MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF INFORMATION

THE HISTORIC STATEMENT OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL
ON THE PEACEFUL DEMOCRATIC
SOLUTION OF THE KURDISH ISSUE.
The Revolutionary Command Council, in a statement issued on 11 February 1970, announced a complete and constitutional settlement of the Kurdish issue. The historic announcement was made by the President of the Republic and Chairman of the RCC over Baghdad Television and radio networks. The following is the text of the statement:

"The first ‘raison d’etre’ of the July 17 Revolution was that it came to express the disgust of all masses against the causes and the causers of the June defeat and to reflect Iraq’s popular consensus in condemning the former one-man reactionary regime on account of its contribution to that nationalist ordeal — a contribution it made through its defeatist role, complete isolation from the people and utter impotence in solving a host of national issues that were gnawing at the structure of the national set up.

"The solution of such issues constituted the necessary and inevitable step to a determined bid to mobilize all human and material energies of Iraq and committing them, without any distraction, to the place where they naturally belong — primarily in the frontlines of the battle of destiny of the Arab nation.

"Thereupon, the Revolution, right from its
first days, set for itself the task of achieving the national unity of the people of Iraq without any distinction on account of race, language, religion or social background. It has also taken upon itself the task of achieving all necessary conditions political, social and economic — for upholding this unity so that Iraq could address itself with all its possibilities and potentials to the nationalist battle of destiny. In the eyes of the Revolution, this battle of destiny represents the peak of the bitter historic struggle between imperialism, Zionism and their evil designs against the Arab homeland on the one hand and the liberation and development of the Arab nation and its struggle for the attainment of its humanitarian progressive goals on the other.

"Despite the heavy legacy of complicated problems which the Revolution inherited right from its first day, it persisted firmly and unwaveringly on the road of liberating Iraq from the hangers of imperialism, corruption and political and social oppression. It also went on working to provide all conditions necessary for building a new Iraq characterised with actual equality in rights and obligations as well as in opportunities among all countrymen. This will be a new Iraq where all avenues are laid open to the masses through a sincere, collective, national commit-

ment to the territorial unity of the homeland and the unity of its people and major basic objectives namely national unity, liberty and socialism.

"The solution of the Kurdish issue in Iraq was in the forefront of the national problems confronting the Revolution. That was all the more so bearing in mind that the inability of the former regimes to understand the issue — or rather the lack of genuine desire on the part of those regimes to tackle the issue and suggest sound solutions to it — along with exploitation by imperialism, its collaborators and its agents have all led to further complicate the issue to a degree where it appeared something like insoluble. That was especially so after violence for a number of years now, has taken the place of democratic, fraternal and objective dialogue dictated by the nature of the national issue and the legitimate and just rights this issue carries to a section of the Iraqi people.

Right from its first days, the Revolution worked for tackling this national issue in a spirit permeated with a sense of self responsibility and the utmost limit of adherence to the revolutionary democratic principles.

The Revolution which nourishes on the
theoretical headspring of the Arab Baath Socialist Party believes that nationalist rights are, in their essence, democratic rights. Among their objects is to revive cultural heritage, language and, tradition and enjoy free expression of will. The consolidation of these rights among various nationalities, especially those living in the same homeland, requires the finding of means for organising relations between such nationalities in a manner helpful to the uplift of all of them.

All projects and plans that have for their purpose undermining ties and sowing dissensions among such nationalities can be of no service to the common interests of these nationalities. On the other hand, the organisation and cementation of national and human ties canalising them to serve the cause of progress furnish the requirements of the unity of national life in an atmosphere pervaded with national fraternity and peace.

"Imbued by these principles, the 7th Regional Convention of the Arab Baath Socialist Party which took place late in 1968 and early in 1969 took the step of formulating the Party's ideological position on this national issue and drew up the line of solution to the revolution and the revolutionary authority. That was included in the resolution released on the winding up of that convention. Among other things, those resolutions said: "The convention stressed that the question of the nationalist ambitions of the Kurds in Iraq takes pride of place in the list of problems confronting the Arab revolutionary movement. Several years have elapsed without any sound solution being achieved for this problem. Because of this, and as a result of arbitrary attempts to solve it, terrible disasters and tragedies have descended upon Arab and Kurdish citizens alike. The forces of imperialism and reaction and the detachments of agents and opportunists always exploited that issue and used failures to solve it as a means for interfering in Iraq's domestic affairs and bringing pressure to bear upon it side by side with conspiring on the rights of Arabs and Kurds alike and inflicting the greatest damage on nationalist, progressive and democratic positions and gains achieved across long periods of sacrifice and joint struggle. The convention further emphasised that our Party which, in its struggle and policy stems from its nationalist, humanitarian, socialist and democratic ideology, has always respected the nationalist ambitions of the Kurdish masses in their progressive national substance, considering them as legitimate human rights. The Party is
also fully aware of the strong relationship between the achievement of those legitimate ambitions on the one hand and, on the other the vigour and soundness of the advance of Iraq’s popular masses towards liquidating the residues of imperialism, fully concentrating on the nationalist battle of destiny in Palestine and pressing on with the historic struggle for the achievement of Arab unity, liberty and socialism.”

As such, the Revolution which plainly adheres to the doctrines and resolutions of the Party has conceded to the Kurdish countrymen the right of enjoying their nationalist right and developing their nationalist characteristics within the framework of the unity of the people, the homeland and the constitutional set up.

At this time, the Arab nation is waging a large-scale struggle against imperialism, Zionism and local reaction — a struggle that places her in the forefront of struggle mounted by peoples in the Middle East. As the struggle of the people of Iraq, so closely knit with the struggle of the Arab nation, is one for democracy and for striving against the forces of reaction both within and without the region, the Revolution considers that the primary base of the Arab-Kurdish national unity in Iraq is that the Kurdish nationalist movement, like its Arab counterpart, is a democratic one objectively directed against those reactionary forces themselves. In Iraq, the Kurdish movement is held together with the Arab liberation movement by the unity of struggle against imperialism, the forces of reaction and other allied and subsidiary forces. It is also held together with the struggle of the Arab people by traditions of historic fraternity, the unity of economic interests and coordinated development of the Arab and Kurdish nationalities. Any act of upsetting this coordination will necessarily inflict damage on the cause of common struggle and the progressive national resurgence in general.

“Imperialism has realised that the unity of Arab-Kurdish struggle has the effect of cementing the cause of the Arab-Kurdish liberation movement and enabling it to secure important position in the face of the imperialist-Zionist-Israeli aggressive plans in the region especially against the nationalist battle of destiny currently raging in Palestine and the adjacent Arab countries. Consequently, the imperialistic and renegade organs sought desperately to find more than one reason for severing the ties of fraternity
between the Arab and Kurdish masses with the object of weakening the front of revolutionary national struggle in Iraq.

"The Revolution, understanding the nationalist issue as a component of the revolution on imperialism, Zionism and reaction, has only naturally, in every step it took in the direction of solving the Kurdish national issue, adhered to everything that leads to the cementation and consolidation of national and nationalist struggle against those inhuman forces combined.

"Against this setting, the exercise by the Kurdish masses of the sum of their nationalist rights and the achievement of absolute equality in the opportunities of free development constitute between them two necessary conditions for the unification and cementation of national struggle in Iraq against the enemies of people and the enemies of the Arab nation and the people of Iraq namely imperialism, Zionism and renegade reaction.

It was by no means a coincidence that the imperialistic-Zionist-reactionary conspiracy on the Republic of Iraq took place at the same time when signs of peace had begun to loom large over our beloved north, thanks to the sincere

endeavours exerted by the Government of the Revolution and the sincere response on the part of the leadership of Sd. Mustafa al-Barazani.

"It is no longer a secret that the Revolution, for its part, took all necessary steps to re-establish peace and security throughout the north of Iraq. The following measures have been taken.

A — "Recognition has been extended to the lawful presence of the Kurdish nationality in accordance with the resolutions of the 7th Regional Convention of the Arab Baath Socialist Party and in accordance to all official and press statements emanating from the revolutionary authority. This fact will be finally consecrated in the text of the Interim Constitution and, subsequently in the text of the Permanent Constitution.

B — "The Revolutionary Command Council has approved the establishment of a University in Sulamaniyah and the establishment of a Kurdish Academy of Letters. It has also endorsed all cultural and language rights of the Kurdish nationality. It ordered that Kurdish language be instructed at all schools, institutes, universities, teachers training institute, the Military College and the Police College. All Kurdish books — scientific, literary and political — expressive of the national
and nationalist ambitions of the Kurdish people shall be given wide circulation. Kurdish writers and poets shall be enabled to found a federation of their own. Their books and writings shall be printed and full opportunities shall be made available to them for developing their scientific and technical capabilities and skills. A publishing and printing house in the Kurdish language shall be set up and a Directorate General of Kurdish Culture created. A weekly newspaper and a monthly magazine shall be published in the Kurdish language. Kurdish programmes of the Kirkuk Television Station shall be increased until a television station exclusive for Kurdish language be set up.

C — "As an act of recognising to the Kurds their rights to revive their traditions and national days and in order that the whole of the people might join with Kurdish fellow-countrymen in observing their days, the Revolutionary Command Council has declared Nawrooz Day as a National Day to be observed throughout the Republic of Iraq.

D — The Revolutionary Command Council has promulgated the Governorates Law which provides for decentralisation of the local administration and approved the creation of the Governorate of Duhok.

E — Further, the Revolutionary Command Council issued general amnesty to all civilians and military personnel who joined in acts of violence in the north so as to remove all vestiges of the former anomalous passive conditions and usher in the features of new national life based on durable foundation for the attainment of general security and comprehensive national fraternity.

The masses of Iraq, Arabs and Kurds alike, have greeted with support and acclamation the resolutions and measures of the Revolutionary Command Council — something which created conditions favourable for going ahead with the tasks of achieving the lofty goals that have become the object of the people's consensus and on which the people's will, power and word became united.

"In view of the above, the Revolutionary Council initiated contacts with the leadership of Sd. Mustafa al-Barazani, leader of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan and viewpoints were thus exchanged. All became convinced of the necessity of accepting and implementing the contents of this statement.

"The Revolutionary Command Council affirms
its determination to deepen and broaden all effective measures for achieving the full means of cultural and economic resurgence and general development in the Kurdish area, seeking in the first place to enable the Kurdish masses to exercise their legitimate rights and assure their actual participation in earnest endeavours to build a homeland and struggle for the fulfilment of its major nationalist goals. Thereupon, the Revolutionary Command Council has resolved on the following:

1 — The Kurdish language shall be, alongside with the Arabic language, the official language in areas populated by a Kurdish majority. The Kurdish language shall be the language of instruction in these areas. Arabic language shall be taught in all schools, where the Kurdish language is the language of instruction, while the Kurdish language shall be taught in schools throughout Iraq as a second language within the limits stipulated by law.

2 — The sharing of our Kurdish brothers in government and non-discrimination between the Kurds and others in the assumption of public offices including sensitive and important posts in the state such as cabinet portfolios, army command, etc., have been and still remain among the important objectives which the Revolutionary Government seeks to achieve. The Revolutionary Government, in approving this principle, stresses the necessity of working for its fulfilment in an equitable ratio with due regard to the principle of efficiency, the proportionate distribution of inhabitants and the iniquities which had befallen our Kurdish brothers in the past.

3 — In view of the state of backwardness which in the past, afflicted the Kurdish nationality from the cultural and educational standpoints, a plan shall be worked out to make good that backwardness. This is to be achieved by:

   A — Speeding up the implementation of the resolutions of the Revolutionary Command Council concerning the language and the cultural rights of the Kurdish people and placing under the jurisdiction of the Directorate General of Kurdish Culture and Information the task of preparing and steering radio and television programmes concerning Kurdish national issues.

   B — Reinstating all students who were dismissed or were compelled to leave the school on account of the circumstances of violence in the area regardless of their ages or producing a convenient remedy for their problem.

   C — Building more schools in the Kurdish
area, elevating the standards of schooling and education and admitting, in just proportions, Kurdish students to universities, military colleges, educational missions and fellowships.

4 — In the administrative units, populated by a Kurdish majority, officials shall be from among Kurds or from among persons well-versed in the Kurdish language provided the required number is available. Appointment shall be made of the principal officials — Governor, Qaimaqam, Police Commandant, Security Director, etc. Work will promptly commence to develop state machineries in the area in consultation with the High Committee supervising the implementation of this statement in a manner assuring such implementation and cementing national unity and stability in the area.

5 — The Government concedes to the Kurdish people its right to set up student, youth, women and teachers organisations of its own — such organisations to become affiliated in the corresponding national Iraqi organisations.

A — The operative period of paras (1) and (2) of the RCC's resolution No. 59 dated August 5, 1968, shall be extended right up to the date of the issuance of this statement and shall extend to all of those who took part in the acts of violence in the Kurdish area.

B — Workers, officials and employees — both civilian and military—shall return to service without this being affected by cadre restrictions. The civilians among them shall be put to use in the Kurdish area within the limits of its requirements.

A — A body of specialists shall be constituted to work for uplifting the Kurdish area in all spheres as quickly as possible and for compensating it for what has descended upon it in the past number of years. An adequate budget is to be set aside for this purpose. The body in question shall operate under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Northern Affairs.

B — The economic plan shall be drawn up in such a way as to assure equal development to various parts of Iraq with due attention to the Kurdish area.

C — Pension salaries shall be made for the families of those who met with martyrdom in the regrettable circumstances of hostilities from among the members of the Kurdish armed movement and others as well as to the persons who became disabled or deformed as a result of
those conditions. This is to be enacted by a special legislation on the pattern of other legislations in force.

D — Speedy efforts shall be made to provide relief to stricken and needy persons through the accomplishment of housing projects and others assuring work to the unemployed. Appropriate in kind and cash subsidies shall also be made available and reasonable compensation offered to those stricken persons who need help. This all is to be entrusted to the High Committee. Excluded from this shall be the persons covered by the above paras.

8 — The inhabitants of Arab and Kurdish villages shall be restored to their former places of habitation. As to the villagers of areas where housing units cannot be set up and which are taken over by the Government for public utility purposes under law, they shall be resettled in neighbouring areas and duly compensated.

9 — Speedy measures shall be taken to implement the Agrarian Reform Law in the Kurdish area and amending it in such a manner as guarantees the liquidation of feudalist relations and the acquisition by all peasants of appropriate plots of land side by side with waiving for them agricultural taxes accumulating over the years of unfortunate hostilities.

10 — It has been agreed to amend the Interim Constitution as follows:

A — The people of Iraq is made up of two principal nationalities; the Arab nationality and the Kurdish nationality. This Constitution confirms the national rights of the Kurdish people and the rights of all minorities within the framework of Iraqi unity.

B — The following para shall be added to Article (4) of the Constitution: "The Kurdish language shall, alongside with the Arabic language, be an official language in the Kurdish area.

C — The above shall be confirmed in the Permanent Constitution.

11 — The broadcasting station and heavy weapons shall be returned to the government — this being tied up to the implementation of the final stages of the agreement.

12 — A Kurd shall be one of the vice-presidents.

13 — The Governorates Law shall be amended in a manner conforming with the substance of this statement.

14 — Following the announcement of the
statement, necessary measures shall be taken, in consultation with the High Committee supervising its implementation to unify the governorates and administrative units populated by a Kurdish majority in accordance with official census operations yet to be made. The state shall endeavour to develop this administrative unity and deepen and broaden the exercising by the Kurdish people therein of the sum of its national rights as a guarantee to its enjoyment of self-rule. Until this administrative unity is achieved, the Kurdish national affairs shall be coordinated through periodical meetings between the High Committee and the governors of the northern area. As the self-rule is to be achieved within the framework of the Iraqi Republic, the exploitation of national riches in the area will naturally be under the jurisdiction of the authorities of this Republic.

15 — The Kurdish people shall share in the legislative power in a manner proportionate to its population ratio in Iraq.

“Kurdish countrymen! These gains scored by the Revolution will be nothing more than a step for the full achievement of your national goals in the shade of this beloved homeland and the unity of its great people. History will bear witness that you did not have and never will have a sincere brother and dependable ally as the Arab people.

“Masses of our great people! It is your willpower concerning national unity which alone will triumph. On the rock of your appreciation of your historic responsibilities shall be smashed up all endeavours made to undermine your cohesion of struggle Your struggling masses, shedding off the dust of the intrigues of your enemies and the elements having greedy designs on you, shall proceed together in one mass overflowing with power, consciousness and determination for work and struggle, to come to the help of the major cause of the Arab nation, the Palestine cause and to attain to your sublime goals respecting unity, liberty and socialism.

“Masses of our struggling Arab nation! One of the chapters of the history of this struggling country is thus folded and a new bright one is opened by the hand of the Revolution and the hand of all free strugglers of the country. This is a new chapter where once more on this good land are renewed the conditions of love, peace and fraternity between two nationalities with common history of struggle extending far back into history. Today, tomorrow and for ever, theirs will be the honour of reviving their com-
mon struggle to destroy the enemies of the two nationalities, the enemies of peoples and of humanity in its entirety, namely imperialism, Zionism and backwardness. Theirs, too, will be the honour of joint contribution to back up human struggle for liberation and advancement and for placing the civilisation of the age on foundations of right, equality and justice between all peoples.

Forward to joint struggle, joint hopes and longings and nationalist and human joint victories.

The Revolutionary Command Council