

# The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) & The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)

## Press Release

Contacts: Farhad Barzani (KDP) 202-331-9505 & Mohammad Sabir (PUK) 202-637-2496

### Members of Congress oppose Turkish invasion of Northern Iraq March 24, 2003

In a letter to President Bush, over twenty Members of Congress from both parties are expressing their strong opposition to any invasion of Northern Iraq by Turkish military forces. Reports from the region convey that thousands of Turkish soldiers are prepared to cross the border into Iraq despite clear statements from the Bush Administration urging the Turkish government not to do so. A Turkish invasion of Iraq is an affront to Coalition efforts to liberate the Iraqi Nation during "Operation Iraqi Freedom," and challenges United States policy of securing Iraq's territorial integrity.

"We are deeply concerned about the real prospect that countries neighboring Iraq will deploy troops into that country. This would not serve U.S. national security interests or those of Iraq's population," the bipartisan letter states.

The letter also points out: "The existing Kurdish regional administrations, as well as the largely Kurdish population, in northern Iraq strongly oppose military interventions by regional players, including by Turkey, irrespective of the reasons given for those deployments."

Correctly, the Congressional letter adds, "The regional administrations, with the assistance of U.S. civil-military personnel, international agencies, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and local institutions, have the capacity to provide, as necessary, disaster response and humanitarian assistance to Iraqi citizens." The letter to the President also adds, "Indeed, thanks to Allied support, the Kurdish administrations have successfully governed this area of Iraq since 1991. As a result, the circumstances that led to the large refugee flow from northern Iraq twelve years ago are not present today."

The Members of Congress warn, "The incursion of troops into Iraq from one country could be the impetus for other nations to follow suit, a scenario that could hinder U.S. military efforts to disarm Saddam Hussein's regime and liberate Iraq."

End

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2003

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Because our Nation is at war with the Iraqi regime, we wish to convey our strong support for Iraq's territorial integrity and regional stability. Therefore, we are deeply concerned about the real prospect that countries neighboring Iraq will deploy troops into that country. This would not serve U.S. national security interests or those of Iraq's population.

The existing Kurdish regional administrations, as well as the largely Kurdish population, in northern Iraq strongly oppose military interventions by regional players, including by Turkey, irrespective of the reasons given for those deployments. The regional administrations, with the assistance of U.S. civil-military personnel, international agencies, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and local institutions, have the capacity to provide, as necessary, disaster response and humanitarian assistance to Iraqi citizens. Indeed, thanks to Allied support, the Kurdish administrations have successfully governed this area of Iraq since 1991. As a result, the circumstances that led to the large refugee flow from northern Iraq twelve years ago are not present today.

The incursion of troops into Iraq from one country could be the impetus for other nations to follow suit, a scenario that could hinder U.S. military efforts to disarm Saddam Hussein's regime and liberate Iraq. Popular unrest against regional forces that enter northern Iraq cannot be ruled out. Such a situation could easily destabilize Iraq's northern region just as American forces open a military front from this part of the country. It would certainly be counter to American national security interests if U.S. troops were called upon to act as peacekeepers when their task is much greater. The image of Iraqi Kurds fighting foreign forces would send a troubling message to the American people as well as the international community. The U.S. exit strategy could be greatly complicated by this predicament, a possible detriment to American security policy and engagement beyond Iraq.

The Kurdish regional administrations have assured senior officials in your Administration, Members of Congress and governments in the region, and have made it

abundantly clear in statements over the past several months, that they do not aspire to secede from Iraq. Rather, they wish to live within an Iraq that is united, democratic and federal. U.S. credibility in the Middle East will also be called into question if we do not abide by long-standing U.S. policy supporting Iraq's territorial integrity.

We must ensure that the Iraqi people -- not regional powers -- dictate their own future. That should be, if it is not already, stated U.S. policy.

We call on you, Mr. President, to make it clear to all concerned in the region that troops from neighboring countries should not be allowed to control any part of Iraq.

Sincerely,



Howard L. Berman  
Member of Congress



Doc Hastings  
Member of Congress



Edolphus Towns  
Member of Congress



Dana Rohrabacher  
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Philip S. English  
Member of Congress

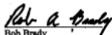
CC: The Honorable Colin Powell, Secretary of State  
The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense

  
George R. Ruanovich, M.C.  
Member of Congress


  
James P. Moran  
Member of Congress

  
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

  
Jose E. Serrano  
Member of Congress

  
Bob Brady  
Member of Congress

  
Jim Cooper  
Member of Congress

  
Major R. Owens  
Member of Congress

  
Frank Balance  
Member of Congress

  
Charles Gonzalez  
Member of Congress

Edward J. Markey  
Edward J. Markey  
Member of Congress

Tom Tancredo  
Thomas G. Tancredo  
Member of Congress

Pete Sessions  
Pete Sessions  
Member of Congress

Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.  
Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen, Jr.  
Chris Van Hollen, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Carol B. Maloney  
Carol B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

Bonnie G. Thompson  
Bonnie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress

Bob Filner  
Bob Filner  
Member of Congress