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Trends. Good Kurds, Bad Kurds, Curds and Whey

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One might perceive United States (U.S.) foreign policy towards an ethnically and socially constructed people called the Kurds as somewhat bizarre.

There are the "bad Kurds" in Turkey. These Kurds have been constrained in the development and expression of their language and culture by the Turkish government. Some of have been imprisoned, tortured, and murdered based on Turkish political rationales. Some have fought against the Turkish government or supported those who fight for self-determination, for raw power motives, or because there seem to be no other options to live. Even if these "bad Kurds" may act like "good Kurds" by professing goals consonant with publicly disseminated U.S. values, they remain "bad Kurds" because the US and Turkey are politico-military allies.

Then there are the "good Kurds" in Northern Iraq. These Kurds have alternatively supported the machinations of Iraq's Saddam Hussein and been the targets of such machinations. They have largely fragmented into two political groupings that from time to time betray each other and jointly or singly betray their foreign supporters. At these moments, "good Kurds" act like "bad Kurds" but they are still "good Kurds" because they are still--for the moment--U.S. Kurds and because the US and Iraq are politico-military adversaries.

Both "bad Kurds" and good Kurds" have been treated well and badly by various other political entities--recurrently serving as the tactical and strategic playthings of others' political schemes and designs. Their history can be partially characterized by the movie "Ground Hog Day" and the nursery rhyme about Little Miss Muffet: benign possibilities abruptly disrupted by various threats over and over again. What "bad Kurds" and "good Kurds" also have in common is that they are the same Kurds--others are creating fictions about putative differences. In this respect, Kurdish history also has been, is, and likely will be like a combined movie and nursery rhyme. Given that the latter are cultural products that convey salient social discourses, one might conclude that the Kurds have been chosen by Fate to represent subjugation. (See Chapman, M. (Ed.). *Social and biological aspects of ethnicity*. Oxford University Press; Karadaghi, P. (1994). *The Kurds: Refugees in their own land*. In A.J. Marsella and T. Bornemann (Eds.). *The mental health and well-being of the world's refugees*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association; Nagel, J. (1994). *Constructing ethnicity: Creating and recreating ethnic identity and culture*. *Social Problems*, 41, 152-176; Raabe, B. (1993). *Constructing identities: IV. Young people's understandings of power and social relations*. *Feminism and Psychology*, 3, 369-373; Spencer, M.B., & Markstrom-Adams, C. (1990). *Identity processes among racial and ethnic minority children in America*. *Child Development*, 61, 290-310.) (Keywords: Foreign Policy, Iraq, Kurds, Turkey, United States.)