

**IRAQI- IRANIAN RELATIONS DURING AMERICAN INVASION OF  
IRAQ 2003-2011**

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# **Iraqi-Iranian Relations during American Occupation of Iraq 2003-2011**

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## **Abstract**

The collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003 is one of the most significant events in the history of Iran-Iraq relations. However, during the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980's, there was a conflict between Iraq and Iran for eight years.

The hostility was continued during the following decade between Iran and Iraq, and then they developed its close relationship with each other. On the other hand, when the Saddam Hussein's regime was collapsed by coalition forces on April 9, 2003, the opportunity was appeared for Shi'ites and Kurds to take power for the first time in Iraq during eighty decades. In addition, the Ba'athists had been struggled by the Shi'ites and Kurds in order to get power and leadership in the new Iraq.

Thus, Iran's Iraqi allies were able to fill the space of Baghdad's power by elections and using force. As a result of that changing regime in terms of Iran-Iraq relations have improved considerably. Despite this there are a number of issues which still remain controversial.

This study based on a hypothesis which is related to the increase of the Iran's influence, by its political allies in order to achieve its goals and interests in the region. In this regard, Iran tried to achieve regional power to take up political leadership in the area and recognize it for extending the common political interests among Iran and the U.S. Therefore, the invasion of Iraq by the U.S. was illegal. According to some researcher America has its oil interests in Iraq and using a policy in order to surround Iran and reduce its influence.

## Irak'ın Amerikan İhtilali Sırasındaki (2003-2011) Irak- İrani İlişkileri

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### Özet

2003 yılında Saddam Hüseyin'in İsrail-İrak ilişkileri tarihindeki en önemli olaylardan biridir.ABD İhtilalinden önce, İsrailve İsrail arasında bir çatışma vardı ve 1980 yılındaki İsrail-İrak Savaşı sırasında bu iki ülke sekiz yıl boyunca İsrail olarak kaldı.

Sonraki 10 yıl boyunca İsrail ve Irak arasındaki İsraillik devam etti ve bu sırada bu iki ülke muhalifleri ve sürgünleriyle beraber yakın ilişkiler içerisinde oldu.Koalisyon güçleri 9 Nisan 2003'de Saddam Hüseyin'i devirdi İnde, seksen yıldır ilk kez İsrail ve Kürtler için İktidarı üstlenme hakkı söz konusu oldu.Yeni Irak'taki liderlik için İsrail ve Kürtler, Baasçılara karşı mücadele örgütlerine döndü.

Böylece, İsrail ve Irak'ın müttefikleri seçimleri ve gücü kullanarak Baas'ın gücündeki boşluğu doldurmayı başardılar.Rejimin devriminin sonucu olarak İsrail ve İsrail arasındaki ilişkiler önemli ölçüde iyileşti.Buna rağmen, bir süredir konu hala tartışılmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada, İsrail'in bölgedeki hedeflerine ve çıkarlarına ulaşmak için etkisini ve Irak iç siyasetindeki kontrolünü arttırdığına dair bir hipoteze dayanır. Bu çalışmada, bölgedeki siyasi liderliği elde etmek ve İsrail ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri arasındaki ortak siyasi çıkarları göz önünde bulundurarak bunu tanımak için bölgesel bir güç elde etmeye çalışırlar.Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin Irak'ta petrol ile ilgili çıkarları vardır ve bu sebeple İsrail'i çevrelemek ve bölgedeki etkisini azaltmak için bir politika yürütürler.

## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>CPA</b>	<b>Coalition Provisional Authority</b>
<b>EFPS</b>	<b>Explosively Formed Penetrators</b>
<b>GDP</b>	<b>Gross Domestic Product</b>
<b>IEDS</b>	<b>Improvised Explosive Devices</b>
<b>IOPSR</b>	<b>United States Institute of Peace Special Report</b>
<b>IRGC</b>	<b>Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps</b>
<b>ISCI</b>	<b>Islamic Supreme Council Of Iraq (SCIRI)</b>
<b>ISCT</b>	<b>International Society for Cellular Therapy</b>
<b>KDP</b>	<b>Kurdistan Democratic Party</b>
<b>KDPI</b>	<b>Kurdistan Democratic Party Of Iran</b>
<b>KRG</b>	<b>Kurdistan Regional Government</b>
<b>MKO</b>	<b>Mujahedin-E Khalq Organization</b>
<b>NIMEP</b>	<b>New Initiative for Middle East Peace</b>
<b>PJAK</b>	<b>Party of Free Life in Kurdistan Iran</b>
<b>PUK</b>	<b>Patriotic Union of Kurdistan</b>
<b>RCC</b>	<b>Revolutionary Command Council</b>
<b>SCIRI</b>	<b>Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution In Iraq (ISCI)</b>
<b>SO</b>	<b>Special Operations Forces</b>
<b>UIA</b>	<b>United Iraqi Alliance</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>UNSC</b>	<b>United Nations Security Council</b>

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## CHAPTER 1.INTRODUCTION

Iraqi-Iranian relations are one of the oldest troubled relations in the history. Therefore, the Iranian policy toward Iraq had been built many years ago. Since the occupation of Iraq by the United States in April 2003, that is an important factor in influencing Iranian policy based on both internal and external factors, and the relationship between Iraq and Iran on the one hand, and Iran and the United States on the other hand.

In addition, collapsing Iraqi regime by the United States, which helps the emergence of the role of Iran, which was the biggest gainer to fail the regional powers such as Iraq. During the Iranian policy towards Iraq even at the present time, also during the Iraqi war in 2003, a lot of data of the geopolitical situation has changed, this war has not only led to overthrow the Iraqi regime, but also has caused a restructuring of the balance of power in the region. Therefore, this has led to its military strength, and increasing its role in Iraq, taking advantage of the political issues, social and economic conditions in this country. After the occupation of Iraq in 2003, achieving the interests and objectives of Iran in Iraq has several strategies including: support for armed groups and religious organizations, military and militias and building economic relations with Iraq. Furthermore, the relationship between Iraq and Iran had begun to create a threat to the security and stability of Iraq and generally the security of the region at different levels in terms of security and economy.

On the other hand, there are different political, security and economic levels that affects the US occupation of Iraq in April 2003, in terms of complexity of the international political interests between America and Iran which began at the time harbingers of tension between Iran and the United States.

The research will try to answer the following questions:

1. What was the kind of relationship among Iran and Iraq during pre-US invasion of Iraq? In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Iran and Iraq had known as the challenger states and empires of Mesopotamia. This ancient opposition has continued in the present day. The new Islamic Republic tried to export the Islamic ideology to Iraq in order to provide Saddam Hussein as an excuse for his 1980 invasion. The Iraqi leader tried to grab its oil wealth and to hit a serious blow against this foremost district rival. Instead, over one million people were killed and wounded as a result of inconclusive and bloody eight-year

war. The occupation of Iraq by the US in 2003 and coalition forces constituted an historic chance for Iran to increase its affects in Iraq, and to change it from a rival into an ally or partner (Eisenstadt, et al, 2011).

2. What is the political power that ruled two countries during the US occupation of Iraq? It might be too early to predict that what the Iraqi War would turn out to be has unexpected benefit to Iran: as the United State is withdrawn into the building of post-war, Washington could hardly bring Iran into the war. Therefore the collapse of the Iraqi regime “it only releases Iran from its long containment of Iraq, but also helps the Shiite majority in Iraq to become the dominant political force after being suppressed by the Sunnis group for many years” (Barzegar, 2004, p: 81). This is a possible change and a very special meaning to Iran which has given Iran a good chance in order to create a Shiite power field in the Persian Gulf and to develop its power in the whole Middle East. Thus, Iran worked for how to construct new relationships with Iraq which become one of the important foreign issues by Iran (Barzegar, 2004, p: 81 and Wang, 2007, p:66).

3. Which causes were accepted by Iran in the formulation and implementation of its goals in Iraq? Since the collapse of Iraqi regime in 2003, Iraqi politics has been influenced by Iran in order to work with Kurdish parties and Shiites to build a weak federal state which dominated by Shiites and willing to Iranian influence. Therefore, Shiite armed groups and militias have been supported by Tehran, and its soft power in the religious, economic and informational fields have been improved. Iran’s purpose is to unite the parties of Iraq’s Shiite in order to translate its demographic power into political influence, thus consolidating Shiite dominance for the first time. In addition, Iran has encouraged its neighboring allies—“the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), Dawa and the Sadrists” in order to support situation Iraq’s nascent institutions and participate in politics. “It has backed a group of different parties and movements to maximize its options and ensure its interests are advanced” (Eisenstadt, M., et al, 2011 and Cordesman and Khazai, 2014, pp: 3-4).

4. What was the relation among Iran and Iraqi Kurds with the participation of Iraqi Kurds since the collapse of Iraqi regime? In the past Iraq and Iran have had their role for dealing with suppressing the case of Kurds for example, the Kurdish demand for declaring its national independence, desire for local autonomy and their hopes of national cultural survival. In this regard, “they have done much to damage themselves through the squandering of state funds and energy in violently putting down and keeping under control the troubled Kurdish population. Occasionally, they have sided with Kurds



across the border in their enemy's territory in order to weaken it through internal conflicts" For example, Kurds had been encouraged by Iraq and Iran in the 1980s, in order to start military actions and promised them to return much Kurds, particularly Iraqi Kurds fell for this returning trick, and broken up paying badly with ending war or defeating another (Izady, 2004, p:72).

The thesis is divided into four chapters: the first chapter will describe the issues which related to regional crisis between the two countries in terms of political, legal, military and economic level. Also it will find out the level of political relations between Iraq and Iran. The second one will discuss American occupation of Iraq in 2003 and Iran's position on this invasion , also this thesis will explain the competition and perceptions of the US, Iran and Iraq, also Iranian's influence intervention in the arena of Iraqi politics. The third chapter will examine Iran's strategic goals and Iranian policy toward Iraq of post-invasion of Iraq. The final chapter will look at the relationship between Iran and the Iraqi Kurdistan and the role of Kurds in order to build a new Iraq after collapsing of the Iraqi regime.

This dissertation will look at many primary sources for example, newspapers, articles, websites and news magazines which published during the invasion of Iraq in 2003. In addition, it will use a number of literature and primarily books that published and produced by leading investigative journalists as a big source of information from the secondary material. There are some important books which authored by Anoushiravan Ehteshami, Michael Eisenstadt, and Michael Knights, and Ahmed Ali, Joseph Felter, and Brian Fishman, as the material examined for this study.

The other categories of secondary literature and source will use to advance this study. There are a number of valuable books and academic articles which are available in my thesis. The researcher will use several PhD thesis. The sources are comprehensive academic sources which available at Duhok University, Salahaddin University and other Duhok libraries. All of these materials are credible and authoritative.

## **CHAPTER 2.HISTORICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN BEFORE 2003**

The history of Iran and Iraq had some political crisis and international disputes and also some conflict and hostilities between them. The beginning of the crisis which related to the issue of boundary between the two countries were the common rivers, the problem of navigation in the Shatt al-Arab, the Kurdish issues, mutual attacks between the two countries, and the agreements concluded between Iraq and Iran, then refused these agreements and lack of commitment and which led to the conflict and Iraq - Iran war, which lasted eight years, from 1980 to 1988. As a result, the siege on Iraq is continuous to the beginning of the American occupation in Iraq in 2003.

This chapter focuses on the issues which are related to the regional crises between two countries in terms of political, legal, military and economic level. Also, it will try to find out the level of political relations between Iraq and Iran. The chapter will include three sections. The first one will explain the issues of border disputes between Iran and Iraq. The second one will discuss the relationship in the era of the Islamic Revolution and the Iran–Iraq War. The last one will focus on Iran’s position on the Second Gulf War and the US Siege on Iraq during 1990-2003.

### **2.1.Border Disputes between Iran and Iraq**

In the historical process, there was a painful course in terms of relationship between Iran and Iraq. When Iraq was under the influence of the Ottomans Empire, this region was mentioned by Iran as a part of the Persian cultural dominion and basin in the Middle East. Since 1920’s a difficult process started in Iraq when mandate regime was established, caused by territory demands and by supporting the challenger powers. Iraq longed to take the Shatt al-Arab channel and the territory of Khuzestan that belonged to Iran but density was settled by Arabs. Demanding territory from Iran, the government of Baghdad preferred to bring its resources with broader facilities in order to open seas in this way. In this regard, "Arabia" state was supported by Iraq which founded in Khuzestan area of Iran. Therefore, until 1929, Iran, not recognizing Iraq, the Kurdish insurgencies had been supported, which were continued under the rule of Mahmud Barzanji between 1919 and 1923. However, "mandate government" of Iraq was founded by the UK which tried to develop relationship between Iran and

Iraq with the agreement of the Pahlavi period. In this era, “the danger of Soviet expansionism in the Middle East by exploiting the troubles in the region was one of the factors that led to the UK to such policy” (Keskin, 2008 ). An operation for influence the Iran - Iraq border on the Shatt al-Arab River was started by Iran since the end of the mandate regime on Iraq in 1932. Therefore, the border should be passed just in the middle of the river by demand of Iran. Also on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1937, the treaty was signed between two countries. The power of Iraq on the Shatt al-Arab River was established. But at the Abadan area in the mid-line (thalweg) was established as the border. (Ataman, 2010,pp: 167-168).

During the Second World War and the Cold War, there were a number of domestic conflicts in both countries. In this regard, no negative developments were experienced that would influence the mutual relations. In addition, Iran and Iraq were between the members of Baghdad Pact that was established as a result of the US encouragements in 1956. However, in 1958, a new age started in the area by the military revolution prepared against monarchy. Republic was declared since the military revolution, and Iraqi regime, by stages, came to leave from the Western site. On the other hand, the movement of Kurdish secessionist blazed out again in Iraq with the leader of Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Mustafa Barzani’s who fought for the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan and Iran among 1930s and 1940s. In this situation KDP was supported by the Iranian Shah, USA and Israel, who were his alliances in the Cold War. In this regard, in 1963, 1965, and 1968, the Kurdish upheavals were not compacted. Therefore, in 1970, Iraqi regime had to confer extensive cultural, economic and political, rights on the Kurds (Keskin, 2008).

In terms of the difficulties Iraq encountered in this age, the 1937 treaty was dissolved by Iran in 1969 and the control of the Shatt al-Arab was declared by itself (Ari, 2007,p:401). The USA’s new policy towards Iran was another important development to encourage the region. According to this policy, “known as Nixon Doctrine (or "Twin-Pillar Policy"), Iran would undertake the military responsibility for the security of the Gulf Area and Saudi Arabia would undertake economic and political responsibility for it” (Ataman, 2010,pp:166-167). Therefore, by using the military and political support, Iran was trying to dominate over the Gulf Area which got from the USA and started to harm the interests of Iraq. In November 1971, the islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb were invaded by Iran, which were important in terms of strategy in the Persian Gulf. To reaction to this, “Iraq, stopping the diplomatic relations with Iran, constrained Iran’s rights to Abadan Oil Refinery and Khormashahr Port” (Ataman, 2010, p: 166-167).

However, the regime of Ba'ath came to power in 1968, was tried to pull the foreign policy of Iraq to the Soviet line. In 1972, a "Friendship Treaty" was signed between Iraq and the Soviet Union to obtain military and political support in the struggle against the Kurds. Iraqi regime, having re-equipped the Iraqi military in terms of supporting the Soviet Union, a new attack was launched against KDP army in 1974. It is expected that the KDP had no opportunity of success against Iraqi military, solving the difficulty by signing a treaty with Iraq had been decided by the Iranian Shah (Rousu, 2010,p:59). On the March 6, 1975, the parties signed the Algeria Treaty. According to the apprehensive agreement, Iran would not support the Iraqi Kurdish groups and Iraq would give up its rights of power over the Shatt al-Arab. A good neighborhood relations would continued by the parties and the transitions between the borders would be prevented. On the July13, 1975 in Baghdad, a "Treaty of Border and Friendship" was completed between the two countries. (Ataman, 2010, p: 169).

## **2.2. The Islamic Revolution and the Iran–Iraq War**

The Islamic revolution of 1979 was deeply worrying for Baghdad and the Iraqi revolution of 1958 caused concern in Tehran. Therefore, in the Persian Gulf, the revolution appeared threatening to all the regimes, but the risk looked mostly threatening from the perception of Baghdad. "Iran and Iraq shared a long border, and the "spill-over" effect of the revolution was most acute in case of Iraq. Iran's message of a new, revolutionary Islam resonated with peoples across the Gulf region, and challenged Iraq's brand of secular Arab nationalism. Especially disturbed to Iraq was the possible appeal of the revolution to Iraq's large Shi'i community" (Shahram and Tripp,1980,p:3). Ayatollah Khomeini as the leader of Iran's revolutionary had mobilized view against the shah of Iran from his expel at the city of Najaf in Iraq in the age before starting the revolution. He had a significant followed between the Shi'is of Iraq in Najaf and other holy place cities. In this regard, several Iranian secretarial propagandists appeared in the Persian Gulf emirates after the revolution. Shi'i grievances against the government of Iraq was not related to Iran. Therefore, in 1977, it had led to serious riots and conflict in Najaf and Karbala and to more turbulence after the revolution of Iran, in June 1979. In addition, on April 1, 1980, a secret Shi'i party, al-Da'wa, was suspected of involvement in order murder Tariq Aziz, as a member of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). In this regard, the authorities of Iraq responded by expelling 35,000 Iranians and arresting suspect Shi'is (Shahram and

Tripp, 1980, p:3). For example, the execution and arrest by the authorities of Iraq of a politically minded and senior Shi'i cleric such Ayatollah Baqir al-Sadr, who was related to al-Da'wa, had led for having bad feeling in Iran (Baram,1983,p: 265).

In September 1980, border incidents were encouraged by the concerned state of Iran's affairs and the activities of Kurdish insurgents in both countries. Also the work of an Iran-Iraq border commission was stopped by the revolution under the 1975 Algiers Agreement that was mapping the border between the two countries. The new government of Iran involved in internal problems. By 1980, the Iranian revolution as an opportunity was seen by Saddam Hussein. Iran was in confusion. Therefore, the executions, purges, and wholesale dismissals ravaged its military. "A failed plot involving members of the officer corps, centered on the Nozha military base in western Iran, and supported by Iraq, resulted in a purge and crippling of the air force. (The Islamic Republic had to release Iranian pilots from prison after the Iraqi invasion and use them to fly bombing missions.) The regime appeared wracked by factional struggles" (Baram,1983,p: 265).

In September 1980, in terms of sending his army into Iran, it is believed that by Saddam Hussein that he could achieve three aims: severely weaken, possibly even overthrow, the Iranian revolutionary government and try to replace it with a government beholden or at least to be a friend to Iraq; improve his standing, in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, as a protector and winner of the Arab cause in order to restore complete Iraqi control in the Shatt al-Arab. The 1975 Algiers Agreement had been denounced by Iraq In October 1979 in order to remove Iran from the Tunbs and Abu Musa. In addition, "if the reiteration of Iraqi claims to Khuzistan following the invasion had a serious intent, the Iraqi president may have had his eye on Iran's rich oil resources. While Iranian actions in the weeks and months leading up to the war could be considered provocative, they did not constitute acts of war" (Baram,1983,p: 265). The war was Saddam's conflict of option; and it gave him war plans, he no doubt required to provoke it. Therefore, Iran-Iraq War was not only a continuance of previous conflicts. Border incidents had occurred between 1960 and 1961 and there were following confrontations, but both countries had been careful not to let actions to escalate extending war. The shah supported armed revolution by the Iraqi Kurds in the 1970s and he used Iranian army in order to support the revolution. But both sides believed that his plans were limited (Baram,1983,p: 265).

In 1980, Saddam went to war in order to collapse the Islamic Republic. Once the conflict started, toppling Saddam Hussein, and perhaps replacing him with a Shi'i conquered regime, had become an

Iranian war plan as well. The conflict obtained on the many characters of “unlimited war”(Baram,1983,p: 265). In the current history of the two countries, the Iran–Iraq War was exceptional, for the ideology’s role and the power and nature of war propaganda. “In periods of tension between Iran and Iraq since 1932, real and imagined past history, and traditional Iran–Arab and Shi‘i–Sunni animosities, had been invoked and had been a feature of the disputation. But the war pitted a highly ideological Baath regime, with a strong propensity for national myth-making” (Chubin,1989,pp: 13-14) against the regime of a revolutionary Iranian which determined by an effective, ideological idea of Islam (Entessar,1988,p: 56). Consequently, there were a conflict on the side of Iraq between Arab and Persian. These subjects were sounded by Tariq Aziz, Iraq’s deputy foreign minister, Saddam Hussein, and other Iraqi officials. Therefore, Iraq and the whole Arab nation were threatened by Iran. Iran was a supporter of the Zionists, whose Arabic power was facilitating. Theme and Sound Iran wished to compel “Persian racial dominance” over the Arabs (Nourbakhsh,1996,p: 16). Even in the early of war, Tariq Aziz and Saddam Hussein issued vague but there was alarming pressure against the territorial integrity of Iran. The recognition and autonomy for the “national characteristics” of the Arab population of the Iranian province of “Arabistan” (Khuzestan) was demanded by Tariq Aziz (Galbraith, 2006,p:17). Saddam Hussein emphasized that the responsibility of Iraq was going to recover, in Iran, not merely Iraqi region, but also “usurped Arab land” (Alfonsi,2006, p:17). It is argued by Saddam Hussein that when the battle started, it was not between our decisions for dividing Iran. (Abdul Ghani, 1993,p: 14)

In the late of the war, when Iraq had the higher hand, Iraqi administrators suggested that the collapse of Iran into its element ethnic components was not completely undesirable. On the side of Iran, Khomeini and the leaders of Iran explained the war as the protection not just of Iran, but of Islam and the very courage of the revolution. Therefore, since the Iranian revolution related to the whole world, it is stated that by the Prime Minister MirHosseinMousavi, “if Iran were defeated, all the revolutionary forces would be defeated” (Karsh,2002, p: 7). On the other hand it is argued by Khomeini who told Iranians: You are struggling to keep Islam and he is combating to collapse Islam. So, there is completely no question of cooperation and peace and we never have any planning with them; because they are perpetrators of corruption and corrupt (Cordesman, 1982,p: 32).

On the other hand, the war lead to leave a legacy of distrust that would show complex to defeat and of contentious problems that would show difficulty to resolve. The two countries stayed far separately in

terms of sovereignty over the Shatt al-Arab. For many years ago, there were problems between two countries in repatriating prisoners of war. Iranian compensation maintains against Iraq remained unsatisfied. About two decades after the end of fighting, a peace treaty or settled the war's residual issues had not been signed between the two countries (Shemirani,1993,p: 35).

The Iran–Iraq War was important for its influence on local army and military involvement and strategic alignments in the area by the United States. In addition, entanglement in earlier instances of conflict and disagreement between Iran and Iraq were avoided by the other Persian Gulf states. Once the war turned in supporting Iran in 1982, the implications for themselves of an Iranian success alarmed the Gulf States. At the height of Iran's army victories, Khomeini gave a suggestion of his future idea of the county. He expected that after Saddam's defeat, the people of Iraq "will set up their own government according to their wishes—an Islamic one. If Iran and Iraq merge and be amalgamated, all the smaller nations of the region will join them" (Shemirani,1993,p: 35).

The view of a merger of Iraq and Iran, with the Gulf's small states being strained into the union was a supportive one. Saddam played competently on the doubts of the Gulf States, also he explained as the rations of Arab unity, and he claimed that Iraq was the "shield" defensive every Persian Gulf states from Iran's hegemonic goals. However, the Gulf's Arab states together ended up in terms of providing Iraq with financial support predictable at \$35 to \$50 billion, exporting oil on behalf of Iraq, and providing overland services and port for goods bound for Iraq. Iraq's ability to sell oil was significantly enlarged by a main new pipeline through Saudi Arabia (Dekker,1986,pp: 78-79). The Gulf states, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia became, in supporters, effect and financiers of the attempt of Iraq's war. When attacks on Iranian offshore oil services and on Iranian oil transport were extended by Iraq in 1987, Iran also retaliated by the attacks on Kuwaiti and, to a smaller level, Saudi transport. It wished to convince them to stop from their support to Iraq's war attempt. These attacks, led Kuwait to request Moscow and Washington to permit Ships of Kuwait to sail under the American and Soviet flags. The United States, worried about the regional stability and consequences for its allies of an Iranian success, had begun silently to support the Iraqi war attempt with goods, credits, supplies of military and intelligence on the positioning of Iranian troops and planned Iranian offensives. It is responded to the Kuwaiti reflagging demand with alacrity. In this regard, the reflagging confirmed to be the starting of a process (deeply accelerated by the Iraqi attack of Kuwait

in 1990) by the American forces attendance in the Persian Gulf area considerably increased (Abdul Ghani, 1993,p: 16).

### **2.3. Iran's Position on the Second Gulf War And The US Siege On Iraq 1990-2003**

During the 1990s, Iran's Iraq policy of "cold peace" can be mostly described as a flexible rapprochement aimed and strategy of practical for looking a original *modus vivendi* in the Gulf. A high level of pragmatist flexibility in aims and means had been proved by the Iran's Iraq policy under the presidencies of Rafsanjani and Khatami. "Iran adopted a double-edged strategy of gradual rapprochement and accommodation with both Iraq and the U.S.-led anti-Iraq coalition. Major goals of Iran's Iraq policy were the preservation of the territorial and political status quo of Iraq and the gradual pushing back of the U.S. military presence and influence in the Gulf region. The Iran's Iraq policy tended towards the strategy of a flexible and beginning. Iran resorted to issue-by-issue discussions with Iraq and reserved its policy temporary as long as Iraq's future appeared vague. Thus, Iran sustained a nuanced and balanced policy of drawing neither on full disagreement nor on conciliatory conciliation. Iran's alert and mostly the policy of defensive-status quo were also fixed with some outstanding revisionist elements. "Iran's mediate confrontation with Iraq through the parallel ideological endorsement of Iraqi opposition groups constituted a double-edged game (Ehteshami,2002,p: 301).

In the 1990s, Iranian Iraq policy was known as a prism in order to deal with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, by the leadership of the US in the Second Gulf War and suppression policy against Iraq, with having the serious political legacy of the previous Iran-Iraq War. In terms of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, a clear status-quo policy was pursued by Iran. The aims of Iranian Iraq policy were the reinstatement of Kuwait's national power and of the defensive position quo of the Shatt al-Arab, the removal of all overseas troops from the Gulf, and the protection of Iraq's state unity and power. Iran chooses an independent and flexible approach in order to respond Iraq's challenge of the political and protective position quo in the Gulf. In this regard, a high degree of flexibility and sovereignty in Iranian Iraq policy was allowed by Iran's objectivity and independent attitude in the Gulf War (Ehteshami, 2002,p: 301).



On the other hand, during the Gulf War, Iran joined neither the pacifist Arab army nor the U.S.-led international alliance against Iraq. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was condemned by Iran at an early step and required the execution of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, but also rejected to allow using Iranian land or air space to the anti-Iraq union (Rieck,1992,p: 80). As a result of that Iran sided with the plans by the leadership of the U.S. as an international coalition (Bakhash, 2001, p: 253). Although Iran denounced using power against Iraq by the US and its coalition collaborators, supported the U.S.-backed international suppression of and embargo against Iraq. In the 1990s the Iran's Iraq policy was mostly marked by de facto cooperation of Iran with the international society and the approval of the UN position. "Iran demanded from Iraq the compliance with all UNSC resolutions and supported a non-military enforcement of the UN-sponsored disarmament of Iraq". During the 1990s, Iran did not offer in to Iraqi efforts of victory Iran as a supporter against the U.S.leadership international embargo and suppression policy. During the 1990s, the U.S. policy of double containment directed against Iraq and Iran, and the general hostility with the U.S. (Ehteshami, 2008b, p: 132 and Taremi,2005,p: 32).

During the 1990s, Iranian Iraq policy proved a significant foreign-policy between realizing a regular rapprochement with Iraq and endorsing the anti-Iraq coalition's policy (Rieck, 1991,p: 82). Therefore, lasting tensions and conflicts and similar assistance and intergovernmental exchange marked the Iranian relations with Iraq (Ehteshami, 2003,p: 121). In this regard, neither appeasing policy of conciliation, nor a completely inflexible policy of disagreement was pursued by Iran. A gradual and trained rapprochement, and on issue-by-issue discussions was built by Iran's policy towards Iraq. Consequently, Iran succeeded in terms of dealing separately with unanswered questions from its earlier eight-year war with Iraq. Furthermore, "Major remaining issues were the question of war reparations, the exchange of war prisoners and lasting border disputes coupled with the question of territorial sovereignty over the Shatt al-Arab and of the acknowledgment of the Algiers Agreement from 1975". While in the 1990s, Iran did not attain an official peace agreement with Iraq, it recreated political and working relationships with its Iraqi neighbor (Hooglund, 2006,p: 174).

When the 1975 Algiers Accord was offered by Iraq as the foundation for discussing a new border accord, Iran did not get the offer of desperate accommodation policy of Iraq in the Gulf War (Rieck, 1991a,p: 83 and1992,p: 81). Iran sustained its ideological endorsement of Iraqi antagonism groups. Therefore, a revisionist policy of mediate disagreement via regional, sub-state proxies had been held

by Iran. The Iranian hosting and supporting of Iraqi antagonism groups had planning to defeat the previous Baathist regime of Iraq and to change the political position quo during the Iran-Iraq War. Iran particularly invested in the organizing, training, and arming of subversive the movements of Iraqi Islamic that were opposed to the regime of Iraq. During the 1990s, Iran has continued to refuge some Iraqi Islamic antagonism groups, including; “the Islamic Dawa party and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) as Iraq’s chief Islamic opposition group advocating an Iraqi Islamic theocracy” (Ehteshami, 2008,p: 129).

During the (Second) Gulf War, the Iraqi Shiite revolution against the Saddam regime in southern Iraq was supported by Iran. While during the 1990s, Iran continued to support Iraqi Islamic disagreement groups, it was similarly confronted with an Iraqi support of the Iranian disagreement group Mojahedin-e Khalq (MOK) deported in Iraq and opposed to the republic of the Iranian Islamic. Iran responded to the reaction of Iraq’s hosting and huge military, political, financial, and support the MOK and to different actions of the members of MOK against Iran by periodic and guerrilla-like assault on Iraqi region. During the 1990s, “Iran pursued a multi-layered, flexible, and “short-termis” Iraq policy that failed to “deliver a consistent set of policy options towards Iraq” (Ehteshami ,2008, p: 129).

It seems that, the border territorial disputes between Iran and Iraq, have started many years ago, and lasted in the eight-year war among two countries in the twentieth century. It had been to exploit this conflict for political purposes which related to the balance of regional power and develop the influence of strategic interests in order to install its sovereignty in the region. However, the regime of Shah and the arrival of Khomeini strained the relationships between two countries.

The Iraq- Iran war for about eight years, Iraq came out of it victorious, but the United States intervened in the region in order to bring the balance of political and regional powers to prevent damage to its oil interests. The US worked on attacking Iraq, through the invasion of Kuwait, and the imposition of the economic blockade later. As a result of that Iraq has made restricted and subject to the United State, and finishing the military power for the invasion in 2003 under the pretext of possessing weapons of mass.

## CHAPTER 3. IRAQI-IRANIAN POLITICAL RELATIONS

Baghdad was occupied in April 9, 2003. Three weeks after starting the invasion, it was announced officially that the occupation of the US forces to the Iraqi capital was successful, also it was collapsed the Saddam Hussein's regime. Since the invasion of Iraq on 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2003, there were many developments in terms of political, security, economic and cultural levels, which has written and still received a direct outcome on the overall situation in the Arab region and the world.

It is argued here since the US occupation – British, Iraqi society had got some internal and external relations, consequently, the latest occupation was not structural in Iraqi society. Therefore, this has led to the emergence of political leaders and supporter of sectarian Sunni, Shiite, Kurdish and other parties doctrinal. Therefore, the balance of the power of regional and international countries, led to create a vacancy political, economic and security in Iraq. In addition, the regional countries have become active and influential through the aspirations of its foreign policy and strategic objectives in the region, including: Iran, Turkey, Syria and Saudi Arabia. But Iran had a big impact on Iraq's domestic and foreign policies, which has worked to expand its influence in Iraq on various political, security and cultural aspects. Furthermore, it became involved in political decision making through its agents in Iraq from the political parties and movements participating in the Iraqi government.

This chapter is divided into three sections, as follows: firstly, American occupation of Iraq in 2003 and Iran's stance on this invasion, secondly, competition and perceptions of U. S. and Iran of the Iraq and thirdly, Iranian influence in Iraqi politics arena.

### **3.1. American Occupation of Iraq In 2003**

The reasons for the Iraqi war: It cannot be limited to the reasons of the US war on Iraq in terms of reducing a number of specific points, as many causes to expand the complexity and interrelatedness. Included the reasons for the level of international ideologies and the other which related to the national interests and international terrorism and the consumption of Arab's oil and build a "New American Century" and its control over the world in order to prevent the rise of another force in the international arena. These reasons can be referred into following points:

Firstly, political reasons:

The people in a democratic government is identified by a transition government as representative of whole Iraqi communities including Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds, after that capturing the members of Ba'ath Party and judging their dictatorial government which set up by Saddam Hussein's regime and his family (Walker,2007,p:67)

Secondly, military factors:

Removing a risk on the world, due to the ability of Saddam Hussein to wage war; defuse weapons of mass destruction which included chemical, biological, the long-range missiles, nuclear, and other weapons; military goals was elected by strikes; and during the first Gulf War, Saddam Hussein seized recover Kuwait's properties, prisoners of war, and military equipment. Also the "fight against terrorism", Iraq is presented as "a state supporting al-Qaida, responsible among other things, the attack against the warship USS Cole bombing, attacks against several U.S. embassies in Africa, and the attacks of September 11, 2001". Those charges have been shown to be unsupported, including the U.S. (Katzman, p: 6).

Thirdly, economic factors:

The protection of oil wealth is known as one of the main economic aims that will be helpful for their state building and put an ending to the big black market. (Greenwood,2001,p: 239 and Maisonneuve Press, 2004,p:250). Then, the purpose of occupying Iraq is to make sure a constant flow of oil from the Persian Gulf to other countries particularly Gulf countries for example, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait as they are a good supply of petrol for the U.S.

The goals of the war on Iraq: It is argued by Robin Cook as the British Foreign Minister says, "The main motive behind the invasion of Iraq was to secure a new base of US influence in the region" (DaYaar, 2008,p: 57). Since this war of violence beyond it declared objectives and it is undeclared on Iraq, it was for the destruction of the Iraqi military force. In this regard, there are some main objectives:

1. One of the main political aims is to set up a new democratic regime in Iraq that will provide United State interests and remove the risk to a number of Islamic governments neighboring to Iraq. It is considered by Saddam Hussein's regime that all efforts to the destruction of Israel

are supported by anti- Israel, additionally supporting Palestinians against their conflict with Israel and the boycotting of the situation of Israel to be stopped. (Resolution 1441 of the Security Council, 2002, p:5).

2. The map of Middle East was drawn for the interests, in March 2004; a new project has done by George W. Bush Son on behalf of the superior Middle East within this framework. Therefore, Iraq's determination was a must to stabilize the neighboring political situation (Dadayan, 2003, p: 166).
3. Placing the United States troops and bases Iraqi regions to control the Persian Gulf for showing the world that the U.S. forces is still the great powerful and the threat of big powers such as Iran, China, and North Korea, and other countries are not a danger to the American plan (Abdul Ghani, 2004).
4. This struggle would allow several American companies in order to close to the Bush government to earnings from Iraqi oil by captivating control of oil. Furthermore, a lot of money could be fed back into the United States economy, especially in terms of weapons and oil.
5. Taking benefit of the war to recover the US economy, is suffering from unemployment, recession and high interest rates for preserving the production of weapons factories and to protect big companies which suffered from Collapse (Haseeb,2003).

The consequences of the Iraqi war, there are a number of the main consequences of the invasion of Iraq which divided into following points: (DeFronzo, 2010, p:323 ).

1. It is expected by many analysts that the collapse of Saddam Hussein and the occupation by the British-US forces leads to raise the terrorist activity of Islamic origin and terrorist cells are more active and independent such as al-Qaeda. Consequently, this led to create a humanitarian crisis due to lack of clean water, food, medicines, and other important items appeared. Finally, rebellion, terrorism, and sabotage became the rule rather than the exemption.

2. According to European diplomacy, the US decision to occupy Iraq was without the agreement of the Security Council of the United Nations and it was a refuse of international law. It is argued by representatives of a number of European countries such as France, Germany or Russia who states that Iraqi invasion without any permission from the UN is an step of violence ( Schmitt,2004,p:82-83).

3. Installation of a temporary Iraqi regime chosen by the allies that the main aims to introduce a democratic regime and to revamp Iraq policy which including members of different national groups in Iraq such as Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds (Danchin, p: 66).

4. Investments in oil by overseas companies, preventing Iraq to get benefit from its resource investments that Iraqi cannot refuse because Iraqi oil refineries are under the control of some special powers such as the US and British armies

5. The Iraqi war has lost thousands of casualties on the side of Iraq and a lot of refugees were fleeing from their country to Syria, Iran and Turkey (about 200,000 Iraqi refugees) while they have lost everything (Wehrey et al,2010,p: 216).

Iran's stance on American invasion of Iraq in 2003, according to the Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i, who states that "The US claims that its objective is the elimination of Saddam and the Baathist regime. This is, of course, a lie. Its real aim is to appropriate OPEC and to swallow up the region's oil resources, to offer a closer support to the Zionist regime and to plot more closely against Islamic Iran, Syria, and Saudi Arabia..."(Gellman and Linzer,2004). It is believed that by architects of the war in Washington that the emergence of an Iraq's democracy would put pressure on undemocratic leaders of Tehran, Iran's position emerges to have been more greatly influenced by fear that American hawks to set their views on Tehran could be encouraged by a U.S. success in Iraq. According to a senior official in the Iranian Foreign Ministry who argues that that Iran was worried more with the United States unilateralism than with the Iraqi war as such: No nation is eager than Iran to see collapsing Saddam Hussein, but no one wants the precedent of a government change policy. Because of that Iran was opposite to the Iraqi war. Everyone was excited to see collapsing Saddam's regime, but we are not eager that something illegal happened. That is way Iran would have agreed with the war (Dobbins, 2004).

Furthermore, reluctance of Iran to collaborate in the U.S. war attempt was due to the reaction of Tehran that its assistance with the United States in Afghanistan in 2001. In this regard, Iran had been a violent challenger of the Taliban regime and had supported the disagreement Northern Alliance. Although Tehran officially confirmed its impartiality during U.S. fight operations, it is supported anti-Taliban fighters and certain Washington that it would save any U.S. pilots shot down in Iranian

land. During the war and its outcome, useful intelligence to Washington on the actions of members of al-Qaeda was provided by Tehran (Zahrani, 2004) and played an important role in terms of establishing Hamid Karzai's change regime, according to the Bush government particular envoy for Afghanistan (Boumnijel,2005,p:64).

Tehran's supposed nuclear aspiration and its suspected misbehavior in other territories, (Reuters, 2006) led the Bush government in order to characterize Iran as a part of an "axis of evil" in the president's position of the Union speech on January 2002. Therefore, the U.S. plans for an Iraqi war had begun to unfold; the decision of Iran's primary makers saw no real profits in support for either part. Furthermore, before the war, they rejected offers from the regime of Saddam Hussein and stayed out of the US' way during fight process. The leaders of Iran gave its approval to Iran-based Iraqi disagreement groups to convene with American administrators regarding strategy for the war and postwar rebuilding (Boumnijel,2005, p:65). But, according to a former Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmoud Vaezi who mentions that, Iran was not going to "make the same mistake twice" in terms of collaborating with the US in Iraq (Linzer,2004).

It seems that through the previous Iranian stance to the US occupation of Iraq and concern that this war turn out to be an imbalance in the balance of geopolitical strategy and the imbalance of power in the region which controlled by the United States. In this regard, the US tried to put its foreign policy, its goals and ambitions implicit in order to fill the political and security vacuum in Iraq through the intervention in Iraqi affairs to build a weak Iraqi regime. The US was continued easily, exploited, and refrain from threatening the neighbors that is what built by neighboring such Iran in its foreign policy, through political consensus with the United States. To suit with their interests, and support the agents of the political parties and religious movements and enable access to have power in the new Iraqi regime after 2003.

### **3.2. Competition and Perceptions Us and Iran ofthe Iraq**

Even though both Iran and the US search for stability in Iraq, there are a number of main problems that can put two sides on a pathway to conflict. The direct issue is related to the program of Iranian nuclear weapons. For the main differences to be resigned, pragmatism must conquer ideology on both countries. For the U.S. and Iran, the strategic opposition between the two sides is a zero-sum game,

also the risk of conflict cannot be unobserved (Khalilzad,2008). According to American critics who argue that it is not in the benefits of the US to talk with Iran, let alone provide encouragement to, an oppressive and undemocratic government. It is suggested that the US understands it needs more international support in terms of resolving the Iranian nuclear issue, and according to Iranian mullahs who realized that to resolve their own economic issues they have to contact out, both countries should understand that there is a realistic, mutually cooperative approach to resolve their mainly self-constructed impasses. However, the issue of nuclear provides a thin but important opportunity for the US to connect Iran in a mutual framework which including the European Union. This commitment could be followed by a new discussion that led to collaboration in some areas (Crocker,2008).

From the Iranian viewpoint, the Iraq's dilemma provide both the inspiration "(the avoidance of strategic encirclement) and the opportunity (the over stretching of U.S. forces) to press forward with their nuclear program as quickly as possible". Furthermore, on both sides, the key to avoid escalation will be considering the nuclear power in a mutual framework. In this regard, for the Iranians, international participation will mean better guarantee that their national benefits that are taken into its relation. For the US, an international imprimatur on actions which are taken into assistance, sanctions, or military power (Ringstrom and Cornwell,2008).

Iran would be needed a successful mutual negotiating debate in order to put its nuclear fuel-cycle program under international control as a part of a far-reaching agreement with the US and the European Union. It would also need an ending of Iran's help for anti-Israeli terrorism. Therefore, Iran would also need a number type of attack on the Mujahideen al-Khalq, and the terrorists of militant anti-mullah who are in Iraq and have not been separated by either the Iraqi government or the United States (Kane and Taylor,2011,p:2).

Although for years the administrator U.S. policy has been that it is eager to have diplomatic associates with Iran and for discussing any subject under the rule of the Iranians favor. In this regard, the Bush administration has not pursued by this policy, and no Iranian regime has been eager to recognize the suggestion. Therefore, the conventional leaders of Tehran would be organized in order to negotiate with the US, created that it stops in its attempts for changing the Iranian government (Quarterly Report To Congress, 2011,p:38).



On the other hand, at the present time, Iran has little motivation to collaborate with the US on Iraq. In fact, “it can probably exert enough influence to realize its preferred outcomes in Iraq and better pursue its broader objectives for the region as an exporter of a revolutionary Islamic agenda without engagement with the United States”. Therefore, if there is an issue that will push the leaders of Iran into a number of kind of meeting with the US, so it is Iran’s require for improvement its economy and foreign investment for developing its natural gas reserves and oil (Quarterly Report To Congress, 2011,p:38). Furthermore, oil income is a critical part in Iran’s ability in order to ride out its arguments with the US, Europe, and, its neighbors. It can use its main export incomes for creation the support for some groups that it considers serve its broader benefits in the Islamic world, like Hezbollah (Petraeus and Crocker, 2008).

Another main cause for Iran to assist with the US in Iraq related to is the development on the nuclear issue. According to U.S. preferences, Iran’s wish does not want to see the civil war and confusion in Iraq, it will play an inactive role with observe to the insurgency and general confrontation to shaping of a new government. However, if debate with the US and the European Union on the program of Iran’s nuclear weaken, it might be excited to raise Iraq’s instability level. In this regard, such instability is a determined as a threat to Iran as a negotiating strategy, it could happen if the government had been faced direct military disagreement with the US (Ottaway and Kaysi, 2012, p:8).

However, it is clear that there is an Iran’s inspiration to help stabilize in Iraq fractured Iraq, perhaps in a situation of civil war, carries a risk of local conflagration that would directly influence on the security of Iran. On the other hand, assisting with the US on this issue while will seriously examine the diplomatic capacities of each side (Ottaway and Kaysi,2012,p:8). Tehran has the inspiration to let the US stand the main burden of stabilizing Iraq. Therefore, the regime’s national objectives and strategic interests directed Iran’s conditions and terms for cooperation.

According to the U.S. perception, working directly with Iran is doubtful in the diplomatic environment in terms of nuclear and terrorism problems. In this regard, the U.S. gratitude of Iranian interests in preserving Iraqi stability would be helpful in order to achieve an agreement, explicit or tacit, that encourages Iranian collaboration rather than interference (White House, 2011). The US must continue in terms of ignored make Iraqi politics an alternative for the United States-Iranian disagreement.

There are three sections of possible cooperation: “tacit agreement with Iran that would commit both sides not to use Iraq as a proxy battlefield; direct dialogue with Iran solely on the issue of Iraqi stabilization; and discussion of Iraq as part of a wider engagement with the Iranian regime” (Ottaway and Kaysi, 2012, pp:12-14).

Furthermore, the US must oppose attractions to blame complexities to fight the insurgency on Iran to encourage Iran for cooperation on Iraq. It is evident that Iranian involvement has been complex to document, although it is stated that by British Prime Minister Tony Blair who openly blamed Iran or its surrogates of providing volatiles to rebellious in southern Iraq who fight the British powers in October 2005 (Talabani, Blair, 2005). However, “the Bush administration seems to have toned down its rhetoric on regime change in Iran, but it will not be willing to consider lifting economic sanctions absent a permanent freeze or a dismantlement of the Iranian nuclear fuel cycle”.

### **3.3. Iranian Influence in Iraqi Political Arena**

Since the collapse of Saddam Hussein’s regime in 2003, Iran has sought to put pressure into Iraqi politics in order to work with Kurdish parties and Shiite to make a weak federal country which dominated by Shiites and agreeable to Iranian control. Therefore, Shiite insurgent groups and militias have been supported by Tehran, and Iran improved its soft power in the religious, economic, and informational sphere. The objective of Iran is to unite Iraq’s Shiite parties because of transform their demographic influence into political power, to consolidate Shiite dominance for the first time. Furthermore, “Tehran has encouraged its closest allies—the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), Dawa and the Sadrists to participate in politics and help shape Iraq’s nascent institutions” (Eisenstadt, Knights, Ali, 2011, p:145). Iranian influence in Iraq after the occupation of Iraq through the division of labor influence which divided into some sections that worked by Iran to achieve this influence which including following sections:

1. Local allies: Refugee Iraqis established the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) in Tehran in 1982, and supported there until returning to Iraq in 2003. Therefore, its army, the Badr group, was controlled and trained by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and had fought alongside Iranian army during the Iran-Iraq War. Since 2003, thousands of Badr militiamen tried to enter southern Iraq

from Iran in order to support that part of the country. After that many were integrated into the Iraqi defense forces, mostly the national police and the army (Kimmage and Ridolfo, 2007, p:12).

In the late 1950s, Dawa, founded. Since 2003, Dawa was joined to the political process, but because of the lack of an armed militia, its prospective was limited. Therefore, the more powerful ISCI and Sadrists elected leader, Nuri al-Maliki as a compromise choice for prime minister in 2005 in order to build a power which based in the government and the military (Felter and Fishman,2008,p:28).

Since 2003, the Sadrists found as a main power in politics of Iraqi street. Muqtada al-Sadr was the leader. Therefore, it politically allied with ISCI and Dawa. The Sadrists have had a controversial and aggressive relationship with both parties. In 2007, Sadr fled to Iran to avoid being targeted by the United States and Iraqi armies (Ganji,2006,p:11).

The Kurdish parties such as the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) have had long-standing relationships with Iran. During the Iran-Iraq War, Kurdish guerrillas (Peshmerga) fought Iran. And Iran continues to have close relationships with the PUK and KDP, and Iraq's northern Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). But Iran has conducted special cross-border arms strikes opposite Iranian Kurdish guerrillas which based in northern Iraq (Alalloyj, 2007,p:143).

2. Information, Propaganda, and Public Opinion: During the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, Al-Alam television was opened, although Iran supports a number of radio stations and TV that broadcast in the Arabic canal into Iraq and outside. In this regard, "Iran has been vying for Iraqi hearts and minds through Arabic-language radio and television news and entertainment broadcasts into Iraq that reflect the Islamic Republic's propaganda line on the country and the region. These efforts, however, have met with only limited success". An anti-Iranian backlash, even in Shiite regions has normally shaped by the politics of Tehran and its actions. For example, in November 2007, heads of tribal in southern Iraq dispersed petitions critical supposed Iranian attempts to threaten Iraq. And Iran's temporary attack of the Fakka oil sparked protests throughout Iraq and condemnations by the heads of tribal in the south in December 2009 (Eisenstadt, Knights, Ali, 2011,p: 148-149). Attempts by a number of politicians of Shiite to soft-pedal Iranian intervention in Iraqi affairs and Iranian contraventions of Iraqi dominion have engendered offense against local allies of Iran. According to polling data since

2003, it is stated that by huge numbers of Iraqis (including Shiites) who believe that Iran has a negative impact on Iraqi stability and politics, and do not believe Iran's appearance of governance a practical form for Iraq. According to this data which shows that all persuasions of Iraq are doubtful of Iran and it is believed that it interferes in politics of Iraq. Since 2003, this observation has stayed fairly stable, and has not been changed by the actions of Iranian information or propaganda (International Republican Institute, 2004, p: 14).

3. Export of Revolutionary Islam: one of the Islamic Republic's principal aims has protected the primacy of its representative ideology in communities of Shiite throughout the world since the Islamic Revolution. Therefore, in Iraq the religious seminaries (hawza) of Najaf encourage a limited secretarial role in politics (Khalaji, 2010, p: 11). In this regard, to Tehran's disappointment, collapsing of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003 produced new opportunities for "Najaf-based Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani—foremost representative of the quietist school and marja (source of emulation) for perhaps 80 percent of all Shiites worldwide—to further expand his activities in Iraq. The Islamic Republic has spent prodigious sums of state monies to fund the activities of politicized clerics associated with Qom, in an effort to outspend the marja as based in Najaf and to co-opt the seminarians and masses under their influence, while funding propaganda activities to promote the Islamic Republic's version of Islam". As a result of that Najaf has known as the focus of Iranian investment and some other actions which sometimes referred as the Shiite Vatican (Rubin, 2010).

4. Militias and insurgents: Iraqi political allies have been encouraged by Iran for working with the US. But its Quds power has been trained, armed, and funded militias which related to these parties, as well as radical insurgent groups that attack U.S. forces. These groups could provide Tehran the resources to retaliate against the United States powers in Iraq, should the U.S. or Israel attack nuclear services in Iraq. Iran originally focused its possessions on its established allies in ISCI's and Badr Corps after 2003. But it extended its support to consist of the military power of Sadrists' Mahdi which related to the particular groups and a number of Sunni rebellious groups. It used Arabic-speaking Lebanese Hezbollah effectiveness in order to aid these efforts. The support of Iran for the Mahdi Army has established difficult (Knights, 2010, p. 12). After 2003, a dramatic development had been undergone by the Sadrist militia, which led it to integrate many illegal basics. The program of militia's radical and its opposition for force within the community of Shiite soon brought it into the conflict with both the Iraqi government and the Supreme Council, thus depression Iranian attempts to

unify the Shiite community. The actions of the Ansar al-Islam, a Salafi jihadist group have been facilitated by Iran in northern Iraq, which created influence over the Kurdish regional government (KRG) and an entree into Sunni jihadist spheres. By 2010, the support to three armed Shiite groups had been narrowed by Iran: “Sadr’s Promised Day Brigade—the successor to the Mahdi Army—and two special groups: Asa’ib Ahl al-Haqq (League of the Righteous) and Kata’ib Hezbollah (Battalions of Hezbollah)”. In mid-2010 Iranian advisors returned to Iraq with Kata’ib Hezbollah operatives skilled in Iran to perform campaign on U.S. army. Their objective was to provide the idea that the US was forced out of Iraq (Felter and Fishman,2008,pp:29-30).

It is argued here that Iran worked during the US occupation of Iraq in order to create opportunities for interfering in the affairs of Iraq, and the payment of the Shiite parties in Iraq. Therefore, Iran tried to gain access to have power and this is what became clear in the elections of Iraq during 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2010. The arrival of Shiite leaders into the power and keep themselves of political power, and an actress prime minister.

Iran’s goal ensures that Iraq controlled by its allies and guidance policies from inside and outside. At the same time it makes Iraq as a settling of accounts with the United States, and makes it a red line area to discourage any US progress that could threaten the future of Iran. Therefore, Iran Influence extended even in the future remains which governed by balanced regional power of, which are essentially as the same role before the US invasion of Iraq.

## **CHAPTER 4. STRATEGIC GOALS OF IRANIAN POLICY TOWARD**

### **IRAQ AFTER THE OCCUPATION**

After the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the USA and UK, Iran had worries that its most neighboring country might be used to attack its interests in the Middle East and minimize its role in the region. The Iranian political leaders and their higher Ali-Khamenei put all their efforts to support the majority Shiite religious group to come to power in Iraq and strengthen their roots.

Obviously, after the overthrow of the Saddam's regime, Iran has succeeded in imposing its influence on Iraqi leaders as Tehran was keen not only to support the Shiite religious group in Iraq but also to have a hand in the interior policies and systems in Iraq. The main goal of this interest was that Iran did not want to give Iraq any chance to threaten its interest in the region and put its national security at danger. The discrimination and neglecting of the Iraqi Shiite by the previous regime was enough to make Iran impose its control over not only the Shiite territory, but also the whole Iraq. Iranian strategic and policy objectives in Iraq after the US invasion could be divided into two main sections: Iran's strategic goals of post-invasion Iraq and Iran's main policy towards Iraq.

#### **4.1. Iran's Strategic Goals of Post-Invasion Iraq**

Political and diplomatic goals: Iran's main reason to interference and apply its influence on Iraq was political and diplomatic commitment. After the fall of the previous regime in 2003, Iran was wise enough to build good political and economic relations with the new government. Iran's main intention was to guarantee that a Shiite religious group, which have the same religious background with Iran, would control the new government. As the Shiite religious group consists of 60% of Iraqi population, this was enough to make the previous regime oppress them for three decades. And Iran was clever enough to use its good relations with the Shiite politicians and political parties to ensure their coming into the power.

The strong relationship between the two countries did not end in the diplomatic sector, but also this opened the door of many contracts and agreements in the field of military, energy and transportation,

and opening new agencies in Basra and Karbala (Katzman, 2009, p: 28). In the two sided US-Iraq Security Assignment in 2008, Iran has influenced the Iraqi politicians in their conciliation with the US. The Security Assignment addressed the US security relationships with Iraq with the Strategic Framework Agreement which summarized by large the US relations with Iraq. These two manuscripts substituted the UN permission which approved the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. During that time, Iran had concerns about the US and their main intention to have partial bases in Iraq which might be used to attack Tehran. Consequently, Iraqi officials were affected by Iran to ensure their own worries tackled to the Security Agreement about the US remaining in Iraq which resulted in forming a condition that ensure the US could not use Iraqi land to attack other countries. Moreover, Iraq has insisted that US should set up a schedule for the total pulling out of its land (Guzansky, 2011, pp: 88-89).

Iraqi Shiite parties were encouraged by Iran to take part in the post 2003 invasion poll which was run by the US. Then to seek information for after the election, three main Shiite coalitions have visited Iran. At this election, US motivated Iraqis to follow the new assured Shiite dominated government as they consisted of 60% of Iraqi Population. The relationship between Iran and Iraq has been very influential and fruitful for Iraq especially for Shiite political parties. It helped Iraqis to launch the new government again after the overthrow of the previous regime. Moreover, these political relations have advanced to the safety of the Iraq- Iran borders, economic and financial agreements (Guzansky, 2011, p: 90).

Information goals: Iran also has hired its rich information to impose its effect on Iraq by using media so broadly to influence Iraqi people generally and their thoughts. Iran used media to depict the US invasion of Iraq so negatively that affect Iraqis' feelings. Michel Rubin from the American enterprise Institute has argued that there were two main Iranian broadcasting channels that Iran has used to influence Iraqis' ideas: Iran's News Agencies, and Iran's Arabic Language TV. Iran used media to have the same effect US has on Iraq and Tehran's negative information about the US invasion has irritated Iraqis' emotions and this lead to the instituting of militias. Moreover, Iran's media has also influenced the US people and provoked the political dispute about domestic maintain of the US invasion of Iraq by broadcasting their causalities (Rubin, 2007).

Also it is showed that how Tehran's government established many TV channels and radio stations which formed the Iraqi point of view of the US invasion and collapsing the previous regime. The

radio station, Voice of the Mujahedin, was considered the representative of the Iran and the higher Al-Khamenei. Moreover, three Arabic-language radio stations were broadcasted by Iran in the Southwest Khuzestan which is near Southern Iraq (Green, et al. 2009, p: 33).

Iran also established two new TV channels for Iraqi people, Sahar TV and Al Alam TV only channels which belonged to Sahar TV were mainly hired to show and advertise Iran into Arab world. Iran's movement in media showed how Iran was trying to play a major role and impose its influence on Iraq. It also displayed how Iran was attempting to control the public ideas in Iraq and Arab world generally (Knights, 2003, p: 1). It is highlighted how the Iran's neighbourhood with the Arab world has effect on how Iranian people were influenced by this world and how it was trying to influence them in return.

Security and military goals: After the 2003 invasion, many armed and rebellious groups were established in Iraq. And Iran has supported these group military and logistically. Many of these armed groups were obviously acting against the US targets in Iraq. In one hand, Iran was using these groups to strike back against US troops in Iraq, on the other hand, the US was using Iran's nuclear program to influence the UN to compel more economic sanction (Guzansky, 2011, p: 86). Moreover, by providing their military support to the militias in Iraq, Iran was helping the interior agenda inside Iraq. The military support included giving instructions, supplying missiles and ammunition. Furthermore, to have more influence inside Iraq, Iran employed its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) or Pasdaran to carry out its armed operations in Iraq. Pasdaran is known as strongly practiced men who consisted of 125,000 men and were mainly employed to protect Iran's interests inside Iran and in the region in general and they were also ready to offer military help for the other terrorist groups in the region (Eisenstadt, Knights, Ali, 2011, p: 146).

In addition, a second part of the Pasdaran is named as the Qods Force, which was basically established to provide support and training for the terrorist groups. The Qods Force, improved by Lebanese Hezbollah armed forces, and fund, were providing training for Iraqi rebellions at Iran and Lebanon. Furthermore, the US and Iraqi security forces were targeted by Iran's weapons such as (IEDS), which is known as explosive formed penetrators (EFPS). The EFPs have 14 advanced lethality speed than other types of offhand explosive devices, these weapons were basically created to crush resistant coalition forces vehicles and these bombs provided for the military groups to target the coalition forces in Iraq (Guzansky, 2011, p: 88). Iran has started to draw a plan to face US forces in



Iraq long before 2003, many reports have shown that Iraq has sent thousand trained men into Iraq rapidly after 2003 invasion and these members have tried to submit its control of many strategic Shiite area in Iraq. There were many proofs that ensured Iran has provided its ammunition, weapons and Hezbollah trainers to the Shiite militia groups in Iraq who were fighting against Sunni Arabs, Coalition Forces and Iraqi Security forces and Iraqi government. More abundance of Iran's military supports for militias groups and its influence in the region were found in a United States Institute of Peace Special Report (IOPSR) by Barbara Slavin. Slavin has very largely examined Iran's crucial role in providing military support for Iraq. Iran's made weapons such as rockets and EFPs were apparently handed to Iraqi militia groups in 2008(Barzegar, 2010, p: 85) has shown that most of the US and Coalition forces loses were resulted by Iranian made weapons. Iran used its connection with Shiite politicians by providing weapons and training to the militia groups.

In addition, Pasdaran has created Badr Brigade which is regarded an armed wing of the ISCT. The ISCT is a diplomatic party which was established in Iran by Iraqi Shiite politicians who were escaped or expelled to Iran during Iran-Iraq war. During Iran-Iraq war, the Badr group has fought against Saddam regime and they employed Shiite prisoners to connect and link with them. And after the overthrown of the Baath regime, several hundreds of the Badr trainers and many Qods members went to Iraq (Eisenstadt, Knights, Ali, 2011, p: 147).

Religious strategy goals: Iran knew how to use its religious bond with Iraqi Shiite to strengthen its roots in Iraq and stop the religious men inside Iraq in condemning Iran's philosophy and to spread radical Islam internationally. Thus Iran has used two major tactics to affect Iraq's religious sector. At the beginning, Iran has imposed its control over Shiite religious network in Najaf, which is regarded as one of the most Shiite crucial and holy place. As the most of religious men in Najaf were trained by the conventional seminars of hawzas, they supported and retrained by Iran's new version of Vilayati- Faqi,(Eisenstadt et al., 2011, p: 12). Therefore, to compel its version of religious rule over Iraqi Shiite hawzas, Iran delivered its agents and religious men, who were trained in Qom, into Iraq. They were loaded with enough money to spread Iran's ideology in Iraq by holding and organizing workshops and propaganda campaign. Tahrán was worried about attendance of Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani in Najaf, who is regarded as the eldest and most devoted religious man by the Iraqi Shiite. Despite the fact, that Al-Sistani is Iranian by origin, but he has very different opinions of that Iranian clericals. As he is very popular in Iraq, he is regarded as a basis of danger and influence by Iran.

Despite that Al-Sistani did not attack Iran publicly; Iran had the ability to stop Iranians from supporting him financially and taking into consideration Al-Sistani's sickness, Iran had the chance to submit its authority over Iraq (Eisenstadt et al. 2011, p: 9 and ICG,2005,p: 11). Secondly, while Najaf is the most holy place for Shiite people, it is also the second most vital diplomatic city which comes after the capital Baghdad. Therefore, Iran has provided money in the city's communications. Najaf is regarded as the centre of Shiite divinity; Shiite Muslims has ratio of visiting the city every year. So Iran invested in building hospitals, hotels, airports and many other sectors. Iran's main aim of its investment in the city was not only to improve its business but also to organize Shiite worldwide (Eisenstadt et al, 2011, p: 12 and Guzansky, 2011, p: 5). Yet, Iran's effort did not fruit as it lasted for because of the same reasons which delayed Iran's formerly argued policies. As most of the Iraqi Shiite people have views which were different from Iran's religious philosophy, therefore they could not have a combined frontage. Moreover, Iraqi patriotism has been increasing and this has confirmed that Iran's attempts to have absolute authority in Iraq have failed (Rahimi, 2012, p: 8).

According to Journal of politics international studies (vol 8, 2012) which stated that although Iran and Iraqi Shiite Muslims shared the same religious views and their Shiite political leaders have strong connections, this did not overcome the fact that Iraqi Shiite would prefer their religious beliefs over their nationality and would help Iran to plot against their own country.

Economic and trade strategy goals: Even though Iran was interested in economic motivation in Iraq, but Tahrans main purpose was to compel its absolute effect over Iraq. Obviously, Iran is very important economic co-worker to Iraq side by side by Turkey and the approximate business between the two countries has risen by 30% since 2003 (Guzansky, 2011, p: 92 and Rahimi, 2012, p: 25). It is discussed that by 2010, the business between the two countries reached \$88 billion. Moreover, in the southern cities of Iraq, the Iranian currency is highly allowed and Tahrans has used about \$300 million in rebuilding Iraq and many other contracts have been signed such as safety, education, manufacturing, transportation and tradition (Guzansky, 2011, p: 92 and Taremi, 2005, p: 39).

In addition, many Iranian actors and famous figures have helped in providing money for manufacture projects as contracting hospitals, schools, airports and accommodation (Eisenstadt et al, 2011,pp: 6-7). Furthermore, to establish optimistic idea towards Iran, Tahrans has created public network, and helped deprived and jobless Iraqi Shiite people in Baghdad and southern Iraq (ICG, 2005, pp: 5-6). Moreover, as Iraq could not meet its people's basic needs such as food and electricity; therefore, Iraq

has completely reliant on Iran. But it's worth mentioning that Iran's some acts have created anger among Iraqi people as a result Iran's influence in Iraq has been destabilized. For example, Iran's use of the Shatt Al-Arab River by building dam, and it's avoidance of exporting cheap food into Iraq, has very badly influenced Iraq's industrial and agricultural sectors. In addition, due to Iraq's constant lack of electricity and fuel supplies, Iran provided its assistance in providing electricity and fuel to some neighbouring cities. Infrequency, Iran would cut off the supplies and electricity, this more often occurred at the time when some parties, which were associated with Tahrán, were protesting against the Iraqi government. This has resulted in boosting bitterness among Iraqi people, but it reinforced Iran's economy and it also diplomatically provoked (Guzansky, 2011, p: 75 and Rahimi, 2012, p: 28).

According to Journal of politics and international studies (v 18, 2012), Iran regularly has been blamed by Baghdad of using the water canal as an excuse of forcing the Iraqi government to leave the MKO, (Guzansky, 2011, p: 93). Moreover, Iran has succeeded in imposing somehow its control over KRG as Iran is the basic destination for oil commodities exported secretly from Iraqi Kurdistan. Tahrán has also plans to use these canals to avoid international sanctions (Eisenstadt et al, 2011, p: 9).

Religious tourism has an additional basis of profits and influence. Finally, Iran also tried to gain the Iraqi people support of its interference in Iraq by spreading propaganda activities in radio stations and TV channels broadcasted in Arabic language. However, Tahrán attempts have negatively affected its policy as this increases Iraqis' hatred toward Iran.

#### **4.2. Iranian Policy Toward Iraq To Prevent Iraq From Re-Emerging As A Threat And To Limit The Us Influence In Iraq.**

Iran was constant on its indecisive position about the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. In one side, Tahrán was again contrasting against the US invasion as it claimed it violated the "international Law" and put an end to the goals of the higher leader Ayatollah Khamenei (ICG, 2005, p: 9) disputed about US claims that the main aim of invading Iraq was to eliminate Saddam and his Baath Party. But this was just an excuse to cover up the real reason which was to suite OPEC interests and to control over the Iraq's natural resources including oil and to help Zionist regime and conspire against Iran, Syria and

Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the previously presence of the US military bases in the Gulf and Afghanistan and after the invasion of Iraq, Iran suddenly has found itself surrounded by several thousand US troops. The relationship between Iran and the US has been historically deteriorated especially after Iran been regarded by the US as a part of "Axis of Evil" and the US attack of Afghanistan and Iraq. This has made Iran to be afraid of being the next victim of US invasion. In the other side, other side Iran was the most interested and pleased country of the overthrown of Saddam regime (Ansari, 2007, p: 58-59 and Hooglund, 2006, p: 173). It would be provided Iran with a historical chance to impose its control over Iraq and reinforce its place inside Iran and in the region (Barzegar, 2005, p: 49-50; Eisenstadt et al, 2011, p: 1).

Despite the fact that there are many different sources about Iran's policy in Iraq, but majority of them agree on the two major aims. The first and most important objective was to stop Iraq from returning a threat on Iran's national, diplomatic, military, economic and religious place in the region.

The second objective was to put a bound on the US power over Iraq and to make US inattentive; Iran's main aim was to discourage the US from attacking Tahrán (Ansari, 2007, p: 59 and Mausner et al, 2012, p: 14). As it is shown in many sources, Iran was trying to get control over the region; moreover, Iran's strategy in Iraq was basically connected to its national safety. But it is worth mentioning that Iran has also concerns about its philosophy and ambitions in the region, but many studies have showhas a secondary role to the Iran's national safety. For example, beliefs are a very vital basis of domination and were widely employed by Tahrán as a diplomatic tool which will be argued in the subsequent chapter.

As it is clear Iran's national security has highly been affected by Iraq's level of safety, therefore Iraq's future is Iran's top concern. But as it was formerly discussed, Tahrán was very conscious about Iraq's becoming a threat to Tahrán's security, but it worth mentioning that what Tahrán was regarding a danger was very unclear.

As it is known, Saddam's Baath party was the most powerful party in terms of military dealings in the Middle East. Nevertheless, after the two wars, the US invasion and the following US strategies in Iraq; for example, de-Baathification, dissolution of Iraqi army and intelligencebodies and the extensive access of the militias into Iraq army, it can be said that Iraq's security body was basically out of order. Thus Iran's goal was to prevent Iraq from returning to impose its absolute power in the

region (Hills, 2009, p: 100 and Mausner et al, 2012, p: 20). Diplomatically, the 2003 US invasion of Iraq has created some difficulties and risks for Tahrán, as they would shortly be discussed in the following paragraph.

1. As it has later known that the Shiite controlled government possibly would come to power due to their 60% of Iraq population, Tahrán concerned that the coming Shiite dominated regime would be looking for Sunni collaboration. (Guzansky, 2011, p: 97).
2. Iran also had worries that the US would provide Iraq with ammunition and weapons. Thus, Iran tried to minimize the US power on Iraq as it concerned that the US would use Iraq as a military base to attack the neighbouring countries and Iran feared that the US by using Iraq would put more pressure on Iran's regime and its nuclear program, (Barzegar, 2008, p: 48 ).
3. Moreover, Iran's national security might be affected by the appearance of new political parties and systems in Iraq, did not matter whether these systems would be democratic with the same civil rights for every citizen regardless to their ethnic, or religious or tribe or class, as this could put Iran's authority and influence at risk. As exploited minority groups in Iran as the Kurds and Arabs might be motivated and started to rise up against Tahrán authorities, (Eisenstadt et al, 2011, p: 2 and Guzansky, 2011, p: 97).
4. Furthermore, Iran also has fears about the diplomatic future of the Iraqi Kurds. Although the Kurdish revolutions and uprisings in Iran have been less brutal than Kurds in Turkey and Iraq, but still they could become a threat to Islamic Republic in the future. In addition, if the Kurds from Iraq maintain more independence, this might inspire the Kurds in Iran to ask about their rights and this would put Iran's national security at risk(Barzegar, 2005, p: 50and 2008, p: 48).
5. There were other threats to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Which was the Sunni radical militia in Iraq as Al-Qaeda, (Khan 2010, p: 101) and continuous insecurity and civil war in Iraq, would possibly cause "spill over effect" (ICG, 2005, pp: 11-12). In the economic sector, Iraq has usually been a vital to Iran. Thus both countries, Iran and Iraq, are the fourth and fifth biggest oil resources in the world respectively. And Tahrán feared that as Iraq has an important place regarding oil resources, this would give it a chance to returning to its place and become a vital and tough contender regarding the "export of oil and oil products". And this would make Iran to lose its place in OPEC or it might face "reduced revenue" because of the reduction of oil prices (Eisenstadt et al, 2011, p: 12). In the religious point of view, Iran worried that under the Iraqi new government, which was dominated by the majority Shiite

religious group, the Iraqi holiest city of Shiite would become the most vital education place for the Shiite Islam worldwide. Najaf, historically and religiously, overweighed Iran's most sacred province, Qom.

While Najaf has been oppressed during the reign of the Baath party, Qom has been flourishing since the Iran's uprising. As Iranian Ayatollahs in Iraq support pair understanding of political Islam and refuse the beliefs of Vilayati- Faqih, and Iran worried that Najaf's flourish, would provoke the Iranian religious men to move into Iraq and this would boost disapproval of the Iran's authority (Katzman, 2007, p: 6).

In spite of many risks, Iran has also seen much more chances to affect Iraq after the end of Baath regime, which has become Iran's major interest in the region, has shown that these interests included many overlies diplomatic, martial, religious and economic sectors and Iran used them very wisely to stop Iraq from returning a threat and minimize the US authority in the region. A major element in all these strategies played by Iran was historical bounds with some Iraq's leading parties, militia groups and politicians. Tehran's continuous power over the neighbouring countries was very difficult and not simply to be reviewed and this was not only due to the lack of proofs but also because its actions and purposes were continuously opposed and badly matched (Filter and Fishman 2008, p: 12). Furthermore, despite that Iran has been blamed of interfering in Iraq's interior problems, Iran's administration refused any interventions. Though Iran's main intention is not to spread insecurity in Iraq, but it is worth mentioning that it also does not want a safe and secure Iraq (ICG, 2005, p: 10). Thus, Iran tried to ensure fragile Iraq and guarantee that a Shiite controlled government would be polled.

As it has been discussed that the main aim of this work is to focus on Iran's effect on Iraq, but the current situation in Syria has added another aspect to Iran- Iraq policy. To stop Syrian Sunni of putting an end to the Assad regime which is regarded as Iran's only Arab partner has become Iran's new aim in the region. As Iran- Iraq relations were very strong and Iran has an absolute effect on Iraqi politicians, and it eased somehow Iran's straight entree into Syrian. And this included sending weapons, and armed forces into Syria to support the Syrian Baath regime. On the other hand, as Iran imposed its control over Syrian-Iraqi border, it stopped sending weapons and arms to the resistance groups in Syria. Moreover, Tehran tried its best to persuade and even oblige Iraqi government to

cover and even militarily support the Assad regime (Katzman, 2012, p: 32 and Mausner et al, 2012, p: 14).

It is clear that things are going to Iraq after the 2003 Iran's valid after it became the only party almost entirely winner probably - not for a long time - from the current war, Iraq will not be able to threaten Iran for many years, perhaps for a long, if not for decades to come, and that the democratic process which ensured America to install in Iraq did not only result in a leadership Shiites to power. They are more sympathetic to Tehran with Washington, and the marginalization of political components and other demographic important in the formation of the Iraqi political map.

## CHAPTER 5. IRAQI KURDS AND IRAN

Iraq's Shi'ites and Iraqi Kurds have an extensive history of cooperation with Iran. Even before the rise of Islamic Republic in Iran and Saddam Hussein in Iraq, these two countries have used Kurdish populations in order to weaken Iraqi central government. Neither Tehran nor Baghdad wanted to see the creation of an independent Kurdish nation; they merely wanted to preoccupy their neighbor with internal conflict, rather than having them focus on a number of regional issues. Iraqi Kurds were often put in uncertain situations by looking for the support of a neighboring country that also contained its own Kurdish nationalist movements. Iraqi Kurdish groups overlooked the suppression of Kurdish nationalist movements in Iran in order to secure material aid from the Iranian government for their own causes in Iraq. When Saddam Hussein's regime fell in 2003, it was these Kurdish nationalists which assumed power in Baghdad and the Kurdish provinces of the north.

This chapter is divided into two sections, as follows: The US policy towards the Iraqi Kurds in war and post-Saddam and participation Kurds for operation Iraqi freedom and Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan region at the present time and the economic ties between both countries.

### **5.1. The Us Policy towardsthe Iraqi Kurds In War And Post-Saddam And Participation Kurds For Operation Iraqi Freedom**

The relationships between the US and Kurds had been started to improve after the Turkish parliament refused to permit the US invasion of Iraq from Turkey. Therefore, the Iraqi Kurds had given support for the US for using Kurdistan as a foundation to collapse the Ba'athist regime during process Iraqi liberty in 2003 (Lawrence, 2008). The Iraqi Kurds had two possessions of value in the run-up to the Iraqi war. Firstly, there was their authority of a military factor. Secondly, "there was the presence in Iraqi Kurdistan of an al-Qaida associated Islamist group, Ansar al-Islam, providing a link to the US War on Terror" (Yildiz, 2004, p: 130).

Furthermore, creation unusually influence for the Iraqi Kurdistan, forcing the Pentagon for re-planning its northern front with larger importance on its Kurdish allies. Therefore, the number of Peshmarga about 100,000 and a small group of particular military represented a new front in the



attack (Galbraith, 2005, p: 271). The Kurds efficiently led the demonstration into Mosul and Kirkuk, as a probability to impossible if Turkey had been a part of the union (Gunter, 2005, p: 225).

Kurdish army hurried in to fill the space as resistance in Kirkuk crumbled (Galbraith, 2006, p: 158). It is caused as a big issue for the US – the Iraqi Kurds were trying to develop their sphere of power, which was a possible cause for Turkish troops in order to push into the northern Iraq. The Iraqi Kurds were asked for leaving, and according to Colin Powell his complement in Ankara who states that that Kirkuk would be back to normal (Gordon and Trainor, 2007, pp: 514-515). This resembled American policy in Afghanistan (Feith, 2008, p: 97). In addition, the Iraqi Kurds had been advised not to obtain over in Kirkuk and Mosul for avoiding a civil war or a Turkish invasion; it is believed that by the US a Kurdish invasion would send a message to Iraq that the United States was prejudiced towards the Iraqi Kurds. However, limiting the Kurds would make sure the United States impartiality. Also, it is believed the US that empowers the Kurds to reins power in both cities, which would allow acts of Kurdish revenge against Arab citizens in the city. Therefore, this would have the possibility to expand civil war between Kurds and Arabs.

The United States rejected to take sides on the greatly controversial the issue of Kirkuk, where the Kurds required overturning decades of Arabisation. Furthermore, the major US SO (Special Operations forces) power since the Vietnam War, with a significant SO presence were concerned by the process Iraqi Freedom in Northern Iraq. Alliance workforce worked with Kurdish troop against the regime. They were responsible to attack some specific goals, for example, weapons of mass destruction sites, airstrip and domination and control headquarters (Shareef, 2010, p: 208). However, “the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), elements of Joint SO Command, and CIA Special Activities Division paramilitary officers, linked up and were the first to enter Iraq prior to the invasion”. Their attempts were under the system by the name of Operation Viking Hammer, which prepared the Kurdish Peshmarga to conquer Ansar Al Islam; in this regard, this concerned a fight for power of a region in north-eastern Iraq that was engaged by Ansar Al Islam (Robinson, 2004, p: 308). With a bigger challenge and larger military action for changing regime, it is argued by Qubad Talabani that the United States did not want Kurdish allies to be unfocused and occupied with these Islamist militants (Shareef, 2010, p:208). In the North of Iraq, the assignment of helping the PUK and the KDP had been by the 10th Special Forces Group (10th SFG) and using them against the Iraqi separations which situated in the neighborhood of Kirkuk and Mosul (Robinson, 2004, p: 308).

Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Kurds participation, the Iraqi Kurds fought side-by-side with the US for removing the regime (Lawrence 2008). A new era for the Kurds has healed since the collapse of the Iraqi regime in 2003 because, when the KRG was separated from the Iraqi central government, the Kurds expanded significant demonstration in Baghdad (Aziz, 2011, p:87)observed, “the Kurds entered post-Saddam national politics on an equal footing with Iraqi Arabs for the first time by participating in a US-led administration, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA)”. Consequently, in July 2003, on an optional Iraq leading council, the Kurds were given five seats out of 25 seats that were chosen. The Kurds also obtained a number of ministerial situations.

On the other hand, there was a referendum movement in Iraqi Kurdistan that composed 1,700,000 signatures such as (two thirds of Kurdish adults) who wanted declaring independence for Kurdistan during 2004 (Galbraith, 2005, p:280). Therefore, the consequence of this unofficial referendum to the UN head office had been submitted by this movement in New York, but it was unnoticed. The United States also ignored the referendum and tried to focus its attention on unified Iraq (Mohammed, 2013, p:117 and Chorev, 2007). Also in October 2005, the plans were made for a national vote and a stable Iraqi government was selected (Galbraith, 2005,p:281). The Kurdistan union won about “26% of the vote, earning 75 out of 275 seats in the Iraqi National Assembly”. According to the Iraqi constitution 2005, it is recognized by the Article 117 that the KRG as an essential part of an Iraqi federal with both Arabic and Kurdish as the official languages (Barkey,2009,pp:11-12). The decentralization of influence to the regions “expanded the Kurdistan Regional Government’s internal sovereignty within its official territorial boundaries” (Natali, 2010, p:80). In this situation a big degree of political independence was awarded by the KRG in terms of its regional borders which included in budgetary, legislative, and administrative authority. Therefore, the organization of federal arranged in the constitution which gave the power to the KRG in order to change Iraqi laws, “not relating to foreign policy; national security or financial issues; to control its own police and security forces; and to manage natural resources in the region including the rights to exploit and administer certain petroleum fields” (Katzman, 2005, p:5).

On the other hand, the economic dependence of the KRG on Iraq, institutional relationships between the KRG and Iraq for staying practically non-existent (Natali, 2010,p:82). Even though there is Kurds representation in Baghdad, there is no factual collaboration between the KRG ministries and Iraqi central ministries as there is no combined group or alliance which continued between ministries and

parts such as education and health. As a result of that led to the appearance of different systems of government in Erbil and Baghdad. In this regard, the weakness of contact between Baghdad and Erbil has led to the existence of “two systems and one country”.

It seems that, recently, the US forces in northern Iraq had two roles which are the military and political roles. The military role was to defeat 150,000 Iraqi troops on the border of the de facto Kurdish cooperation. In addition, the political role was to keep the Peshmarga in line, preventing the Kurds from taking Kirkuk, reason enough for a Turkish intervention. It was in the interest of the US to maintain peace between rival Kurdish factions and also prevent them from upsetting the status quo. The future of Iraqi Kurdistan is not only reliant on the local political dynamics but also on the regional and international policies towards this region. The US, as the superpower and an international actor, and Turkey, as a regional actor, play key roles in determining the political trajectory of Iraqi Kurdistan.

## **5.2. Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan Region At The Present Time And The Economic Ties Between Both Countries**

The collapse of the Ba’athist regime created the KRG with a collection of opportunities in terms of internal and external of the Kurdish independent region. The members of the PUK and KDP protected the situations of prominent and held posts that exceeded the issue of Kurds in Baghdad. In this regard, Jalal Talabani, became the successor of Saddam Hussein who spent a important part of his job planning with the Iranian regime, In the part of Kurdish autonomous region, there was elections for the first time since 1992, providing a legal regional government which accepted by Baghdad. In this regard, the fundamental of Iraqi Kurds reason for looking for a close relationship with Iran was realized at the present time. However, a group of leaders were elected by the Iraqi Kurds in order to have a close relationship with Iran as a central part to the KRG’s foreign policy. Therefore, on June 14, 2005, MasoudBarzani, as the leader of the KDP, “was sworn in as the new president of the kurdistan region” (Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, 2005).

On the other hand, in Baghdad, Jalal Talabani as representing of the Iraqi central government often met the leaders of Iran in order to discuss about some issues which related to Iraq. Talabani wanted to

keep strong relationships with the Iranian regime and supported many of programs of Iraq's pro-Iran Shi'ite parties. Therefore, on 19<sup>th</sup> of 2006 at a press conference, Talabani mentioned on the future of US-Iran meeting which were put forward by the leader of ISCI, Abdul Aziz al- Hakim: "I am one of those who support this and worked for this purpose. When I visited Tehran, I met with Iranian officials and raised this issue with them, since I believe that the Iraqi problem has become an international problem... If this action serves Iraq and its sovereignty and independence, provided there is no interference in its domestic affairs, and if it serves security and stability, prevents infiltrations, and ends terrorism... then it is welcome" (Ridolfo,2006).

On the other hand, Iraqi Kurds make sure that their representation in the Iraqi central government would stay pro-Iran by placing Talabani in Baghdad. Talabani desires to keep friendly relations with Iran. Talabani looks at Iran as a basis of Iraq's foreign policy in terms of like the Iraqi Shi'ites who hold its influence in Baghdad. Consequently, the leaders of Iraqi Kurdistan have had high-level meetings with Iranian administrators on many occasions. In August 2008, Prime Minister of the KRG Nechirvan Barzani made one of the first main visits by a member of the KRG to Iran. Visiting Barzani to Tehran was invented by the Iranian government in order to discuss the trade and economic issues which related the two countries. A collection of Iranian government officials was met by Barzani, including President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Therefore, the meeting was praised by Falah Mustafa Bakir as the top administrator in the KRG's Department of Foreign Relations who stated that Iran is a significant neighbor to Iraq. "The visit to Tehran comes as part of a continued KRG policy of reinforcing good neighborly relations, with a view to creating prosperity in the region and mutual benefit for all parties. This includes cooperation in the spheres of joint border security, economic investment, and general commerce" (Press Release, 2008).

In addition, trade and some other economic issues occupy a big part of the discussion in official relations between Iran and Iraq. On 12 of February 2009, Manouchehr Mottaki as the Iranian Foreign Minister created his first official visit to the KRG. He is the main ranking Iranian official for visiting the KRG in order to date. There was a meeting between Mottaki and President Masoud Barzani and they discussed trade partnerships and investment opportunities. Trade is a main subject in Iranian-Iraqi Kurdish relations because a big percentage of imports of Iraqi Kurdistan come through Iran. Therefore, a few months after visiting Mottaki, a number of PUK's members traveled to Iran to shape a combined trade committee between the two states. The delegation met with Trade Minister Mehdi

Qazanfari, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and a number of other famous members of the Islamic Republic. There was an agreement between two sides in order to shape a combined trade committee and to set up branches of Iranian universities in the KRG. In this regard, trade is not the only subject which discussed on official visits to Iran though. On 22th 2008, Masoud Barzani as the KRG President prepared his first official visit to Iran. As a result of that he spent three days in Tehran in order to have meeting with senior government officials (Rousu, 2010, p:67).

Furthermore, the meeting centered on security agreement between the US, Iraq and the Iranian army's intermittent raids against the insurgents of Iran inside the KRG. A number of the leading points of argument were highlighted by visiting Barzani that exist in Iranian-Iraqi Kurdish relations at the present time. The third parties who work freely in the KRG are considered enemies by Iran's Islamic Republic. Thus as they work independently inside the Iraqi Kurdistan's autonomy, they will spoil the relationships between Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan. The existence of coalition powers in the KRG has become a main cause of disagreement between Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan. For example, the US powers held a number of Iranians who were in a liaison office in Irbil as the capital city of the KRG on January 11, 2007. The US supposed that these Iranians were distributing weapons to Iraqi rebellious and they were members of the IRGC. A number of famous politicians of the KRG denounced the raid, consisting of the Iraqi Kurdistan President, Masoud Barzani. Since then it is argued that by QubadTalabani, the son of Jalal Talabani and as the Iraqi Kurdistan Ambassador in Washington DC, who states that "Ultimately, we are neighbors, and I think this is something that I hope our American friends understand. They are here, and America is 6,000 miles away" (Watson,2007).

Although coalition powers in the KRG have shaped hinders in terms of relationships between the KRG and Iran, their attendance is temporary and it is not a long-term obstacle like the KRG's other third parties. In this regard, coalition powers are by no means the only struggle power that has strained the relationships between Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan. The PJAK as the Party of Free Life in Kurdistan is a Kurdish militant group in Iran. In addition, PJAK is included of leftwing nationalists who desire for creating autonomy for Kurdish people in western Iran. It is believed that by the group to operate mainly along the part of north of the border of Iran and Iraq. In 2005, PJAK started fighting Iranian troops and police officers. Such as Turkey, Iran's fight with Kurdish nationalist guerrillas has encouraged it for performing operations inside the KRG. Furthermore, the Iranian army

started its first operation against PJAK positions inside the KRG by shooting a city north of Erbil on April 21, 2006. It is mentioned that by a member of the PKK that on November 25, 2006, Iranian powers performed their first raid into the KRG (Radio Liberty, 2006).

This source also mentioned that the military power of Iran engaged PJAK powers for almost an hour before withdrawing back across to the border. Therefore, since this raid, the disagreement between PJAK and Iran inside the KRG has raised significantly. On 21st of 2007, an Iranian by the name of Mahmoud Farhady in Suliymaniyah was detained by the US army. Farhady was an administrator visitor of Iraqi Kurdistan on a trade assignment, but it is argued that by the United States regime that he was known as a member of the IRGC. The arrest of Farhady encouraged a main reaction by the Iranian regime against PJAK and the KRG powers inside the KRG. Iran closed its border to the KRG on September 24th. This had a big effect on the KRG's economy, as an important section of their imports which come through Iran. In addition, a huge attack of PJAK positions on the side of Iraqi Kurdistan of the border was performed by the Iranian army. In reaction to the shooting, on September 28, 2007, Iraqi Kurdistan issued the following statement: "During the past few weeks the forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran have been shelling the border areas of the Kurdistan Region in Iraq. This shelling has resulted in the displacement of thousands of villagers, the disruption of their lives, and the destruction of several villages. It has also inflicted great loss and destruction and spread fear among the people of Kurdistan" (Rousu, 2010, p:67). This unfair and unjustifiable military action was criticized by the KRG. It is an obvious violation of the power of Iraq, believes the KRG it an act of violence. Therefore, Iraqi Kurdistan calls upon the regime of Iran's Islamic Republic in order to end immediately this shooting and its pressures. In this situation it is requested by the KRG that the Iraqi central government takes an obvious situation on this violation of borders of Iraq, which is causing confusion and disruption to the lives of Kurdish people inside Iraqi Kurdistan. Also, we call upon the Multinational Powers in Iraq and the United Nations Security Council for addressing the problem and stopping these unfair attacks. Iraqi Kurdistan restates its obligation in order to have good neighborly relationships on the basis of common interest and mutual respect (Rousu, 2010, p:68).

Consequently, the shooting was suspended and its border was reopened, but the conflicts between PJAK and Iran inside the KRG was continued. On April 25, 2009, a group of police officers was attacked by PJAK militants in Iranian Kurdistan, killing such as ten in the process (Reuters, 2009). Furthermore, once again, the Iranian regime reacted to the shellings by aiming PJAK positions inside

the KRG. The Iraqi village of Penjwin which is located in the east of Sulaymaniyah was shelled by Iranian powers. As a result of that the Iraqi central government responded to the attacks by calling on the Iranian diplomat to Baghdad and informing him there would be consequences if the gunfire did not end. To respond to this, Hassan Qashqavi as a representative for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, argued that Iran “expects that Iraqi officials pay special attention to movements of small groups which are officially known as terrorist groups even by Western countries.” (Rousu, 2010, p:69).

It is argued here that, recently Iran known as a friend group of leaders in Baghdad, and it does not want to see an independent Kurdistan. It caused major problems for the new Shi'ite government, or moving up a revolution between its own Kurdish populations. The leaders of Iraqi Kurdistan because of their long history of cooperation with the Islamic Republic naturally wanted to maintain their friendly relations with Tehran after the US invasion. However, the new realities of Iranian-Iraqi Kurdish relations cannot be masked by the positive rhetoric and the cordial visits of PUK and KDP leaders indefinitely. The new focus of Iranian-Iraqi Kurdish relations in post-Ba'athist Iraq is intended to center on issues such as the treatment of Iranian Kurdish populations and border transgressions carried out by the Iranian military and Iranian Kurdish rebels who find refuge in Iraqi Kurdistan. In spite of the fact that the North of Iraq Kurdish Administration's coming close to the USA after the occupation and PJAK's harbouring in North of Iraq which have caused Iran's strategy towards. But this strategy can change in the long-term. Breaking off the relations with the Iraqi Kurds, in this regard, they established close relations during the 20th century would not suit the Iran's interests in the long run. As long as PJAK is not sheltered in the Northern Iraq and the relations between Kurdish Administration in the north of Iraq and the USA that are not turned into an ally relations against Iran, it is likely that Iran keeps the Kurdish existence in the North as a trump in return for the prospective attitude of Iraqi administration.

The Economic Ties between Iran And Iraq Kurdistan Region: There is a significant arena of economic relationships between Iran and the KRG. Trade between the two countries is essential to both economies. In 2006, Kurdistan passed an overseas investment law that it describes “the most liberal in the region.” It allows overseas companies for keeping full possession over some projects within Kurdistan and gives firms liberal incentives in order to invest in the KRG (KRG, 2010). Consequently, the KRG has seen an investment's flood four years ago, which it came from Turkey

and Iran. In 2008, over 100 Iranian firms were invested in Iraqi Kurdistan. In July 2010, more than 185 Iranian companies contributed in a trade fair in the city of Sulaimaniyah to emphasize potential for investment. Therefore, an interest in setting up a character optic telecom network in Iraqi Kurdistan was declared by the director of the Telecommunication Company in Iran, also the plans to create electricity to the Iraqi Kurdish province of Bashmakh was discussed by the head of Iranian Kurdistan's Power Distribution Company (Iraq Business News,2010).

There are three main active border crossings from Iran into the KRG: Bashmakh, QasreShirin and Haj Omran. Feiz Ali Khorashid who argues that, "a member of the KRG's Legislative Council, trade between Iraqi Kurdistan and Iran through these NIMEP Insights 2011 143 three border points currently has an annual value of [approximately] \$2 billion. The same report predicts that the value of the year's trade will increase to \$4 billion by the end of 2010" (Rafferty, 2011, p:142). The KRG imports modern created and food goods from Iran. In this regard, the KRG has begun exporting a number of products to Iran. It is described that by a Kurdish official in Sulaimaniyah, 462 tons of herbs and vegetables were exported to Iran from the Bashmakh crossing (Rafferty,2011,p:142). In addition, Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan declared plans to construct a "joint industrial town" in the part of Iranian Kurdistan on the border with the KRG outside of Bashmak, which is located in the east of Sulaimaniyah in March of 2010. According to the KRG Prime Minister BarhamSalih, since meeting with the governor of Iranian Kurdistan province, confirmed, "Iran and Iraq enjoy great deal of interactions. The relations must extend to economic and civil sectors to increase investments in the two countries" (Iran English Radio, 2010).

Furthermore, the plans, calls for a border opening during 24 hours per day, since 2009, Kurdish officials supported a proposal. Whether or not these strategies come to completion is of little meaning; that they are significant because both sides show a promise to economic cooperation. It may be supposed that this level of business will be a reason for both sides in order to work harder for a pleasant future. In this regard, researchers outlined the international relations theory of difficult independence for example; Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye create a forceful structure to understand the relations between both sides that trade would be with one another. In addition, by trading with one another, both countries are improving the benefits of mutual collaboration while at the same time increasing the chance cost of disagreement (Rafferty, 2011, p:143).



Furthermore, element groups within the both sides, which includes trader, businessmen, people who get benefit from imported goods and also politicians with ties for trading, may all have influence the government policies for supporting more cooperation. Therefore, countries that trade in important products as opposite to luxury substance are even less possible to want conflict in terms of high costs. A number of these costs are true in the side of Iranian-Kurdish framework. Different groups of each community have sure benefits in trade, from the private benefits to state projects, to hybrid projects on both countries. And the supplies that each side is importing are necessary in terms of food, electricity and clothing. But it does not show that these economic relations have influenced political relations between the two countries. It is discovered that the KRG and Iran are unified, but not interdependent. Therefore, both sides have got benefit from each other, but at the present time, neither country desires the other. In this situation Iran is not depends on Kurdistan for its economic survival. In 2010 Iran's GDP is predicted at \$863.5 billion (Rafferty, 2011, p:143), and it has another sources for the goods which it receive from the KRG. The position of Iran is single in 144 NIMEP nears 2011 which pushed by international allows.

However, recently Iran is not dependent on the trade of Iraqi Kurdistan, which the willingness of Iran established for using a postponement of such trade for the political aims. For many times Iran has closed its borders with Iraqi Kurdistan in order to reply to political proceedings since 2003. In September 2007, an Iranian citizen had been arrested by the US powers in Sulaimaniyah by the name Mahmoud Farhadi that "accusing him of being an agent of Iran's Revolutionary Guards' Quds force". Closing Iran's border with Kurdistan responded to Iran. While the US, Iraq and Iran argued over keeping of the man, land transport among the two states was arrested for two weeks, and Iraqi Kurdistan felt the significance of Iranian products. According to the leader of the Sulaimaniyah Chamber of Commerce who mentions that 60 percent of customer products in the city of Sulaimaniyah came from Iran and about 35,000 Iraqi Kurds of work were depriving almost (Digital Journal, 2007). During this time until 8 October the prices of products increased sharply, when, the borders were reopened after two days of high level debates between the KRG ministers and Iranian administrators (News-desk Media Group, 2009, p:165).

In addition, according to Iranian authorities who states that in December 2010, a 3,000 dinar insurance tax, of Kurdish vehicles when enter to the country would be charged which led to a hit that left borders closed for about two days until Iran changed its decision. Therefore, for the part of Iran, it

seems that the border with Iraqi Kurdistan is not measured an economic link. While Iraqi Kurdistan imports a huge amount of products from Iran and in 2007, it was harm in the small period by the suspension in trade, so it has a lot of other economic associates. After 2008, its collaboration with Turkey has started and its trade with Iran had dwarfed; although there are more than 100 Iranian companies operating in Iraqi Kurdistan, also there are almost 500 Turkish ones (Rafferty,2011,pp:143-144). It is expected that 80 percent of products sold in Kurdistan are prepared in Turkey, and in 2009 annual trade between the two countries reached about \$6 billion. Furthermore, Iraqi Kurdistan has involved investment from East Asia, Europe and the Gulf countries. While food and electricity of Iraqi Kurdistan is provided by Iran and it is not the only source of these products, and Kurdistan could simply turn elsewhere. When inquired regarding the border closures, according to Masroor Barzani, as the leader of the KRG Intelligence and Security, stated that “This is the Middle East, not the United States-Canada border”(Rafferty, 2011, p: 144). Iraqi Kurdistan would depend on imports of Iranian food. At the present time, Iran and the KRG stay independent that the economic costs do not create conflict for a long priced; consequently, Iran is able to militarily provoke Kurdistan without a threat of huge economic loss.

## CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

The relationships between Iraq and Iran have improved significantly since the fall of Saddam Hussein. The 2003 invasion of Iraq made it easy for Iraqi dissidents, who had longstanding ties with the Iranian government in terms of seizing power in Baghdad. By completely dismantling the Ba'athist government, holding elections and stressing sectarianism in institutions like the IGC, coalition forces ensured that parties with strong Shi'ite and Kurdish identities would take control of the new government.

Consequently, nearly every Iraqi Shi'ite and Kurdish organization was opposed Saddam Hussein's regime before the invasion. It maintained close ties with the Iranian government. American policy in Iraq eliminated one of Iran's worst regional enemies and inadvertently replaced that regime with a set of parties who had been receiving financial and military aid from Tehran for more than two decades. Iran-Iraq relations are currently the most cordial that the two countries have seen since the collapse of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958.

Tehran and Baghdad have now established official relations with each other, exchanged ambassadors and ended outright support for each others' dissident groups. Furthermore, Iranian and Iraqi leaders have demonstrated their improved 90 relations by frequently visiting each other. Such symbolic displays of friendship have not been seen in more than fifty years. The current situation, though, is not the most cooperative period of relations in the entire history of Iran-Iraq relations. Baghdad does not perceive the United States or other powerful Arab regimes in the region to be threats, like Tehran does.

As a result of that, the two countries have not entered into any mutual defense pacts, such as the Baghdad Pact which united the two countries against the Soviet Union and Arab nationalists in the 1950s. Unless the new Iraqi government changes its perception of major regional powers, Iran-Iraq relations will not reach the height of their ties in the 1950s.

Iran-Iraq relations are now much less hostile, and thus improved, because it is no longer a relationship of equals. Saddam Hussein boasted one of the world's largest militaries and fought Iran to stalemate in the Iran-Iraq War, despite his country's smaller population size.

The decision by Ambassador Bremer and the CPA to completely dismantle the Iraqi army in 2003 ensured that Iraq would not be a military power in the region for many years. The new Iraqi army, which is still mired in the insurgency, in no way poses a threat to anyone beyond its own borders. In addition to Iraq's feebleness, the new government is rather diplomatically isolated in the region. Saddam Hussein's ability to withstand Iranian counter offenses in the Iran-Iraq War was partially attributable to the steady flow of aid from his Arab neighbors, like Saudi Arabia. Most Arab governments opposed the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and thus ostracized the subsequent government. Stemming from the circumstances of its creation, the new Iraqi government never had a real opportunity to establish strong ties with other Arab governments. The dismantling of the military and diplomatic limitations has made the new Iraqi government extremely weak vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic.

As a result of that, Tehran has a much larger capacity to influence events in Iran-Iraq relations in the post-Ba'athist era. Nevertheless, Iraq's weakened state and its leadership's history with Iran are not guarantees that Baghdad will seek close ties with Tehran in the future. Saddam Hussein was the common enemy of Iraqi Shi'ites, Iraqi Kurds and Iran was the primary reason why they forged close ties to one another in the first place. In the absence of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship, the need for a close relationship disappears. An Iraqi Kurdistan, which has secured its main goal and secured general autonomy from Baghdad, no longer needs aid from the Iranian government. With this legitimacy in hand, Iraqi Kurds will focus more on issues such as trade and the treatment of their Kurdish brethren in Iran. Similarly, Iraq's Shi'ite parties no longer need aid from Iran because they rule the country.

Regularly-held elections make these parties more accountable to the interests of Iraqi voters. This is most evident in the recent breakup of the once dominant pro-Iranian parliamentary coalition, the UIA, and the subsequent success of the Islamic Da'awa Party, which allied itself to several Iraqi Sunni parties. The future of Iran-Iraq relations will be heavily influenced by Baghdad's relationship with the United States. After the 2003 invasion, Iraq's new leaders had no choice but to work closely with the United States. Now that Iraq has regained its sovereignty and coalition forces are leaving the country, a decision to work closely with the United States in the future would be made more voluntarily by Baghdad.

If the new Iraqi government continues to work closely with the United States, it will drive a wedge between Baghdad and Tehran. Like relations from the 1920s through 2003, issues like border ambiguity, access to the Persian Gulf and ethnic tensions lie just beneath the surface. These issues have historically been exacerbated when Iran and Iraq sit on different sides of regional and geopolitical conflicts. Baghdad's allegiance in these larger conflicts will determine if these issues will be disregarded in order to meet mutual regional interests, or brought to the forefront of Iran-Iraq relations.

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