

The demise of the Parti Québécois and the separatist movement in Canada, can such a scenario take place with the Kurdistan Democratic Party in Iraq? A comparative study

***Nadum Jwad**

INTRODUCTION

The latest Quebec general election was held on October 3, 2022, and it was held to elect the members of the National Assembly of Quebec.

The governing Coalition Avenir Québec increased its parliamentary majority in the election. The opposition Liberals dropped to their lowest seat count since 1956 and recorded their lowest share of the popular vote in their history; however, they remained the official opposition (1.) The once dominant Parti Québécois (PQ) had its worst general election result in history, losing most of its seats, but nevertheless managed to elect its previously seatless leader Paul St-Pierre Plamondon (2.)

This article will try to explore the reasons behind the astonishing demise of the PQ to a virtual nonexistence, and whether such a scenario can take place in Iraq whereas the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) is the dominant political force in northern Iraq and has been so for many years.

The PQ, history

The Parti Québécois formed in Quebec in 1968 through the merger of the Mouvement souveraineté-association and the Ralliement national. René Lévesque was the PQ's first leader and held that position until 1985. The party was elected to its first term in office in 1976 and went on to hold two referendums on Quebec sovereignty: one in 1980 and the other in 1995.

In the first two elections in which it participated, the PQ achieved very limited success. In 1970, it won 23.5 percent of the popular vote, but only seven seats in the National Assembly. In Quebec's 1973 provincial general election, the results were even more disappointing for the PQ: only six PQ candidates were elected, even though the party took 30.2 percent of the popular vote, while the Liberals, led by Robert Bourassa, took 102 seats out of 110. But in 1976, the PQ finally emerged victorious, trouncing the Liberals while capturing 41.4 percent of the vote and 71 seats. The PQ victory was attributable largely to an electoral strategy nimbly executed by Claude Morin, in which the party promised to hold a referendum on sovereignty-association during its first term in office (which was held on May 20, 1980. That referendum and the one in 1995 will be reviewed in more detail, the writer.) The referendum "Yes" side was defeated handedly, but

despite this failure, the PQ was returned to power in the 1981 elections, with 80 seats and 49.2 percent of the votes.

In the December 1985 elections, the PQ experienced a shattering defeat at the hands of Bourassa's resurgent Liberals, receiving only 38.7 per cent of the vote and retaining only 23 seats in the National Assembly. In November 1987, one week after the death of René Lévesque, Pierre-Marc Johnson resigned as PQ leader. Jacques Parizeau, a stauncher champion of independence, was the main contender to replace him and became party leader on 19 March 1988.

In the Quebec general election of 1989, the Parti Québécois proposed to hold a series of "sectoral referendums" on individual constitutional jurisdictions such as language if it took power, but lost to Bourassa's Liberals again, carrying only 29 seats and receiving 40 percent of the vote. Polls showed support for the sovereigntist option rising once more, however, in the wake of the failure of the Meech Lake Accord on 22 June 1990. Jacques Parizeau's troops played a leading role in organizing the "No" camp for the October 1992 referendum on a proposed new constitutional agreement, the Charlottetown Accord, which a large majority of Quebecers rejected. In the Quebec general election of September 1994, the Parti Québécois was returned to power with 44.7 percent of the votes and 77 seats in the National Assembly — a strong majority.

After the 1995 referendum which was held on the 30th of October, 1995, Jacques Parizeau resigned as PQ leader the next day, and Lucien Bouchard, leader of the Bloc Québécois in Ottawa, became PQ leader and Quebec premier on 29 January 1996.

Believing that any new referendum held too soon after this last one would be doomed to failure, Bouchard focused on building Québec's economy and eliminating the province's budget deficit by imposing massive cutbacks on health and social spending. On the whole, the PQ's fiscal policies did help to right the Québec economy, and the party was re-elected in 1998 with 76 out of the 125 seats in the National Assembly. Bouchard remained premier for three more years but, disappointed at the lack of enthusiasm for the sovereigntist cause during his term in office, he resigned in 2001.

Québec finance minister Bernard Landry succeeded Bouchard as PQ party leader and premier of Québec on 8 March 2001. In 2002, surveys showed a major decline in the PQ's popularity, to the benefit of the Quebec Liberal Party, led by Jean Charest, and the ADQ, led by Mario Dumont. The passage of additional progressive legislation, such as the *Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion* (2002), helped the Parti Québécois to climb back in the polls somewhat, but not enough, and the party was defeated by the Liberals in the general election of 14 April 2003.

In the wake of this political reversal, some PQ members questioned Bernard Landry's leadership, and at the party convention in June 2005, he announced his intention to resign if he did not receive the support of at least 80 per cent of the delegates in the leadership vote to be held there. He received only 76.2 per cent of the votes, made good on his word, and bowed out. On 6 June 2005, Louise Harel became acting leader of the PQ.

On 15 November 2005, André Boisclair, a former minister in the Bouchard and Landry cabinets, became the sixth leader of the Parti Québécois, edging out Pauline Marois and Richard Legendre. Boisclair pushed the party's position on Québec independence further by denouncing Bill C-20 (the federal *Clarity Act* on referendums for Québec secession). Boisclair asserted that sovereignty was a political issue, not a legal one, and stated that in the next Québec election, he would seek a mandate to hold a referendum on sovereignty. In August 2006, when Boisclair won a by-election in the riding of Pointe-aux-Trembles and took his seat in the National Assembly, surveys showed the PQ ahead of the Liberals. But the following months proved hard on the party, which lost ground in the polls, especially to the ADQ.

The general election of 26 March 2007 confirmed this rise in the fortunes of the ADQ, which had been founded in 1994 on a moderate conservative platform and had, over the years, gained favor with a growing number of Quebecers who did not want another referendum. Thus, in the 2007 general election, while the PQ took only 36 seats, the ADQ took 41. For the first time in 30 years, the Parti Québécois formed neither the government nor the Official Opposition in the National Assembly. Two months later, André Boisclair announced his resignation as party leader.

On 27 June 2007, Pauline Marois was elected PQ party leader by acclamation, thus becoming the first woman to hold this position. Under her leadership, the PQ supported the Bouchard–Taylor Commission hearings on reasonable accommodation and tabled two private members' bills of note: Bill 195, the *Québec Identity Act*, which would have established Quebec citizenship; and Bill 196, the *Québec Constitution*, which would have established a Quebec constitution. Neither of these bills was ever passed by the National Assembly, because they were unconstitutional.

After the December 2008 general election, the Parti Québécois returned to the National Assembly as the Official Opposition, winning 51 seats while the Liberals took 66, thus securing only a weak majority.

In June 2011, five PQ members of the National Assembly, including Louise Beaudoin, Pierre Curzi, and Lisette Lapointe (the wife of Jacques Parizeau) decided to quit the PQ caucus and sit as independents. They did so in protest against Bill 204, a private member's bill tabled by Agnès Maltais, a PQ MNA from Quebec City, which was designed to provide protection against

lawsuits for the agreement between Québecor Inc. and Quebec City on the management of the city's new multi-functional amphitheater, the Colisée (*see also* Québec Nordiques). In the following months, several PQ MNAs called Marois's leadership into question. One of them, Jean-Martin Aussant, called for her resignation and even went so far as to create a new sovereignist party, Option Nationale, in September 2011. (Since 2006, the sovereignist vote had already been divided by the emergence of another sovereignist party, Québec solidaire.)

On 4 September 2012, the Parti Québécois won the provincial election, defeating the Liberal government of Jean Charest, which had been in power for nine years. The PQ was called on to form a minority government, and Pauline Marois became the first female premier in the history of Quebec.

During her first year in power, Marois enjoyed growing popularity, in particular because of the leadership she showed after the tragic trainwreck that claimed 47 lives in Lac-Mégantic on 6 July 2013. But her government stirred up controversy throughout Canada when it announced plans to adopt a Quebec Values Charter. Tabled in November 2013, this charter (Bill 60) affirmed the values of State secularism and religious neutrality; one of its provisions would have banned the wearing of religious symbols by government employees, including staff of daycare centers and hospitals.

Believing that she now had the chance to secure a majority mandate, Marois called a general election on 5 March 2014, only 18 months after the election that had brought her to power with a minority. But she lost her bet: on 7 April 2014, the Liberal Party, under its new leader, Philippe Couillard, won 70 out of 125 seats, leaving its main opponents trailing far behind. The Parti Québécois won only 30 seats (24 fewer than in the preceding election) and was invited to form the Official Opposition. The Québec solidaire party, led by Françoise David, took three seats, while the Coalition Avenir Québec (led by former PQ minister François Legault and participating in its second election since its founding in 2011) won 22. As a result of the defeat, Marois resigned as PQ leader and left politics.

In May 2015, Pierre Karl Péladeau became the eighth leader in the history of the Parti Québécois. However, on 2 May 2016 — less than a year after being named head of the PQ — Péladeau announced his resignation as party leader, leader of the official opposition and member of the National Assembly (MNA), citing family reasons. The party's caucus chose Sylvain Gaudreault to serve as interim leader. A new leadership race was launched which Jean-François Lisée won. In October 2016, he became the ninth leader of the Parti Québécois and leader of the official opposition.

The 2018 election reshaped Quebec's electoral landscape. Defeating the Liberal Party (31 seats) and the Parti Québécois (10 seats), the Coalition Avenir Québec formed a government with 74 seats and 37.47 percent of votes. This result shattered the two-party system which existed between the QLP and the PQ since the 1970s. The PQ was reduced to third place alongside Québec solidaire who also won 10 seats. Jean-François Lisée was himself defeated in his borough of Rosemont and resigned as leader. Pascal Bérubé acted as interim leader until October 2020 when Paul St-Pierre Plamondon was elected leader (3.)

The 1980 and 1995 referenda in Quebec

As was stated above, it was one of the election promises of the PQ in 1976 to hold a referendum on sovereignty-association during its first term in office. The PQ proposed "sovereignty-association", a proposal for Quebec to be a sovereign nation-state while requiring (hence the hyphen) an economic partnership with what remained of Canada. The PQ's efforts were in philosophical conflict with the federal Liberal government of Pierre Elliot Trudeau, an opponent of sovereignty who instead urged Quebecers to seek empowerment at the federal level through reforms that provided for bilingualism and protection for individual rights. Trudeau, an effective campaigner whose party had dominated federal politics in Quebec for over 80 years, was considered such a formidable opponent that Lévesque refused to implement a referendum while Trudeau remained in office.

In the 1979 federal election, the Liberals were narrowly defeated by the Progressive Conservatives led by Joe Clark, whose platform had included a more accommodating approach to constitutional negotiations with the provinces. Clark's minority government made a point to not have the federal government be involved in the referendum, leaving the task of representing federalist voices to Claude Ryan, the new leader of the Quebec Liberal Party.

On June 21, 1979, Lévesque announced the promised referendum would occur in the spring of 1980, and that the question would be announced before Christmas (4.) However, a dramatic development in Ottawa resulted in the return of Trudeau as Prime Minister in the general election which took place on February 18, 1980, in which the federal Liberals won a majority in the House of Commons, and Trudeau returned as Prime Minister. Trudeau announced Jean Chrétien, his most trusted lieutenant, as having responsibilities for the federal response to the referendum (4.)



Rene Levesque, Gettyimages

The 1980 referendum

On April 15, Lévesque announced before the National Assembly the referendum would occur on May 20, 1980. The same day, on the opening of the House of Commons, Trudeau announced that the Government of Canada would not negotiate sovereignty-association under any circumstances, as he considered the question too vague and the Canadian government's authority too uncertain to do so. He also stated that the question was too vague to give Lévesque and the PQ any mandate to declare independence, making any result from a "Yes" vote impossible; in contrast, he offered that a "No" vote would lead to constitutional change (5.)

The "Yes" campaign was, in the initial stages, low key. It focused on gaining broad acceptance of sovereignty-association through specialized "regroupments" that would be presented with special certificates at ceremonies led by Lévesque and other cabinet ministers. The regroupments were seen as an attempt to show broad support for the movement and create conversations at the ground level, however, the attempt to create them in some heavily Federalist professions, such as lawyers, prompted a severe backlash.

The "No" campaign, led by Ryan, was run as a traditional election campaign, with Ryan campaigning during the day and making speeches in local hockey arenas across rural Quebec (6.)

On May 14, six days before the vote, Trudeau made his final appearance at a packed Paul Sauvé Arena, where the PQ had celebrated their victory in 1976. Trudeau attacked the "Yes" campaign for not asking a clear question, and stated that a "Yes" vote was a dead end, given that the rest of Canada was not bound by the question and that it was too vague to pursue independence if negotiations were refused.

Trudeau then stated that he would interpret a vote for the "No" as a mandate to renew federalism and change the constitution, putting his MPs' seats on the line if he were to fail to keep this promise.^[19] Addressing himself to Canadians outside Quebec on behalf of his MPs, Trudeau challenged English Canada that change would have to occur and that the referendum could not be interpreted as an endorsement of the status quo.

After this Trudeau hit an emotional high note, invoking a remark by Lévesque days earlier that he was showing his "Elliott" side during the campaign. Trudeau detailed the story of his parents, who had both had many ancestors in Quebec, and remarked that his full name was both a Québécois and a Canadian name. Trudeau then began to list members of the Parti Québécois who had Irish or English last names. The riposte brought the crowd to an uproar, and Trudeau exited to chants of "Elliott."

The speech, which prompted Morin to wonder if his mind was changed, was seen as the death knell of the "Yes" camp, despite Lévesque's attempts to cast doubt over Trudeau's words (7.)

This writer believes that there are moments in history in circumstances like this whereas it plays a major and decisive role in sewing opinions one way or the other, especially in a charged atmosphere like the one that existed in Quebec at that time (and the similar circumstance of the 1995 referendum.) Example, the speech delivered by Charles De Gaul on 22 April, 1961 to the French people to combat a failed coup d'état led by elements of the French army opposed to his policies of granting independence to Algeria. In that speech, De Gaul, dressed in his World War II uniform (he was 70 years old and long since a civilian head of state) ordered the French people and military to help him (8.)

Another example is the speech given by King Philip VI of Spain on October 3, 2017 on the eve of the Catalonia referendum to secede from Spain. It was suggested that the "king effectively ruled out any room for negotiations with the Catalanian government . . . instead of trying to play good

cop and push for a mediated solution, he took a very hard line, and it ultimately makes it more likely that Madrid will attempt to suspend the autonomy of the Catalan state” (9.)

At the end the result of the 1980 Quebec referendum was lopsided and delivered a crushing defeat to the separatist movement in which it scored only 40.44% percent of the vote while the “No” side got 59.56% percent of the vote.



Rene Levesque speech after the 1980 referendum. CBC news

The 1995 Quebec referendum, backgrounds

Unlike the 1980 referendum which was soundly defeated, the 1995 results were much closer and it could have gone either way to the last minute of voting. In fact this time it was widely expected that the “Yes” side would prevail. This writer, who lives in Canada, was following the development closely and would write about his experience in relation to these events. But first, it is important to survey the significant events in Canada between 1980 and 1995 which lead to that famous referendum.

In 1984 Pierre Elliot Trudeau announced his retirement and left office on June 30, 1984 and was widely unpopular with very low approval ratings in the polls. He was succeeded by his ex finance minister, John Turner, who was soundly defeated after a few months in office by the

newly-elected progressive conservative leader Brian Mulroney, a Quebecer, on the seventeenth of September, 1984. He remained in power until June 13, 1993, again highly unpopular.

The Meechleake and Charlottetown Accords

In the section below, we will illustrate the events which led to the famous referendum of 1995 which almost saw the division of Canada.

Brian Mulroney changed the not-so-great relationship between Quebec and the PC party. A bilingual Quebecer, Mulroney offered an olive branch to Quebec's nationalists and won a huge majority of the province's seats in 1984 and 1988. He even found an unlikely ally in Premier René Lévesque, who was willing to take the "beau risque" offered by Mulroney when he pledged to get Quebec's signature on the constitution (10.)

Mulroney's first attempt to tackle the Quebec problem came on April 30, 1987 when he called for a First Ministers' conference with the ten provincial premiers at Wilson House, located on the shores of Meech Lake, Quebec, in the Gatineau Hills. The accord was a series of proposed amendments to the Constitution of Canada negotiated in 1987 by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and all 10 Canadian provincial premiers. It was intended to persuade the government of Quebec to symbolically endorse the 1982 constitutional amendments by providing for some decentralization of the Canadian federation.

The proposed amendments were initially popular and backed by nearly all political leaders. However, former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, feminist activists, and Indigenous groups raised concerns about the lack of citizen involvement in the Accord's drafting and its future effects on Canadian federalism, and support for the Accord began to decline. Changes in government in New Brunswick, Manitoba, and Newfoundland brought ministries to power that declined to accept the Accord. Further negotiations were conducted but tension increased between Quebec and the predominantly English-speaking provinces. A dramatic final meeting among first ministers a month before the Accord's constitutionally-mandated ratification deadline seemed to show renewed agreement on a second series of amendments that would address the concerns raised in the intervening debates. Despite this, the original accord would not gain acceptance in the Manitoba or Newfoundland legislatures in time for ratification.

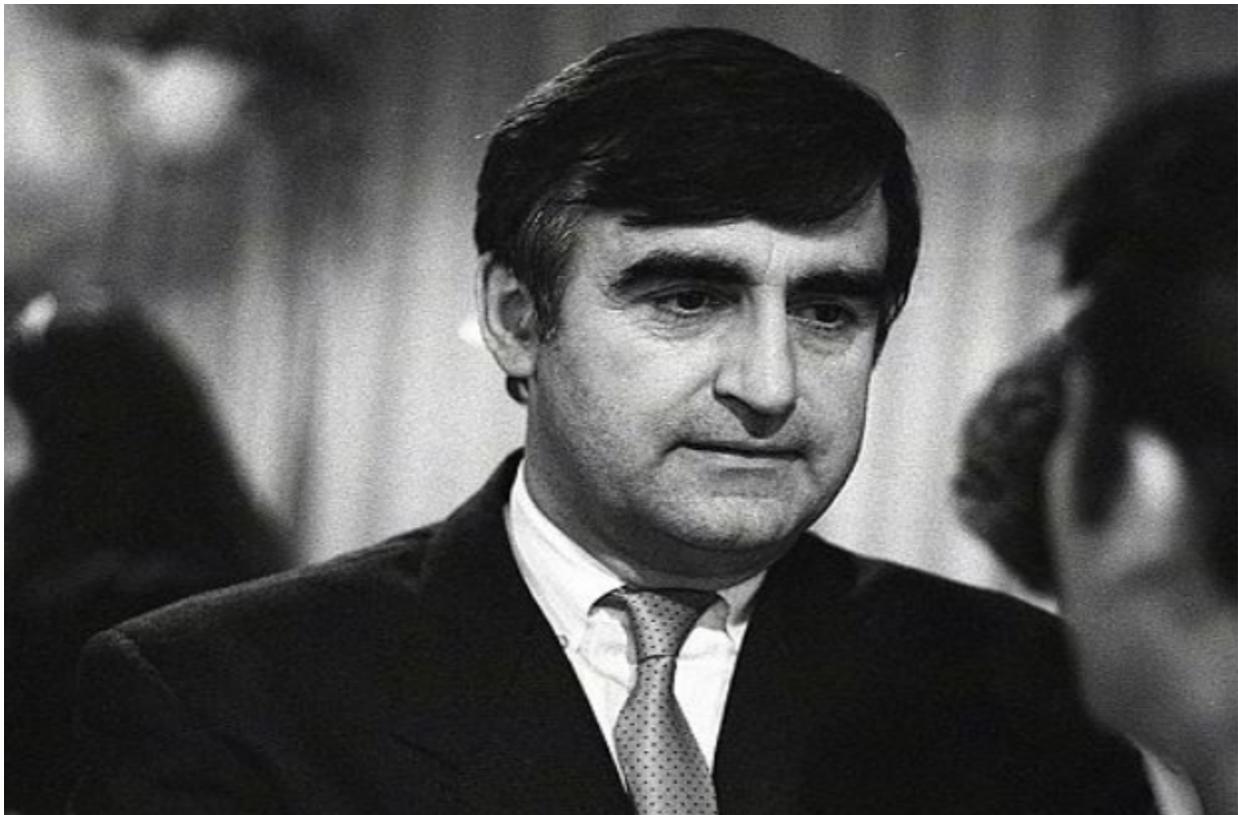
Failure to pass the Accord greatly increased tensions between Quebec and the remainder of the country. The Quebec sovereignty movement gained renewed support for a time. The general aims of the Accord would be addressed in the Charlottetown Accord, which failed to gain a majority vote in a referendum (11.) The Charlottetown Accord of 1992 was a failed attempt to add Quebec's consent to the Constitution. The Accord would have recognized Quebec as a "distinct society." It would have given many federal powers to the provinces; addressed the issue of Indigenous

self-government; and reformed the Senate and the House of Commons. The Accord was approved by the federal government and all 10 provinces. But it was rejected by the public in a referendum on 26 October 1992 (12.) Many saw the Accord's defeat as a protest against Mulroney's government, which was heavily unpopular due to the failure of the previous Meech Lake Accord, the introduction of the GST, and the early 1990s recession.

Mulroney resigned his position as prime minister On June 25, 1993. The Progressive Conservative selected Kim Campbell as his successor, and in the October 25, 1993 election, the PC Party was reduced from 156 seats to two seats in the worst defeat ever suffered for a governing party at the federal level in Canada. That election was won by the Federal Liberal Party of Canada, led by Jean Chretien, with a huge majority in the House of Commons.

Lucien Bouchard, Jack Parizeau and the 1995 Referendum

The 1995 referendum was dominated, at least initially, by two hugely charismatic figures, namely Lucina Bouchard and Jack Parizeau,



Lucien Boucahrd. The Canadian Encyclopedia

In 1988, Bouchard returned to Canada to serve as Mulroney's Quebec lieutenant, and was elected as a Progressive Conservative from a Saguenay-area riding. He was immediately named to Cabinet as Secretary of State and later Minister of the Environment.

While still a strong Quebec nationalist, he believed that Mulroney's Meech Lake Accord was sufficient to placate nationalist feelings and keep Quebec in Confederation. However, after a commission headed by Jean Charest recommended some changes to the Accord, Bouchard opposed them, saying they diluted the original spirit and objectives of Meech. Mulroney rejected his reasoning.

Soon afterward, Bouchard declared himself a sovereigntist and sent a message of support to the PQ, which was holding an anniversary meeting in his riding. He was quoted as saying “René Lévesque's memory will unite us all this weekend. He was the one who led the Québécois to realize they had the inalienable right to decide their own destiny.”

When Mulroney learned about this, he called Bouchard into his office and fired him, though Bouchard long publicly insisted that he had resigned rather than support what he saw as a betrayal of Meech (13.) It turned out that Bouchard had cut a deal with PQ leader Jacques Parizeau in which Bouchard would declare his support for sovereigntism; PQ leaders had told Bouchard that if Meech succeeded, it would mean the end of the PQ. Mulroney only learned of the deal when Parizeau revealed the plot in the early 2000s, and was angered to learn that Bouchard had "cooked up the deal with Parizeau while he was a member of my cabinet" (14.) This event ended their long friendship and the men never spoke to each other again. The two have not spoken to each other since then, though they have occasionally run into each other in Montreal (15.)



Prime minister Brian Mulroney. The Canadian Encyclopedia

Bouchard resigned from the Progressive Conservatives soon afterward, and sat as an independent for a few months. After the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, Bouchard formed the sovereigntist Bloc Québécois with five former Tories and two former Liberals.

The PQ campaigned for the Bloc in the 1993 federal election in order to prepare Quebec for sovereignty, according to the Three Periods strategy devised by Parizeau. In this election, the Bloc Québécois won 54 out of 75 ridings in Quebec, including a near-sweep of the francophone ridings. Despite only running candidates in Quebec, its heavy concentration of support there was enough to give it the second-most seats in the House. Bouchard thus became the first separatist leader of the Opposition in the history of Canada. Bouchard was still serving in that capacity in Ottawa, and working closely with the provincial Parti Québécois to bring about the independence of Quebec, when he lost a leg to necrotizing fasciitis on December 1, 1994 (16.)

Jack Parizeau

Jack Parizeau was an imposing figure with his distinctive mustache and expensive suits, and his use of English with a distinctive British style (he obtained his doctorate from the highly prestigious London School of Economics.)



Jack Parizeau. Ecole branchee

Parizeau was elected as party leader on March 19, 1988.

In the 1989 election, Parizeau's first as PQ leader, his party did not fare well. But five years later, in the 1994 election, it won a majority government. Parizeau promised to hold a referendum on Quebec sovereignty within a year of his election, and despite many objections, he followed through on this promise.

In preparation for the referendum, every household in Quebec was sent a draft of the Act Respecting the Future of Quebec (also referred to as the Sovereignty Bill), with the

announcement of the National Commission on the Future of Quebec to commence in February 1995. The commission was boycotted by the Liberal Party of Quebec, the Liberal Party of Canada, and the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada (17.)

In the beginning, support for sovereignty was only about 40% in the public opinion polls. As the campaign wore on, however, support for the "Yes" side grew larger. This growth halted, however, and Parizeau came under pressure to hand more of the campaign over to the more moderate and conservative Lucien Bouchard, the popular leader of the federal *Bloc Québécois* party. Parizeau agreed and as the campaign progressed he lost his leadership role to Bouchard (18.) Bouchard, already popular, became a sensation: in addition to his medical struggles (people were openly crying in his rallies, the writer) and charisma, his more moderate approach and prominent involvement in the Meech Lake Accord while in Ottawa reminded undecided nationalist voters of federal missteps from years past (19.) Politicians on both sides described his appeal as messianic and almost impossible to personally attack, in contrast to the well-worn figures on both sides of the referendum (20.) "No" advisor John Parisella noted that at focus groups, when presented with statements Bouchard had made that they did not like, participants would refuse to believe he meant them (21.) New polls eventually showed a majority of Quebecers intending to vote "Yes" (22.)

The federal government reaction to the referendum

The polls favoring the yes side prompted the federal government, which seems to be caught off guard, to act. Five days before the referendum, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien gave a televised address to the nation in English and French. Broadly similar in both languages, Chrétien promoted the virtues of Canadian federalism to Quebec, touched on the shared values of the country, warned that Parizeau would use the referendum result as a mandate to declare independence from Canada (while explicitly not stating the result would be accepted), and announced that Quebec would be recognized as a distinct society and that any future constitutional reform that impacted Quebec would be made with the province's consent (23.)

On October 27, 1995, a Unity Rally was held in downtown Montreal, where an estimated 100,000 Canadians from in and outside Quebec came to celebrate a united Canada, and plead with Quebecers to vote "No" in the Quebec independence referendum (held three days after the rally). Held at the Place du Canada, it was Canada's biggest political rally until the 2012 Quebec student protests (24.)

In a highly controversial move, Citizenship Court judges from across Canada were sent into the province to ensure as many qualified immigrants living in Quebec as possible had Canadian citizenship before the referendum, and thus were able to vote. The goal was to have 10,000 to 20,000 outstanding citizenship applications processed for residents of Quebec by mid-October (25.) 43,855 new Quebecers obtained their Canadian citizenship during 1995, with about one quarter of these (11,429) being granted during the month of October (26.) This issue was mentioned by Parazeau in his concession speech, in which he said sovereignty had been defeated by "l'argent et des votes ethniques" ("money and ethnic votes"), and referred to the Francophones who voted Yes in the referendum as "*nous*" (us) when he said that this majority group was, for the first time, no longer afraid of political independence. Many suspected he may have been drinking (27.)

The result

In the end, the margin was significantly smaller than the 1980 referendum. The "Yes" side was the choice of French speakers by an estimated majority of about 60% (28.) Anglophones and allophones (those who do not have English or French as a first language) voted "No" by a margin of 95% (29.)

Parazeau resigned his position the next day and was replaced by Lucien Bouchard as a PQ leader and premier of Quebec.



Parizeau acknowledges the referendum defeat in 1995. La Presse

The aftermath, federal government response after the referendum to combat separatism

The referendum seems to have taken its toll on the Yes and the No sides after such a bruising fight which almost took Canada to the brink.

On the separatist side, and once he became premier, Bouchard made the elimination of the deficit and the strengthening of the Québec economy his major priorities. Pursuit of sovereignty was placed on the political backburner. He even stated once on TV that his family is so tired of the word "referendum" that his kids spit when they hear that word.

Meantime, the federal government began to frame a coherent plan to combat future threats of Québec separatism. Prime Minister Chrétien appointed Stéphane Dion, an academic who was a strong opponent of Québec sovereignty, as his Intergovernmental Affairs Minister, and assigned him the responsibility of formulating this new strategy. Dion devised a two-pronged approach, which he characterized as "Plan A" and "Plan B." Plan A consisted of positive inducements and placating measures designed to win over francophone Québec public opinion to the federalist cause, such as the passage of a House of Commons resolution declaring Québec to be a "distinct society." Under Plan B, which consisted of more coercive measures, he directed his Ministry to frame a reference to the Supreme Court of Canada asking for its advisory opinion on the legality both under the Canadian constitution (domestically) and internationally of the unilateral secession of Québec from Canada. The Québec government refused to recognize the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court on this matter.

The Court handed down its ruling on this reference on 20 August 1998. It declared unanimously that under domestic and constitutional law, the Québec government could not initiate legal steps toward secession. However, faced with the consent of a clear majority of the Québec population on a clear question in a referendum (and the Court left the matter of defining what is meant by a "clear majority" and a "clear question" to the politicians), the federal government and the other provinces of Canada would be obliged to negotiate with the Québec authorities in good faith. The decision was viewed as a victory by both sides (30.)

It was also suggested that huge amounts of money were directed toward Quebec (31.) The accusation of the federal government pampering Quebec in an attempt to quash separatism and to keep it in the confederation (at the expense of others) was a long standing accusation by other provinces, especially in the west. For instance, The Reform Party (established in 1987) saw the Canadian federal government as led by the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties as being consistently indifferent to Western Canada while focusing too much attention on Eastern Canada (especially Quebec). It noted that the National Energy Program of the 1980s, introduced by a federal Liberal government, involved major government intervention into Canada's energy markets to regulate prices, resulting in economic losses to Alberta and benefits to Eastern Canada. It also cited the 1986 decision by a federal Progressive Conservative government to

contract the construction of CF-18 military aircraft to an unprepared contractor in Quebec rather than a ready contractor in Winnipeg, Manitoba. To Reformers, these events served as evidence that Liberals and Progressive Conservatives consistently favored Eastern Canada at the expense of Western Canada (32.)

Other reasons behind the collapse of the separatist movement in Quebec is also due to demographic factors. The Guardian noted that “The slow collapse of the movement lies in its demographics. Separatism began in the 1960s during Quebec’s “Quiet Revolution” – the bloodless overthrow of Catholicism and the anglophone ruling classes that had both exerted an outsized social and economic influence in the province. Early Quebec nationalists saw separation as a natural progression. Yet the movement wasn’t able to maintain itself through near-constant infighting and lost two referendums.

“To put it bluntly, old sovereignists are dying off and there simply aren’t very many young sovereignists to take their place,” says Claire Durand, a public opinion analyst at Université de Montréal. A recent IPSOS poll said only 19% of those aged 18 to 25 considered themselves separatists.

The Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) has positioned itself as the receptacle of choice for disaffected nationalists. Led by François Legault, himself a former Parti Québécois cabinet minister, the CAQ’s gains have come mostly at the expense of the Parti Québécois. A one-time diehard separatist, Legault declared the idea “dead” in 2016. Though immigration dominated both the rhetoric and the coverage of the campaign, many Québécois don’t see it as a ballot box issue. A recent study by La Presse, the province’s main daily, said it placed well behind more pressing priorities such as the environment, health and the economy. The paper went on to quote a resident of Quebec who stated that his ’s priorities are schools, infrastructure and an end to the Liberal reign — and that means bringing about an end to the PQ. “My vote for the CAQ isn’t from the heart, it’s practical,” he says. “We believe the dream for a country is dead and we just want to get rid of the Liberals.” (33.)

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in Iraq

This writing coincided with the latest development which has taken place recently in the Kurdish semi-autonomous region in Iraq. On November 3, 2022, The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) reelected Masoud Barzani as the party’s president, with Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani reappointed as his first deputy, and Prime Minister Masrour Barzani elected as his

second deputy. (34.) It is important to note that Nechirvan is the son of Masoud's late brother, Idress, and Masrour is his eldest son.

The KDP is the largest party in Iraqi Kurdistan and the senior partner in the Kurdistan Regional Government. It was founded in 1946 in Mahabad in Iranian Kurdistan. The party states that it combines "democratic values and social justice to form a system whereby everyone in Kurdistan can live on an equal basis with great emphasis given to rights of individuals and freedom of expression."

The KDP is dominated by the Barzani tribe and described as a Kurdish nationalist big tent party (35.) Its first leader was the legendary warrior Mustafa Barzani who is also known as Mula Mustafa.



The legendary Kurdish leader, Mula Mustafa Barzani

The KDP 1947-1975

Mula Mustafa, along with a faction of Rizgari, the Kurdish section of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), returned to Iraq after the collapse of the Mahad Republic in Early 1947. From that date, till his military defeat in 1975 and his subsequent death in 1979, Mula Mustafa was the dominant military and political figure in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Mula Mustafa was in almost constant state of war with the central government in Baghdad despite repeated attempts to subdue his movement whether through military operations or peaceful initiatives. His final showdown with the government of Baghdad was through the war of 1974-1975 in which his forces suffered a total defeat when Iraq and Iran reached an agreement during the OPEC Conference in March 1975, encouraged by the United States, culminating in the 1975 Algiers Agreement. Unable to continue receiving military support from the Iranian side, the Kurdish resistance ended and Mula Mustafa went into exile (36.)

The KDP between 1975 and 1990

In the wake of their defeat during the 1974–1975 War, Mustafa Barzani and his sons Idris and Masoud fled to Iran. The power vacuum they left behind was thus filled by their ideological nemesis Jalal Talabani, who, together with his leftist supporters, announced in Damascus the formation of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

Despite the terrible hardships suffered by the Kurds as a whole, intra-Kurdish feuding did not cease following the 1974–1975 war, as KDP groups ambushed and killed PUK fighters on several occasions in 1976–1977 (37.) Talabani vowed revenge, and at various moments ordered his troops to fire upon any KDP troops – but suffered from operational weaknesses compared to the KDP. Feuding and splitting continued throughout the late 1970s, as the KDP, PUK, and KDP-I jostled for influence and funding from neighboring states (38.)

On September 22, 1980, Saddam invaded Iran and the long and bloody war provided the Kurds with a badly-needed break from his iron grip on the Kurdish region. And in November 1986 Masoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani finally met to form an official alliance, in Tehran. By May 1987 KDP, PUK, among other Kurdish factions and the Assyrian Democratic Movement all

joined what was known as the Kurdistan Front, and now all Kurdish parties were receiving monetary and military support from Iran (39.)



Masoud Barazani and Jalal Talabani

As Saddam felt increasingly threatened, he commissioned his cousin, Ali Hassan al-Majid also known as Chemical Ali for his use of chemical weapons against Kurdish towns such as Halabja, to launch the Al-Anfal campaign. Thousands of Kurdish villages were destroyed, and at least 180,000 civilians perished (40.) This ruthless campaign continued till Saddam invaded Kuwait.

The KDP 1991-2003

On August 2, 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. This move was faced by a massive military response led by the USA and resulted in crushing the Iraqi army. And as a result of the war, the country was engulfed by a major revolt against the tyrannical regime of Saddam by the Kurds in the north and Shiites in the south.

Following initial victories, the revolution was held back from continued success by internal divisions as well as a lack of anticipated American and/or Iranian support. Saddam's Sunni Arab-dominated Ba'ath Party regime managed to maintain control over the capital of Baghdad and soon largely suppressed the rebels in a brutal campaign conducted by loyalist forces spearheaded by the Iraqi Republican Guard.

During the brief, roughly one-month period of unrest, tens of thousands of people died and nearly two million people were displaced. After the conflict, the Iraqi government intensified a prior systematic forced relocation of Marsh Arabs and the draining of the Mesopotamian Marshes in the Tigris–Euphrates river system. The Gulf War Coalition established Iraqi no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq, and the Kurdish opposition established the Kurdish Autonomous Republic in Iraqi Kurdistan in three provinces of northern Iraq. The Kurds smartly resisted the temptation of declaring a long-sought independent republic.

Faced with the administrative vacuum and double embargo after the total withdrawal of Saddam's forces from the region, the Kurdistan Front, an alliance of diverse political groups in Kurdistan Region, decided to hold a general election. Their goal was to establish an administration to provide for essential public services and to meet the basic needs of the people. The population also expressed a strong desire to choose its representatives.

The election, held on 19 May 1992, was the first free and fair parliamentary election in the history of Iraq. Voter turnout was very high and the elections were deemed to be free, fair, and democratic by international observers. After decades of dictatorship, the people in Kurdistan were able to vote for their representatives.

This regional election led to the formation of the first Kurdistan National Assembly (later Kurdistan Region Parliament) and the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government. The leadership and the people of the Kurdistan Region decided to remain part of Iraq, and to adopt and abide by all national laws except for those that violated human and universal rights (41.)

In the 1992 election and due to the 7% threshold the only parties which had a chance of winning seats in parliament were the KDP and the PUK. The election resulted in a narrow victory for the KDP, which with 45% of the vote gained 51 seats while the PUK with 44% of the vote gained 49 seats. However, due to allegations of election fraud they divided the seats 50–50 and created a unity government. The government however collapsed and resulted in a civil war breaking out in 1994. The last parliamentary meeting was held in 1996 (42.) It resulted in the creation of two Kurdish states, a PUK-controlled state based in Silemani and a KDP-controlled state based in Hewler, both proclaiming themselves as legitimate rulers of Kurdistan (43.)

This dual government arrangement remained till this. It is important to note that, to their credit, the Kurds used this new reality (not under the control of the central government) to embark on a large scale of

construction of badly-needed roads, infrastructures, schools, malls, high-rise buildings, etc. The region also enjoyed a huge amount of foreign investment dollars, and robust trade with neighboring countries.

The KDP 2003 to the present

The fall of Saddam in 2003 provided the Kurd with the unique opportunity. For the first time since his coming to power 1968, the Kurds were not under threat of brutal reprisals. Indeed, for the first time since the establishment of the modern state of Iraq in 1921, they were not under threat from a central government in Baghdad. This new reality and the fact that they have been living in practically an independent state for almost thirteen years, prompted the Kurds to take a tough stand in negotiating the new constitution of Iraq and worked hard to guard what they have already achieved in their region and at the same time ensure a strong representation in the federal institutions. Many believe that the new constitution of Iraq has more than accommodated Kurdish demands for equality. For instance, Article 4 states that the Kurdish language is one of the two official languages of Iraq. Article 113 states that the constitution shall approve the region of Kurdistan and its existing regional and federal authorities. And in an explicit recognition of what the Kurds have accomplished, Article 137 states “Legislation enacted in the region of Kurdistan since 1992 shall remain in force, and decisions issued by the government of the region of Kurdistan - including court decisions and agreements - shall be considered valid unless it is amended or annulled pursuant to the laws of the region of Kurdistan by the competent entity in the region, provided that they do not contradict with the constitution (44.)

Masoud Barzani, the KDP, and the presidency of the KRG

Masoud was elected as the President of Iraqi Kurdistan by the Parliament of Iraqi Kurdistan in June 2005 (45.)

In July 2009, in the first direct elections for the presidency of the autonomous Kurdistan Region, Barzani was reelected as president by a popular ballot, receiving 69.6% of the votes. The elections were closely monitored by international observers and the Iraqi Electoral Commission. In August 2013, after the expiration of his 8-year term, the parliament extended his presidency for another two years, and he continued in the role even beyond this extension (46.)

The KRG was rocked to the core by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) during that time. The group launched an offensive on Mosul and Tikrit in June 2014. On June 29, ISIS

leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi announced the formation of a caliphate stretching from Aleppo in Syria to Diyala in Iraq, and renamed the group the Islamic State. A U.S.-led coalition began airstrikes against ISIS in Iraq on August 7, 2014, and expanded the campaign to Syria the following month. On October 15, the United States named the campaign “Operation Inherent Resolve.” Over the next year, the United States conducted more than 8,000 airstrikes in Iraq and Syria. ISIS suffered key losses along Syria’s border with Turkey, and by the end of 2015, Iraqi forces had made progress in recapturing Ramadi (47.) In the end, Iraq as a whole and the KRG in particular survived the ISIS threat.

The KRG referendum to separate from Iraq, backgrounds

The threat of separation from the rest of the country by the Kurds and declaring an independent state is as old as the modern state of Iraq itself which was born on August 23, 1921. And although Mula Mustafa was careful not to use the word “independence” in dealing with successive Iraqi governments, his resistance was always perceived and dealt with that way. Also, it was not a secret to any watcher, that there was always an overwhelming desire by the vast majority of Kurds in Iraq to have an independent country. But there were always the questions of when and how.

The Kurds in Iraq certainly had a golden opportunity to declare independence in 1991 when Saddam withdrew his forces from the region and the USA declared a no-fly zone in the area. From that time till the American invasion in 2003, they had an independent state in all but name. They opted, however, not to do so. For instance, In 1992, parliamentary elections were held, and in October the same year the Regional Parliament in Arbil voted for a ground-breaking resolution: federalism, instead of failed autonomy, as the solution to the Kurdish question in Iraq (48.)

The Barazani family has long been accused of using the plight of the Kurds in Iraq to have their own independent state as a ploy to remain in power. Back in the 1970’s, Mula Mustafa Barzani's own son Ubeydullah who defected from the movement and preferred to cooperate with the regime in Baghdad (49) declared that any peace treaty with Iraq will be undermined by Mula

Mustafa since it will diminish his leadership. And this accusation has persisted. The last referendum and Masoud's insistence on holding despite enormous objection to the contrary was a subjection of such a speculation. In an editorial in the days leading to the referendum, Kurdish scholar Othman Ali asked the following question; "What are KRG President Masoud Barzani's motives in insisting on holding the referendum? It is noteworthy that Barzani has been in office since 2005, and has had two extensions to his time in office. In August 2015, his opponents rallied forces in the streets and created a political bloc in the parliament to unseat him. Since then, there has been a political crisis accompanied by acute financial difficulties and rampant corruption." And with regards to the opposition to the referendum, Ali stated "based on the official reactions to the referendum from many international and regional actors, the KRG seems to have no overt support to carry out its plan for the independence vote. The Baghdad government considered the issue of holding a referendum unilateral, unconstitutional, and unacceptable, and the prime minister's office said as much to the press. The U.S. State Department expressed concern that the independence vote would distract from efforts to fight Daesh, and it declared its support for Iraq's territorial integrity. Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım has also denounced the referendum and considers it irresponsible. The Foreign Ministry called the referendum "a grave mistake." and the U.N, Russia and the EU have issued similar statements." He went on to say "Barzani has been well-informed in advance through the powerful Kurdish lobbies in the U.S. and EU about the official stances of regional and Western countries on the referendum. However, he believes at the end of the day, the pro-Israeli lobbies in the U.S. and Europe, which support Kurdish independence and recognize the power Kurds have gained in the war against Daesh, and his secular and pro-Western credentials will eventually convince Western countries not to offer any tangible opposition to the referendum (50.)

Sources have also speculated on Masoud's reasoning in pressing forward with the referendum and attributed it to external and internal factors. "The reason why he went ahead this time may lie in his concern that if and when the Islamic State is defeated, U.S. and European military support may dry up, along with the diplomatic leverage that comes with it. In other words, Barzani may believe that the window for Western backing of his independence bid may be closing soon. Perhaps as importantly, Barzani bolstered his own tenuous domestic position as Kurdish president by mobilizing the popular "yes" vote and sowing disarray among the



A beaming Masoud Barzani votes for independence, 9/25/2022

opposition. His detractors in Suleimaniya, in particular, who support Kurdish independence in principle, but oppose it if it delivers a Barzani-led state, told their supporters that they would be free to cast their vote. Barzani's move also allowed the reopening of parliament, which he shuttered two years ago after the opposition refused to extend his tenure for another two years, without an election. The main opposition party, Gorran, decided to stay out, resulting in a more pliant parliament for Barzani (51)

Masoud also capitalized on the fact that calls for Kurdish independence had been going on for years, with an unofficial 2005 referendum resulting in 98.98% voting in favor of independence (52.) These longstanding calls gained impetus following the Northern Iraq offensive by ISIS during the Iraqi Civil War in which Baghdad-controlled forces abandoned some areas, which were then taken by the Peshmerga and controlled *de facto* by the Kurds. Certainly, the astonishing speed at which the Iraqi army disintegrated gave Masoud an added incentive to proceed forward with the referendum.

At the end it was unanimously agreed that the referendum which was held on the 25 of September 2017 with 92.73% voting “yes”, backfired in a spectacular way amid rampant accusations of treason. The Washington Post commented “When Kurdish forces recaptured the town of Sinjar from the Islamic State two years ago, the leader of Iraq’s Kurdish region gave a triumphant speech on a mountainside, with a breathtaking view of plains behind him. “Only the Kurdish flag would ever fly here, he pledged.” But today, the Iraqi flag flutters in the town and across a swath of disputed territory in northern Iraq. The city of Kirkuk and the lucrative oil fields near it are now back in the hands of the federal government. Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani’s decision to hold an independence referendum, despite furious Iraqi and regional objections, has backfired spectacularly. Instead of paving the way to statehood, or boosting the Kurds’ bargaining power in negotiations, it has triggered a humiliating reversal of fortunes for Iraq’s Kurds” (53.)

Aftermath

Barzani professes to have no regrets. He says "of course" the consequences his region has suffered were worth it to make clear that Kurds want independence.

"I am very proud of the result. I am very proud that we have given the opportunity for the Kurdish people to express their vote – and I do not regret it," he says.

Asked about the expectation that he take some responsibility for the aftermath, Barzani says it was a collective decision to hold the referendum and not his alone.

He accuses specific Kurdish leaders from the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan of treason in handing over Kirkuk. And he blames the United States for allowing Iranian-backed Iraqi paramilitaries working with Iraqi troops to attack the Kurds.

"They were using American weapons – Abrams tanks and other things the American government gave to the Iraqi government to use in the fight against ISIS. But they used it against the Kurdish people, and the Americans stayed silent," he says.

The U.S., the U.K. and almost every other ally had warned Barzani not to hold the referendum in September. U.S. officials brokered a deal with Baghdad to open negotiations with Irbil. If those failed, the U.S. would promise to recognize the need for a referendum.

But Kurdish officials say the offer came too late – two days before the vote, when Barzani had already made clear the referendum would go ahead” (54.)

The whole episode ended in Masoud resigning the presidency of the KRG in favor of his nephew Nechervan Barazani. He remained, however, head of the KDP and exerts a marked influence on the affairs of the KRG. This was confirmed by Necheravn himself. Although he is the new president, he is not the one in charge. It is his uncle who still pulls the strings, as he himself admitted in an interview with al-Monitor. Asked whether it is safe to say that Masoud is the real boss, he said, “Of course! He is the one person who cannot be removed from the scene” (55.)

In a further blow to the referendum, the Iraqi Supreme Court has ruled that a referendum on Kurdish independence was unconstitutional. In a response, Nechirvan Barzani, called the ruling "unilateral", but said he would not challenge it.

The top court also decided to annul "all the consequences and results of the referendum", a statement said. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi welcomed the ruling, saying his government "refused to have anything to do with" the vote. Also, an offer by the Kurdish government to "freeze" the referendum results was rejected by Mr Abadi, who demanded its annulment by the Kurds. (56.)

Discussions

It has been more than five years since the referendum in the KRG, and despite of the often stormy relationship between it and the center, and the many lingering issues between the two sides such as the Oil & Gas law, the status of the Kirkuk, the disputed areas, etc., no Kurdish leader brought the issue of holding a new referendum. It looks like, at least for now, the Kurds have learnt from this experience that the situation in Iraq is much more complex than one party deciding to part with another. And given Iraq’s strategic location, its enormous oil reservoirs, ethnic complexity, vast influence of its neighbors and foreign powers, etc. makes disturbing the status quo, and indeed the whole region, that much difficult. That does not mean, however, that

Kurdish leaders, and most notably Masoud's son, the current KRG prime minister, Masrour, reminds others at every possible opportunity to explore a different relationships, such as confederation, between the two sides as a "strategic option" (57.)

The future of the KDP

As stated earlier in the article, On November 3, 2022, KDP reelected Masoud Barzani as the party's president. He has been a leader of the party since the death of his father in 1979.

Masoud, who is now 76, hinted at willingness to retire. "I am not among those people who desire to stay as presidents or officials until they die. I wish there was an atmosphere in the [Kurdistan] Region and the region that could allow me to ask you to give me permission [to quit]. Every beginning has an ending," he noted." (58.) In that conference, he looked tired and frail. It has been rumored in the past that he is suffering from an undisclosed illness.

Regardless of Masoud's future at the helm, the KDP is dominated by the Barzani family and has been as such since its inception. It enjoys a rich history among the people of Kurdistan which includes the fact that the party was established by Masoud's father, the legendary leader Mustafa Barzani, was in the forefront in fighting for kurdish rights, and he (Masoud) lost three brothers.

What does the PDK leadership look like in the post-Masoud era? And how rough that transfer would look like? There are currently three players on the scene in Erbil and each is jostling for a position. First it is Masoud's eldest son, Masrour Barazani, the current prime minister and heir apparent. Second, Masoud's nephew, Nechervan, the current president. And finally, Masoud's youngest son, Waysi, head of the KDP's intelligence and counter-terrorism portfolios. A fourth player, however, is waiting his turn, he is Nachravin's son, Idris. It is expected that the generational change in the Kurdish region would not be pretty (59.)

The animosity between Masrour and Nechrevan is known for a long time and is the subject of consistent rumors. The latest PDK conference confirmed the internal strife between the two men. Al Jazeera reported that "The kurdistan Democratic Party ended its 14th conference by re-electing Masoud Barzani as party leader for the sixth time in a row, amid a heated controversy that observers refer to, and it is represented by a hidden conflict between the two most prominent

poles in it, between the current president of the region, Nechirvan Barzani - son of Masoud's older brother - and the Prime Minister of Kurdistan, Masrour Barzani - The eldest son of Massoud - to succeed Barzani, the father in the future.



Masoud is between Masrour (right) and Nechirvan (left)

The party congress was launched last Thursday in the city of Dohuk in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, after being delayed for 12 years, and the congress elected two vice presidents, Nechirvan and Masrour, in contrast to its internal system, which confirms the presence of only one deputy, and this prompted many observers to confirm the existence of a hidden conflict between the party leaders” (60.) The struggle between the poles of the Barazani family would be more interesting when Wayzi and Idris come into the picture.

Conclusions

The intent of this study was to first explore the reasons behind the demise of the once-dominant Parti Quebecois (PQ) in Quebec, and second to see if such factors can result in weakening the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) which has an iron grip hold on the western part of the KRG.

This writer believes that such a scenario would not occur, at least in the foreseeable future, in Kurdistan.

As stated above, the fading of the PQ has occurred due to aging PQ members, demographic factors due to immigration, infusion of large sums of money into Quebec by the federal government, constitutional reforms, and the emergence of alternative political parties.

None of the factors listed above which affected the PQ are applicable to the KDP. The party is dominated by one family and controls all economic, social, political, and security matters in the KRG. In addition, the federal government practically has no presence in the region and, as such, can not influence matters such as immigration or finances. In addition, the KDP never misses an opportunity of reminding Kurds of the atrocities committed by successive governments, and that the KDP (and the Braqzani family in particular) was in the forefront in fighting for Kurdish rights.

One future development, however, might have its effect on the party which is the inevitable absence of Masoud Barazani from the scene and the expected power struggle between his sons and his nephew. But these are only speculations and nobody can predict the future. This writer believes that nothing major will happen should Masoud depart the scene. This is based upon the fact, the KDP is well entrenched entity in the KRG and Masoud, a veteran leader who has experienced first hands several episode in which he was almost deposed, will lay the foundation for a peaceful transition of power, and in due process preserves it in the Barazani family.

*Nadum Jwad is a freelance political writer who lives in Windsor, Ontario, Canada

- (1) Le PLQ formera l'opposition officielle". TVA Nouvelles (in French). October 3, 2022. Retrieved October 4, 2022.
- (2) Lachance, Nicolas (October 3, 2022). "PSPP fait son entrée à l'Assemblée nationale". TVA Nouvelles (in French). Retrieved October 4, 2022.
- (3) The Canadian Encyclopedia
- (4) From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
- (5) English, John (2009). Just Watch Me: The Life of Pierre Elliott Trudeau Volume Two: 1968–2000. Toronto: Knopf Canada. ISBN 978-0-676-97523-9.
- (6) Fraser, Graham (1984). PQ: René Lévesque and the Parti Québécois in Power. Toronto: MacMillan. ISBN 0771597932.
- (7) Bastien, Frédéric Bastien (2013). The Battle of London: Trudeau, Thatcher, and the Fight for Canada's Constitution. Toronto: Dundurn. ISBN 9781459723290.
- (8) NY Times, 30/12/1961
- (9) The Financial Times, October 4, 2017
- (10) CBC, Conservatives have a long, tumultuous history of trying to figure out Quebec, February 1, 2020
- (11) Meech Lake Accord, From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
- (12) Charlottetown Accord, The Canadian Encyclopedia
- (13) "Lucien Bouchard says 'wounds' remain with Brian Mulroney". CBC News. August 21, 2014. Retrieved August 27, 2014.
- (14) Ioria Galloway (November 12, 2005). "Bouchard was fired in 1990, Mulroney insists on tapes". The Globe and Mail..
- (15) "Lucien Bouchard says 'wounds' remain with Brian Mulroney". CBC News. August 21, 2014. Retrieved August 27, 2014
- (16) Bouchard returns to work after losing a leg". CBC.ca archives. February 22, 1995. Retrieved June 4, 2018.
- (17) Haljan, p. 302.
- (18) McKenzie, Robert (1972). Comment se fera l'indépendance: entrevues de René Lévesque, Jacques Parizeau, Jacques-Yvan Morin, Camille Laurin (in French). Éditions du Parti québécois.
- (19) Cardinal (2005), p. 242
- (20) Cardinal (2005), p. 243.
- (21) Hébert and Lapierre (2014), p. 12
- (22) Cardinal (2005), p. 229.
- (23) Cardinal (2005), p. 313-4.
- (24) Garsten, Ed. "Canadians rally for a united country". CNN. October 28, 1995
- (25) "Citizenship blitz in Quebec". The Montreal Gazette. August 31, 1995.
- (26) O'Neill, Pierre. "Le camp du NON a-t-il volé le référendum de 1995?". Le Devoir. August 11, 1999

- (27) "Jacques Parizeau : L'homme derrière le complet trois pièces - Portrait - Pixcom".
www.pixcom.com. Retrieved 2021-06-05.
- (28) Cardinal (2005), p. 405.
- (29) Cardinal (2005), p. 400
- (30) The Canadian Encyclopedia, Separatism in Canada, February 7, 2006.)
- (31) (Is Quebec subsidized by the rest of Canada? The Frase institute, Appeared in the
National Post, March 2014)
- (32) Manning, 1992. P120, P126
- (33) (The Guardian 30/9/2018.)
- (34) Rudaw, Masoud Barzani reelected as KDP president, 11/3/2022
- (35) Gürbey, Hofmann & Ibrahim Seyder 2017, p. 65.
- (36) McDowall 2004, p. 339
- (37) McDowall 2004, p. 344
- (38) McDowall 2004, p. 346
- (39) McDowall 2004, p. 352
- (40) Kurdistan Democratic Party, From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
- (41) 1991 Iraqi uprisings. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
-
- (42) Knn.u-net.com. Archived from the original on 2012-02-15. Retrieved 2012-02-19.
- (43) Lee, Andrew (2006-03-17). "Trouble in Kurdistan". TIME. Archived from the
original on May 12, 2006. Retrieved 2012-02-19.
- (44) Full text of Iraq constitution, NBC News, October 16, 2005
- (45) Kurds in Northern Iraq Elect Regional President". Voanews.com. 12 June 2005.
Retrieved 22 February 2012
- (46) Chomani, Kamal. "Iraqi Kurdistan Elections Could Be Turning Point". Ekurd.
ekurd.net. Retrieved 11 October 2013.
- (47) Wilson Center. Timeline: the Rise, Spread, and Fall of the Islamic State. 10/28/2019
- (48) The Kurds as parties to and victims of conflicts in Iraq, International Review,
Volume 89 Number 868 December 200
- (49) McDowall, David (2005). A Modern History of the Kurds p.331-332)
- (50) Daily Sabah. Why Barazani insists on an independence referendum. By Othman Ali,
Jne 14, 2017
- (51) The Atlantic, September 27, 2017
- (52) Kurdistan Referendum Movement – International Committee (8 February 2005). "98
percent of the people of South Kurdistan vote for independence". KurdMedia.
- (53) Washington Post 10/20/2022

- (54) NPRI, November 7, 2017
 - (55) Fanack, Published on June 11, 2019
 - (56) BBC, November 20, 2017
 - (57) The Arab Weekly, 21/04/2022
 - (58) Rudaw, 03-11-2022
 - (59) AEI, Michael Rubin, 9/23/2022
 - (60) Al Jazeera, November 8, 2022
-