The Intelligence Case in Kurdistan

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Introduction

- Kurdistan’s most influential security and intelligence organization: *Asaysh*
- Thesis: an examination of how political conflict in the Kurdistan region affects national security
- Methodology: a mosaic of domestic and international opinions
Linguistically

- *Asaysh* is equivalent to the Arabic word of *Alamn* and both mean ‘security’ in English.
- *Asaysh* originally roots back to a Persian word which could mean ‘soundlessness.’
- *Asaysh* has come to refer to the security organization of the Kurdistan Region.
1993: general security was established (Barewbarayati Gshti Asaysh), by the Kurdistan Parliament

1994: After civil war, Asaysh was separated between PUK & PDK authority.

2003: Asaysh was targeting groups such as Al-Qaida and ISIS.

2014: Asaysh was more systematic and active.
Problems

- Political Structure & Recriminations
- Intelligence relations
- International Problems
Blood relations determine the societal and political structure of Kurdistan.

The *Asaysh* organization in the PDK zone has prioritized the security of the Barzani family over that of Kurdish society at-large.

*Asaysh* in the PUK has become susceptible to the rivalry present between the groups
The Kurdistan region evolved into being in 1991 with the aid of United States. After the rescue of Iraq in 2003, the door of Baghdad was opened to Kurdistan. US interests rest with organizing, structuring, and unifing the Peshmarga army. Asaysh has played an important role in handling terrorism, but has not been able to remove itself from the connections of blood and family relations.
Turkey, Iran, and Syria seek to influence the Kurdish political parties for their own security interests.

The Iranian agency, *Etellat*, being superior in the PUK green zone.

Turkish ‘MIAT’ being superior in the PDK yellow zone.
Conclusion

- *Asaysh* contributed to Kurdistan’s stability and security.

- Yet, *Asaysh* suffers from pervasive influence from domestic relations of blood, family, and political rivalries.

- To reverse this trend, the US seeks to bolster the Kurdish military
  - a turning point in the attitude of USA towards the Kurds.