

1 Karwan Salih Waisy<sup>1</sup>

2 <sup>1</sup> The University of Zakho

3 *Received: 8 December 2014 Accepted: 5 January 2015 Published: 15 January 2015*

4

---

5 **Abstract**

6 This article shows an area of key interest in modern-day of the Kurdish military, ora  
7 well-known Peshmarga force ?those who face death? history. The Peshmarga have become  
8 anessential of Kurdish sociopolitical culture in the last 100 years. The Peshmarga formally  
9 structured by Mustafa Barzani in 1943, they have come to represent the Kurdish nationalist  
10 movement in the Middle East, especially in Iraq. Inappropriately, there have been few detailed  
11 works at length on the Peshmarga and their link to the Kurdish struggle. Through this paper  
12 this link is shown in conjunction with the development of Kurdish military forces. This  
13 research paper focuses on the roots of the Peshmarga from 1891 to 1975. This article outlines  
14 the historical roots and genesis of the Kurdish Peshmarga forces and their role in the Kurdish  
15 issue in the Middle East especially in Iraq. This study presented a noteworthy amount of  
16 positively not published details about these parties. It delivers a short history about how the  
17 Kurdish Peshmarga force formed; its role in the Kurdish nationalist liberation movement and  
18 the Iraqi Kurdish revolts as well.

19

---

20 **Index terms**— the Kurdish issue and revolts in Iran, Turkey and Iraq, roots of Peshmarga and their role in  
21 the Kurdish movement, Kurdish leaders, Iraqi-Kurdish w

22 **1 Introduction**

23 he roots of the modern-day Peshmarga force, particularly in regards to training, can be found in the early efforts  
24 of the Ottoman Empire to generate an organized Turkish-Kurdish military force. In 1891, Ottoman Sultan  
25 Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) created the Suwaren Hamidi (Horse soldiers, hereafter Hamidiya Knights), merging  
26 Turkish leadership with Kurdish tribal troops. This force had two primary objectives: to defend the Cossack  
27 Region from a possible Soviet threat (McDowall 2004:59; O'shea 2004:78) and secondly, to decrease the possible  
28 of Kurdish-Armenian collaboration ??Safrastian 1949: 66). Dividing two of the biggest minority groups in the  
29 region guaranteed the Ottoman Empire control of Eastern Anatolia and countered current losses of its western  
30 lands to the expanding European powers. The Hamidiya Knights might further more have been started to produce  
31 a feeling of "Pan-Islam", especially in light of a perceived possible British-Russian-Armenian Christian alliance  
32 ??Olson 2013:8; ??Zakhoyi 2005: 20).

33 Although efforts were prepared to assimilate select Kurdish fighters in the Ottoman military previous to the  
34 (Hamidiya Knights), most, if not all, Kurdish mounted troops and riflemen were faithful only to their local tribes  
35 or regional sheikhs. To join the fighting capability of the Kurds into the Ottoman armed forces, Hamid II's  
36 administration employed many of the durable tribes in Eastern Anatolia (McDowall 2004:59; O'shea 2004:79).  
37 According to Zakhoyi, authoritative tribes, such as the Mirans, the Tayans, the Batwans, the Duderis, the  
38 Kachans and the Shernakhs were to supply nearly 40 battalions. Smaller tribes, such as the Heiderans, the  
39 Jibrans, the Jallals and the Mugurs were only to donate units. Ottoman frontrunners, after selecting which  
40 tribes were to contribute in the Hamidiya Knights, summoned the corresponding chiefs to Constantinople and  
41 endowed them with military ranks. These chiefs and their associates, armed frequently with atamans ??Zakhoyi  
42 2005:22), kandjar rifles, and Russian Winchester cavalry rifles, were coached to newcomer troops and form units.  
43 After recruiting, the tribal chiefs and taking place groups of Kurdish leaders were sent to the Hamidiya Suvari  
44 Mektabi, a special military school in Istanbul ??Olson 2013:9). Although Greene states that these units were  
45 to be cavalry units exclusively, it is uncertain as to how accurate his interpretations were and whether or not  
46 positive Kurdish tribes were structured as infantry units ??Lortz 2005:6).

### 3 KURDISH FORCES DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

---

47 With the purpose of differentiate themselves from other cavalry troops under the Sultan's command, the  
48 Hamidiya Knights were delivered distinctive costumes consisting of large black wool caps with brass badges on  
49 the front ??Lortz 2005:6). This headdress was seen during their "ground" operations, whereas some elements  
50 of the Cavalry were observed wearing Cossack-style costumes ??McDowall 2004:59) and costumes worthy of  
51 being paraded before the Sultan earlier to the 1897 war with Greece ??Safrastian 1949: 67). According to  
52 Italian diplomatic correspondence, "some wore a uniform similar to that of the Cirassian's, others like that of  
53 the Cossacks, and finally others, instead of the kalpak worn by the first group, were wearing the keffeyia like  
54 Arab horsemen" (Lortz2005:6).. The rank organization of the Hamidiya Knights reflected Turkish distrust in the  
55 Kurdish leadership. With the aim of limiting Kurdish development and control, the pre arranged arrangement  
56 of the officer corps was a commanding Turkish cavalry overallin charge for all cavalry forces, a Kurdish brigadier  
57 general commanding up to four Hamidiya Knights regiments, four colonels per regiment (two Kurds and two  
58 "prescelti" -a shadowing Turkish officer of comparable rank used to ensure conformity), four lieutenants (two  
59 Kurds and two prescelti), two majors (one Kurd and one prescelti), and two adjutant-majors (one Kurd and  
60 one prescelti) (Lortz2005:6).Generally, the Hamidiya Knights was included of 48 to 76 regiments, each having  
61 roughly 400 to 600 men. In total, there were around 50,000 troops in the unit ??Kreyenbroek & Stefan 1992:  
62 197).The Hamidiya Knights was in no way a cross-tribal force, notwithstanding their military presence, institute,  
63 and possible. Simply when smaller tribes were incapable to fully man their unit necessities were other tribal  
64 warrior's integrated ??McDowall 2004: 59).

65 As tribal commanders regularly took benefit of their newfound power and state connection, great tribes, such  
66 as the Jibran tribe, which retrieved four regiments, found it easy to control, frighten, and terrorize smaller  
67 non-Hamidiya tribes. These chief officer repeatedly used Hamidiya Knights and equipment to settle tribal  
68 variances. Instructions also came from the state as tribes in the Hamidiya Knights were called upon to overpower  
69 "recalcitrant tribes" ??Olson 2013: 9). The "benefits" of being involved in the Hamidiya meant getting not  
70 only artilleries and exercise, however a confident level of prestige. Hamidiya majors and militaries rapidly  
71 acknowledged they could only be tried through a military court martial ??Lortz 2005:7) and not through civil  
72 administration. Understanding their immunity, Cavalry leaders speedily turned their tribes into "lawful robber  
73 brigades". Hamidiya soldiers would every so often steal grain, reap fields not of their possession, drive off herds,  
74 and agreeably steal from storekeepers. The Hamidiya Knights was moreover used by the Ottoman Empire  
75 to overpower Armenian revolts in Eastern Anatolia. The Sultan's militaries, including the Hamidiya Knights,  
76 made no distinction between pro-or anti-government Armenians as the European powers improved their desire  
77 for Armenian Christian concerns. Massacres happened in numerous Armenian areas, with victims reaching the  
78 thousands in several towns ??McDowall 2004: 60). Hamidiya strategies during these raids were principally  
79 cavalry in nature although unorganized Kurdish "brigands" conducted most dismounted occurrences. In total,  
80 more than 200,000 Armenians were killed between 1894 and 1896 ??Lortz 2005:7).

81 After the overthrow of Sultan Abdul Hamid in 1908, the Hamidiya Knights was disbanded as asystematized  
82 force. Select few units were kept in administration service nevertheless, renamed "Tribal Regiments", and  
83 deployed to Yemen and Albania. Sent to subdue trouble on the fringes of the Ottoman Empire, the performance  
84 of these former Hamidiya units was poor at best. According to McDowall, they not only sustained heavy losses,  
85 however also acquired a "reputation for savagery" ??McDowall 2004:63).The Hamidiya Knights is showed as a  
86 military disappointment and a failure because of its contribution to tribal feuds and "one of the darkest stains in  
87 Kurdish history" ??Lortz 2005:7) because of its role in the Armenian massacres. Despite these charges, it remains  
88 integral to the history of the Peshmarga. Many Kurds received their first training in non-tribal warfare from  
89 the Hamidiya Knights, learning strategic military strategy, and acquiring "knowledge of military technology and  
90 equipment and the experiences to use it" ??Olson 2013: 15). Many of the same officers that led Hamidiya Knights  
91 troops would play alike roles in future Kurdish revolutions and influence future Kurdish military organization  
92 ??Lortz 2005:7).

## 93 2 II.

### 94 3 Kurdish Forces during the First World War

95 As the Ottoman Empire resisted to stay together during World War I, it once again called on the Kurds, with their  
96 newly-acquired military experience, to enhancement the Turkish armed forces. According to Safrastian, most  
97 military age Kurds not already in the light cavalry regiments were drafted into the Turkish army and refreshed to  
98 fight with their Muslim Turkish brethren against the Christians and Armenians ??Safrastian 1949: 75).Because  
99 of the anti-Christian and anti-Armenian advertising, the Turkish armed forces fielded enough Kurds to entirely  
100 man numerous units. Among the all-Kurdish units were the eleventh Army, headquartered in Elazig, and the  
101 Twelfth Army, headquartered in Mosul. Kurds similarly made up a mainstream of the Ninth and Tenth Armies  
102 and supplied enough troops for many frontier units and 135 squadrons of reserve cavalry ??Olson 2013:18). These  
103 militaries, with their experience and acquaintance of the terrain, were crucial in fighting the Russian hazard to the  
104 Eastern Ottoman Empire. The end of World War I brought forth a new era in the prospective for an organized  
105 Kurdish armed forces. Due to the Sykes-Picot Treaty of ??ay 1916 ??McDowall 2004:115).

106 Kurdistan was no longer the unauthorized buffer between the Ottoman and Persian Empires, but a region  
107 divided between several new nations (Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran). With a majority of Kurds fragmented

108 between British-controlled Iraq (Southern Kurdistan) and the newly dismantled nation of Turkey (Northern army).  
109 Despite their physical division, the increasing number of Kurdish intelligentsia endeavored to take advantage of the  
110 regional dismay and lobby for a Kurdish nation-state ??Izady 1992:59). Originally, Kurdish ideas of independence  
111 went well as Britain, the reigning Allied superpower in the region, agreed to sponsor an independent nation in  
112 Southern Kurdistan in 1918. Accordingly, British support would be limited to political and administrative advice  
113 only. The Kurdish people would responsible for all else, including their own administration, judiciary, revenue,  
114 and military. Once established, the Kurdish armed force was to be comprised in part from local Kurdish levies  
115 trained by British Major Denials as well as the cavalry forces of Sheikh Mahmud Barzinji, head of the Qadiri  
116 Sufi Order and a landed aristocrat. According to Eskander, Sheikh Mahmud was "by far the most influential  
117 Kurdish personality in southern Kurdistan during and after the war" ??Eskander 2005:143).

118 Thoughts of political autonomy and a possible Kurdish military would soon be eliminated however. Neither  
119 the British nor the developing Kemalist Turkish government wanted to see an independent Kurdistan, expressly  
120 one able to defend itself ??Eskander 2005: 145; ??cDowall 2004:126). For the British, the notion of a recognized  
121 nation in Southern Kurdistan was believed unreasonable due to the incapability of the Kurds to govern themselves.  
122 The British were also worried with the prospect of oil in the Kirkuk, Kifri, and Erbil regions. Henceforth the  
123 British need to pull to pieces the Kurdish Republic, and assume command of the Assyrian-Kurdish Levies. By  
124 May 1919, months into the "new" British policy, Kurdish officers amongst the Levies decreased from 36 units  
125 under Kurdish self-government to nine. British officers rapidly took charge of units and conscripts from the  
126 Kurdish region were "forced into service under the British government" ??Eskander 2005:157).

127 The possible for a Kurdish armedforces in Northern Kurdistan was pretty different from that in the south due  
128 to the growth of Mustafa Kemal and Turkish nationalism. Numerous Kurdish forces, both former Hamidiya and  
129 non-Hamidiya tribes, were once again united under Ottoman and pan-Islamic propaganda. These armed forces  
130 commonly participated in battles to liberate Turkey from the so-called "foreign invaders", namely the Greeks and  
131 Armenians. Led by Miralay (Colonel) Halid Beg Cibrani, former commander of the Second Hamidiya Regiment,  
132 Kurdish troops expelled numerous Russians and Armenians from Eastern Anatolia. Under Kemal's original plans,  
133 Turkey was to become a land of Turkish rule with the Kurds assimilated within the society ??McDowall 2004:  
134 191).

135 By the end of the 1920s, political boulevards of independence and the capability to lawfully create their own  
136 armed forces were all however closed for the Kurdish people both in northern and southern Kurdistan.

137 Both the Turks and the British had used the Kurds for their own regional interest purposes and given the  
138 Kurds diminutive in return. For the common Kurd, equality and sustenance was seen merely at the local level,  
139 where sheikhs became not only the biggest religious authorities, but then again political and military leaders too.  
140 According to Van Bruinessen, the inter-tribal effect of the Kurdish sheikhs developed them into "astute political  
141 operators, who succeeded in imposing their authority on even the largest tribal chieftains of their regions" (Martin  
142 1999:15).The improved power of the sheikhs furthermore led to the assumption of regional military commands,  
143 as sheikhs and their followers saw no choice however to take up arms in the struggle for regional appreciation.  
144 Two sheikhs in particular, Sheikh Said of Piran in Northern Kurdistan and Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji in Southern  
145 Kurdistan, would lead their followers the future Peshmargain military struggles and attempt to influence the  
146 politics of the principal powers ??Lortz 2005:8).

#### 147 4 III. Sheikh Mahmud of Barzanjirebellion

148 Even though both the Turks and the British used Kurdish tribes to originate cross-border conflicts, local sheikhs  
149 recruited Kurds to revolt against the regional player powers. The first of these Kurdish call-to-arms happened  
150 in British controlled Southern Kurdistan in May 1919. Shortly before being selected governor of Sulaymaniyah,  
151 Sheikh Mahmud Bazanji ordered the arrest of all British political and military officials in the region ??Eskander  
152 2005:157.153). After seizing control of the region, Barzanji raised anarmed force from his Iranian tribal followers  
153 and announced himself "Ruler of all of Kurdistan". Tribal fighters from both Iran and Iraq rapidly allied  
154 themselves with Sheikh Mahmud as he became more effective in opposing British rule. According to McDowall,  
155 the Sheikh's forces "were largely Barzinja tribesmen, the Hamavand under Karim Fattah Beg, and disillusioned  
156 segments of the Jaf, Jabbari, Sheikh Bizayni and Shuan tribes". The admiration and numbers of Sheikh Mahmud's  
157 multitudes only increased after their ambush of a British armed forces column ??McDowall 2004: 158). Among  
158 Mahmud's many supporters and troop leaders was 16-year-old Mustafa Barzani, the future leader of the Kurdish  
159 nationalist movement cause and commander of Peshmarga forces in Kurdistan of Iraq ??McDowall 1996: 26).  
160 Barzani and his men, following the orders of Barzani tribal Sheikh Ahmad Barzani, crossed the Piyaw Valley on  
161 their way to join Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji's forces. Despite being ambushed several times along the way, Barzani  
162 and his men reached Sheikh Mahmud's location, albeit too late to help in the revolt ??Barzani 2002:22). The  
163 Barzani fighters were only a part of the Sheikh's 500-person force. As the British The Kurdish Peshmarga ??orce  
164 1943 ??orce -1975 became aware of the sheikh's developing political and armed forces power, they were forced  
165 to respond militarily. Two British brigades were positioned to defeat Sheikh Mahmud's fighters ??McDowall  
166 2004: 158) at Darbandi Bazyar near Sulaymaniyah in June 1919 ??Ghassemloou 1965: 63). Sheikh Mahmud was  
167 eventually arrested and exiled to India in 1921 ??Olson 2013:61).

168 At the root of the revolution, Sheikh Mahmud's leadership appealed to both Kurdish nationalist and religious  
169 feelings. Even though he knew he could not directly defeat the British, Sheikh Mahmud expected to seek

170 recognition of Kurdish nationalism ??Eskander 2005: 153) by supporting a 'free united Kurdistan'. Using his  
171 ability as a religious leader, Sheikh Mahmud called for a jihad against the British in 1919 ??McDowall 2004: 158)  
172 and therefore acquired the support of many Kurds indifferent to the nationalist struggle. Although the passion of  
173 their struggle was motivated by religion, Kurdish peasantry seized the idea of "national and political freedom for  
174 all" and endeavored for "Andevelopment in their social standing" ??Ghassemloou 1965: 63). Despite opposition  
175 by other regional tribes, feasibly fearful of the sheikh's developing power, Sheikh Mahmud's troops continued to  
176 oppose British rule after the sheikh's arrest ??McDowall 2004: 158). Even though no longer organized under one  
177 leader, this inter-tribal vigor was "actively anti-British", engaging in hit-and-run bouts, killing British military  
178 officers, and contributing in local uprisings. The fighters sustained to be inspired by Sheikh Mahmud's capability  
179 to "challenge British interference" ??Eskander 2005: 153).

180 The success of the Kurdish fighters' anti-British upheavals forced the British to recognize Kurdish political  
181 autonomy in 1923 ??McDowall 2004: 159). Returning to the region in 1922, Sheikh Mahmud continued to indorse  
182 raids against British militaries ??Lortz 2005:8). Once these uprisings were subdued, the British government signed  
183 Iraq over to King Feisal and a new Arab-led government ??McDowall 2004: 158). After having to retreat into  
184 the mountains, the defeated Sheikh Mahmud signed a peace harmony with the new Iraqi government and settled  
185 in the new Iraq ??Ghassemloou 1965: 66).

## 186 5 IV.

### 187 6 Sheikh said of Piranuprising

188 As Sheikh Mahmud battled for Kurdish political autonomy and liberation in Southern Kurdistan, similar  
189 revolutions were happening throughout Northern Kurdistan against the unexperienced Turkish government. Of  
190 these revolts the chiefly tribal Kuchgiriup rising of 1920 was possibly the most prominent as Kurdish fighters  
191 struggled for political autonomy and were clever to seize many Turkish arms and supplies ??Olson 2013:32).  
192 The defeat of these revolutions inspired the Turkish government to deal with the "Kurdish question" by enacting  
193 laws limiting both Kurdish identity and the governing capability of sheikhs (O'Ballance1973:15). As the Turkish  
194 nationalist position became firmer, attacks on the democratic rights of the Kurds improved ??Ghassemloou 1965:  
195 51).

196 Forced underground, Kurdish nationalist leaders formed the political group Azadi (Freedom) in Dersim,  
197 Turkey in 1921 ??McDowall 2004: 192). Dissimilar earlier Kurdish nationalist collections, the core of Azadi  
198 was comprised of practiced military men, not the urban Kurdish intelligentsia (Bruinessen 1992:280). According  
199 to Olson, Azadi' sbelligerent forces included various tribal armed forces and several former Hamidiya regimental  
200 leaders, all equipped with rifles and other weapons previously owned by the Turks The strength and expansion  
201 of Azadi would lead to its downfall. During a Turkish military expedition in September 1924 more than a few  
202 Azadi leaders mutinied, fleeing into the mountains with various artilleries and hundreds of lowerranking Kurdish  
203 soldiers ??Olson 2013:50). Over 500 officers and soldiers -three companies of one battalion and one company of  
204 another left the Turkish ranks to join the Kurdish army (Bruinessen 1992:284).

205 In reaction to the revolution, the Turkish government, recognizing the strength of Azadi, quickly arrested  
206 many of the organization's leaders, both mutineers and conspirators ??Olson 2013:50). With their leadership  
207 exhausted, a power vacuum formed in the political-military arrangement of Azadi. Out of the remnants of Azadi  
208 emerged Sheikh Said of Piran, a Naqshbandi sheikh related through marriage to Khalid Beg, Turkish Army  
209 colonel and Azadi founder (Bruinessen1992:281).

210 The remaining Azadi substructure supported the Sheikh's leadership, considering a sheikh could generate more  
211 support than amilitary officer. Once persuaded to join the uprising ??Olson 2013:94), Sheikh Said directly began  
212 assembling contributors and forming a chain of command. As Van Bruinessen demonstrated Sheikh Said "knew  
213 what he wanted, had the capacity to convince others and had a great reputation for piety, which was useful when  
214 his other arguments were insufficient" (Bruinessen 1992:281).

215 As a new leader, Sheikh Said, similar Sheikh Mahmud years earlier, appealed to the Kurdish sense of Islamic  
216 unity. In addition the usual fighting attendants of a Kurdish sheikh, Sheikh Said was able to increase his  
217 ranks during his tour of Eastern Anatolia in January 1925. New recruits answered the call to arms as Said  
218 issued fatwasfor war (Call for holy war), gave speeches denouncing the secular Kemalist policies, and wrote  
219 letters inviting numerous tribes to join in a jihad against the government ??Olson 2013:95). Said similarly met  
220 personally with tribal leaders and their representatives, including Barzan tribal representative Mullah Mustafa  
221 ??arzani (Mc Dowall 1996:27).

222 Although some tribes rejected to follow Said, he was acknowledged definitely in many towns. The 'emir  
223 al-mujahidin' (commander of the faithful and fighters of the holy war) in January 1925. Overall, 15 to 20,000  
224 Kurds mobilized in support of Sheikh Said and Azadi. Many of these fighters were armed with horses, rifles,  
225 or sabers ??Olson 2013:95)attained from the various munitions depots across the countryside. Other Kurdish  
226 armament was either personally owned earlier to the rebellion or taken from the Armenians, despite Turkish  
227 attempts at Kurdish disarmament ??Safrastian 1949:82).With sufficient firepower recruited from the tribes, a  
228 plan of outbreak was set in place. In generating a battle strategy, Said and the other prominent remaining Azadi  
229 leadership recognized five major fronts to be commanded by regional sheikhs (Bruinessen 1992:292). These sheikh  
230 leaders were aided by former Hamidiya Knights officers who provided military construction to the revolution.

231 After institute, unit responsibility was distributed among nine areas. The overall headquarters of Said's armed  
232 force was located in EgriDagh and protected by a force of 2,000 men ??Lortz 2005:14). Duringthe onset of the  
233 revolution, Said's fighters, facing nearly 25,000 Turkish troops ??Olson 2013:107), gained control of a Vilayet near  
234 Diyarbakir ??Lortz 2005:14). Besides seizing Turkish land and acquiring additional munitions, early victories  
235 instilled confidence in the rebellion and garnered further Kurdish support. Throughout the conflict, Said's fighters  
236 used both conventional military tactics, including multi front attacks and efforts at urban seizure, and alternative  
237 warfare, including guerrilla tactics ??Olson 2013:110). An example of the conventional military organization was  
238 evident in the assault on Diyarbakir, where reports saw "three columns of 5,000 strong, under the personal  
239 command of Sheikh Said". The formation of conventional sophisticated levels of Kurdish armed forces command  
240 may moreover be assumed as documents written by foreigners were lectured to a 'Kurdish War Office'. These  
241 official papers, found by Turkish forces, may have been propaganda nevertheless, designed to create the illusion  
242 of international support for the Kurdish revolution ??Lortz 2005:15).

243 Despite the valiant efforts of Said's fighters, the Kemalist administration was able to rapidly amass forces to  
244 overpower the rebellion by early April 1925 and arrested Sheikh Said as he endeavored to flee to Iran on 27  
245 April 1925 (Bruinessen 1992:290). After his arrest, Sheikh Said was punctually trained for his actions against  
246 the Turkish administration. Said, along with a number of his factions, was hung on 29 June 1925 ??Olson  
247 2013:127). Similar the Iraqi Kurds under Sheikh Mahmud, Sheikh Said's persisting followers did not halt their  
248 assaults after the removal of their leader. Throughout 1925 and 1926 their attacks sustained as they conducted  
249 guerrilla maneuvers against Turkish military units (Bruinessen 1992:290). After their arrest, these remaining  
250 armed forces proclaimed themselves to be 'the unvanquished tribe of the nation' ??Lortz 2005:15). Whether  
251 or not these thoughts of nationalism were articulated by all the remaining followers cannot be strong-minded,  
252 though, according to Van Bruinessen, "neither the guerrilla troops, nor the leaders of the Ararat revolt that  
253 followed, used religious phraseology" units (Bruinessen 1992:299).

254 Because of growing Kurdish awareness, nationalism, despite its primary urban, intellectual, and political  
255 individual roots, had become a military reason in and of itself, separate from religious inspirations. Even though  
256 recruitment continued based on tribal or sheikh allegiances, the Kurdish nationalist struggle became anauthentic  
257 call to arms. By fighting for "Kurdistan," Kurdish troops, the future Peshmarga, separated themselves from the  
258 mujahedeen, their regional religious combatant brethren ??Lortz 2005:15).

259 V.

## 260 7 The Ararat Uprising

261 Despite the failure of Sheikh Said and Azadi, Kurdish intellectuals and nationalist leaders sustained to proposal  
262 for an independent Kurdistan ??McDowall 2004: 202). Many of these nationalists met in October 1927 and  
263 not only declared the independence of Kurdistan, but then again moreover formed Khoybun (Independence),  
264 a "supreme national organ ? with full and high-class national and international powers" ??Safrastian 1949:  
265 84)..102 This new organization's leadership supposed the crucial to success in the struggle for an independent  
266 Kurdistan lay not in tribal loyalties, however in a "properly conceived, planned and organized" military initiative  
267 ??McDowall 2004: 203). In showing the need for a proper military construction, Khoybun nominated IhsanNuri  
268 Pasha Commander-In-Chief of the Kurdish National Army. Nuri Pasha, besides being a former Kurdish member  
269 of the "Young Turk Movement", showed his loyalty to the Kurdish question when he led the mutiny within the  
270 Turkish military earlier to the Sheikh Said Uprising (Bruinessen1992:284;Izady 1992:62).

271 After forming leader ship of Khoybun sought the assistance of many influential European forces to help supply  
272 the Kurdish nationalist military attempted ??Ghassemlo 1965: 54). Despite their irritation with the Kema list  
273 regime, however, neither the British nor the French gave much support to Khoybun. ??McDowall 2004: 203).  
274 According to Safrastian, the European powers, once supportive of Kurdish independence, were persuaded through  
275 Turkish media and press reports ??Safrastian 1949: 85). With little assistance from Europe, Khoybun eventually  
276 settled for the support of the Armenian Dashnak Party, the Shah of Iran ??McDowall 2004: 204), and fellow  
277 Kurds such as Sheikh Ahmad of Barzan, leader of the Iraqi Kurdistan Barzani tribe ??Izady 1992:62). Syrian  
278 Kurds also came to the assistance of By 1928, Nuri Pasha had assembled a small clutch of soldiers' armed force  
279 with modern weapons and trained in infantry tactics. This force initiated the Khoybun revolution, marching  
280 towards Mount Ararat ??McDowall 2004: 203). Nuri and his men not simply achieved success in reaching Mount  
281 Ararat, nonetheless they were capable to secure the towns of Bitlis, Van, and most of the countryside around  
282 Lake Van ??Izady 1992:62),, establishing a notable area of Kurdish resistance ??Mella 2005 103)..Along with  
283 their weapons, organization, and ability, Kurdish strength was enhanced by the positioning of the rebellion.  
284 Although Turkish forces attempted to suppress the revolt as early as 1927, their success was tempered by a  
285 lack of Persian cooperation, as Mount Ararat lay in the Turkish-Persian border ??McDowall 2004: 204). By  
286 1930, however, Turkish forces began to take the upper hand. Beginning in May, the Turkish army went on  
287 the offensive, surrounding Mount Ararat with over 10,000 troops by late June. Troop numbers on both sides  
288 sustained to cultivate as Kurdish tribes were enlisted to join the cause and roughly 60,000 more soldiers were  
289 called up by the Turkish government ??Lortz 2005:17).

290 Besides facing acumulative numerical disadvantage, the Khoybun resistance slowly saw its regional support  
291 disappear. Pressured by the Turkish government, French administrators in Syria and British administrators in  
292 Iraq restrained much of the southern support for Khoybun ??Izady 1992:63). Preceding to Turkish persistence,

293 Barzani military assistance from Southern Kurdistan included 500 horsemen from the Mosul district brought by  
294 the "Sheik of Barzan". Other Kurdish tribal chiefs such as Hatcho and Simqu, both from Syria, came to the  
295 assistance of Khoybun in 1930. The biggest blow to Khoybun's Ararat revolution, nevertheless, came from Persia.  
296 Although initially sympathetic of Kurdish resistance, the Persian government did not fight Turkish military  
297 developments into Persia to surround Mount Ararat ??Mella 2005: 104). Persian frontier guardsmen similarly  
298 stigated to close the Persian-Turkish border to non-essential travelers, including Kurdish tribes endeavoring  
299 to reinforce the revolt. Persia would ultimately completely submit to Turkish operational demands, trading  
300 the land surrounding Mount Ararat for Turkish land near Qutur and Barzirgan. The organized revolution on  
301 Mount Ararat was beaten by the fall of 1930, although then Turks waited until the following spring to attack  
302 any outstanding tribal dissenters. Similar to the consequence of previous Kurdish revolutions, the Turkish  
303 government was merciless to the rebels and anyone supposed of assisting them, destroying villages and killing  
304 hundred thousands of Kurds ??Mella 2005: 104).

305 Despite the defeat, Khoybun and the Ararat revolt are significant to the historical roots of the Peshmarga for  
306 three reasons. First, never before had a military force been constructed specifically for the Kurdish nationalist  
307 ideal. The influence of the tribal sheikh as military commander was increasingly reduced as nationalism became  
308 a more important reason for Kurdish military actions. Second, the Khoybun revolt showed a growing relationship  
309 between the Barzani tribe and Kurdish nationalism. Although Mullah Mustafa Barzani had been involved in  
310 Sheikh Mahmud's revolt and had met with Sheikh Said, the military support granted to the Khoybun cause from  
311 the Barzani tribe (as led by Sheikh Ahmad and commanded by Mullah Mustafa) was unprecedented. This level  
312 of support would continue to grow as future Peshmarga, specifically from the Barzani area, would again be called  
313 on to defend attempted Kurdish nation-states. Finally, the Khoybun revolt began a pattern of international  
314 cooperation against Kurdish nationalism. Exchanges of land between neighbouring countries would be seen  
315 again as regional powers temporarily put aside their differences in an attempt to suppress Kurdish military  
316 ability ??Lortz 2005:18).

## 317 8 VI.

### 318 9 The Role of Barzani Tribe in the Kurdish Issue

319 Before exploring more the early history of the Peshmarga and its role in Kurdish revolts, the influence of the  
320 Barzani tribe and their sheikhs must be discoursed. Not simply would the leaders of this tribe (Sheikh Ahmad  
321 and Mullah Mustafa) play a great role in early Kurdish nationalist conflicts, however it is their fighters who  
322 defined what would become the Peshmarga-those who face death. The influence of the sheikhs in the village  
323 of Barzan was first noted in the early 19th century with the emergence of Taj ad Din, the first Barzani sheikh  
324 ??Bois 1996: 50). Located in the northernmost part of Iraqi Kurdistan ??Barzani 2002:17), "in the mountain  
325 vastness northeast of Arbil in Iraq, on the Greater Zab River and in the highlands above it" ??Eagleton 1963:  
326 47), Barzan is illustrated as a small village with "no outstanding features except for the solid stone houses of  
327 the sheikhs". On the other hand, nondescript their residence, Barzani villagers had a long-standing reputation  
328 as great armed forces. This reputation applied particularly to those who followed the resident sheikh. According  
329 to Eagleton, the idea of the Barzani people as capable fighters, combined with support from members of outside  
330 tribes, allowed the Barzanis to defend themselves despite being outnumbered by neighboring enemies. After the  
331 execution of Sheikh Abdul Salam in 1914 by Turkish authorities, his 18-year-old brother, Ahmad Barzani took  
332 charge of the Barzani tribe. Ahmad, defined as "young and unstable", continued to rule as his brother had,  
333 Volume XV Issue II Version I The Kurdish Peshmarga Force 1943-1975 seizing both religious and political power  
334 and becoming sheikh of the region ??Eagleton 1963: 47). Sheikh Ahmad's growing religious authority would  
335 eventually lead to conflict. According to Mir Hadi Izady, Ahmad instituted a new religion in 1927, attempting to  
336 combine Christianity, Judaism, and Islam for the sake of unifying the "religiously fragmented" Kurdish populace  
337 ??Izady 1992:64). Persuaded of Ahmad's divineness, Mullah Abdul Rahman proclaimed the sheikh to be "God"  
338 and declared himself a prophet. Although Abdul Rahman was killed by Shaikh Ahmad's brother Muhammad  
339 Sadiq, the ideas of Ahmad's divineness spread. Sheikh Ahmad's eccentricities would become the target of rival  
340 tribes by 1931 ??Izady 1992:64). As the numerous tribal strikes and counterstrikes involving the Barzanis began to  
341 wave the countryside, the new Iraqi government, having recently agreed to independence with Britain, attempted  
342 to destroy the contentious ??arzani tribe (McDowall 2004: 179). According to Masud Barzani, the Iraqi intent to  
343 subjugate the Barzanis was "without foundation because there was already a civilian administration in the Barzan  
344 region, and Sheikh Ahmad was not in opposition to it". Masud Barzani further asserts that the Iraqi objective  
345 was to "vanquish Barzan because of its firm patriotic stand". Conflict between the Barzanis and the Iraqi forces  
346 initiated in late 1931 and continued through 1932. Commanding Barzani fighters was Sheikh Ahmad's younger  
347 brother, Mullah Mustafa Barzani. Mustafa would intensification to prominence against the Iraqi forces (who were  
348 supplemented by British commanders and the British Royal Air Force). Despite his young age, the 28-year-old  
349 Mustafa Barzani displayed "excellent defensive and offensive military superiority" and his "outstanding abilities  
350 raised the morale of his fighters and their trust in his leadership".

351 Iraqi numerical superiority and air power overcame Kurdish bravery, nevertheless. By June 1932 Sheikh Ahmad  
352 Barzani, his brothers, and a small contingent of men were forced to seek asylum in Turkey. Although Ahmad  
353 was separated from his followers and sent to Ankara ??Barzani 2002:28), Mullah Mustafa and Muhammad Sadiq

354 continued to fight Iraqi forces for another year before surrendering. After swearing an oath to King Faysal of  
355 Iraq, the Barzanis (sans Sheikh Ahmad) were allowed to return to Barzan in spring 1933, where they found their  
356 "devoutly loyal" forces had kept their organization and weapons ??McDowall 2004: 180).

357 Eventually Mullah Mustafa was reunited with Ahmad Barzani as the Iraqi government arrested the brothers  
358 and exiled them to Mosul in 1933. The two Barzanis were transferred to various cities in Iraq throughout the 1930s  
359 and early 1940s. During this time their stops included Mosul, Baghdad, Nasiriya, Kifri, and AltinKopru before  
360 finally ending in Sulaymaniyah. In the meantime, back bone in Barzan, the remaining Barzani tribal fighters  
361 were faced with constant pressures of arrest or death. Although initially a tribal dispute, the involvement of the  
362 Iraqi government inadvertently led to the growth of Sheikh Ahmad and Mullah Mustafa Barzani as prominent  
363 Kurdish leaders. Throughout these early conflicts, the Barzanis consistently displayed their leadership and  
364 military prowess, providing steady opposition against the fledgling Iraqi military. Additionally, exile in the main  
365 cities exposed the Barzanis to the ideas of urban Kurdish nationalism, movements they had only been a part  
366 of militarily ??Barzani 2002:49). This exposure was especially important for Mullah Mustafa Barzani as he  
367 increasingly recognized the need for an organized armed force to coincide with Kurdish nationalism, realizing  
368 tribal disagreement could never defeat the Iraqi government. As Barzani military had strong point, with its  
369 disdain for the Iraqis and desire for political autonomy, merged with the growing nationalist-oriented Kurdish  
370 intelligentsia, Barzani influence in Iraqi Kurdistan became even greater ??McDowall 2004: 290).

## 371 10 VII.

372 Appearance of Mullah Mustafa ??Barzani's Forces 1943 ??1945 As World War II instigated to occupy the attention  
373 of the world's nations, the Barzanis and their tribe were still internally separated and remained at odds with the  
374 Iraqi government. The British occupation of Iraq in 1941 and their seizure of Baghdad, presumably to ensure  
375 Iraqi compliance with the Allied cause, would indirectly lead to a reunion between Mustafa Barzani and his people  
376 and again pose a challenge to Iraqi authority ??McDowall 2004: 290). Two years after the British occupation,  
377 in 1943, with inflation gripping Iraq and the British showing little unease about the Kurdish issue, the Barzani  
378 family found themselves unable to subsist on their meager government stipend. Still in exile in Sulaymaniyah, the  
379 Barzani financial situation became so dire the family resorted to selling their rifles and their gold jewelry just to  
380 survive (O'balance 1973:21). The indignation of having to part with their family fortune and their methods of  
381 selfdefense led Mustafa Barzani to plot his return to Barzan ??Barzani 2002:43).

382 The impetus for Barzani's return was strictly economic, not nationalist nor caused by a desire to counter any  
383 anti-British sentiment in Kurdistan (McDowall 2004: 290), although Barzani did have contacts within Kurdish  
384 nationalist circles in Sulaymaniyah who may have assisted him in his escape. After receiving permission from  
385 Sheikh Ahmad Barzani, Mullah Mustafa, along with two close friends, fled Sulaymaniyah and crossed into Iran.  
386 Once in the Iranian town of Shino, Barzani reunited with resettled members of the Barzani tribe and made his  
387 way to Barzan. ??Barzani 2002:43) Upon his return, Mullah Mustafa became "the immediate object of attention  
388 from Ahmad and Mustafa Koshnaw, Kurdish officers in the Iraqi army and members of Hiwa, an underground  
389 Kurdish nationalist movement ??McDowall 2004: 293).

390 Upon his return to Barzan, Mullah Mustafa recruited a force to challenge regional Iraqi authority. Numbering  
391 virtually 750 in only two weeks, Barzani fighters began small operations such as raiding police stations and frontier  
392 posts ??Barzani 2002:44). These early raids demonstrated the growing military organization of Barzani's forces.  
393 Although still mostly tribal, enrollment in Barzani's force grew to nearly 2,000 within months as local Kurds,  
394 including those deserting the Iraqi army, joined the ranks (O'balance 1973:24). With the purpose of organizing  
395 this growing force, Barzani created combat groups of 15-30 men; appointed Muhammad Amin Mirkhan, Mamand  
396 Maseeh, and Saleh KaniyaLanji commanders; and instilled strict rules of soldierly conduct. These rules included  
397 the need for fighters to obey and carry out guidelines, the need for commanders to stand with their fighters as  
398 equals and treat them like brothers, instructions on how to treat civilians and prisoners, and how to disperse  
399 the spoils of war. Barzani adhered strictly to his own instructions, refusing privileges of command and sharing  
400 duties such as mounting guard ??Barzani 2002:44).

401 Throughout 1943 Barzani and his fighters seized police stations and re-supplied themselves with Iraqi arms  
402 and ammunition. Barzani used these primary skirmishes as well as future battles to classify who among his force  
403 was best suited for leadership positions, who was best in handling logistics, and who might fill other supervision  
404 positions ??Barzani 2002:45). Once levels of command were formed, Barzani established his headquarters in  
405 Bistri, a village halfway between Rawanduz and his Barzan forces. Barzani's conclusions to develop command  
406 and control, combined with intense feelings of reliability and camaraderie among the Barzani troops, led to  
407 victories in the Battle of Gora Tu and the Battle of Mazna. During these battles, Barzani forces were able to  
408 defeat trained, organized, and well-supplied Iraqi armed forces units ??Lortz 2005:23).

409 Consequently of his developing regional control, augmented reliability, and developing military power, Barzani  
410 appealed the Iraqi government for political autonomy as well as the release of Kurdish prisoners, including Sheikh  
411 Ahmad Barzani. Even though the political autonomy request was denied, the Iraqi government did negotiate  
412 with Barzani throughout the early 1940s (McDowall 2004: 293). These negotiations not only led to the release  
413 of Sheikh Ahmad in early 1944 ??Eagleton 1963: 48), but also brought the word government collaborator "Jash"  
414 into common Kurdish usage. Barzani used the term, meaning "donkey" in Kurdish, as a way to openly criticize  
415 Kurds who collaborated with the Iraqi government, derogatively labeling them the "jash police". Due to Iraqi

416 recognition and Barzani's extensive influence and power, Kurdish loyalists began to rally around Barzani, viewing  
 417 him their respect and turning him into the "national beacon of the Kurdish liberation movement" ??Barzani  
 418 2002:45).

419 Relations between Mustafa Barzani and the Iraqi government began on a positive note, partially due to  
 420 more than a few Kurdish sympathizers within the Iraqi government. After the resignation of the Iraqi cabinet  
 421 in 1944, a new ruling body took over, one far less willing to give into Kurdish aspirations ??Eagleton 1963:  
 422 52). Consequently, previous concessions were overlooked and pro-Kurdish diplomats were dismissed, opening a  
 423 new round of Iraqi-Kurdish hostilities ??Barzani 2002:45). With his position only reinforced by the previous  
 424 administration, Mustafa Barzani continued his demands while simultaneously preparing his forces for additional  
 425 military actions ??McDowall 2004: 293). Knowing a conflict was imminent, Barzani separated his forces into three  
 426 fronts: a Margavar -Rawanduz front, commanded by former Iraqi official Mustafa Koshnaw; an Imadia front, led  
 427 by Izzat Abdul-Aziz; and an Aqra front, led by Sheikh Suleiman Barzani. All fundamentals would be responsible  
 428 to Mustafa Barzani, the self-proclaimed "Commander-In-Chief of the Revolutionary Forces" ??Barzani 2002:77).

429 Knowing tribal discord and inefficiency of the Kurdish general public could hinder his forces, Barzani, with  
 430 the approval of Sheikh Ahmad Barzani, formed the Rizgari Kurd (the Kurdish Freedom Party) in early 1945.  
 431 Consisting primarily of Kurdish officers, government officials, and professionals, Rizgari Kurd intended to unify  
 432 the Kurds, form autonomy or independence within Iraq, and continue to create armed units to defend Kurdistan.  
 433 Despite Barzani's order to his armed forces to "not initiate fighting", conflict erupted in August 1945 in the  
 434 town of Margavar. This violence led to the death of prominent Kurd Wali Beg and numerous Iraqi police officers  
 435 ??Barzani 2002:73). As a result of Beg's demise, the Kurdish populace, without any armed forces authorization,  
 436 overran the police stations in Margavar and Barzan ??Lortz 2005:24).

437 Barzani speedily returned from arbitrating a local tribal dispute and took command of the revolt ??Barzani  
 438 2002:73). Against British advice, the Iraqi government attempted to mollify the region, declaring martial law,  
 439 threatening military action, and demanding Barzani's surrender. With diplomacy no longer an option, the Iraqis  
 440 deployed numerous armed forces units to the region to subdue the developing rebellion ??Lortz 2005:24). In  
 441 preparation for the conflict, Mustafa Barzani met with Sheikh Ahmad Barzani to decide who should command  
 442 the forces against the looming Iraqi The Kurdish Peshmarga ??orce 1943 ??orce -1975 threat. The Barzanis  
 443 decided that Mustafa Barzani himself should lead the Aqra force; Muhammad Siddique Barzani, brother of  
 444 Sheikh Ahmad and Mullah Mustafa, would lead the Margavar-Rawanduz front; Haji TahaImadi would lead the  
 445 Balenda-Imadia front; and As'adKhosavi was given the responsibility of both surrounding the Bilah garrison and  
 446 supplying the forces of the Aqra front. With command in place, the Barzani forces were able to dominate the  
 447 early battles. The Iraqi army, attempting to seize the eastern slopes of Mount Qalandar, was driven back to  
 448 the GaliAli Beg Gorge. Although victorious, the Barzani forces did sustain numerous losses, including a serious  
 449 injury to Commander Muhammad Siddique Barzani ??Barzani 2002:89).

450 On 4 September 1945 the Iraqi assault continued, as army units from Aqra and Rawanduz and a police unit from  
 451 Amadia were deployed towards Barzan ??Lortz 2005:25). A few days later in the Battle of Maidan Morik, Barzani  
 452 fighters once again held their own against Iraqi mechanized and artillery batteries. As the battles degenerated to  
 453 hand-to-hand combat, the Iraqi army, presumably losing command and control, was forced to retreat temporarily  
 454 from the region ??Barzani 2002:89). However the undervalued abilities of Barzani's military harshly dampened  
 455 the morale of Iraqi ground armed forces, Iraqi air raids sustained unabated ??Lortz 2005:25).Despite the primary  
 456 victories, by the end of September 1945 the Iraqi government turned the tide of the battle, resounding regional  
 457 tribes to oppose the Barzanis and aid in suppressing the revolt. These tribal fighters, including members of  
 458 the Zibrari, Berwari, and Doski tribes, and "elements of the 'Muhajarin' trustworthy to several of the sons of  
 459 Sayyid Tahaof Shemdinan (and led by Abdul Karim Qassim)" (Eagleton 1963: 53) attacked Barzani and his men,  
 460 uprooting them from their "defensive strong holds" and preventing them from further attacking Iraqi troops in  
 461 the region ??Lortz 2005:25).These "treasonous" assaults, combined with the Iraqi occupation of Barzan on 7  
 462 October, forced Barzani to order his forces to retreat from the region and cross into Iranian Kurdistan. Once  
 463 there, the Barzani family and their supporters settled in various towns in the Mahabad area, joining the Kurdish  
 464 autonomous movement in the region and setting the stage for the official creation of the Peshmarga. The early  
 465 1940s are extremely important in the history of the Peshmarga. Although still without an official title, the core  
 466 of the Peshmarga was definitely created when Mustafa Barzani returned to Barzan in 1943 ??Barzani 2002:94).

467 By taking advantage of World War II and the British occupation of Iraq, Barzani was given the time to mold  
 468 an armed force that superseded tribal affiliation, an idea that the Ottoman Empire, with its Hamidiya Knights,  
 469 had failed in creating. Without Barzani's leadership and organizational and tactical ideas, it is doubtful his forces  
 470 would have been capable to achieve the results they did or, more outstandingly, conduct the tactical retreat that  
 471 kept most of the command structure together in Iranian Kurdistan. It is uncertain however, how much of the  
 472 military loyalty given to the Barzanis was due to their tribal standing and how much was because of their struggle  
 473 against the Iraqi government (Barzani 2002:95). Even the nationalist leanings of the revolt are not completely  
 474 clear. McDowall dismisses the notion of Mustafa Barzani as an ardent nationalist at this point and claims that  
 475 the Barzani revolts were initiated simply to increase the tribe's regional power ??McDowall 2004: 293). Barzani's  
 476 creation of the Rizgari Kurd, however, reinforces the idea of Barzani as nationalist leader, albeit with a tribal  
 477 based force. Combined with the emerging Kurdish administration in the Iranian-Kurdistan town of Mahabad,

478 Barzani's influence and the prominence of his troops would continue to change the politics of the region ??Lortz  
479 2005:25).

## 480 11 VIII. The Peshmarga in Thekurdistan Republic

481 The Mahabad Republic stands as the high point of the Kurdish nationalist liberation movement. This short  
482 period of national identity marked the formal formation of the Peshmarga and cemented the role of Mustafa  
483 Barzani as a military hero of the Kurdish people. During the short life of this nation-state, the idea of a  
484 Kurdish homeland finally came into being. Unfortunately for the Kurds, the Republic lasted only 11 or so  
485 months, from January 1946 to December 1946 (Yassin 1995:140). In the opening years of the Cold War, as the  
486 British re-occupied Iraq, the Soviet Union seized northwestern Iran to ensure the "uninterrupted flow of vital  
487 supplies to the Soviet Union". Central control of Iran, similar to the occupation of Iraq, included a diminished  
488 capability to undermine the growing Kurdish nationalist movement ??Jwaideh 2006:713). Nearsighted a window  
489 of opportunity, the newly-formed Komala-iJiyanawi Kurdistan (The Committee for the Revival of Kurdistan  
490 -Komala), a predominantly middle class democratic nationalist party, originated to negotiate with the occupying  
491 Soviets with the idea of creating a Sovietsponsored Kurdishre public, independent of Iranian control ??Lortz  
492 2005:26). Leading the nascent Kurdish republic and fully endorsed by the Soviets was Qazi Muhammad, the  
493 religious and ostensible leader of Mahabad. Muhammad, who had become democratic Komala's sole leader -a  
494 position the communist Soviet leaders were comfortable with was stress sedthrough the Soviets to leave Komala  
495 and generate a more centralized party ??McDowall 2004: 240).

496 In September 1945, for example, the Kurdish leadership, including Muhammad, was taken to Soviet Azerbaijan  
497 where the Soviets agreed to supply the Kurds with money, military training, and arms, including tanks, cannons,  
498 machine guns, and rifles, thereby The Kurdish Peshmarga ??orce 1943 ??orce -1975 ensuring autonomy from  
499 Iran ??Eagleton 1963: 44). In exchange for the support the Kurds had to abandon Komala, which Soviet  
500 Azerbaijan President Bagherov labeled "an instrument of British imperialism" and create the "Democratic  
501 Party of Kurdistan Iran" (KDP-I). Bagherov also warned the Mahabad leaders not to trust Mullah Mustafa  
502 Barzani, whom Bagherov called "a British Spy" ??Eagleton 1963: 46). Dismissal of Mustafa Barzani was not  
503 straightforwardly accomplished however. Knowing tribal opposition to a less-thandemocratic ideal could derail  
504 his position as leader ??Lortz 2005:27). Qazi Muhammad, upon his return from Soviet Azerbaijan, met with  
505 Barzani in an endeavor to attach Barzani's prestige and his troops to the KDP-I cause ??Barzani 2002:99).  
506 Barzani approved to support Muhammad and the KDP-I in exchange for billeting and supplies for his family  
507 and forces, 3,000 of which would be stationed in Mahabad. Barzani may have met previously with Soviet  
508 representatives through his Iranian Kurdistan contacts so as to "dispel their well-known suspicions regarding his  
509 previous associations and orientations" ??Eagleton 1963: 57). With the purpose of procuring their trust, Barzani  
510 approved to collaborate with Muhammad and to avoid the "public eye" due to the possible unwanted pressure on  
511 the Soviet Union by the governments of Iraq and Great Britain ??Barzani 2002:99). With Barzani's collaboration  
512 guaranteed, Muhammad, along with 60 tribal leaders, including Barzani, established a KDP-I party platform,  
513 created a Kurdish People's Government, and raised the official Kurdish national flag ??Eagleton 1963:57). As  
514 the people of Iranian Azerbaijan moved towards their own neighboring Soviet-sponsored state, Qazi Muhammad  
515 was elected the first Kurdish president and on 22 January 1946 the Mahabad Republic was born. Subordinate  
516 to the new Kurdish president was a government consisting of a Prime Minister, a 13-person parliament, and  
517 various ministers, including Minister of War Mohammad Hosein Khan SeifQazi, Qazi Muhammad's cousin and  
518 former honorary captain of the Iranian gendarmerie. SeifQazi was responsible for an emerging Kurdish army  
519 that included Amr Khan Shikak, Hama Rashid, Khan Banei, Zero Beg Herki, and Mullah Mustafa Barzani, all of  
520 whom received the rank of marshal. Each of these "marshals" was outfitted with Soviet-style uniforms, "complete  
521 with high boots, stiff shoulder-straps, and red-banded garrison caps" ??Lortz 2005:28). The forces under these  
522 commanders were further advised and organized by Soviet military officer Captain Salahuddin Kazimov. The  
523 Soviets continued their influence, sending at least 60 Kurds to Soviet Azerbaijan for additional military training.  
524 In total, the Mahabad army consisted of 70 active duty officers, 40 non-commissioned officers, and 1,200 lower-  
525 enlisted privates ??Eagleton 1963 :78).

526 Mustafa Barzani, as one of the higher-ranking commanders, was again responsible for doling out titles among  
527 his men. Barzani appointed Major Bakr Abdul-Karim commander of the first regiment and Mohammed Amin  
528 Badr Khan, Mamand Maseeh, and Faris Kani Boti his company commanders; Captain Mustafa Koshnaw was to  
529 be commander of the second regiment with Sa'idWali Beg, Koshavi Khalil, and Mustafa Jangeer his company  
530 commanders; and Captain Mir Haj Ahmad was appointed commander of the third regiment and SalihKani Lanji,  
531 Haider Beg Arif Beg, and Wahab Agha Rawanduzi were his company commanders ??Barzani 2002:100).

532 Many of these men had served under Barzani since the police raids of 1943. Now under the banner of the  
533 Mahabad Republic, they remained extremely loyal to Barzani. Besides appointing higher levels of command,  
534 Qazi Muhammad helped to literally define who his forces were. On orders from Muhammad, a committee of  
535 "hand-picked litterateurs and writers" constructed distinct terms for positions in the Kurdish military. Among  
536 the many words the committee helped standardize was the Kurdish word for soldier -"Peshmarga" -a term  
537 meaning "one who faces death" or one willing to die for a cause in April 1946 ??Lortz 2005:29). Despite protests  
538 leading to Sheikh Ahmad Barzani's dismissal from Mahabad, Qazi Muhammad and the Kurdish Parliament's  
539 first deployment of the Peshmarga was to put down resisting tribes in the region ??Jwaideh 2006:749).

540 These were minor conflicts however, compared to the new army's first test against Iranian forces eager to  
 541 reclaim their land. Knowing Iranian intentions and fearing a withdrawal of Soviet aid, many of the Peshmarga,  
 542 including much of Mullah Mustafa Barzani's forces, were deployed on the republic's southern boundary. On 29  
 543 April 1946, only five days after the Mahabad Republic signed a military collaboration accord with neighboring  
 544 Azerbaijan, the First Kurdish Regiment, located in the southeast corner of the republic in Qahrawa, and faced 600  
 545 Iranian soldiers reinforced with weaponry and cavalry. Regional support for the Mahabad Peshmarga included  
 546 numerous small Kurdish tribes "always ready for fighting and looting" ??Lortz 2005:29).

547 The Peshmarga under Barzani's command quickly showed their abilities against Iranian forces, ambushing  
 548 the first Iranian units to reach Qahrawa, killing 21, wounding 17, and capturing 40. Although short lived,  
 549 the ambush was considered the first military victory for the Kurdish Republic. The Mahabad Peshmarga also  
 550 engaged Iranian reconnaissance teams in the region as the Iranians attempted to mass forces throughout timely  
 551 May 1946 ??Eagleton 1963:90). Kurdish offensives were limited to minor skirmishes due to the removal of Soviet  
 552 influence in the region that month, possibly due to a Soviet-Iranian oil agreement. A By mid-May 1946 Kurdish  
 553 forces included approximately 12,750 Peshmarga, 1,800 of which were dedicated infantry under the command of  
 554 Mustafa Barzani. The majority of the armed forces were cavalrybased, which according to Eagleton, "could still  
 555 terrify an ill-armed or badly organized force, but it could not prevail against trained infantry carrying repeating  
 556 rifles and concealed by the rugged terrain of Kurdistan" in 1946 ??Eagleton 1963:93).

557 On 15 June 1946 the period of preparation ceased as the fighting positions of the Second Kurdish Regiment  
 558 at Mamashah (Mil Qarani) were attacked by two Iranian battalions supported by weaponry, tanks, and aircraft.  
 559 The purpose of the Iranian attack was twofolds: first, to seize the highest point of Kurdish occupation in  
 560 the area and second, to stop Kurdish snipers from attacking Iranian supply vehicles. Although accounts of  
 561 the Battle of Mamashah vary, the Peshmarga again demonstrated their expert use of cover and concealment  
 562 ??Barzani 2002:103). Among the Peshmarga killed during the battle was Khalil Khosavi, a Kurdish soldier who  
 563 "demonstrated capable leadership and utmost courage." Mustafa Barzani correctly predicted that the surrender  
 564 of Khosavi's hilltop position would only come with his death ??Eagleton 1963:96).

565 Khosavi's actions in the battle earlier to his death were at the root of the battle's conflicting accounts.  
 566 According to Masud Barzani, after Iranian forces seized the initial "upper hand," Khosavi led Peshmarga forces,  
 567 reinforced by the First Kurdish Regiment, in a successful counterattack, repelling the Iranian assault ??Barzani  
 568 2002:104). Other accounts portray the battle as an Iranian victory, albeit a victory for Kurdish morale and  
 569 increasing the regional confidence in the Peshmarga (O'balance 1973:31). According to Eagleton, neither Kurdish  
 570 nor Soviet reinforcements arrived, leaving the Barzani forces stranded in their defensive positions and allowing  
 571 Iranian forces to seize the hill ??Eagleton 1963:96).

572 McDowall also explores the question of Kurdish supports in the area, stating the apparent lack of assisting  
 573 forces may have been due to tribal disunity. According to McDowall, regional Kurdish tribal leader Amr Khan  
 574 simply brought tribal fighters from the Shikak and Harki tribes south after getting a Soviet bribe. These  
 575 fighters, lacking the dedication of the Barzani Peshmarga, were quick to flee the battlefield as fighting intensified  
 576 ??McDowall 2004: 243). As a result of the Kurdish military defeat in the Battle of Mamashah, the Iranian  
 577 military was able to seize the highland, erect military watchtowers, and ensure a military presence in the area  
 578 ??Barzani 2002:105) Lack of tribal unity continued to hinder the cause of the Mahabad Republic following the  
 579 Battle of Mamashah. As tribal interest in Qazi Muhammad's government waned, the Barzani Peshmarga were  
 580 left as Mahabad's lone fighting force. Despite their loyalty, Barzani's fighters had their own difficulties with  
 581 the government as lack of food and diminished sanitary conditions caused a typhoid outbreak, hindering their  
 582 fighting ability ??Lortz 2005:30). Consequently, the cause of the Mahabad armed force was all but lost by late  
 583 1946 as even assured Soviet support failed to arrive. The Mahabad Republic faced its most difficult challenge as  
 584 Iranian forces planned to reclaim Mahabad following the seizure of Iranian Azerbaijan in December 1946 ??Mella  
 585 2005: 84). Initially the Mahabad government resisted Iranian developments positioned the Peshmargain both  
 586 Saqqiz and Mahabad ??Barzani 2002:112). Shortly thereafter, negotiations began with the purpose of ensuring  
 587 the peaceful reoccupation of Mahabad. Important to the agreement was the withdrawal of Barzani forces from  
 588 Mahabad. After the Barzanis, including the Peshmarga and their families, withdrew to Naqada on 15 December  
 589 1946, the Iranian military entered Mahabad, officially ending the one-year life of the Kurdish Republic ??Lortz  
 590 2005:30).

## 591 12 IX.

### 592 The Fate of Peshmarga post-Kurdistan Republic

593 Following the fall of Mahabad, the Barzanis and their Peshmarga again faced the struggle of resisting national  
 594 powers without the support of a recognized nation. After leaving Mahabad and ordering the establishment of  
 595 defensive positions between Mahabad and Naqada, Mullah Mustafa and several of his officers were ordered by  
 596 Iranian officials to dismiss the Peshmarga, lay down their arms, and integrate into Iranian controlled areas. If they  
 597 failed to do so, the Iranian government stated they would order military action against the Barzanis ??Barzani  
 598 2002:113). Although Mullah Mustafa may have agreed with the proposal, Sheikh Ahmed Barzani put up defiant,  
 599 stating the Barzanis and their Peshmarga would stay until the spring thaw when they would then travel back to  
 600 Iraq ??Eagleton 1963:117).

601 With both sides at a political impasse, conflict became inevitable. As he did prior to earlier conflicts, Mustafa

602 Barzani divided his Peshmarga into several fronts and assigned command. ??arzani had led Peshmarga forces  
603 earlier, including SalihKaniyaLanji and Mohammad Amin Mirkhan (both of whom had commanded since the  
604 1943 raids on Iraqi police stations), the loss of many officers to executions in Iraq and Iran forced Barzani to  
605 make changes in Peshmarga command ??Barzani 2002:121; ??erwy 2012:32). The Barzani Peshmarga, again  
606 outnumbered by their opposition, was well armed in anticipation of the conflict. Despite Iranian attempts to  
607 disarm the remnants of Mahabad, the Barzani Peshmarga was able to smuggle out 3,000 rifles, 120 machineguns,  
608 numerous hand grenades, and two 75 mm artillery cannons ??Eagleton 1963:115). These cannons fell under the  
609 command of former Iranian officer Tafrashiyah and six other trained Kurdish officers. Iranian forces, on the other  
610 hand, were numerically superior and aided by American experts and weaponry ??Barzani 2002:121).

611 In March 1947, the Peshmarga finally faced their Iranian foes ??Lortz 2005:32). During the conflict the  
612 Peshmarga once again fought with tenacity and dedication ??Ghassemlo 1963: 78). In various battles throughout  
613 mid-March, the Peshmargade fended themselves against numerous offensives as Iranian forces continued their  
614 attacks, often recruiting rival tribes to oust the Barzani ??Eagleton 1963:120). Even though many Peshmarga  
615 were killed in the fighting, more Iranians died as the Kurds claimed early victories. Among these victories  
616 was the Battle of Nalos, where Peshmarga forces effectively used their artillery to kill many Iranian soldiers,  
617 including Colonel Kalashi, the Iranian regimental commander ??Barzani 2002:121). The Peshmarga also took  
618 many Iranian officers and soldiers captive, further decreasing Iranian armed forces effectiveness. Other Peshmarga  
619 high lights during their various post-Mahabad battles include ambushing an Iranian military column, killing 50  
620 enemy soldiers and capturing Iranian Lieutenant Jahanbani, son of General Jahanbani. Lieutenant Jahanbani  
621 was used as a bargaining chip to save the Barzani from Iranian air force attacks, the only Iranian method of  
622 punishing the Barzani that at the time minimized Iranian casualties ??Eagleton 1963:121).

623 With his forces withering under the continuous attack, Mustafa Barzani realized the need to flee Iran and cross  
624 the border into Iraqi Kurdistan. The Barzani plan of escape was two-fold: first, Sheikh Ahmad Barzani, after  
625 receiving a written guarantee of amnesty from Iraqi authorities, would cross into Iraq with a majority of the tribe,  
626 including the former Iraqi military officers who had led the Peshmarga. The second wave of Barzani fleeing the  
627 Mahabad region was to be led personally by Mustafa Barzani and included most of the Peshmarga. The return  
628 plan faced mixed results. Once the first group crossed the Kalashin Pass the Iraqi army immediately seized the  
629 ex-Iraqi officers and brought them to trial, executing many ??Chapman 2008:48). Among the Kurdish Army  
630 officers put to death were Izzat Abdul-Aziz, Mustafa Khoshnaw, Muhammad Mahmud, and Khayrullah Abdul-  
631 Karim. At their death, each of these officers yelled patriotic slogans praising the ideal of Kurdish nationalism  
632 ??Jwaideh 2006:766). The second wave of Barzani followers also faced Iraqi forces upon their return. Prior to  
633 crossing the border, Barzani divided his forces into five sections and appointed Sheikh Suleiman, As'adKhoshavi,  
634 Mamand Maseeh, Muhammad Amin Mirkhan, and Mustafa Mizori commanders. These commanders led their  
635 Peshmarga into Iraqi Kurdistan, defeating Iraqi police and jash forces. After their victory, Mustafa Barzani and  
636 his commanders were finally able to lead their troops into Barzan on 25 April 1947 ??Barzani 2002:127). Almost  
637 immediately, the Iraqi government, after arresting Sheikh Ahmad Barzani and other family members, sought the  
638 surrender of Mullah Mustafa ??arzani (O'balance 1973:34). Knowing arresting Mustafa Barzani would not be  
639 a simple task, the Iraqi military began mobilizing forces towards the Barzan region. Once the attack became  
640 imminent Barzani realized he had to flee yet again. Because both Turkish and Iranian Kurdistan could no longer  
641 be regarded as safe haven, Barzani decided to take his Peshmarga to the relative security of the Soviet Union  
642 ??Eagleton 1963:128). The Peshmarga journey to the Soviet Union began in late May 1947. Receiving accommo-  
643 dations and supplies from Kurdish villages along the way ??Barzani 2002:133). Barzani and his forces were  
644 able to weave their way along the Iran-Turkey border and made their way north to the USSR. Often, as the  
645 Barzani-led forces crossed into Iranian territory, they had to prepare for potential Iranian military assaults. Using  
646 their well-refined skills in cover and concealment, the Peshmarga were often able to elude the Iranian military  
647 presence. In areas where stealth was impossible, the Peshmarga did not hesitate to engage their adversaries with  
648 their guerrilla tactics. On 9 June 1947, for example, the Peshmarga attacked the flank of an Iraqi army column.  
649 During the two-front attack, led by both Mustafa Barzani and As'adKhoshavi, the Peshmarga killed hundreds of  
650 Iranian soldiers, destroyed several tanks, rendered an artillery battery ineffective, and downed an Iranian aircraft.  
651 After evading or engaging the Iranian army throughout their trip, the Barzani, along with over 500 Peshmarga  
652 and their families ??Barzani 2002:135), crossed the Araxes River into the Soviet Union on 18 June 1947. In total,  
653 they traveled nearly 220 miles in 14 days ??Eagleton 1963:128).

654 The period from 1945 to mid-1947 was integral to the development of the Peshmarga as a recognized fighting  
655 force. First and foremost, the soldiers of the Mahabad Republic were given the title of Peshmarga, a Kurdish  
656 term, rather than serbaz, the Persian word for soldier. Defining who they were in the Kurdish, rather than the  
657 Persian context, only added to the fighters' loyalty and morale. As they were being "named", the No longer  
658 was the military organization confined to fighters of the Barzani tribe. The Mahabad administration effectively  
659 merged officers and soldiers from Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan, creating a unified Kurdish force that crossed tribal  
660 lines ??Lortz 2005:34).

661 The downfall of the Mahabad Republic, however, destroyed the Kurdish Army's organization, as many fighters  
662 returned to their respective tribes. As a result, the Barzani Peshmarga and others loyal to Mustafa Barzani were  
663 left as the only force willing to defy the Iranian government in the name of Kurdish nationalism. Unfortunately,  
664 with their limited numbers and lack of national recognition, Barzani's trek to the USSR can be seen as his only

## 14 XI. THE PESHMARGA IN THE NEW REPUBLIC OF IRAQ AND KURDISH WAR 1958-1961

---

665 realistic avenue of escape. With their commander leaving and their hopes for a free Kurdistan dashed, many  
666 Peshmarga had little choice but to follow Barzani into the Soviet Union ??Eagleton 1963:129).  
667 X.

### 668 13 The Barzani's Peshmarga force in

669 The Soviet ??nion 1947 ??nion -1958 Life for the Peshmarga failed to develop upon entering the Soviet Union.  
670 They were rapidly brought to an unprepared compound surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by Soviet  
671 troops. According to Masud Barzani, the Kurdish exiles were interrogated, given bread and soup, and treated  
672 as prisoners of war. The Peshmarga also were soon deprived of their leader. Within weeks of their arrival,  
673 Mustafa Barzani was escorted to Nakhichevan, Soviet Armenia, where he stayed until being transferred to shush  
674 and finally to Baku, Soviet Azerbaijan. Ultimately, many of the Peshmarga leaders were separated from the  
675 rank and file and their families. Among those separated were Sheikh Suleiman, Ali Muhammad Siddique, Sa'id  
676 Mullah Abdullah, and Ziyab Dari. The separation would not last however, as the rest of the Barzani tribe and  
677 their Peshmarga were brought to Baku by the end of 1947. While in Baku, the Peshmarga were reorganized  
678 under the command of As'adKhoshavi. Under Khoshavi, Sa'idWali Beg, Mohammad Amin Mirkhan, Mamand  
679 Maseeh, and MistoMiroi were appointed company commanders. Once reconstituted and given Soviet uniforms  
680 and weapons, the Peshmarga conducted training in "regular" military operations under the tutelage of several  
681 Soviet military officers ??Lortz 2005:35). After their first few years in the Soviet Union, the Peshmarga and  
682 other followers of Barzani saw their training cease, quickly becoming subject to government manipulation. For  
683 long periods the Peshmarga were separated from their leadership with many forced into hard labor. Only after  
684 Barzani personally wrote to Soviet leader Josef Stalin did conditions finally According to Dana Adams Schmidt,  
685 Barzani inquired about refuge for him and his men in the U.S. while in a meeting with U.S. Ambassador George  
686 V. Allen in Tehran improve for his followers ??Schmidt 2008:104.). The Peshmarga were finally reunited with  
687 their command in late 1951. Under their developed conditions in Tashkent, Soviet Uzbekistan, the Barzanis and  
688 the Peshmarga developed their lives dramatically. Many took advantage of the opportunity and became literate,  
689 with some even attaining degrees of higher education ??Barzani 2002:143). This period of relative prosperity for  
690 the exiled Kurds also led to the interesting phenomenon of Kurdish men marrying blond haired, blue eyed Soviet  
691 women, many of whom were widows of deceased WWII Soviet soldiers ??Lortz 2005:38).

692 Finally, after nearly 20 years, the followers of the Barzanis were allowed to live "normal" lives. Conditions also  
693 developed for Mullah Mustafa Barzani as he was eventually granted the privileges of a leader-in-exile. Throughout  
694 his years in the USSR, Barzani was capable to broadcast through Soviet radio (Edmonds 2008:62) and attended  
695 courses in language (and politics. Although many sources claim Barzani was given the rank of general in the  
696 Soviet Army ??Kinnane 1964: 59).Masud Barzani denies that this occurred. Possibly most significant, however,  
697 was Barzani's ability to correspond with Kurdish exiles throughout the world, including Jalal Talabani and  
698 IsmetCherifVanly ??Barzani 2002:140). Meanwhile, the successful coup d'etat of Brigadier Abdul Karim Qassim  
699 and his followers in Iraq on 14 July 1958 opened a new chapter in Iraqi-Kurdish relations. Shortly after taking  
700 power, Qassim pardoned Sheikh Ahmad Barzani and allowed Mullah Mustafa, his followers, and his Peshmarga  
701 to return to Iraq (Edmonds 2008: 150) . The Barzani exile in the Soviet Union ended after 12 years, and upon  
702 their return, the Peshmarga would once again play a prominent role in Iraqi regional politics ??Lortz 2005:38).

### 703 14 XI. The Peshmarga in the New Republic of Iraq and Kurdish 704 War 1958-1961

705 The 1958 Revolution, similar to the post-WWI political re-alignment, offered the Kurds a chance to again push  
706 for independence or political autonomy through political means. Optimism ruled as many Iraqi Kurds found a  
707 voice in the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (KDP). According to the new Iraqi governing body, power in the  
708 nation was to be shared among the Sunni, Shia and Kurdish populations ??McDowall 2004: 302).After Barzani's  
709 return, the Peshmarga and other Barzani followers were allowed back into Iraq. Through a joint Soviet-Iraqi  
710 attempt, the Soviet ship Grozia carried nearly 800 returnees from the port of Odessa to Basra port in southern  
711 Iraq. Upon their arrival, the former government dissidents were warmly greeted and granted general amnesty  
712 ??Barzani 2002:187) The Kurdish Peshmarga ??or 1943 ??or 1975 Mustafa Barzani placed himself and his  
713 Peshmarga under the command of Abdul-Karim Qassim in 1958 ??Stansfield 2006:4).Qassim was knowing the  
714 Peshmarga's proven ability, employed them to suppress numerous uprisings throughout 1959. In the first of these  
715 skirmishes, the Peshmarga successfully defeated a major demonstration by pan-Arab nationalist officers in Mosul  
716 "disillusioned by Qassim's 'betrayal'" and intent on creating a strictly pro-Arab Iraq. Although Kurdish fighters  
717 fought "at the behest of Mullah Mustafa ??arzani" (McDowall 2004:304). However, Barzani did not personally  
718 command any of his Peshmarga at these attacks ??Kinnane 1964: 61).

719 In July 1959, the Peshmarga again came to the assistance of Qassim to defeat a second revolt. Supported  
720 by anti-Iraq forces in Turkish and Iranian Kurdistan, Sheikh Rasid rose against the Qassim government, seizing  
721 police stations and surrounding pro-government forces in Sidakan. Once more Qassim called upon Barzani and  
722 his fighters to quell the uprising. After calling up 1,000 Peshmarga, Barzani was capable to defeat Sheikh Rashid's  
723 forces and in two days drive the dissenters into Iran ??Barzani 2002:215). For Barzani and his Peshmarga the  
724 offensive was worth the effort, as earlier Barzani conflicts with Sheikh Rashid were among the several reasons the

725 Feisal government attacked the Barzanis in 1931-1932 ??Jwaideh 2006:b24). The cooperation between Peshmarga  
726 forces, led by Barzani, and the Qassim government only served to strengthen the ties between the Kurds and the  
727 Iraqi Arabs. Among the Kurdish gains during this time were the inclusion of a Kurdish sun dish on the Iraqi flag  
728 (Izady 1992:67), placement of Kurds in high government positions, and mention in the provisional constitution  
729 of a joint Arab-Kurd "homeland"(Jawad 1990:38). The removal of pro-Arab Colonel Abdul Salam Arif, Qassim's  
730 Deputy Premier and Minister of the Interior, was also seen as a step towards Kurdish appeasement, although  
731 Arif was also regarded as a threat to Qassim ??Lortz 2005:38).

732 Despite these acts of concession, Kurdish optimism began to wane. Throughout northern Iraq many of the  
733 traditional tribal enemies of the Barzanis, including the Harkis, Surchis, Baradustis, Jaf, and Pizhdar tribes, and  
734 followers of the late Sheikh Mahmoud, opposed the return of Mullah Mustafa Barzani and the Peshmarga and their  
735 growing ties to the Qassim regime. These tribes also began to violently revolt against the new Iraqi government  
736 in objection to the 1959 Agrarian Reform Law. Although the tribal leaders tried negotiating with Qassim, their  
737 efforts were in vain. Once again, the Peshmarga, supplemented by Iraqi military forces, were ordered to suppress  
738 dissention ??McDowall 1996: 27). The Peshmarga support for Qassim ceased to be reciprocated however, as  
739 Qassim began to grow fearful of Barzani's growing political and military influence. After pardoning Baradost  
740 and Pizhdar rebels ??McDowall 2004: 307).Qassim began to supply these and other anti-Barzani tribes with  
741 weapons and support throughout 1959 and 1960(O'balance 1873:39). Barzani became aware of this attempt to  
742 undermine his power after several of his tribesmen intercepted Iraqi logistic trucks on their way to the Zibari  
743 tribe. These trucks were stocked with rifles and automatic weapons and included a letter by anIraqi military  
744 officer ??Schmidt 2008:75). Although Qassim denied supporting anti-Barzani tribes, relations had permanently  
745 deteriorated between him and Barzani. As tension continued to grow between Qassim and Kurdish political,  
746 tribal, and military leaders throughout 1960, Mustafa Barzani endeavored to garner support for an inevitable  
747 conflict ??Lortz 2005:38).

748 During a visit to Moscow on 3 November 1960, for example, he spoke with "high-level" Soviet officials, including  
749 Nikita Khrushchev, and asked for Soviet aid. Although military support was not promised, the Soviets pledged to  
750 support the Kurdish Democratic Party and continued broadcasting propaganda to the Iranian Kurds ??Barzani  
751 2002:231). Barzani left the Soviet Union a "bitter and disillusioned man", unhappy with the meager support  
752 ??Lortz 2005:38).The Peshmarga returned to action upon Barzani's return to Barzan in 1961. Barzani quickly  
753 used his men to take advantage of the tribal disunity in northern Iraq. Although hesitant to attack government  
754 troops, Peshmarga forces were ordered to seize strategic passes and bridges and defeat tribes unfriendly to  
755 the Barzanis (O'balance 1873:39). By the end of 1961, Barzani was able to control most of Iraqi Kurdistan  
756 ??McDowall 1996: 27).

757 The Qassim regime, disappointed with Barzani's growing power, used a strike on Iraqi forces by Sheikh Abbas  
758 Muhammad's tribal Arkou fighters to justify air strikes throughout Iraqi Kurdistan, including Barzan (O'balance  
759 1873:48). These strikes only solidified Kurdish resolve, unifying the tribes and bringing Mullah Mustafa Barzani  
760 officially into the conflict. According to McDowall, Qassim had "brought together two distinct Kurdish tribal  
761 groups, the old reactionary chiefs ? and Mullah Mustafa whose agenda was a blend of tribalism and nationalism"  
762 ??McDowall 2004: 310).

## 763 15 XII.

### 764 The Role of the Peshmarga in the Kurdish-Iraqi War 1961-1970

765 As Barzani joined the still-tribal rebellion against the Iraqi government, Mullah Mustafa Barzani began to  
766 consolidate his forces and provide a system of organization to supplement his already established Peshmarga.  
767 Under Barzani's lead, non-Barzani tribal forces were used as irregulars and instructed to conduct guerrilla attacks  
768 on Iraqi military positions ??Lortz 2005:39). Barzani's involvement and the recognition of the rebellion also led  
769 to the defection of thousands of The Kurdish Peshmarga ??orce 1943 ??orce -1975 Iraqisoldiers, including officers  
770 ??Schmidt 2008:61). These Kurdish soldiers, who comprised as much as one-third of the Iraqi military, increased  
771 the professionalism and organization of the Peshmarga ??Chapman 2008:56).

772 By fall 1962, after nearly a year of conflict, Barzani had nearly 15 to 20,000 troops at his command, including  
773 the 4 to 5,000 original Peshmarga. Among his other forces was a rotating reserve of 5 to 15,000 soldiers serving in  
774 six-month rotations and 10 to 20,000 local reserves serving as home guards or "territorials" ??Schmidt 2008:62).  
775 Barzani divided the Peshmarga into groups of 10 (dasta), 50 (pal), 150 (surpal), 350 (lek), and 1,000 (surlek).  
776 With many new recruits and the deaths of several long-time Peshmarga veterans such as Mohammad Amin  
777 Mirkhan and Shaikhomer Shandari ??Barzani 2002:359), Barzani was forced to make numerous leadership  
778 decisions. Appointments were made in regards to rank, with fighters becoming officers, non-commissioned  
779 officers, and privates. Among the officers, Barzani appointed Assad Khoshewi commander of the northwest  
780 sector, accountable for nearly one-third of the Kurdish force. Other command appointments included tribal  
781 leaders Abbas Mamand Agha and Sheikh Hussein Boskani ??Barzani 2002:360).

782 With the purpose of engaging the Iraqi forces, the Peshmargaand the other miscellaneous Kurdish fighters  
783 armed themselves with Lee-Enfield bolt-action rifles, old bolt-action German rifles, Czech-made Brno rifles,  
784 ??Chapman 2008:57)Soviet Seminov semiautomatic rifles, and Soviet Glashinkov machine guns. Numerous arms  
785 captured from Iraqi forces were moreover used, including the Degtyarov machine gun ??Lortz 2005:40). Other  
786 weapons purchased from arms bazaars in the region were smuggled into Iraq by Syrian, Iranian, or Lebanese

787 Kurdish benefactors (O'balance 1873:55). Unfortunately for the Peshmarga, lack of ammunition and defective  
 788 rounds were a problem for their most often used weapon, the aforementioned Brno ??Schmidt 2008:64). Although  
 789 Chapman claims Kurdish marksmanship was poor overall, Peshmarga veterans are quick to proclaim their  
 790 marksmanship prowess during battle ??Chapman 2008:58).

791 Logistics were also an obstacle for the Peshmarga despite rules limiting distracting nonessentials from the  
 792 fighting corps. Although only items necessary for the upkeep of soldiers were allowed to be carried, supplying  
 793 this material proved to be difficult. As combat increased, the Peshmarga established supply points in caves  
 794 throughout the region where items such as sugar, cheese, grain, rice, and excess weaponry were often available.  
 795 Supporting peasantry were furthermore encouraged to set aside 10 percent of their produce for the cause as  
 796 Peshmarga carried little to no money ??Schmidt 2008:64). Outside sources, such as sympathetic Kurds from  
 797 Iran and Turkey moreover contributed supplies to the revolution ??Chapman 2008:58). By the end of the war,  
 798 Iran supported the Kurdish cause with heavy weaponry and Israel sent numerous Israeli commandos who not only  
 799 fought alongside the Peshmarga, however also offered "very good advice"-including setting up a communications  
 800 network and training the Peshmargain sabotage and demolitions ??Lortz 2005:41).

801 The U.S., through its clandestine agencies such as CIA, also allegedly supported the Peshmarga. ??McDowall  
 802 2004: 325)Despite their ample supply, the Peshmarga faced plentiful challenges moving and carrying items.  
 803 Although they had unimpeded access to major roads at night and secondary routes during the day ??Chapman  
 804 2008:59).Tactical mobility dictated the Peshmarga move much of their logistics via man or donkey, neither of  
 805 which carried mass quantities. Many Peshmarga were forced to maximize the little they had, incorporating  
 806 homemade bombs and explosives into their arsenals (O'balance 1873:55).Besides weapons and food, the  
 807 Peshmarga considered captured Iraqi military radios among their most coveted supplies. With numerous former  
 808 Iraqi soldiers among the ranks, the Peshmarga were able to decipher many Iraqi transmissions and provide  
 809 key intelligence for Kurdish operations. Operational decisions using this intelligence were made by Peshmarga  
 810 commanders, including Mustafa Barzani, stationed in highly-mobile, makeshift command centers. Schmidt  
 811 describes one "headquarters" as "a blanket under a tree above a mountain torrent" with rifles hanging from  
 812 tree branches and "a canvas bag, apparently containing some papers, hung from another branch" ??Schmidt  
 813 2008:64).Despite their stolen information and impressive guerrilla tactics, this lack of command and control  
 814 limited head-on Peshmarga offensives and prohibited Operations consisting of more than one sarpel (150-250  
 815 troops) ??Chapman 2008:59).

816 After realizing conflict was inevitable and exhausting all avenues of political reconciliation, the KDP finally  
 817 joined the revolution in December 1961. The KDP leadership rapidly established a triangular area of command  
 818 from Raniya in the north, Sulaymaniyah in the southeast and Kirkuk in the southwest. This area was divided  
 819 into four sectors with separate commanders appointed to each, although Mustafa Barzani was still regarded as  
 820 the "senior and presiding Kurdish leader" ??Kinnane 1964: 69). Among the leaders of the KDP military were  
 821 party secretary Ibrahim Ahmad, commander of the Malouma Force; Jalal Talabani, commander of the Rizgari  
 822 Force; Omar Mustafa, commander of the Kawa Force; Ali Askari, commander of the Khabat Force; and Kamal  
 823 Mufti, commander of the Third and Fourth Forces of Qaradagh ??Stansfield 2003: 71).

824 The KDP forces varied little from the northern Barzani-led Peshmarga. Although even the smallest unit of the  
 825 new "Kurdish Liberation Army" was assigned a political instructor, a majority of the fighting forces came from  
 826 regional tribes and not Kurds from urban areas ??Kinnane 1964: 69). Like Barzani's forces, these troops were  
 827 also assisted in organization and tactics by deserting Iraqi officers ??McDowall 2004: 325). Using this support,  
 828 the KDP was eventually able to create five battalions and a military "academy" led by a former commander of  
 829 KingFeisal's Royal Guard. Despite mention of the Peshmarga fifteen years earlier, as O'Ballance, and McDowall  
 830 proved that the KDP-created force was the first to be labeled "Peshmarga" (O'balance 1873:55;McDowall 2004:  
 831 326). Similar to the armed forces of the Mahabad Republic, this Peshmarga force was also willing to face death  
 832 for the idea of a recognized Kurdistan autonomous status. In the ranks of Talabani and Ahmad the leadership  
 833 of the Kurdish Liberation Army became known as "sarmerga" "leading death". ??Chapman 2008:60).

834 Initially only 20 Iraqi battalions and six mobile police units opposed the growing Kurdish rebellion. By  
 835 1963, nearly 3/4 of the Iraqi army was engaged in combat operations ??Lortz 2005:43). Unlike the Peshmarga,  
 836 these troops were reinforced by heavy weaponry, armor and various types of Soviet-made air support ??Schmidt  
 837 2008:64). The Iraqis were also supported by the Jash ??Chapman 2008:60). As they did in earlier conflicts  
 838 with the Barzani's, the Iraqi government recruited numerous Kurds to fight for the government. Although many  
 839 were from tribes staunch in their hatred for the Barzani's, some Jash were unemployed Kurds seeking payment  
 840 through any means ??McDowall 2004: 312). Many of the tribal Jash were placed under the command of their  
 841 respective tribal leadership (O'balance 1873:57) although a select few were assigned to "The Saladin Cavalry" -a  
 842 new Kurdish mercenary force ??Schmidt 2008:71). At its peak, the Iraqi military employed nearly 10,000 Jash.  
 843 This number decreased however, as the impartial Kurds grew tired of fighting their fellow people (O'balance  
 844 1873:57).

845 With their limited supply and smaller numbers the Peshmarga were forced to use nonconventional tactics such  
 846 as roadblocks, ambushes, sniper attacks, and other tactics designed to "starve out" the government's soldiers.  
 847 Unlike earlier Iraqi Kurdistan conflicts, the use of cavalry was limited, if not nonexistent. Peshmarga strategy was  
 848 primarily infantry based and focused on the need for endurance, speed, movement by night, and deception skills  
 849 advantageous in the mountainous Kurdish homeland. By 1963, the numerous battles and skirmishes between

850 both the Barzani and KDP-led Peshmarga and the Iraqi military had become a stalemate. The Peshmarga kept  
851 control of Iraqi Kurdistan and the Qassim regime refused to grant Kurdish autonomy. Qassim was eventually  
852 overthrown by pro-Arab Baathists led by Abdul Salaam Arif. Under Arif, the pattern of Iraqi assaults and  
853 Peshmarga guerrilla counter-assaults lasted throughout the decade ??McDowall 2004: 313; ??Ort 2005:43).

854 Along with the ability to continue operations for nearly 10 years, the Kurdish-Iraqi War saw Kurdish women  
855 assist the Peshmarga in ways not seen before. As members of the Kurdistan Women's Federation assisted the  
856 war effort through clandestine means ??Chapman 2008:63), Margaret George, an Assyrian Kurd, led her own  
857 small Peshmarga unit near Akre. A former hospital attendant, George decided to fight after Jash forces attacked  
858 her village. After leading her unit for several years and killing a prominent Jash officer, George left to tend  
859 to her father. According to Schmidt, she was removed from command after many Peshmarga found her too  
860 impetuous to lead ??Schmidt 2008:160). After her death, George became a heroine to the Kurds -the "Joan of  
861 Arc of Peshmarga". (Lortz 2005:44) Thousands of Peshmarga carried a photo of her in remembrance ??Schmidt  
862 2008:160). George remains idolized among Peshmarga, who describe her as "brilliant", "valiant", and a "great  
863 guerrilla fighter" ??Lortz 2005:44).

864 The 1960s conflict is one of the most important eras in Peshmarga history, second only to the shortlived  
865 Mahabad Army. Kurdish soldiers again proved their skill in battle against an enemy far superior in numbers and  
866 equipment. Unlike earlier conflicts however, during the 1960s there was neither a retreat nor surrender. Because  
867 of the Peshmarga, negotiation became the only Iraqi means to victory. Although Peshmarga forces saw action  
868 in Mahabad, their force structure was unlike that of any earlier Kurdish army. As the conflict progressed from  
869 tribal-based revolts to a fullout war, three distinct Kurdish militaries developed. While some tribes maintained  
870 their traditional tribal fighting corps, the other entities, the KDP and the Barzanis, featured their own Peshmarga  
871 forces. Each of these "militaries" were successful in controlling their own region -the tribes in the northwest,  
872 central Iraqi Kurdistan led by Barzani, and the southern forces under the command of the Ahmad-Talabani-led  
873 KDP leftwing ??Schmidt 2008:160).

874 Like the military "boundaries" separating these fronts, these three commands were also divided along the  
875 spectrum of Kurdish political ideology. Whereas the tribal groups still fought their ongoing battle against  
876 government control, the KDP Peshmarga force was the first Kurdish army in Iraq with entirely nationalist  
877 objectives. Located in the center both geographically and ideologically was Mustafa Barzani and his Peshmarga,  
878 who fought for an independent Kurdistan, albeit one governed by ??Barzani. The Peshmarga employed many of the  
879 guerrilla strategies of earlier conflicts. Hiding weapons depots in the mountains, for example, was seen frequently  
880 during the 1925 Sheikh Said Revolt. Other traditional strategies included using the mountains for supply points,  
881 sniper positions, and staging areas. By applying these proven courses of action and utilizing modern ideas such  
882 as military organization and rank structure, the Peshmarga were able to become a more effective guerrilla force.  
883 The growing ability of the Peshmarga was not lost on the Iraqi government. During several rounds of ceasefire  
884 negotiations, the Iraqi government frequently called for the disbandment of the Peshmarga earlier to the granting  
885 of political autonomy ??Chapman 2008:70). Barzani believed dismissing the military force was "putting the  
886 cart before the horse", knowing the Peshmarga presence was essential to the Kurdish cause and could not be  
887 disbanded before the Kurdish people achieved their goals and objectives ??Ghareeb 1981: 122).

888 Beyond their organization, tactics, and importance, the most dramatic evolution of the Peshmarga during  
889 the 1960s was its expansion. No longer was the title of Kurdish soldier confined to the followers of Mustafa  
890 Barzani. The decision by the KDP to label their fighters "Peshmarga" not only increased the size of the force,  
891 but also instilled a growing level of pride membership. To be called a Kurdish Peshmarga became a testament  
892 of those willing to face death for Kurdistan. Unfortunately, the ideological rift between the Ahmad-Talabani  
893 group and Mustafa Barzani would also grow, forcing the Peshmarga to choose what sort of Kurdistan they were  
894 willing to die for ??Lortz 2005:48). The Peshmarga and the Second Kurdish-Iraqi ??ar 1974 ??ar 1975. Although  
895 armed conflict was minimal from 1970 to 1974, tension between the Iraqi government and the Kurds continued  
896 unabated. Additional Kurdish political demands and an attempt on Mustafa Barzani's life served to drastically  
897 increase hostility ??McDowall 2004:354). By 1973, Kurdish discouragement was solidified as reports circulated  
898 that the Iraqi military received supplies of "poison gas" from the Soviet Union ??Chapman 2008:70). The Kurdish  
899 leadership again saw the Peshmarga as their only recourse for recognition. Even the Peshmarga were not immune  
900 to the developing rift between the Iraqi government and the Kurdish leadership. Shortly after its inception,  
901 conflict emerged over the duties and command structure of the Peshmarga border guard. Whereas the Baathist  
902 party wanted the force under the command of the national army so as to attack Iran and assist in the 1973  
903 Arab-Israeli War, Barzani and the KDP insisted the border guard be placed under the orders of the minister of  
904 the interior. The Iraqi government also claimed the Kurds granted over 120,000 individuals paperwork identifying  
905 them as Peshmarga and exempting them from government conscription. The harshest accusations against the  
906 Peshmarga were charges of murder, kidnappings, rape, assault, and robberies similar to those levied against the  
907 Hamidiya Knights nearly 70 years earlier ??Ghareeb 1981: 122).

908 Barzani, knowing conflict was forthcoming, consolidated the Peshmarga and continued to recruit throughout  
909 the early 1970s. By spring 1974, nearly 50-60,000 Peshmarga were enrolled in Barzani's ranks ??Lortz 2005:48).  
910 International support also continued as Iran and Israel gave supplies and weapons, attempting to weaken the Arab  
911 nationalist regime of Ahmad al Bakr ??McDowall 2004:354). The United States also assisted the Peshmarga more  
912 openly in June 1972, supplying money and weapons through the CIA, countering Iraq's ties with the Soviet Union

913 ??Chapman 2008:70). These alliances quickly drew the fury of the Baathist regime ??McDowall 2004:354). With  
 914 his Peshmarga larger and better equipped than ever before, Barzani, on the advice of foreign advisors (possibly  
 915 Israeli, Iranian, or American), drastically reorganized his force. Earlier guerrilla tactics were abandoned and the  
 916 Peshmarga were re-assigned into completely conventional units. Believing international military support would  
 917 continue throughout the conflict, Barzani ordered these units to face the Iraqi enemy head-on ??Ghareeb 1981:  
 918 162).

919 The Peshmarga units began offensive operations by seizing the town of Zakho and the surrounding Turkish  
 920 frontier area after Barzani decided against further diplomacy, rejecting the Iraqi government's proposed Autonomy  
 921 Law of 1974 (O'balance 1873:95). According to McDowall, Barzani's strategy was two-folds: "to hold the  
 922 mountainous country along a line from Zakho to Darbandikan" and "to hold the Kirkuk oilfield in artillery  
 923 range" ??McDowall 2004:337). Although the Peshmarga lacked modern heavy weaponry, they were capable to  
 924 supplement their own weaponry with American-style mortars and 122mm guns and Soviet-made AK-47s and  
 925 RPG-7s ??Chapman 2008:71). The Peshmarga furthermore received support from every aspect of the Kurdish  
 926 society, as animosity towards the Iraqi government permeated through both urban and tribal Kurds (O'balance  
 927 1873:95).

928 The Iraqi army counterattacked in April 1974. Their strategy was also two-fold, first reinforcing their  
 929 overwhelmed Iraqi Kurdistan units and second, changing to the offensive, attempting to finally eliminate the  
 930 Peshmarga threat. As the Iraqis attacked deep into Kurdistan, Barzani's order to abandon guerrilla tactics  
 931 and confront the Iraqi army head-on resulted in tragedy. Although the Peshmargamay have downed over 100  
 932 Iraqi planes and destroyed over 150 tanks, they lacked the firepower of the Iraqis. According to Lortz, the  
 933 overmatched Peshmargaunits "stood, fought, and were blown to bits" ??Lortz 2005:49). Realizing they could no  
 934 longer control the cities, the remaining Peshmargafled to the mountains (O'balance 1873:95). From their more  
 935 accustomed concealed positions, the Peshmarga were capable tode crease their losses and engage the advancing  
 936 Iraqi forces from hidden sniper positions. These tactics allowed the Kurdish military to claim a kill ratio of 20 to  
 937 30 Iraqi soldiers killed for each Peshmarga deathb ??Lortz 2005:50). During the Battle of Qaladize, for example,  
 938 Peshmarga were able to prevent the Iraqi army from seizing the high ground near Sulaymaniyah by accompanying  
 939 their mortar attacks with hidden sniper fire. The Peshmarga did not surrender their ground despite taking many  
 940 casualties due to continuous Iraqi air attacks on their positions. The success of the Battle of Qaladize was one of  
 941 the few bright spots for the Peshmarga during the war. With their losses mounting, their supply lines captured,  
 942 and the Iraqis maintaining their positions throughout the winter of 1974, Kurdish hopes for victory were crushed.  
 943 The final blow to the Peshmarga forces came via the Algiers Accord, signed between Iran and Iraq in March  
 944 1975. In an attempt to stop one of the Peshmarga's primary benefactors, Saddam Hussein met with the Iranian  
 945 Shah during an OPEC summit in Algiers, Algeria ??Yildiz 2004:23).

946 By conceding part of the Shatt al Arab waterway and limiting support for Iranian opposition groups, the  
 947 Iraqi government received assurance that the border between the two nations would close and security in the  
 948 area would become tighter, thereby ending Iranian infiltration and Kurdish support ??Chapman 2008:72). Once  
 949 the agreement was announced, Iranian artillery and other firepower quickly marched back into Iranian territory,  
 950 leaving the already-battered Peshmarga nearly defenseless. With the termination of Iranian support, the allies  
 951 of Iran furthermore stopped supporting the Kurdish cause. In what many Peshmarga veterans refer to as  
 952 "Kissinger's Betrayal", the U.S. government ceased providing military and financial support to the Peshmarga  
 953 ??Lortz 2005:50). Despite their pleas, the Kurdish leadership discovered the American objective was simply to  
 954 weaken Iraq and prevent an attack on Iran not to assist in achieving Kurdish autonomy ??Blum 2006: 145).

955 The Peshmarga fantasies of American tanks and airplanes disappeared as they once again considered themselves  
 956 "abandoned" by a military superpower. Seeking to gain the upper hand, Iraqi forces attacked Peshmarga positions  
 957 the day after the Algiers Accord was signed. Several Iraqi divisions advanced on the remnants of the Kurdish  
 958 Army as Iraqi airplanes continued to bomb select locations, including Mustafa Barzani's Galala headquarters  
 959 ??Lortz 2005:50). Hundreds of Kurds, both Peshmarga and civilians, were killed as Iraqi forces seized previous  
 960 Peshmarga strongholds at Mount Zozuk, Mount Sertiz, and Mount Hindran. The indiscriminate Iraqi assault,  
 961 lack of foreign assistance, and dwindling supplies and ammunition caused over 200,000 Kurds to flee to Iran,  
 962 including 30,000 Peshmarga. Many remaining Peshmarga gave up their weapons and surrendered to the Iraqi  
 963 forces while others possibly hid their weapons, hoping to continue the fight ??Chapman 2008:75).

964 General, the Kurdish-Iraqi War of 1974-75 nearly destroyed the Peshmarga's fightingability and with it the  
 965 entire Kurdish cause. Fearing reprisals, the KDP leadership fled to Iran in March 1975; upon their return to Iraq  
 966 months later they found strict controls on their activities (O'balance 1873:102). Barzani furthermore fled Iran  
 967 and would not return until after his death in 1979 ??Ghareeb 1981: 174). The surviving Peshmarga were either  
 968 forced underground or ordered to live in settlements where they were incapable to carry their rifles (O'balance  
 969 1873:100). Kurdish culture was increasingly marginalized as the uncontested Baathist party tightened its grip  
 970 on Iraq. Once proud Peshmarga veterans could only watch as thousands of Kurds were relocated, villages were  
 971 destroyed, and millions were forcefully integrated into Iraqi society. After over 40 years of fighting, most for the  
 972 cause of Kurdish nationalism, Mustafa Barzani's last military operation was perhaps his greatest failure ??Lortz  
 973 2005:50).

---

## 974 16 XIII.

## 975 17 Conclusion

976 This article has endeavored to account the development of the Peshmarga and its role in the Kurdish struggle in  
977 Iraq. While supporting the objectives of Kurdish nationalism, the Peshmarga's continuous fights and defiance of  
978 central successive governments, despite being regularly outstripped or overpowered, have bolstered the Kurdish  
979 warrior spirit. To indicate the Peshmarga's passing, as many authors have done, or to label the Peshmarga as  
980 merely "guerrilla troops", is to marginalize the involvement of the organized Kurdish fighting force in twenty  
981 century Kurdish military history. For a people who have contingent on their struggling capability for centuries  
982 with the purpose of sustaining their cultural existence, it is tough to picture the Kurdish values in Iraq without the  
983 Peshmarga role. The broken promises of the past have forced the Kurds to look to their own as the most reliable  
984 means of protection. As seen in this study, not only have previous internal agreements have not been implemented,  
985 nevertheless the Kurds have moreover been "abandoned" by three of the world's premier superpowers: the British  
986 in the 1920s, the Soviet Union in the 1940s, and the U.S. in both the 1960s and the 1970s. It is little shock then  
987 that after gaining power the Kurds would be hesitant to disband their only factual source of self-protection. To  
988 rely on a wide-ranging "Iraqi" armed forces that seeks the best concern of the Iraqi state over that of Kurdistan  
989 region would be counterproductive to the objectives of Kurdish nationalism political autonomy or independence  
990 for Iraqi Kurdistan. Inclusion in an Arab-Kurdish force would be also against the Kurdish expression give a  
991 stranger your life's blood, in the end you will regret it. Although earlier attempts were made to merge tribal  
992 warriors in an inclusive Kurdish force, the years of Barzani leadership was the turning point in creating a  
993 Peshmarga forces. Not an academically learned man, Barzani learned the benefits of military association from the  
994 lessons learned in the early revolutions such as the Sheikh Said Revolution and the Ararat Revolt, each of which  
995 trace their military roots to the Hamidiya Knights. By delivering levels of knowledge and morals of conduct, he  
996 set the foundation for generations of Peshmarga. With a standard rank arrangement in place, Barzani's force  
997 developed compatible with other military commands, spreading from the Mahabad Republic to recent Peshmarga.  
998 Special Forces operations. As Barzani's military impact advanced, so did the influence of the Kurdish nationalist  
999 movement. Without the triumphs of Barzani's Peshmarga, other Kurdish politicians would not have had the  
1000 opportunity to impact and influence Iraqi Kurdish direction.

1001 Unfortunately for the Peshmarga and Kurdish political aspirations, the Kurds must be reliant on regional  
1002 cooperation to maintain any level of affluence or security in the recent geopolitical landscape. Kurdistan in  
1003 general, especially Iraqi Kurdistan, is surrounded by land and lacks any independent way to export resources.  
1004 Even with control of oil-rich Kirkuk, the Kurds must depend on pipelines crossing Turkish or Arab Iraqi lands.  
1005 As long as the present landscape created by the Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916 and the treaties of WWI positions,  
1006 the Kurds are at the humanity of their neighbors. Their years of distrust and belief in Kurdistan, nonetheless,  
1007 have mandated the need for an organized armed force, one willing to face death. As an introductory study on  
1008 the subject of the Peshmarga, this article has endeavored to show the significance of the Kurdish military force  
1009 and its relationship to the survival of Kurdish nationalism. It is suggested that study on this subject remain  
1010 as to better relate to the mindset of the Kurdish nation. The ideal of the Peshmarga as "guardians" of Kurdish  
1011 nationalism will carry on far beyond the generation of Qazi Muhammad; Mullah Mustafa Barzani and Masud  
1012 Barzani and Jalal Talabani. As older Peshmarga stage away from the battlefield and assume political roles,  
1013 new Peshmarga fill the ranks. Alike to the long-standing bond the Kurdish people have with their scours, the  
1014 institution of men and women willing to sacrifice their lives for an independent or political autonomous Kurdistan  
1015 will keep on. Even Iraqi Kurdish children are considered future Peshmarga and their connection in the cause is  
1016 observed at positively by their parents. <sup>1 2 3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>© 2015 Global Journals Inc. (US)

<sup>2</sup>© 2015 Global Journals Inc. (US) Sheikh's rise to power permitted him to declare himself

<sup>3</sup>© 2015 Global Journals Inc. (US) © 2015 Global Journals Inc. (US)



Figure 1:

---

1017 26. ??an

1018 [Bois ()] , T Bois . The Kurds. Khayats 1966.

1019 [O'ballance ()] , E O'ballance . *The Kurdish Revolt* 1973. 1961-1970.

1020 [Mcdowall ()] *A Modern History of the Kurds*, D Mcdowall . 2004. (IB Tauris)

1021 [Schmidt ()] *A trip among Brave men in Kurdistan*, D A Schmidt . 2008. Erbil, Kurdistan.

1022 [Barzani ()] *Barzani and the Kurdish liberation movement 1961-1975 with documentary supplement*, M Barzani . 2002. Kurdistan: Publisher, A. P. A. Erbil. (III)

1024 [Eskander ()] 'Britain's Policy in Southern Kurdistan: The Formation and the Termination of the First Kurdish Government'. S Eskander . *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 2000. 27 (2) p. .

1026 [Ghassemloou ()] *Kurdistan and Kurds Czechoslovak: Publishing House of Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences*, A R Ghassemloou . 1965. Collet's Ltd.

1028 [Mella ()] *Kurdistan and the Kurds: A Divided Homeland and a Nation without State*, J Mella . 2000. Western Kurdistan Association Publications.

1030 [Safrastian ()] *Kurds and Kurdistan*, A Safrastian . 1948. Harvill Press.

1031 [Mcdowall and Short ()] D Mcdowall , M Short . *The Kurds. Minority Rights Group*, 1996.

1032 [Dohuk ; Resool ()] *Reactive Nationalism in a Homogenizing State: The Kurdish Nationalism Movement in Ba'thist Iraq*, S M Dohuk ; Resool . 2012. Kurdistan Spriz Press and Publisher 21. p. .

1034 [Blum ()] *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*, W Blum . 2006. Zed Books.

1035 [Chapman ()] *Security Forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government*, D P Chapman . 2009. DTIC Document.

1036 [Nerwy ()] *Tesis Faculty of the Humanities*, H K T Nerwy . 2012. 1946. Leiden University. (The Republic of Kurdistan)

1038 [Olson ()] *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, R Olson . 2013. University of Texas Press. p. .

1040 [Zakhoyi ()] *The Knight of Hamidiya*, M M Y Zakhoyi . 2005. p. .

1041 [Jwaideh ()] *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development*, W Jwaideh . 2006. Syracuse University Press.

1043 [Ghareeb ()] *The Kurdish Question in Iraq*, E Ghareeb . 1981. Syracuse University Press Syracuse.

1044 [Eagleton ()] *The Kurdish Republic of*, W Eagleton . 1963. 1946. London; Toronto: Oxford University Press.

1045 [Kinnane ()] *The Kurds and Kurdistan*, D Kinnane . 1964. Oxford University Press.

1046 [Izady ()] *The Kurds: A Concise Handbook*, M R Izady . 1992. Taylor & Francis.

1047 [O'shea ()] *Trapped between the Map and Reality Geography and Perception of Kurdistan*, M T O'shea . 2004. New York, the U.S.: Routledge.

1049 [Lortz ()] *Willing to Face Death: A History of Kurdish Military Forces-the Peshmerga from the Ottoman Empire to Present-Day Iraq*, M G Lortz . 2005.

1050