



**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**THE ROLE OF INTERNAL FACTORS IN SHAPING POST-2003
INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF IRAQ**

M.A. THESIS

Jawaheer HASAN

**Nicosia
February, 2023**

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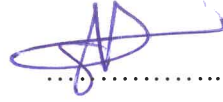
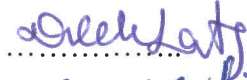
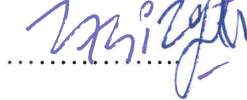
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Approval


We certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Jawaheer Sedeeq Hasan titled “**The Role of Internal Factors in Shaping Post-2003 International Politics of Iraq**” and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of International Relations.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that all information, documents, analysis and results in this thesis have been collected and presented according to the academic rules and ethical guidelines of Institute of Graduate Studies, Near East University. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced information and data that are not original to this study.

Jawaheer Hasan

6/2/2023

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I am grateful to thank the people such as my instructors and the head of our department who have helped me throughout my thesis, and special thanks to my supervisor Dr. Zehra Azizbeyli.

Jawaheer Hasan

Abstract

The Role of Internal Factors in Shaping Post-2003 International Politics of Iraq

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The political stability of Iraq has been of huge concern to Iraq's citizens and the other countries at large. Nonetheless, the international political landscape of Iraq has been completely different since the removal of Saddam Hussein in 2003. Since then, the USA has been a major player in Iraq's political and economic affairs, especially in oil trading. Apart from the rich petroleum deposits and increasing trade and investment in Iraq promoting international relations with global partners, the destabilization of petroleum prices will be prevalent if Iraq is allowed to operate in a conducive economic and political atmosphere. It remains to be determined further what other motives are stirring internal and external political players to affect Iraq's political affairs on an international scale. Indeed, the lack of a coherent policy in Iraq impacts advancing national interests. Also, the struggle between the south and north of Iraq has given rise to the issues of multi-polarizing the country. Besides, the internal factors and international actors involved in the changes in Iraq's international political affairs must be determined if sound political measures capable of fostering peace and stability in Iraq are to be enacted.

Keywords: International politics, Iraq, Internal Factors, Post-2003.

Öz

2003 Sonrası Irak Uluslararası Politikasının Şekillenmesinde İç Faktörlerin Rolü

Hasan, Jawaheer

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

Danışmanı: Dr. Zehra Azizbeyli

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Irak'ın siyasi istikrarı, Irak vatandaşları ve genel olarak diğer ülkeler için büyük endişe kaynağı olmuştur. Bununla birlikte, Irak'ın uluslararası siyasi manzarası, 2003 yılında Saddam Hüseyin'in devrilmesinden bu yana tamamen farklı bir hal almıştır. O zamandan beridir ABD, Irak'ın siyasi ve ekonomik işlerinde, özellikle Petrol ticaretinde önemli bir oyuncu olmuştur. Zengin petrol yatakları ve küresel ortaklarla uluslararası ilişkileri teşvik eden Irak'ta artan ticaret ve yatırımın yanı sıra, ülkenin elverişli ekonomik ve siyasi bir atmosferde faaliyet göstermesine izin verilirse de petrol fiyatlarının istikrarsızlaşması yaygın olacaktır. Irak'ın siyasi meselelerini uluslararası ölçekte etkilemek için iç ve dış siyasi aktörleri başka hangi gerekçelerin harekete geçirdiğinin daha fazla belirlenmesi gerekmektedir. Gerçekten de Irak'ta tutarlı bir politikanın olmaması, ilerleyen ulusal çıkarları etkilemektedir. Ayrıca, Irak'ın güneyi ve kuzeyi arasındaki mücadele, ülkeyi çoklu kutuplaşma meselelerini gündeme getirmiştir. Bunun yanında, Irak'ta barış ve istikrarı teşvik edebilecek sağlam siyasi tedbirlerin alınabilmesi için, Irak'ın uluslararası siyasi ilişkilerindeki değişimlerde rol oynayan iç faktörlerin ve uluslararası aktörlerin belirlenmesi gerekmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uluslararası siyaset, Irak, İç Faktörler, 2003 Sonrası.

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List of Abbreviation

HRC:	Human Rights Commission
IMF:	The International Monetary Fund agency of United Nations
KRG:	The Kurdish Regional Government
NATO:	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO:	The Non-Governmental Organization
OPEC:	The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
SCIRI:	The Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq
UNAMI:	The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNDHR:	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN:	The United Nations
UNSC:	The United Nations Security Council

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The term 'Iraq' has referred to different areas at different times (Abdullah, 2011). It includes the land from around Tikrit in the north down to the Persian Gulf in the south between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers with an intensive, cultural and historic presence of many communities in the region for many centuries. Today, Iraq refers to all of the lands that make up the modern Iraqi state, which was founded in 1921. Thabit Abdullah (2011) indicates that the richness of the culture is formed by Iraq's numerous communities, who had always found ways to redefine their relationships toward each other in a difficult and painful search for national harmony throughout centuries of political and social change (Abdullah, 2011).

The internal factors that create domestic and international problems for Iraq are listed such as no partnership and misunderstanding between the main parties of Iraq and the instability in the implementation of the Iraqi constitution as well as the international factors that can interfere with the other countries to govern and solve the internal problems of the Iraqi government. Internal factors such as the various parties or different minorities in Iraq and the interference of other countries in Iraq's government affairs increase the presence of any internal and international conflict in Iraq. Iraq's foreign policy is influenced by its primary interests to a large extent. With its current position, things such as foreign investment, meeting the country's resource needs such as water and electricity, and military are most likely to be determining factors in Iraq's foreign policy. In addition, to the main domestic and international factors, other important factors that affect Iraq's foreign policy will also be mentioned, such as secularism, religious minorities, and also, like the oil policy, the use of water and electricity are considered as political and economic tools.

Numerous undesirable political incidents were observed in Iraq from the Republic of the late 1950's to the Dictatorship of Saddam Hussein in 1979 until the American-led invasion in 2003, where both Iraq's internal economic, social and political structures have been severely affected by various occurrences. These undesirable political conflicts have been widely prevalent since the

removal of Saddam Hussein in 2003 by the Bush-established “operations freedom Iraq” (Saleh, 2018). Since then, the United States has been a major player in Iraqi politics amid deepening US-Kurdish relations characterized by military agreements and the relocation of American oil companies in the north (Salem, 2013). Subsequently, Iraq’s new leaders struggled to chart a democratic course after decades of dictatorship, where severe issues of political instabilities have been on the rise. Consequently, a lot of main factors such as The Shia-dominated government and the KRG are now meddling with Iraq's political activities thereby completely changing its international political landscape. Such has been empirically sidelined in academic studies and hence, it undermines efforts to promote and foster peace and stability in Iraq and nearby states.

There are concerns regarding the motivating factors responsible for changes in Iraq’s international politics. As it stands, there is unverified evidence as to what factors are stirring such changes since the removal of Saddam Hussein in 2003. The rich petroleum deposits in Iraq can destabilize world international oil prices if Iraq is allowed to operate in a conducive economic and political atmosphere (Scholl, 2018). Iraq holds about 145,019 million barrels of oil in 2021 (Country Economy, n.d), and this leaves no doubt why other countries would want to partake of such resources. Overall, all these factors and incidences have created a completely new different political atmosphere for both Iraq and other countries. Hence, it remains to be determined and verified as to what exact changes have been observed in Iraq’s international politics? Additionally, clarity is highly required about who are the dominant actors or players influencing Iraq’s international politics and what reasons or motives are necessitating their behavior and stance towards Iraq.

Research Proposition and the Hypothesis

This Thesis demonstrates the changes in the international political landscape of Iraq since 2003 and analyzes the huge involvement of several international players with various political and economic incentives including the need to address concerns about the rising insurgent groups in Iraq and their suggested threats on other countries. This research accepts the challenges between the main internal actors in Iraq such as Shiite, Sunni and Kurds, the intervention of international actors, the rich oil deposits found in Iraq, and the

destabilization of petroleum prices if Iraq to operate in a conducive economic and political atmosphere, as the main factors responsible for causing changes in Iraq's international political landscape. Also, internal factors such as the rich Oil deposits, Kurd, Shiite, and Sunni have a significant impact on Iraq's international politics.

Statement of Purpose of the Study/ Research Questions

The main emphasis of this study is to answer the questions; how has the international politics of Iraq changed since 2003 and what is the current state of its international politics? And can oil be considered a strong factor in Iraq's foreign policy? What is the role of Oil and the Kurdish Regional Government in the future of Iraq's foreign policy?

This will be guided by the need to identify the international political players that are involved and the internal actors who affect the foreign policy of Iraq after the year 2003.

Research Methodology

The proposed study assumes a qualitative approach in examining the post-2003 international politics of Iraq. This is because a qualitative study will assist in examining several international political subject issues on a larger scale in greater detail (Guest, Namey & Chen, 2020). Furthermore, Carminati (2018) contends that adapting a qualitative approach allows the researcher to have a more real feel as it deals with human observations and experiences. Such is important, especially when international matters of peace and stability are concerned. Other studies support the idea of using a qualitative research method citing that researchers can flow with the initial data by asking further questions in respect of the answers and this is not the case in other forms of research (Carminati, 2018; Haven & Van Grootel, 2019). Moreover, the decision to adopt a qualitative approach will be guided by the need and importance to offer significantly generalized data notwithstanding the multiplicity of perspectives and opinions (Guest, Namey & Chen, 2020). Additionally, the entire approach encompasses the use of qualitative approach in the form of deductive reasoning and second resources. According to Johnson-Laird (2010), deductive reasoning involves the usage of logical premises and general assumptions to arrive at a

logical conclusion. Deductive reasoning is used in the proposed study because it helps in generalizing research findings to a certain extent, measuring concepts qualitatively and explaining causal relationships between concepts and variables (Cramer-Petersen et al., 2019).

The contextual information is collected through the secondary data method. The sources can be government publications, books, newspapers, journals, websites, organizations' websites, eBook libraries, free research article databases, electronic media, and the internet. Additionally, other vital insights into the world frequency are important in determining the approach of Iraq's international politics after 2003. The results can be presented in the form of tables, charts and graphs. Frequency tabulations will also be used to further enhance the meaning and implications of the obtained results.

Limitations of the Study

The proposed study will not be void of limitations. The first limitation is that it does not include international stakeholders in Iraq's international political affairs, because oil stakeholders are important in Iraqi politics. This can limit the broadness and/or scope of the study. Additionally, other areas significantly affected by political incidents like terrorist attacks will not be included as they are not politically stable. The researcher will rely on expert advice provided by academic supervisors and an in-depth review of related studies to develop the data collection. Also, the lack of references and academic books on the topic of the research can affect the quality of the thesis, and this is considered a scientific limitation.

Justification of the Study

The clarification about the prevailing actors affecting Iraq's international politics and their reasons and motivations which create the complicated political atmosphere in Iraq; the reasons led us to analyze the main problems which cause Instability in Iraqi politics, especially the international politics of Iraq in detail.

Scope of the Study

The main emphasis of this study is on the international politics of Iraq that changed since 2003 and analyzing the internal and international factors which affect Iraq's international relations; The methodology of the research is driven by a qualitative approach to examine the post-2003 international politics of Iraq.

Chapter Outline

This Thesis introduces the main objectives of the research in Chapter One with the introduction, along with the methodological clarifications to answer the questions; how has the international politics of Iraq changed since 2003 and what is the current state of its international politics? Chapter Two elucidates the existing literature with an emphasis on the originality of the research. The research in Chapter three is about oil. According to researchers such as Salem and tables in the OPEC section; We can see that in 2003, because of the war, the oil trade and the amount of Iraqi crude oil exports decreased significantly. For example, crude oil exports in 2002 were 1,494.6 barrels, while in 2003 they were 388.6 barrels. This shows the impact of war on a state's economy and foreign policy. Chapter Four is about the discussion about the foreign policy of the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq and highlighting its strength and weakness. Chapter five highlights religion as a key factor that has been shaping Iraq's international politics and explains that Iraq's main internal actors (Shiite, Sunni, Kurds) are derived to shape Iraq's foreign policy. Chapter six has conclusion and recommendations about the research.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Studies on Iraq's international political landscape are relatively few, and much is needed to develop studies in this related area. However, there are nascent ideas that can point the direction regarding the exact changes, factors and players influencing Iraq's international political landscape after 2003. A significant number of empirical studies point out that the need to control Iraq's oil reserves has greatly shaped its international political landscape since the ouster of Saddam Hussien in 2003. For instance, Paul Salem (2013) said that the challenges between the main internal actors such as Kurd, Sunni, and Shia affect Iraqi foreign policy. However, until Iraq resolves the deep and lingering internal disputes such as territory struggles, energy and power-sharing; it cannot have a coherent and stable foreign policy; Cashman and Robinson (2021) Iraq itself has been divided between Kurds from north of Iraq and Arabs in Baghdad because of ethical reasons behind the Sunni, Shia and Kurds. Additionally, other reasons like the need to control oil reserves are also suggested as the main causes of the civil war in Iraq. Hence, the international community sees the need to meddle in Iraq's international politics as a solution to deal with human rights violations as noted by the ones perpetrated during Saddam's era.

Su et al. (2021) conducted a study analyzing how oil is stirring political problems in Iraq. Their study highlights that there are geopolitical and geoeconomics' reasons why other countries would consider it fit to interfere with Iraq's political affairs. It was noted that the huge potential benefits linked to Iraq's oil resources were vast and can destabilize world oil prices. Hence, the need to interfere with its political affairs on both the local and international scales was seen as best by other political players. This aligns with propositions given by Meierding (2020) denoting that oil wars were major causes of international conflict in Iraq and denotes an instrumental factor responsible for changes in Iraq's international political landscape since the ouster of Saddam in 2003.

In another study, Aykan (2018) entitled Analysis of the USA such a major player in Iraq's political affairs amid deepening US-Kurdish relations. Such is evidenced by the drift of American oil companies north and the striking of two major agreements in 2008 namely; the strategic framework agreement

and status of forces that defined health, trade, technological, science, cultural and economic relations, and the status of forces agreement which authorized the full withdrawal of American troops from Iraq by 2011 (Salem, 2013).

Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry highlighted that the Iraq war in 2003 is a product of Liberalism; on the other hand, this great disaster is one of the motivations of America's basically liberal foreign policy; as well as, the academic realists promoted this view and believed that the Iraq war was part of America's liberal expansionism after the Cold War. The relationship between this ideology of war with realism and liberalism is fundamentally flawed and it is a clash between them. He argued that the Iraq war is a result of the USA's hegemonic primacy. After the September 11 incident in America, the hypothesis of building liberal democratic regimes as a solution to reduce terrorism and increase the freedom of people everywhere paved the way for the war of democratic imperialism against Iraq. And it was against the views of restrained realists who called the war in Iraq wrong. Realist critics blamed the American liberal-democratic ideology for this disorder, while for liberals, no regime is ultimately legitimate, and people's freedom is important. A wide common interest owned by itself and its clients.

In another research, Zainadin Khider (2015) analyzed the influence of the oil factor on the political future of the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government. He highlighted oil as a strong political and economic factor. The main purpose of the research is to know all the possibilities and measures that are available to the KRG so that it can use oil as a strong point in its foreign policy for the benefit of its people through self-strengthening and strengthening. It also describes the relationship between the Iraqi Federal Government and the Kurdish Regional Government, which has created several political conditions, especially in the foreign policy of the state. It attempts to analyze the current political situation in the north of Iraq and the relationship between the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government and the Federal Government of Iraq and the tensions between them, especially over oil. The researcher's view is to end the partnership in the federal experience of Iraq and change the form of governance in Iraq which can moderate these tensions. Omar Noradini's research discusses the new prospects of the internationalization of the Kurdish cause under the shadow of the new world system, such as the development of democracy, which is one of the

principles of the new world system. He also discussed the US domination over the new world order and the role of the US and its attitude towards the internationalization of the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government and the democratic way of resolving the Kurdish issue, especially since 2003. The United States, as the power and leader of the new world order, has a significant contribution to the Kurdish cause in the Middle East and its international development. It also explains whether these attitudes of the United States are the result of its material interests alone or its moral commitment to the values and principles of the new world order and its international position.

Contribution of the Study to the Existing Literature

Political tensions in Iraq have painted the picture of Iraq as a peaceful country as other regions like the Kurdish Regional Government, as the official executive body of the autonomous Region of northern Iraq, are continuously enjoying significant levels of peace and stability. Hence, this study helps in enhancing to understand of Iraq's political situation. Additionally, it adds to the existing theoretical models by suggesting ways of improving the use and role of peace and international relations models in addressing international political matters. This study's originality is to offer various practical measures for improving peace and stability in Iraq, especially at a time when internal factors and other countries have played an adverse role in promoting peace and stability. The internal factors that create domestic and international problems for Iraq are listed such as no partnership and misunderstanding between the main parties of Iraq and the instability in the implementation of the Iraqi constitution as well as the international factors that can interfere with the other countries to govern and solve the internal problems of the Iraqi government. Internal factors such as the various parties or different minorities in Iraq and the interference of other countries in Iraq's government affairs increase the presence of any internal and international conflict in Iraq.

There has been a lack of academic resources, especially in English on some of the issues in this study and there are few articles, books and scientific and academic research in the issues that is focused by this Thesis. Issues such as oil, international and domestic problems of federal states, especially in the Middle East, changes in the system of governance in the after the conflict is over

and constitutions of states are the most important issues in the new international system. It is believed that this thesis can be used as a good scientific resource for future research. The research attempts to analyze the changes in Iraqi foreign policy after the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003 and focuses on the factors of strengths and weaknesses of Iraq and also discusses the policy of the previous government, the Ba'ath regime. This is an assessment of the two different stages of a state which presents the transition of a society from dictatorship to democracy and concludes whether this transition and change in the basic system of a state was successful or not. Analyzing the system of federalism in Iraq and also dealing with the internal and international problems of the government that have arisen from the change of the constitution of the government to federalism, as well as, how Iraq deals with ethnic and religious minorities and different political parties.

Federalism is one of the forms of state and systems of management and governance in the world which has many justifications, motives and reasons; also, its primary goal is to create multilateralism, effective and significant participation in political life in a democratic manner and away from dictatorship. The current Iraqi federalism is based on devolutionary federalism, is popularly referred to as “devolution”, the “devolving” of federal responsibilities to lower levels of government (Tannenwald, 1998). Transferring central government to several regions, principle and in the permanent constitution of Iraq, Article 1, emphasizes federalism as the new system of governance in Iraq.

Theoretical Framework

Foreign policy theories analyze the foreign policy of each country from different perspectives and levels, and this study shows how the theories of realism and liberalism influence the system of governance. The current Iraqi constitution, issued in 2005, emphasizes the sovereign state in Section one, Article 1, which reflects the concept of reality in international relations, and international organizations, which reflects the concept of liberalism. As the New World Order, which is a combination of ideas from both international concepts such as realism and liberalism (The Iraqi Constitution, 2005).

This study attempts to explain more options and factors and to choose the best according to the researcher's opinion, which is to end the international

problems and the problems between the Iraqi government and the KRG. It also emphasizes the poles of liberalism and secularism to run a federal state and end religious conflicts. It attempts to present both the domestic and international dimensions of developments and the impact of each on the other. Most of the research in the field of oil, especially in countries where oil revenues are the main economic pillar in supplying the country's revenue agree that oil can play a two-level role in political development and as an incentive for the development of foreign policy. Instead of oil being a factor in the development of democracy and changes in the structure of the political system, on the contrary, it will have a negative impact on the political system. This phenomenon is largely related to countries with undemocratic political power. However, this does not apply to all countries that rely on oil revenues, we have examples of oil playing a role in the development of strong systems, so the problem is not the availability of oil itself, but how it is used by political power.

Federalism is a system of governance that is practiced in multi-ethnic states with more than one nation, although there are few federal states in the world. This system arises from a domestic constitutional structure and becomes the basis for the division and determination of the constitutional powers of the regions and the federal government at both the domestic and international levels; however, federalism also creates many domestic and international problems and obstacles. The issue of managing natural resources such as oil, determining the budget, the issue of participation of the regions in the central government, the issue of how and their share of representation. At the international level, many problems will arise that cannot be resolved by domestic legal solutions because they are international in nature and also the international problems of the regions. This Thesis believes that the federal form of governance is a good situation for Iraq with many minorities but according to the Iraqi constitutional principles. But most international principles do not refer to the powers and capacities of the regions at the international level; for example, the KRG's activities in concluding and signing international agreements and diplomatic activities are very extensive, while the federal constitution limits its powers. The question is who will take the international responsibility for resolving the international problems of the regions?

Realism

As one of the oldest theories of International Relations, realism emphasizes motives related to national security, power, and resources (Lieberfeld, 2005). The national interest concept is an important point in the realism analysis of foreign policy. The goal of realism concept is the survival of the state and securing national interests, Hans Morgenthau, one of the leading realist analysts, believes that national interests are an objective fact to find out the actions of political actors. States are preeminent (sovereign) actors, the first objective of states is survival, states try to be at the top of today's competitive system due to the power they have. Power is a fundamental principle in the international system and the differences between states are based on power. Power to maintain their interests and upgrade their position through this approach, that this struggle is an incontrovertible reality of international relations. The balance of power and stability pursue states to focus on their interests rather than ideology to pursue peace through power. Power in the realism concept means peace. According to Kenneth Waltz, an American political scientist and one of the founders of the realism concept, we can interpret the facts such as the causes of war or the international system which is an anarchic system through theories. Iraq's natural resources like oil and gas are the economic interests that cause more intervention of main players like the USA and European poles, also the USA desires to maximize its power in the Middle East or maybe become hegemony in the region. The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, states that "great powers are always searching for opportunities to gain power over their rivals, with hegemony as their final goal", also "great powers fear each other", (Mearsheimer, 2003). Realists don't believe in institutions they say that institutions have no significant effect on the nation's behavior. Realism supports the explanation of enduring aspects of foreign policy. From a realist point of view, the decision by governments (or "states") to go to war is the result of all states' involuntary participation in a never-ending battle for power and security in an international political environment in which each state is afraid of the hostility of other states, either actual or potential. This is also seen in the American interference in Iraq in 2003.

The realism theory can be answered this question "Why Iraq was targeted in 2003?" Realism emphasizes maintaining hegemony and unipolarity. The

United States tries to demonstrate its power to its allies and competitors and maintain its unipolarity through the war. According to realism's point of view, Iraq's geopolitical situation and using the nuclear weapons by Saddam Hussein's regime which was a threat to the security of America; as well as, the Iraqi unsurpassed oil resources were the reasons to target Iraq by the USA in 2003 particularly. Additionally, having military bases in Iraq gives more power to the U.S. to control the Middle East area (Lieberfeld, 2005).

Liberalism

In general, liberalism concept is under serious pressure for human rights and equal opportunity, liberalism is the most powerful human school that has emerged in the field of philosophy and politics today. Liberalism or liberal democracy is a feature of modern democracy to promote a moral perspective of existing individual freedom and welfare. It was not considered to be a humanitarian intervention, a chemical weapon attack against civilians in Iraq by Saddam Hussein and violated international law.

The liberals believe that having international relations with other states abroad can have a strong interior liberty, that's why they consider that the realm of International Relations is important (Stephen McGlinchey, 2017). The individual is a main principle of liberalism, the spiritual use of the individual and equality before society and law are basic to it, which means the individual has a higher value morally and should be free from arbitrary state power (Burchill et al., 2013). It argues that violent power is a basic threat to individual freedom and should be restrained and separated. Some theorists criticize that liberalism is a strong supporter of a free or market-oriented economy and capitalism and drives the government into a system of anarchy and chaos by reducing the power of the state. Liberalism emphasizes the rational action of individuals and states, economic interests in International Relations, non-governmental actors such as institutions, and organizations, and peace (contrary to the realism concept that does not believe in international cooperation between non-governmental actors). For example, the United Nations has a liberal system due to its aims to promote human rights and spread peace and security through cooperation between states and international organizations such as UNSC (United Nations Security Council), also to solve interstate problems, rather than intrastate, or NATO that

changes its goal after the cold war to extend and support the democracy, a feature of liberalism, between eastern and central European countries, also make a closed relationship with the assumptions of liberalism. Therefore, the United Nations has a liberal system due to its aims to promote human rights and spread peace and security, also to solve interstate problems, rather than intrastate. The main principles of Liberalism can be listed as individual freedom, equality of rights a limited government, economic freedom and competition and consent of the governed. The globalization of the economy means that there are few problems with international trade. Liberalism wants to remove the influence of the state in commercial relations between businesses and individuals. Liberalism emphasizes democracy, national security and peace. Therefore, replacing the dictatorship with democracy by using force is one of the perspectives of liberalism (Lieberfeld, 2005).

CHAPTER III

How the Oil Deposits has Challenged Iraq's International Politics?

This chapter is about an important political and economic substance that has played a central role to improve international relations, in the other hand, this political commodity is the center stage of International relations between power states such as the USA, England, France and Middle Eastern countries; as well as has been the source of many conflicts in these centuries on control or access to it. The concept of oil is a fuel and energy source which is used in industry and production, so it is the main reason for industrial progress and an income resource in the world. Oil is an intense political and economic factor due to its value in the world such as black gold.

The Foreign Policy Imperatives of Oil

International relations or foreign policy is interpreted by various theories and perspectives as a tool for relations with states or other international actors in order to achieve the goals of this state. This is based on specific factors and strategies; and are the result of a number of domestic and external factors. In this sense, the foreign policy of any state is the result of the interaction between internal and external material and moral factors.

Here is a brief history of the discovery and use of crude oil. Crude oil has an ancient history, according to Herodotus, an ancient Greek historian, dating back to four thousand years ago when it was discovered in Babylon and Babagurgur. The Kirkuk field contains 13% of Iraq's total oil ready for production. According to most oil experts, the Babagurgur field in Kirkuk contains 16 billion barrels of crude oil. this field is about 100 kilometers long and between 3-4 kilometers wide. This field in Kirkuk is one of the 10 largest in the world, (Zainadin, 2015). The history of the diplomatic relations with Iraq to find the oil is related to 1903, when it was rules under the Ottomans, at the time English companies found crude oil fields. After that international oil companies came to Iraq to find and extract the oil and fulfill the strategy of energy.

After the European and American Industrial Revolutions and the improvement of life standards in terms of industrial settlements, the first industrial oil production started in the United States and the search for oil led

Europeans and the United States to establish diplomatic relations with oil-rich areas such as Iraq, where the first oil well was drilled in Khanaqin-Iraq with British assistance in the early 20th century. Since then, the role of oil has increased after its discovery and use as an important economic factor in the policies of the superpower states (Zainadin, 2015). Oil is considered a very powerful economic and political factor, because of its high value in the world markets and its importance in the fields of industry and politics provided. Hence, oil can be used as a very powerful card by those who own oil for the benefit of the country and its citizens. Oil is a substance extracted from the ground and used as a fuel as well as a source of energy that enters most industries. From this perspective, the focus on oil resources and production is related to the fact that it is a diverse material and a strategic tool that affects the state's foreign relations. So, when we talk about oil, we are talking about an important economic and political substance that has a role in the development of civilization and humanity.

In other words, no economic sector, including agriculture, industry, petrochemicals, transportation, and even domestic sectors, can develop without oil energy resources. If we look at the countries that have natural oil resources and a lot of income. However, oil is not always a good factor for economic growth, and in many countries, oil revenues have caused instability and insecurity instead of prosperity, especially in countries that rely solely on oil revenues and this revenue according to a clear strategic plan through a democratic authority is not distributed and as a result, creates a kind of state called the single-source state (Zainadin, 2015). The impact of oil revenues has led researchers to point out that oil has a strange characteristic, some believe that the growth of democracy is largely related to increased revenues, but sometimes, with oil revenues, this equation is reversed. When oil revenues increase, the power moves towards oppression and authoritarianism and moves away from democratic governance. According to Denise Natali (2011), a researcher at the institute for national studies and strategists in Washington, DC, who believes that there is no direct link between oil revenues and the repressive regime, rather, it is about the form of authority; In other words, if the regime is undemocratic, oil revenues will lead to more oppression, and if the system is democratic, oil revenues will be a strong factor for the development of democratic institutions.

According to Natalie's point, we conclude that oil and power are related to how oil revenues are managed and distributed to society. Additionally, Political and economic powers will also be confused, and the structure of the management institution will be weakened (Zainadin, 2015).

The Gulf countries were originally several tribes due to the post-World War I situation and the availability of oil, they entered the world arena, which now appears to have advanced institutions. In this situation in the Gulf countries, oil with all the revenues it earns some changes that have brought some welfare but has not led to the development of society in its broad sense, to achieve radical changes in the economic, political and social aspects. The circumstance is that about twelve of the most oil-dependent countries are on the IMF's list of poor countries and are heavily indebted. If oil revenues have been a curse for the Iraqi people during the Ba'ath regime, then the Iraqi government after 2003, which came to power through democratic and elected elections, has not been a source of prosperity for the Iraqi people. Therefore, the people's elected government does not always have to provide a developed economic and political system if it does not have stable and efficient institutions. During the Saddam Hussein regime, political oppression was the result of oil oppression, but despite the existence of the Corruption Commission after 2003, oil oppression led to a new political corruption that led to the involvement of senior officials in the state. However, the Corruption and Reform Commission is much more active in the new Iraqi government and the eradication of corruption is at the top of the programs of the new Iraqi government.

With the apparent diverse and huge petroleum resources, Iraq's economic growth and development activities and policies have been pretty much influenced by its petroleum resources. According to Salem (2013), Iraq is the fifth-largest proven oil reserves in the world, with 143 billion barrels and further exploration could make it an even larger reserve holder. However, setbacks posed by the invasion of Iraq and the prevalence of insurgent groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda had significantly undermined investment in this sector (Dodge, 2013). Nonetheless, the post-Saddam era and governments have made significant strides to lure investment into this sector and this included effort aimed at pursuing foreign policies capable of providing external exit routes and markets for Iraq's energy. As such, Salem (2013) contends that Iraqi foreign

policy has been driven towards seeking better relations with its neighboring countries. Iraq depends on countries like Turkey and Iran for energy export routes to some extent (Cordesman, 2018). Moreover, India, China and the United States have proved to be Iraq's major energy clients (Sakr, 2021). Hence, promoting foreign policy initiatives that promote good relations with other states prove to be an effective way for Iraq to boost investments in its energy and petroleum sector. Iraq's isolation policy together with damage to its infrastructure that occurred during ISIS and al-Qaeda's reign significantly undermined investment in this sector and caused oil production to decline significantly. Meanwhile, a significant amount of Iraq's oil exports is transported south through the port of Basra to the Persian Gulf and out through the Straits of Hormuz (El Mallakh, 2019). Calls have over the past years been made for the Baghdad government to strategically diversify and expand its oil export routes (El Mallakh, 2019). As a result, its policy initiatives in this regard encompass building foreign relations with countries situated around the Straits of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf. Previously, it had been noted that the closure of the Strait of Hormuz will significantly a heavy economic blow to the Iraqi economy (Dodge, 2013). Moreover, several historical oil export routes used by Iraq are either currently badly damaged or shut down and including the Baniyas-Tripoli (Syria-Lebanon) pipeline that was closed during the U.S. invasion (Sakr, 2021). Salem (2013) outlines that the challenge is that the Syrian war remains a major obstacle hindering any attempts to pump oil west. The other challenge faced by Iraq with regard to its foreign policy stance on oil is poor relations between the Shia-led Baghdad government and Riyadh (El Mallakh, 2019). The prospects are low that such an outlet will be reopened unless or otherwise, the relations improve. Bombings by insurgent groups and sabotage are other obstacles standing against Iraq's foreign policy initiatives in that regard as they have completely shut down the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline that was carrying 900,000 BPD of Iraqi oil north through Turkey to the Mediterranean in 2001 (Salem, 2013).

As it stands, relations with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the current head of the Republic of Turkey and the Baghdad government will have to strengthen their ties for Iraq to boost higher oil export flows to Turkey. This also includes reviving plans and cooperation with Jordan to build a double oil and natural gas

pipeline spanning southwest to the Jordanian Red Sea port of Aqaba (Salem, 2013). The relations should also include major oil corporations (eg. Halliburton, ConocoPhillips, Chevron, and ExxonMobil) and importers. Iraq has a particular position on the world energy map and is the fifth largest oil reserves in the world, with about 8.7% total oil reserve of the world. After the US invasion of Iraq and the destruction of Saddam Hussein, the oil policies were changed. Many oil companies were dealt with to gain beneficial oil contracts.

An Analysis of Politics of Oil

Oil-markets and competition over oil sometimes stimulates conflict for international relations, which can be a negative aspect of politics of oil. These issues can be listed as:

a. The federal and multiethnic states that have oil trading and importing obstacles; for instance, Iraq and the KRG still have some conflicts in multilateral cooperation and importing their oil.

b. Oil transit routes that have caused many international clashes.

c. Financing assistance through oil for insurgencies or wars between other countries can be another negative aspect of oil.

d. If oil revenues are not distributed through an elected authority responsible of the society, it will create political and economic choices of corruption and parasites that their only task is to distribute oil, instead of planning appropriate economic and political strategies. This prevents the development of rationality and energy renewal that are also the reasons for advancement of the political system through a responsible and restricted authority according to national law.

f. The resource wars and oil can be accepted as a leading cause of war: The political effects caused by the oil industry, sometimes become the main cause of war and an impact on international security. States, especially powerful states, try to acquire oil and reserves, sometimes leading to war; for instance, the conflict and war between Iraq and USA over Kuwait in 1990 was actually to dominate the oil market, as well as a geopolitical oil crisis. The United States believed that having Kuwait's oil revenues would allow Saddam Hussein to build nuclear weapons, which was a threat to the world. we can say that oil, this powerful commodity, can turn into military, economic and political power. As

well as Iraq war in 2003 which some politicians believe that the occupation of Iraq by the United States and the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003 was to obtain natural resources, especially oil reserves.

g. Another cause of conflict between states is petro-aggression, which makes dictatorial and aggressive leaders like Saddam Hussein an increasing threat to foreign policy to achieve their extremist goals.

Hence, the leading cause of the resource wars is oil and this is one of the disadvantages of oil wealth which stimulates or exacerbates an international conflict that is poorly understood. This is seen particularly in petro-states, for instance, in conflict over controlling oil transit paths, such as oil pipelines or oil aggression, whereby the aggressive leader such as the former leader of Iraq, Saddam Hussein who had much willing to lead Kuwait war in 1990 and made international policy adventurism. Oil does not always lead to progress but sometimes it is the cause of instability and insecurity, especially for countries whose economies depend on oil. For instance, in the current political affairs, the world is facing an energy crisis caused by the Russia and Ukraine war. Additionally, the war has a significant impact on the global energy supply and naturally, all of this has serious impacts on the foreign policy of the states. With the globalization of oil, policymakers and The United Nations Security Council should think about emerging security threats from oil and resource wars (Jeff Colgan, 2013).

The Politics of Oil in Northern Iraq

According to the American Geological Society, the region of northern Iraq has huge reserves of oil and its substitute and accounts for 30% of Iraq's oil. According to the Financial Times, the area accounts for 30 percent of Iraq's oil and the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government's reserves will not be exhausted for another century and is considered one of the best oil reserves in the world in terms of quality, which international companies compare its quality with olive oil. In addition to this, the KRG is among the top 10 countries for oil revenues and the facilities provided to companies are the reason for the arrival of the well-known companies in the world, including ExxonMobil, Chevron, and marathon oil corporation. Therefore, KRG has an important position on the energy map of the Middle East and the world.

Due to its importance in the oil and energy sector and the presence of huge hydrocarbon resources, the region of northern Iraq has been able to convince a number of energy companies to invest and develop oil after the fall of the Baath regime in 2003. This strengthens its political and economic position in the domestic and international community as well.

The KRG's oil and gas development strategy is based on the new Iraqi constitutional provisions (the 2005 constitution, which was voted for by about 80% of the Iraqi people), which allows the regions to manage their own sectors; however, despite the constitutional basis, the debate between Iraq and the KRG has continued in all three phases of the strategy's implementation:

- a. Signing oil contracts
- b- Construction of transmission lines
- c. The process of selling, collecting and distributing revenue.

The Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) Oil Law No. 22 of 2007 consists of seventeen chapters and sixty-one articles. This law deals with the issue of oil and gas extraction, export and supervision for the present and future generations. However, it is interesting to note that according to the law, there are a number of institutions that have not been established due to differences between the parties, except the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government Fund for Oil and Gas Revenues, which was issued by the KRG Parliament. This has led the Kurdish people to view oil revenues with suspicion in the absence of clarity. This requires further steps as a start. It is true that the Ministry of Natural Resources publishes figures and oil revenues, but in order to remove this doubt must be confirmed by the financial supervision.

After the failure of its attempts to pass a new law, the Iraqi government resorted to the use of the Iraqi Oil Law No. 84 of 1985, which belongs to the Ba'ath era. The application of this law, as well as the existence of a centralized mentality in the Iraqi government, has created problems for the KRG's oil sector, which is sometimes considered illegal. Despite these conflicts, the KRG has been able to develop the oil sector and, for this purpose, use the capital of international companies; the capital that the KRG did not have. There is no doubt that due to its landlocked location in the region, northern Iraq needed a gateway to transport oil products to the European market and Turkey was the best gateway for this purpose. Therefore, the KRG tried to improve its relations with Turkey. This

policy coincided with Turkey's zero-problem-with-neighbors policy, eradication of all problems with neighboring countries, implemented under Ahmet Davutoglu, the 26th Prime Minister of Turkey. On the other hand, northern Iraqi relations with Baghdad were not at a good level, which began with the failure of Baghdad to supply region's budget year after year, the KRG's share of the budget was reduced for various reasons, and after the implementation of the oil policy by KRG and sending oil through Turkey, especially during the rule of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki the relations between them eventually deteriorated (Jihan, 2016). One of the problems with the Iraqi government is the ambivalent behavior of the northern Iraq policy of Baghdad, especially regarding oil and the share of the budget of the KRG (Jihan, 2016). The oil policy in Iraq will be and the oil and gas law must be passed in the Iraqi parliament through the 2021 budget law, to resolve this issue and how the region of northern Iraq is to hand over its oil to Baghdad. They did not accept the KRG to manage its own oil issue and even ignored the constitution and law. The agreement between the region of northern Iraq and the Iraqi government is complicated, especially economically and politically. What is important for the position of the region of northern Iraq, especially in International Relations, is the oil issue that Baghdad wants to take away from the Kurds in order to keep the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government at a weak level; but this is a red line, especially for the United States and its interests. No one may dare to side with the Iraqi government to hand over the north oil issue. The Baghdad government's argument was more to prevent the development of the oil sector in Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government, and also to take over it by themselves. The KRG's debate was caused more by internal political competition for the interests of Kurdish parties than by differences in their political goals. Therefore, this debate can be reduced in the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government and the successes of the reconstruction of the oil sector can be shared by those who are actively involved in the reconstruction and try to involve other parties in the development process. In order to eliminate suspicions of corruption in this sector, institutions that are useful for eliminating corruption must also be established. Therefore, the KRG should continue its efforts to develop the oil and gas sector of the region while developing other sectors of the economy; As we see today, when oil prices decreases, it becomes difficult for the government to provide the necessary budget. Consequently, in order to avoid

economic crisis in the future and the livelihood of the Kurdish people is not only dependent on oil, other sectors and industries should also be developed, such as agriculture, tourism and the implementation of the tax system. As a way to support domestic production and generate more revenue, the government could increase tariffs on imported goods that are either non-essential or harmful (such as cigarettes and alcoholic beverages) (Jihan, 2016).

The USA's Foreign Policy Towards Iraq

The nature of international relations has always been dynamic and continuous and has not been stable. Change has always been a dominant characteristic of international relations. In light of this characteristic, we must understand the intentions of US foreign policy toward Iraq. In general, the US foreign policy is somehow known as "a vague and surprising policy surrounded by vague and uncertain ambiguity" (Dr. Sherzad Najjar, 2014). Basically, the goal is to achieve the US national interest without regard to the interests of others. The main principles of the foreign policies of the USA are related to saving their political, economic, and military concerns, and maintaining the national security of the USA. Democracy, human rights, and individual liberties are the value of their construction. For this concern, the USA's international relations are changeable due to these factors; on the other hand, they don't have a stable policy (Dr. Sherzad Najjar, 2014). The dominance of the United States over the new world order is still evident, which is considered a distinctive feature of the New World Order; Although there are other poles and powers in the system, such as the European Union or China, the position of none of them is as strong as the position of the United States in leading and directing this system. This is because the country has all the military, economic, political, cultural, and technological conditions necessary for the leading state-of-the-world system and a world-class power.

The New World Order, despite differences in civilization, religion and culture, works on a unified system for the benefit of all and achieves stability. Just as the internal life of societies requires a system, organization and rules to regulate the relationships between its members, determine the rights and duties of its members, and achieve stability; Similarly, at the national and international levels, determining the rights and duties of members of the international

community and keeping humanity away from crises, problems and wars: without this system, violence and aggression will increase. The US strategic interests in US foreign policy are to try to make the Middle East a branch hanging a global system that should be narrow nationalism and the extremist religious ideology and the system of dictatorship and totalitarian system and blind the sources of the threat of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. To do this, the United States must review the type and extent of its alliances with the states and nations of the Middle East, especially those who have helped in the fight against terrorism, the third Gulf War, and the peace process. Therefore, if Iraq allies with the United States based on common principles and interests, according to its strength, size, and weight, it can achieve many new gains.

Since the late nineteenth century, the United States has central influence in the world in formulating principles, rules and identifying principles to influence the new world system and we see that the United States dominates that system. The extent of the United States' shadow over the world is such that some people resonate the word global as American, that is, the country's efforts to shape the new world order in such a way that it becomes a mirror of its interests and goals. Today, the dominance of the US is not only the result of the Cold War and the bipolar system but has a deeper historical background that goes back to pre-Cold War times. What must be the various dimensions and factors that have enabled the United States to assert its hegemony so strongly? In many parts of the world, countries are asking the United States to help them resolve their problems to maintain peace, stability, and political security. The Arab world is subject to US surveillance and entrustment to the extent that it relates to the Gulf region. While today is called the oil era, there is competition among oil producers in the region, as a result of which the United States has the opportunity to play its role in the Gulf area, because the oil trade needs security and political peace. The third Gulf War, the fall of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship in 2003, and the liberation of Iraq showed that the Gulf states are demanding the presence of US forces to solve their problems. That is why this Thesis asks: What were the goals and projects of the USA while they entered Baghdad and overthrew the former regime on April 9, 2003? The former US President, George W. Bush said the goal of the invasion of Iraq was to overthrow the regime and establish a new system because Iraq was a threat to world peace. As the research mentioned that

liberal democracy is a feature of modern democracy to promote a moral perspective of existing individual freedom, welfare and national security. The departure of the nationalist and liberation movements of nations from the values, beliefs and methods of democracy produces racism in terms of thought and dictatorship in terms of the political system. Some Arab societies and states still suffer from extreme nationalism and a misleading and distorted democracy. Since the establishment of the Arab nation-state, they have not been able to find a rational, democratic and radical solution to the multi-ethnic, religious and cultural phenomenon of their societies. Many Arab nationalists are skeptical of democratic reform and minority rights, believing that minority rights are a Western plan to deprive Arabs of their own power. This misunderstanding has led to conflicts in the Arab world caused by pluralism and sectarianism. Dictator Saddam Hussein used to say that democracy is a source of empowerment for individuals and collectives, but in practice, he turned the entire Iraqi country into a mass grave for those who demanded democracy. It had a negative impact on ethnic and religious minorities and political parties; Because the circles of political power and the seat of rule have always been dominated by the Ba'athists, while others such as Shiite Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens, Christians, Chaldeans and Assyrians have been deprived of their political and civil rights and this policy has always led to the destruction of the state and threatens its legitimacy. The consequences of the dictatorial regime's policies have left Iraqi citizens starving on the soil of a wealthy country and hard to understand how people struggled on the shores of the oil lake. The stability of Iraq depends on insisting on the rule of law, equality of citizens, ethnic and religious rights, and a multi-party system that includes representatives of all sections of society and listens to other ethnic groups and minorities. As for the new Iraq, which has been freed from the shadow of a dictatorship and an extremist regime, with the existence of ethnic, religious and sectarian differences, they are making various efforts to invent a democratic policy which it needs the cooperation of the international community and global civil society.

In this catastrophe, the Obama administration was faced with the crisis in Iraq with shock and surprise, which clearly showed that it cannot make a decisive decision. For this, USA administration struggled to establish a government of national unity in Iraq. The steps which the USA was taking were

related to trying to form a government of national unity. Meanwhile, the United States wanted a government in which all communities of the Iraqi people participate equally in the process. Iraq is a complicated puzzle in US foreign policy (Dr. Sherzad Najar, 2014).

The US president delivered a speech to the UN General Assembly, stressing the nature of the commitment of Resolution 688, saying that the UN Security Council Resolution 688 called on the Iraqi regime to immediately and completely stop resisting its people in 1991. With the systematic repression of ethnic minorities, the Security Council responded as: “The repression threatens international peace and security in the region. So far, this demand has been ignored. Freedom for the Iraqi people is a great moral issue and a great strategic goal. People deserve freedom and the security of all countries demands it” (Nureddini, 2003). Two weeks before starting Operation Freedom of Iraq and the fall of Saddam Hussein, the United States confirmed that the Iraqi president is a threat to the American people, neighboring countries and the people of his own country and they said that We want Iraqi citizens to be able to run their country democratically and Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds and even Christians to live together within a federal system. The result of the US position on the Iraqi people is a mixture of the ideas and values of both international concepts such as realism and liberalism. This balance between beliefs and interests is one of the main foreign policy requirements of any power that wants to lead the world system. Therefore, the realization of the political, civil and human rights of Iraqis remains one of the moral obligations of the organizing forces in the new world system.

In the context of this message, it can be seen that in US foreign policy, the issue of providing international guards and the establishment of no-fly zone to protect Kurds and Shiites from the Baath regime, it has always been combined with a number of common principles such as human rights, democracy, federalism, freedom and the consolidation of peace and security in Iraq, Middle East and the world. But this does not mean that Washington's strategy in providing this international guard has been empty of interests and seeking to enrich its resources, but if providing international security is one of the interests that has brought various benefits to Washington, it is not considered a vital interest of US national security; as Kim. R. Holmes, a former American diplomat

and assistant secretary of state, says the United States has political and economic interests that have nothing to do with national security, these are issues that the United States wants to support because they may affect the US moral position in the world or serve other political and economic interests as a rule. The US president told the UN General Assembly that Iraq continues to commit horrific human rights violations and everywhere under its control will impose repressive powers on the people, arrest and attack the tribe without trial. He stressed that if Iraq wants peace, it must stop the oppression of civilians, including Kurds, Shiites, Turkmen and Assyrians. The US support for humanitarian affairs is more of a mechanism for achieving strategic goals and part of the country's expansionist strategy, which plays a significant role in expanding the market economy. But if they go the opposite direction and harm its interests instead of benefiting, the possibility of giving up support in US foreign policy is always expected (Nureddini, 2003).

The USA's Foreign Policy is Based on its Economy and Oil Industry

The economic sector of the USA is the center of all their concerns, even the foreign policy is based on the concerns of this sector; so, they try to have a balanced policy with the oil-rich countries such as Iraq which has rich oil reserves. The USA is one of the biggest oil imports and also is the third oil producer in the world. USA's foreign policy has oil industry instruments. Having a balanced policy for the economic sector is an effective factor that makes the USA the greatest power in the world. Additionally, the foreign policy tools of the Bush and Obama administrations for energy security and the overall foreign policy tools of the country for energy security include the use of military force in the locations of new energy sources, the use of diplomatic tools, and assisting oil-producing countries. As the units and external boundaries of the United States increase the global energy consumption in the oil prices for energy security, the seizure of energy resources in the world in general and in the Middle East, in particular, increases the US energy consumption.

OPEC (the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries)

OPEC is an international organization is a permanent institution in which a significant number of states participate in order to develop or revive the

achievement of certain common and specific goals. It's a permanent Intergovernmental Organization that created on 14 September 1960 in Baghdad by the five founding members (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela). OPEC is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland then moved to Vienna, Austria in 1965. The organization were later joined by eight countries (Qatar, Indonesia, Libya, United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Nigeria, Ecuador, Angola, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Congo). These countries that have most of the world's proven oil reserves.

In terms of structure, this organization has three main institutions:

- a. the Council of Ministers
- b. the Council of Lawyers
- c. the Secretariat

OPEC's purpose is Coordinating oil policies between members of the organization; also securing and stabilizing the price of petroleum for producers; OPEC can be described as the largest organization of developing countries and an international trading union politically for producing raw materials; also, for political gaps in the world which are closely related to the performance of this union and this keeps political cohesion. For instance, the war between Russia and Ukraine which effects on the oil price and trading. Although it has a bright history of setting oil prices and export levels, during the ISIS war in 2014, oil prices decreased significantly and It has a direct impact on the oil market and sources of income. The Kurdish Regional Government itself should try to meet with the organization to find a mechanism for how to deal with it.

OPEC can use the oil exports as leverage in foreign policy which has the main political factors:

- a. Economic policies
- b. Long-term political interests related to oil
- c. Foreign policy concerns

Since 1990, Iraq has not negotiated over oil prices and quotas (rationing). Also, for defending the profits of oil exporters who have an effective relationship with the international oil industry by controlling the set prices and quotas as a cartel; that means the oil exporters from OPEC are competing as much as cooperation together in this industry (Zainadin, 2015).

The oil exporters of Middle Eastern and North Africa tried to absorb foreign investors and large international oil companies to increase their oil production, market shares, and earnings. For this purpose, there has been an international challenge in the oil industry.

Indeed, the stability and set of oil prices depend on Saudi Arabia, which has extra capacity in critical situations; its contribution is essential in setting the oil prices. It acts as a dominant company and ultimate supplier in OPEC because of its low costs which give statistically interesting results. According to some approaches, OPEC acts as a profit-maximizing cartel by arranging supplies to set the oil prices.

Tables 1 and 2 in the next pages compare the crude oil reserves of the member states to the largest oil reserves in 2022 and 2003. Iraqi crude oil reserves have now increased significantly since. Table 3 shows that Iraq's oil trade and crude oil exports declined significantly in 2003. These show the impact of the war on the Iraqi economy and foreign policy.

Table 1.

Top 10 Countries with the Largest Oil Reserves Recently (in Thousand Million Barrels):

Rank	Country	Reserves	% of World Total
1	Venezuela	303.8	17.5%
2	Saudi Arabia	297.5	17.2%
3	Canada	168.1	9.7%
4	Iran	157.8	9.1%
5	Iraq	145.0	8.4%
6	Russia	107.8	6.2%
7	Kuwait	101.5	5.9%
8	United Arab Emirates	97.8	5.6%
9	United State	68.8	4.0%
10	Libya	48.4	2.8%

Table 2.

OPEC-Proven Crude Oil Reserves in 2003

Rank	Country	Reserves	% of World Total
1	Venezuela	77,226	
2	Saudi Arabia	262,730	
3	Canada	4,500.0	
4	Iran	133,250	
5	Iraq	115,000	
6	Former USSR	86,932.0	
7	Kuwait	99,000	
8	United Arab Emirates	97,800	
9	United State	22,700.0	
10	Libya	39,126	

Table 3.

World Crude Oil Exports by Country, 2002–2003 (1,000 b/d), (The OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin. 2003).

Rank	Country	Year 2002	Year 2003
1	Venezuela	1,572.0	1,535.0
2	Saudi Arabia	5,284.6	6,522.9
3	Canada	1,426.8	1,553.6
4	Iran	2,093.6	2,396.3
5	Iraq	1,494.6	388.6
6	Russia	5,581.7	6,479.5
7	Kuwait	1,138.0	1,242.9
8	United Arab Emirates	1,614.0	2,048.0
9	United State	20.6	22.1
10	Libya	983.6	1,126.5

CHAPTER IV

The Different Roles of the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government in the Foreign Policy of Iraq

In this chapter, the Thesis elaborates the international relations of Iraq and a region in Iraq and its political situation that is northern Iraq; so that the authorities of the KRG can take advantage of these factors when making decisive political decisions, they should also keep in mind that there are some shortcomings in the region that if not addressed, will be considered weaknesses and will have a role to play in the present and future.

An Overview of the Foreign Policy of Iraq and the KRG

Attempts to examine the roles of the KRG in the foreign policy of Iraq revolve around the manner in which Iraq's foreign policy is structured as well as its policy interests. It is in this regard that this section examines these two major aspects with an intention of analyzing how the KRG influences or plays a major role in Iraq's foreign policy. Rebuilding war-torn states is a sustainable way to guarantee that humanitarian intervention and constructed peace to proceed. Transforming a post-conflict area to peace, stability, and security is one of the most complex efforts of the international community. Most of these countries have been unable to stand on their feet, let alone get back on a path toward sustained prosperity for the population at large. This process needs some modern institutions and mechanisms to achieve that goal. In Iraq, the United Nations tried different ways to transfer the country from conflict and insecurity to establish sustainable peace. Holding free elections to make a new government was one of the main steps of it. Also, the democratization process has a strong link to state-building; it's a legitimate way to provide a mechanism for generating internal legitimacy for Peace agreements. It provides strategic insights into the successful transition of a society from dictatorship to democracy. When the Iraqi regime invaded Kuwait in August 1990 International Community put intensive sanctions on Iraq. That sanction destroyed that country badly; it placed huge restrictions on Iraq's oil imports. Also, it put the expenditure of its oil revenues under the United Nations' control. The Iraqi currency lost its prize in the international market. The sanction on Iraq was too much worse for the KRG

because the northern Iraq should confront two intensive sanctions first from the international community and later from Iraqi regime sanction decided by the Iraqi regime. The double sanctions experienced by the KRG included the sanctions imposed on Iraq by the United Nations Security Council as well as the sanctions imposed by the Iraqi government on the Kurdish autonomous entity had a devastating effect.

The current Iraqi federalism is based on devolutionary federalism, is popularly referred to as “devolution”, the “devolving” of federal responsibilities to lower levels of government (Tannenwald, 1998). transferring central government to several regions, principle and in the permanent constitution of Iraq, Article 1, emphasizes federalism as the new system of governance in Iraq. According to this constitution and legal procedures, the federal government has been allowed to form a federal region by Article 119 of the Iraqi Constitution (Soran, 2008). The concept of federalism is one of the most complex concepts in terms of law and politics does not have its definition, so there are many different definitions and opinions. The term federal is derived from the Latin word (Foedus) which refers to an alliance or agreement. Federalism is one of the forms of state and systems of management and governance in the world, has many justifications, motives and reasons and the primary goal is to create multilateralism and effective and significant participation in political life in a democratic manner and away from dictatorship.

Regions are semi-autonomous political and legal entities with their own regional and ethnic characteristics, language, culture, history, or political status, and their powers are determined by the constitution and according to the powers that govern their affairs and implement a way for their right to self-determination. The main reason for the international problems in the federal state is due to an equation in which the regions aim to express their political personality at the international level and implement the features of foreign policy as a means of strengthening themselves. These efforts eventually lead to problems that are not easy to solve and often a third side comes to solve the problem, but this often complicates the situation.

Power sharing is another cause of conflict between the federal government and the regions. Such as the earlier political, economic and social development of the regions compared to the federal government. This early

development of the regions is a helpful factor in encouraging the regions to use more power and demand a broader power than the constitution, even if the federal government does not comply with the demands of the regions, there are many internal and international problems. These are some of the conflicts between the Iraqi government and the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government; because there is no reference to the powers of the regions in some diplomatic affairs and international powers such as the implementation of international agreements in the Iraqi constitution (Soran, 2008).

Principally, Iraq's geographical location and geological features are of huge interest and importance to its foreign policy and how it relates to other states. As such, Iraq lies along several vital fault lines comprising the Sunni-Shia, and Kurdish-Arab, and holds one of the world's largest oil reserves (Dodge, 2013). As such, it is a central country that is highly rich in petroleum resources and situated in the volatile heart of the Middle East. This implies that the Middle East country has a huge potential of becoming a severe test for sectarian and ethnic conflict, an engine for economic growth or a huge force for regional accommodation and stability. Therefore, Iraq's foreign policy is of huge importance for Iraqis, other Middle East countries and the world at large. Yet, Iraq will not have a coherent foreign policy until it resolves deep and lingering internal differences over matters such as power sharing, territory, and energy.

One of the key features of Iraq's foreign policy is its complexity and it comprises various sets of foreign interests relating to securing access to electricity and water, encouraging investment in the energy sector to promote economic growth, and building military capacity (Salem, 2013). Available facts point to issues such as volatile regional neighborhoods notably the Syrian war, and the nature of its polarized and fractured domestic politics are the major impacting factors causing incoherence in Iraq's foreign policy (Dawisha, 2013; Katzenstein, 2020). Suggestions have been offered to point out that it is best for Iraq to build good relations with various regional and international players (El Mallakh, 2019; Sakr, 2021). Salem (2013) contends that there are several countries pursuing a similar policy approach. However, efforts to foster such initiatives have proved to be futile. Salem (2013) further asserts that Iraq's foreign policy is not effectively institutionalized and centralized. There are other various opinions that have been suggested as part of efforts to determine key

challenges undermining Iraq's foreign policy to promote the effectiveness of the provided solutions in boosting the attainment of the stated policy goals. For instance, Pourahmadi (2022) documents that Iraq's central government has long been holding a lion's share of power and blamed for the subsequent national and international political problems linked to the Baghdad government. Other lines of studies argue that the central government commands the national army, controls the budget, and enjoys the constitutional authority of setting foreign policy (El Mallakh, 2019; Sakr, 2021; Salem, 2013). Others cite discrepancies such as efforts by the central government to concentrate power in its hands and oppress other minority groups denoting that they impose obstacles hindering the effective functioning of the country and its ability to attain the stated policy goals (Abubakar, 2016; Kaválek, 2015). The KRG's pursuit of its own policies concerning the war in Syria and initiatives to forge its own external relationships with regional powers like Turkey and international oil companies through the leadership of KRG's struggle with Iraq's official foreign policy pursued by Baghdad. On a broader and significant level, KRG is not the only ethnic player contesting Baghdad's foreign policy authority as other minority groups like the Sunnis are imposing significant threats to key areas that enhance the effective attainment of Iraq's foreign policy goals (see, Haddad, 2014; Mansour, 2016; Pourahmadi, 2022). Other challenges have been linked to Tariq al-Hashimi, the former vice president, who was ousted in 2011 by Maliki but has established his own relations with Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Iran (Baram & al-Maliki, 2022). Consequently, Iraq's foreign policy has always been blamed for failing to preempt other politicians and Erbil to pursue their own foreign relations and to reflect national consensus (Dawisha, 2013; Katzenstein, 2020; Salem, 2013). That is, the internal struggles of other ethnic groups affect Iraq's foreign relations according to political freedom and interests. These contrasting theoretical propositions denote that any foreign policy must promote national interests (Dodge, 2021; Hudson & Day, 2019). Nonetheless, foreign policy and foreign relations are pursued by either non-state or state actors to solidify their political dominance in domestic politics, especially in countries like pre-recession Sudan, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria and Lebanon. Additionally, ethnic groups like the Sunnis are increasingly reaching out to countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey to boost their competitive threat against the Shia-dominated central Iraqi

government. In light of these provided insights about Iraq's foreign policy, a solid understanding of the role of the KRG in Iraq's foreign policy revolves around the aims or interests of Iraq's foreign policy. As a result of the aforementioned issues primary interests of Iraq's foreign policy needs to be analyzed.

Primary Foreign Policy Interests

It is apparent at this stage to contend that Iraq's foreign policy is significantly influenced by its distinct primary interests to a large extent. With its current position, things such as boosting trade and foreign investment, meeting the country's resource needs, promoting growth in the energy sector, increasing military capacity and drifting from a Saddam-era policy of engagement in costly wars and isolation are most likely to be huge determining factors in Iraq's foreign policy. For instance, Salem (2013) outlined that the devastating social and economic effects of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) financial sanctions imposed on the Iraqi economy and society for invading Kuwait demand a new approach to Iraq's foreign policy. Though some of these sanctions were removed, some studies contend that Iraq has not yet managed to rebuild normal relations with other regional states as well as other states, and still yet to regain international legitimacy since the fall of the Saddam regime in 2003 (Cordesman, 2018; Salem, 2013). However, Iraq's approach to national and international affairs has been more or less focused on events avoiding external military conflicts and extreme external challenges that may trigger confrontations. Most importantly is the UNSC's inclusion of Iraq into Chapter VI allowing it to establish cooperation with other states and the removal of Iraq from Chapter VII in June 2013 and allowing UN-mandated external action (Salem, 2013). Such acts have managed to enhance Iraq's national sovereignty but such sovereignty remains under severe threats posed by externally backed militias and intelligence networks, the state's incomplete control of its airspace and borders, and internal divisions. Given such challenges, Iraq's foreign policy is primarily centered on the following interests; building military capacity, the geopolitics of water, meeting electricity demand and building trade and investment relations. These interests are explained in the next section of this Thesis.

Building Military Capacity

Given the significant level of threats posed by externally backed militias and intelligence networks like ISIS and Al-Qaeda, Iraq's foreign policy has partly been influenced by the need to acquire arms and train the national army (Sakr, 2021). Besides, Dodge (2013) outlines that the need for Iraq to regain control of its airspace, territory, and borders requires an effective and empowered national army. Though Iraq has over the past years managed to counter threats posed by ISIS and Al-Qaeda, it still remains incapable of weaning threats posed by Turkey and Iran as it lacks the mechanized armour and airpower capacity to defend against incursions (Sakr, 2021). Besides, concerns about Iraq's counterterrorism capacities being low have always been a key issue linked to its foreign policy objectives (El Mallakh, 2019; Sakr, 2021). Moreover, the Iraq army has never been in good books with the Kurdish peshmerga armed forces and it is believed that Iraq has about 300,000 lightly and strong-armed forces patrolling and protecting the KRG (Salem, 2013).

Overall, boosting the strength and capacity of Iraq's national army on a foreign policy level implies building and maintaining relations with countries capable of providing effective and advanced weaponry. As it stands, the United States has proved to be reliable in that aspect, striking arms deals worth \$18 billion with the Baghdad government that includes the supply of 160 Guardian armored security vehicles, 140 upgraded Abrams main battle tanks, six C-130 Hercules Transports, 25 Bell attack helicopters armed with Lockheed Martin laser-guided AGM-114 Hellfire missiles, and 36 Lockheed Martin F-16 fighter jets (Salem, 2013). Efforts to promote diversity in Iraq's arms supplies have seen the Baghdad government striking a \$1 billion arms deal with the Czech Republic and another \$4.2 billion arms deal with Russia in 2012 (Salem, 2013). However, the major challenge is that neighboring countries like Iran do not have the necessary capacity to meet Baghdad's military needs. As a result, Iraq will always continue to depend on other international capitals for arms deals.

The Geopolitics of Water

Water is linked to life and has become more important with the development of the industry. Water problems have become a fundamental problem in the Middle East today. The US intelligence agency points to the risk

of water poverty in the next 10-20 years, especially in the Middle East. This threat to water resources has become a strong factor in international relations and relations between nations because of the importance of water for life, economy and development. However, due to the policy of the Iraqi government not paying attention to water projects, only a small amount of water is used for drinking but recently the government try to make water dams to collect the water (Zainadin, 2015). Water resources of Iraq include surface and groundwater, rivers and lakes. It varies from year to year according to the amount of rain and snow. Rivers, especially in northern Iraq, are considered the most important water resources in Iraq. Groundwater is very low and has become a major problem, especially in summer when there is very little rainfall and the weather is very hot in Iraq has long been confronted with acute water problems and thus, making water a significant factor in its foreign policy. Iraq's main sources of water are the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers originating in Turkey (Salem, 2013). The Euphrates flows through Syria before reaching Iraq, and some tributaries of the Tigris and other smaller rivers that irrigate parts of eastern Iraq originate in Iran (El Mallakh, 2019). Therefore, Iraq needs to maintain good relations with both Iran, Syria and Turkey and any policy initiative geared towards that aspect will prove to be handy as Iraq is currently confronted with existing-low water level problems. Besides, declining river flows are significantly imposing a huge negative toll on Iraq's hydropower input and irrigation (Sakr, 2021). In most cases, numerous towns in Iraq have been abandoned in the past because of water salinity problems (El Mallakh, 2019). Because of the importance of water for the economy and development, especially in the development of the agricultural sector, which is on the agenda of the new Iraq and the KRG. The provision of drinking water to the growing population also shows both positive and negative aspects of water, which plays a strong role and an influential factor on Iraq's domestic and foreign policy.

Increasing cases of severe drought together with a lack of government subsidization problems are taking a huge toll on Iraq's agriculture. It is, therefore, imperative for Iraq to solidify its relations to deal with its existing water challenges. Thus, foreign policy initiatives can be geared towards bilateral agreements with either Turkey or Syria, whose relations with Baghdad have been compromised by Baghdad's relations with Erbil (Dodge, 2013).

Notwithstanding that in 1975 Syria and Iraq almost went to war over water (Salem, 2013). In line with this assertion, Iraq may assume a different approach to its foreign policy by dealing with its long-standing issues with Erbil. On a broader perspective, foreign policy initiatives can be geared towards finding a common breaking point through which both Turkey and Baghdad can find amicable ways of resolving tensions triggered by irrigation projects and dam construction in Turkey's eastern provinces, especially at a time when the Euphrates is drying up (Salem, 2013). The implications of such adverse circumstances have been stirring Iraq to turn to Iran for major food imports (Sakr, 2021). As a result, Iran can capitalize on such deficiency to push for its Sunni agenda. Thus, a cautious approach to Iraq's foreign policy needs to be structured around its water situation and foster relations with Turkey, Iran and Syria.

Water will determine the fate of the Middle East. Because of the importance of the role of water in the Middle East, the US intelligence agency has identified the conflicts over water resources; that is the areas where war is expected to break out very soon, mostly in the Middle East. The agency has estimated water zones could reach threatening levels in the next 10-20 years, especially in the Middle East.

Meeting Electricity Demand

The prevalence of Iraq's electricity woes that have long existed since the Saddam regime is a solid indication that turning to other countries for solutions can put the problem to rest once and for all. It is reported that since 1990, Iraq's electricity system has only been capable of meeting about 50 percent of its total demand (Salem, 2013). The repercussions are inevitably reflected through a decline in economic capacity and performance as companies struggle to find cheaper and more effective energy sources. Nonetheless, cooperative efforts by the Baghdad government to narrow down the electricity deficit by importing electricity from its neighbors amid existing challenges undermining its long-term viability to sustain its electricity energy needs implies that Iraq will have to in the long run rely on electricity imports. Hence, Iraq inevitably has to shape its foreign policy around neighboring countries from which it imports electricity. This is vital, especially considering that Iran is the major exporter of electricity

to Iraq, exporting an estimated total of 1,000 MW a day to Baghdad (Salem, 2013). Consequently, this does not rule out the possible fact that Iran can capitalize on the situation to further its agenda in Iraq. With the Sunni increasingly building relations with Iran, it is no doubt that this can be to the disadvantage of the Baghdad government, which may be forced to compromise various ethical conducts, rules and morals so as to sustain its energy supplies. Meanwhile, self-reliance initiatives worth more than \$1 billion launched by the Baghdad government to develop 2,500 MW power plants in Nineveh, Karbala, and Baghdad provinces can go a long way in alleviating these possible effects (Salem, 2013). Turning to the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government, which meets 85 percent of its region's electricity needs and produces about 1,950 MW can also prove to be an effective solution as the Kurds have grown in the past and exported electricity to some provinces in Iraq (Salem, 2013). Awarding contracts to foreign companies to develop power plants in Iraq should be a major goal and an integral part of its foreign policy as existing solutions can compromise its internal plans and stabilities because of conflict of interests.

Building Trade and Investment Relations

Baghdad's new elites recognize the need for high levels of international trade and investment to create high levels of economic growth. Studies have long hinted at the importance of capitalizing on such opportunities (Cordesman, 2018; Sakr, 2021). However, others raised concerns citing that the opportunities are much reaped by the new elites and hence, are the ones who can push more to promote efforts that enhance Iraq's trade and investment relations. The U.S.-led occupying powers are greatly acknowledged for their positive approach toward actions taken to Iraq into an open market economy (Baram & al-Maliki, 2022; Dodge, 2013; Salem, 2013). In other words, Iraq's elites are presumed to have taken the much-needed stance towards embracing change (El Mallakh, 2019). Besides, the post-Saddam foreign policy is regarded as having been significantly focused on attracting a diverse range of regional and international investors and trading partners (Sakr, 202). This has managed to bring notable positive social and economic improvements irrespective of some insecurity and instability issues that have been affecting Iraq over the past years.

One of the keys turning points used by the post-Saddam foreign policy was taking measures essential for the removal of sanctions that had significantly crippled the Iraqi economy since their imposition for evading Kuwait (El Mallakh, 2019). The taken measures were extended to include initiatives aimed at promoting infrastructure development and reconstruction following the ravaging effects of the 2003 war (Cordesman, 2018). Despite Iraq having huge petroleum deposits, shifting focus to another vital sector can prove to be an effective strategy essential in harnessing its foreign policy initiatives. This encompasses efforts aimed at promoting development in other sectors such as healthcare, education, agriculture, telecommunications, transportation, defense, construction, electricity and real estate. The use of incentives can also be one of the key aspects the central government can utilize to attract foreign investment into Iraq. For instance, prior experience observed in Iraq after the Saddam era has shown that incentives such as the right to employ foreign workers when needed; the ability to repatriate investments and profits from investments, and ten years' exemption from taxes played a crucial role in boosting foreign investment levels in Iraq and KRG (Dodge, 2013).

Regional integration can open new avenues for Baghdad to strengthen its trade and investment relations. This requires extending beyond the previous Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed with the EU in 2012 and joining the World Trade Organization (Salem, 2013). The strong interactive influence of domestic activities with international activities and policies such as foreign policy is of huge importance. This can be traced to facts such as the Ease of Doing Business index through which Iraq has in the past been ranked relatively low and in 2013 it was ranked 165 out of 185 countries (Salem, 2013). This index intends to quantify guidelines influencing organizations in a straightforward manner but does not directly gauge broad circumstances like a country's vicinity to enormous business sectors, nature of foundation, expansion, or wrongdoings. This implies that the Baghdad government needs to make a stern effort to improve its regulatory environment to make sure that it is conducive to starting and operating businesses. Foreign policy initiatives can also be geared towards reducing the time and costs to import and export because Iraq has always been ranked with a 2013 Trading Across Borders subcategory rank of 179 out of 185 countries (Salem, 2013). Furthermore, foreign policy initiatives will take a

diverse approach as other aspects such as Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (TICPI) are brought into the perspective. Transparency International is a global movement with one concept: a world in which government, business, civil society and the daily lives of people are free of corruption. During the period 2013 Iraq's TICPI ranks Iraq 169 out of 176 countries and territories (Salem, 2013). Efforts to deal with such matters have not been integrated into practical means and still demand visible commitment by the Baghdad government.

The other angle through which Iraq's foreign policy can be used to bring out the necessary improvements in trade and investment relations involves dealing with corruption. For instance, Sakr (2021) contends that Iraq's politics is deeply mixed with business with the means of production highly concentrated in the hands of the few and powerful political elites (Dodge, 2013). In addition, this can be augmented by infrastructural development projects aimed at creating a positive perception and facilitating the ease of doing business and operational conditions. Given that they are concerned about the ruling elites in Erbil and Baghdad being closely integrated with the Iraqi private sector (Sakr, 2021). As a result, their interest in maintaining and increasing these international economic ties can be significantly high. As a result, Iraq's coherent foreign policy is most likely to be highly interlinked with its complex and rich trade, investment and economic relations with both international and regional partners.

The Different Roles of the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government in the Foreign Policy of Iraq

Discussing the importance of the regional importance of northern part of Iraq may cover several aspects, from geography to politics because the KRG possesses a geopolitical position. These characteristics have affected the internal and global behaviors of the KRG, which is located in northern Iraq, it builds a bridge from the west to Syria and the Mediterranean coast from the north to Turkey that connects Iraq to Europe through Turkey. Therefore, it is a strategic place in terms of geography and geopolitical theories in the Middle East and has always attracted the attention of other countries, especially Europe and the United States. Of course, geographical location plays an important role in the strength of the state, which directly affects the domestic and foreign policy of

the state such as in Iraq. The position of the KRG in geopolitical theories and in the opinion of political geographers shows the strength of the Kurdish Regional Government, but this does not mean that the political position of the KRG is not weak (Zainadin, 2015).

The result of these efforts which has been mentioned in previous sections was the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 688 in 1991. According to the draft resolution, a peace zone was established for northern Iraq along the 36th latitude to restore peace to the Kurdish people. In terms of politics, the northern Iraq, which now has a government through elections, democracy and the coexistence of all nations, is of interest to international centers in terms of political and diplomatic relations, which will have a positive impact on the future for the regional government. Generally, we can say that after the fall of the regime in 2003, the KRG's position has gained more importance in foreign relations. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, international relations developed in the world. The establishment of the international community after World War I and the conclusion of international agreements led to the emergence of differing views on international relations.

According to the concept of the realist school, the state is the sole subject of international law. This theory led to the emergence of nation-states and the formation of the international community on a set of principles to maintain international peace, security and cooperation. Recently, however, there has been an increasing international involvement of regions in the world which can call the para-diplomacy phenomenon. For example, the KRG is not an independent state and is a non-state character in the international community. Iraq's constitution, section 5 from 2005 affirms the KRG's right to make International relations separately. The concept of para-diplomacy is a new idea on the position of the Region in a federal state. The Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government is a federal region and its level of autonomy is considered within the framework of the constitution and its relations in international affairs in a para-diplomatic manner. Para-diplomacy is the international relationship created by regions alone to promote their own goals. We can say that para-diplomacy is a new form of diplomacy. Many regions of the world, such as the KRG, have permanent representatives in other countries. According to Articles 117 and 121 of the Iraqi Constitution, the northern Iraq is a federal region and can participate in

international affairs. There are 41 consulates and UNAMI in Erbil; as well as it has 14 representatives in some countries around the world. After the fall of the Ba'ath regime in 2003, at the request of the government of Iraq to support, United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) was established by resolution 1500 of the Nations Security Council. This decentralized activity is interpreted in the field of international relations as a framework of para-diplomacy; However, the implementation of the Iraqi constitution, especially those articles related to the rights of the Kurdish people, has created some obstacles. Additionally, the KRG plays an instrumental role in addressing long-standing issues between the Sunni and the Shia ethnic groups through secularism (Ira, 2008; Genauer, 2021). Hence, by fostering unity and cooperation between the Baghdad government and KRG, Iraq can able to convince other ethnic groups like Sunnis and minority groups to unite and forge towards a common social and religious freedom and equal representation.

Secularism

Secularism is a social movement to limit religion that separates the government from religion and reduces the relationship between them. Secularism focus on material concerns not on religion and removes religious symbols from government institutions. French, India, Turkey, and Mexico are some notable states where the system of government was shifted to modernize and their emphasis is on constitutionally secular.

Giovanni Sartori, an Italian political scientist, outlined that the separation of religion and state means the existence of a democratic society based on liberal values. The link between democracy and secularism can have essential analogies such as freedom, civil Liberty and equality before the Law.

The important thing for the international community is the role of the KRG in the political, economic, military and humanitarian process in the fight against ISIS, such as the role of their military forces and the importance of coexistence. Politically, the KRG uses diplomatic tools such as the parliamentary system and negotiations to enter the global arena and promote international relations, which form the basis of foreign policy.

In terms of economy, the government needs cooperation and coordination with international companies and institutions to promote their

relations and modernize the pursuit of investment, markets for their products and natural resources, technology and tourism development. Given that the previous sections have set a solid stage on which Iraq's foreign policy can be analyzed, this section examines the different roles of the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government in the foreign policy of Iraq. One of the key aspects relates to the role and contributions played by KRG with regard to improving Iraq's foreign policy imperatives on oil and gas. As noted, Iraq's oil and gas deposits are vastly located in the autonomous region of northern Iraq as well as in some parts of Mosul, Kirkuk, and Fao (Salem, 2013). Hence, by controlling such reserves, Iraq can be able to boost the attainment of other policy objectives. Furthermore, the central government has been blamed for applying controlling and restrictive measures aimed at preventing KRG from selling its oil and gas products independently (El Mallakh, 2019; Salem, 2013). This is because the 20% budget that was reduced to 12% as part of the Baghdad government's commitment to the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government is presumed to be a controlling tactic as it has always been accused of withholding KRG's share of the budget (Cordesman, 2018; El Mallakh, 2019).

The main conflict is the disagreement between Iraq and the Kurdish Regional Government on the oil issue and by reducing the budget and delaying it from Iraq, the Kurdish Regional Government tries more dependent on its oil revenues. 41% of oil revenues of KRG are allocated only for the salaries of the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government employees. 43% of the money will be paid back to the companies that extract the oil with international contracts. 9% of the money goes back to oil transportation and 7% of the money goes to pay off debts. Most of the debt of the northern Iraq as a region was during the war against ISIS when Iraq was in a financial crisis in general (Zainadin, 2015).

Militarily, the KRG Force has been actively involved in the fight against ISIS, which has created a strong international position for it.

Rising tensions posed by militants and extremist groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS have proven that the Baghdad government cannot operate in isolation. For instance, Malik (2018) contends that the participation of religious clerics and tribal sheikhs in the fight against Al-Qaeda is what offered a huge blow to Al-Qaeda's attempt to establish a stronghold in Iraq. With al-Qaeda being driven into obscurity, other tangible benefits have been visible on both local and

international scales. For instance, the successful provincial electoral process held in 2009 and the 2010 national parliamentary elections are also attributed to the increased engagement of the central government with religious clerics and tribal sheikhs of various ethnic groups (Ottaway & Kaysi, 2012). Besides, neighboring countries like Iran do not have the necessary capacity to meet Baghdad's military needs. As a result, Iraq will always continue to depend on other international capitals for arms deals. Thus, the KRG can play a vital role in easing Iraq's military needs and in turn reduce Iraq's high military expenditure.

International experts believe that the KRG is a peaceful and stable region, especially for Christians and has been able to build a strong regional relationship. Its good policy of coexistence and democracy has attracted regional and international attention and is a haven for coalition forces in the region. The growth of these activities abroad, the presence of the Ministry of International Relations in the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government, representations in the United States and Europe, and foreign institutions and companies show the position of the KRG's international relations.

Efforts to strengthen ties between the Baghdad government and its neighboring countries like Syria have long been linked to how the Baghdad government has been relating with the KRG. With Syria having another distinct Kurdish ethnic group that is similar to its own, efforts by the Baghdad government to negotiate with Syria and Turkey have fallen victim to crisis and worsening relations (Salem, 2013; Sakr, 2021). As a result, tensions between Erbil and Baghdad are making cooperation over water even harder. Hence, the importance and role of the KRG in Iraq's foreign policy, in this case, are significantly evident. Geographically, the KRG in the Middle East has an impact on international relations, which is a geopolitical fact and the interests of the major powers in a unified Iraq and within the framework of decentralization of federalism, have created a stronger relationship. The other role played by the KRG in Iraq's foreign policy relates to the easing of Iraq's water problems. With declining river flows that are significantly imposing a huge negative toll on Iraq's hydropower input and irrigation (Sakr, 2021), the KRG with famous dams and rivers can play an instrumental in addressing Iraq's water problems. This follows significant concerns denoting that Iraq has long been confronted with acute water problems (Salem, 2013). Besides, other countries like Turkey from

which Iraq obtains its main sources through the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers (Salem, 2013), with the Euphrates flowing through Syria before reaching Iraq, and some tributaries of the Tigris and other smaller rivers that irrigate parts of eastern Iraq originate in Iran (El Mallakh, 2019), the feasibility of both Iran, Turkey and Syria influencing Iraq's domestic and international politics are inevitably high. Besides, concerns have been raised by SCIRI's *'modus of operand'* as it is argued that it receives significant support from Iran (Dawisha, 2005). Moreover, other ideas against the SCIRI's political activities cite that it has opened ways through which international political players, especially Iran can influence Iraq's political affairs (Kaufman, 2006; Kirmanc, 2013). Hence, this, makes water a significant factor in Iraq's foreign policy and the KRG can enhance Iraq's position to address its water problems and related consequences linked to sourcing water from Turkey, Iran and possibly Syria. Besides, water tensions are also a source of conflict between the Kurdish and Arab regions of Iraq. As noted by Salem (2013) the KRG's authorities have been constructing eleven dams along the Tigris. This restricts water flows to the south and increases ethnic and regional tensions.

Given that the northern Iraq meets 85 percent of its region's demand and produces around 1,950 MW (Salem, 2013), the Baghdad government can rely on the KRG government for electricity supplies and avoid compromising its social, economic and political positions by engaging neighboring countries like Turkey and Iran from which it imports electricity that has been exporting an estimated total of 1,000 MW a day to Baghdad (Salem, 2013). Furthermore, this can prove to be an effective way of dealing with long-standing mismanagement and corruption problems observed under post-Saddam governments and reduced progress in reducing the energy deficit gap.

CHAPTER V

Shifting of the Authority from Sunni to Shiite After 2003

Despite the high level of attention for Iraq's political activities has been attracting on an international landscape, religion remains a key factor that has been shaping Iraq's national and international politics. Besides, religion serves as one of the ways through which Iraq's main internal actors (Shiite, Sunni, Kurds) are derived. Due to limited understanding in this area as well as a lack of strategic courses of action taken in the past century to improve the image of Iraq's national and international politics, this study through this chapter seeks to explore matters related to religious politics in Iraq, the role of secular parties, secularism or religiosity of the state and cycles of engagement and disengagement.

Religious Politics in Iraq

Furthermore, it is vital to note that Iraq is both ethnically and religiously overwhelmingly Muslim country. As it stands, Iraq's religion and ethnicity are widely divided between Sunnis who constitute 35 to 40% and Shiites who constitute about 50 to 60% (Smock, 2003). However, the subdivisions between these two groups are of huge influence and have been the main feature characterizing Iraq's political affairs on both national and international landscapes. An interesting feature about the Sunnis is that they are further divided into Turkman, Kurdish and Arabic ethnic groups (Smock, 2003). Along similar lines, Smock (2003) contends that there is a small Christian population constituting about 3% of the total and is further divided among Assyrians, Chaldeans and others. Though the Shiite constitute a majority of Iraq's ethnicity, the Sunnis have been occupying a dominating position in Iraq's politics. Studies highlighting this exercise contend that the Sunnis have been garnering support from other minority groups such as Christians to oppress the Shiites (Dawisha, 2005). In another instance, Kaufman (2006) contends that the Shiites have long been expressing their repression by the Sunnis. Consequently, the 1991 Shiite uprising is strongly considered to be a product of such repression (Kirmanc, 2013). Others opine that the brutal halt of the uprising by Hussein that led to the massive massacre of the Shiites is undeniable evidence of oppression against the

Shiites (Dawisha, 2005; Kaufman, 2006; Kirmanc, 2013). Nonetheless, the Shiites' resentment and hostility against the Sunnis have continued to increase over the past few years with contemporary studies contending that it is one of the main reasons why political instability has proved to be difficult to curb (Althubetat, 2022; Mirkan, 2021).

According to D' Anieri (2020), national political issues can spill over into international political affairs when existing domestic political parties fail to find a common ground for mutually resolving their political differences. This has been the case with Christians and Sunnis, and it is currently uncertain whether the Shiites will continue to seek prospects for supremacy, a possibility that both groups fear, or whether the statistically dominant Shiite majority will be responsive to political cooperation with the Christian minorities and the Sunnis. The other question pertains to the ideologies and strengths of Islamist political movements, especially the Shiites, that have been asserting themselves over the past years. Traces of al-Qaeda and Boko Haram insurgent groups have been linked to Islamist political movements and the Shiites (Abubakar, 2016; Kaválek, 2015). But many issues are posed regarding the type of connection between Iran's Shiite Islamist regime and Shiite Islamist movements. The resultant international political implications were felt as the United States of America (USA) through a symposium on religious politics in Iraq held on 21 May 2003 by the U.S. Institute of Peace, raised issues about such connections and highlighted the adverse effects on foreign affairs (See Smock, 2003).

Shiite Islamist Movements

It is apparent at this stage that the Shiite Islamist Movements play and continue to play an influential role in Iraq's current and future politics, especially among the Shiites. However, there has been debate about how best to view and characterize the Shiites. For instance, earlier discoveries by Mirkan (2021) regard the Shiites as partly monolith whereas Smock (2003) asserts that it is an error to regard them as a monolith. This aligns with Althubetat's (2022) arguments highlighting that the Shiites are secular in orientation. Furthermore, Dawisha (2005) outlines that the Shiites Are Shiites by ethnicity and background. Other studies on the view of the Shiites and their implications on Iraq's politics contend that this subject matter revolves around the definition and

approach towards the word religion. For instance, Kirmanc (2013) opines that there exist three distinct types of religiosities namely; the Islamist movement, jurisprudence (popular religiosity) and Islamic law (the clerical class oriented toward Sharia). Besides, there are conflicts and rivalries among the Shiite communities in Nassiriya, Karbala and Najaf. Moreover, the existence of other numerous competing Shiite Islamist movements cannot be ruled out. This can be evidenced by the existence of threats posed by a movement led by the young Muqtada Sadr, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), and several fragments of the Dawa party (Dawisha, 2005; Kaufman, 2006; Kirmanc, 2013). As a result, the agendas of these distinct groups are by no means similar and as a result, have increased conflicts and rivalries that have triggered interference by the international community. In support of this argument, D'Anieri (2020) contends that the agendas of Iraq's various religious groups include assuring the future influence of clerics and respect of Islam by the Iraqi government, and advocacy of theocracy. Consequently, the prospect of an armed conflict has been raised high by the existence of such divergence in agendas, conflicts and rivalries. Mirkan (2021) contends that the possibility of an armed conflict in Iraq is imminent because these groups have armed wings. In addition, this cannot be overruled because of student/mentor relationships, family ties and several interconnections among leaders of numerous movements (Dawisha, 2005; Kaufman, 2006; Kirmanc, 2013). As it stands and has been the case in the past years, there is no clarity about the widespread support among the Shiites for either one or other Islamist movements.

Meanwhile, the influence of The Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), a Shi'i resistance group that was formed in Iran in 1982, is dominant in Iraq's political affairs. It is considered to be a widely known political astute that is best funded and organized (Mirkan, 2021). Hence, its ability to inflict severe political damage has always been feared and considered an imminent threat to efforts to foster peace and stability in Iraq (Althubetat, 2022). Moreover, concerns have been raised by SCIRI's *'modus of operand'* as it is argued that it receives significant support from Iran (Dawisha, 2005). Moreover, other ideas against the SCIRI's political activities cite that it has opened ways through which international political players, especially Iran can influence Iraq's political affairs (Kaufman, 2006; Kirmanc, 2013).

Consequently, other countries like the USA have been involved in conflicts over their respective roles in Iraq's political affairs. When the damaged buildings near the U.S. consulate in Erbil, Iraq, that were hit by a missile, the regional government reported that Erbil, the capital of the northern Kurdish region, was struck by twelve ballistic missiles fired from outside Iraq. This event was the recent bombings on the 13th of March 2022 around the USA's army base in Erbil, Iraq by Iran's militia are believed to be part of initiatives to drive the USA out of Iraq's political affairs (Ismail & Davison, 2022). Skelton and Ali Saleem (2020) argued that Iraq and its governorates are now a political ground through which other states such as Iran and the USA can settle their political differences. It can, therefore, be seen at this stage how religion has been influencing Iraq's national and international politics.

Sunni Islamists

With regard to the Sunni Islamists, arguments have been leveled against the Sunnis citing that its religious politics is clearly defined (Kaufman, 2006; Kirmanç, 2013). However, what remains questionable is the level of support and program provided by the Iraqi branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, as a Sunni Islamist Muslim organization, which at this stage is deemed as not clear (Smock, 2003). Though the Muslim Brotherhood is mainly an Arab movement, it is blamed for launching attacks against Iraqi Kurds and there are other several movements among the Sunni Kurds (Smock, 2003). Similar to the Shiites that have been obtaining support from Iran, the Sunnis have on the other hand amassed support from Saudi Arabia to promote Wahabism among Iraqi Sunnis (Ababakr & Khaddar, 2021). As a result, the strengthening of both Shiite and Sunni Islamists imposes huge adverse effects on regional political balance. However, there are possibilities for Sunni and Shiite Islamists to collaborate, but the Shiite movement will mostly center on a Shiite agenda without or with insignificant collaboration. Consequently, the Islamists movements will generally not transcend sectarian and ethnic lines. Saudi Arabia feared that the victory of the Shiites in Iraq would cause the spread of Shiite ideology and disrupt the unity of Saudi Shiite citizens. On the other hand, they do not want Iraq to become a democracy because they believe that the spread of democracy in the region would have a negative impact on the notion of Kingdoms.

The Role of Christians

Though the ascendance of either Islamist party does not pose threats to Christian minorities, Christians in Iraq are uncertain of the safeguarding of the future of their political interests. Incidences such as the Islamist attacks on the moral laxity of the West in the context of the USA's occupation are presumed to be directed towards the Christian minority groups in Iraq (Smock, 2003). Smock (2003) contends that Christian minority groups in Iraq have always been labeled as the local surrogates for the Christian or western world. With the international community widely shaped by Christian values, the international community is most likely to influence Iraq's religious political events and proceedings. Moreover, the notion of human rights and its influence on international politics cannot be dismissed, as religious freedom constitute a key element of human rights (Monshipouri, 2022). Besides, human rights violations in Mosul (Ali, 2021) together with the Yazidi massacre (Lobanov-Rostovsky & Kiss, 2022) provide undeniable evidence of the existence of human rights atrocities perpetrated in Iraq. Apart from this, Islamism together with secularism is branded as a trigger of human rights violations, especially in the Middle East (Monshipouri, 2022). Moreover, the Islamic religion has always been branded as a threat to other religious groups (Kirmanc, 2013). As a result, this justifies concerns and fears by the Christian minority groups in Iraq concerning their future following the transcendence of Islamist movements.

Role of Secular Parties and Secularism or a Religiosity of the State

According to Genauer (2021), secularism is best defined as the separation of religion from the state and civic affairs. Alternatively, secularism can also be known as the idea that deals with human affairs based on naturalistic and secular considerations (Ira, 2008). Since secularism's meanings and implications are various, its interpretation in international politics and law varies. Nonetheless, studies supporting the notion of secularism contend that it serves a vital role in minimizing the extent to which religious affairs interfere with public institutions and state activities (Ira, 2008; Genauer, 2021).

There is a common consensus under normal circumstances, no religion shall have a state character (Ira, 2008). This means that States such as Iraq and others must not be in any way religious. In other words, there is no official state

religion but the situation in Iraq is as much as the Sunni, Shiite and other religious groups such as Christians. However, the Iraqi constitution considers Islam as the official state religion (Ira, 2008), and this means Iraq is religious and has an Islamic religion. It is highlighted in some studies that the Constitution of Iraq has a tendency towards the role of the Islam so its influence on state affairs becomes an undebated issue (Farhan & Sharif, 2021). As a result, concerns have been raised against the Iraqi government placing considerable efforts through its legal and religious organizations in enforcing and upholding Islamic beliefs and conducts (Farhan & Sharif, 2021). Therefore, the possibility of promoting secularism in Iraq that will allow a neutral political playfield in which other ethnic and religious groups can freely participate in Iraq's political affairs seems to be far out of reach. With the absence of secularism both Christian minorities, Shiite and Sunni Islamist movements will still remain at loggerheads with conflicting ideologies triggering rivalries.

In this context, the long-standing religious conflicts between the Christian minorities, Shiite and Sunni Islamist movements as well as the Yazidis (Dawisha, 2005; Kaufman, 2006; Kirmanc, 2013; Lobanov-Rostovsky & Kiss, 2022), can be resolved by introducing secularism, which acts as a reconciling tool. Secularism is essential in reconciling religious problems compounding Iraq's political crisis because secularism initiatives are vital for promoting equality (Froese & Mencken, 2009). Furthermore, it has been noted that freedom and other forms of equality measures are restricted in States that are religious (Genauer, 2021). Therefore, secularist ideologies are vital and can open the much-needed door of fostering the necessary constitutional amendments essential for addressing conflicts and rivalries between Christian minorities, Shiite and Sunni Islamist movements as well as conflicting interferences between a secular state and a religious state. In support of this idea, Mojtahedi and van Wijk (2019) noted that secularism is crucial in safeguarding peace. As a result, the need and importance of separating religious laws and activities from Iraq's state activities and affairs are well justified. Other lines of studies support secularism and its application citing that it reduces conflicts (Baram & al-Maliki, 2022), and promote social peace (Roomi & Kazemi, 2021) induced by different religious beliefs and values. This provides the much-needed solution to problems encountered in a one-state religious entity like Iraq as this is not always the case

with most Islamic religious states. With the advent of extremist groups such as Daesh and ISIS originating from Islamic religious nations like Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan, one can contend that secularism will significantly improve Iraq's national and international political image. Most importantly, with various religious ideologies between Christian minorities, and Shiite and Sunni Islamist movements threatening peace and stability in Iraq, this section of the study infers that secularism will to a greater extent improve Iraq's national and international political landscapes. The resultant benefits will to a large extent go a long way in promoting economic and social development in Iraq as well as improve its political ties and relations with neighboring countries like Iran and other countries in the region such as Saudi Arabia.

Separation of the Church and the Iraqi Government

According to Froese and Mencken (2009), public authorities in their three levels (municipal, regional and central) are autonomous and independent entities. As a result, this entails that either Islamic, Christian or Yazidis' internal operations must not interfere with public authorities' affairs and activities. Similarly, the Iraq State must not interfere in religious affairs, if so, then it must maintain a neutral position. Both national and international political landscapes stand a huge chance of being influenced by the separation of the church and the Iraqi government. This aligns with previous findings denoting that political tensions observed in Iraq are a result of confusion between religious and state functions (Baram & al-Maliki, 2022). Hence, by minimizing the Islamic religion's interference in Iraq's political affairs, consensus and equality can be established between Christian minorities and Shiite and Sunni Islamist movements.

Meanwhile, religious matters and conflicts between Christian minorities, and Shiite and Sunni Islamist movements can be governed in an amicable way by making the necessary constitutional amendments. With the Iraq constitution upholding Islam as Iraq's official religion (Farhan & Sharif, 2021), the advent of conflicts between Christian minorities, Shiite and Sunni Islamist movements, seems to be an out-of-reach goal. This is mainly attributed to the fact that the Iraq constitution governs the distribution of power and is established on the foundations of Islam (Farhan & Sharif, 2021). Hence, religious activities have

important direct and indirect implications on the Iraq state's activities. Therefore, by separating the role of the State and religion in political affairs, and making the necessary constitutional amendments, the Iraq state can influence the distribution of power in Iraq to address its political woes and promote peace and stability.

Even though the Iraqi constitution allows for equal power sharing between governments (Farhan & Sharif, 2021), the division of power between the Baghdad federal government, the KRG and other governorates, remains an issue. Other studies branded such differences as a Sunni and Shiite long-standing debacle (Abubakar, 2016; Kaválek, 2015). As a result, the Iraqi government has always been confronted with the burden of influencing other religious and/or political parties to consent to certain religious and human rights matters. It is in this regard that separating power between the church and the Iraqi government will go a long way in dealing with long-existing differences, conflicts and rivalries between Christian minorities, and Shiite and Sunni Islamist movements. Additionally, this will promote the effectiveness of the long-suggested power-sharing initiatives and curb social and religious groups' acts of using religion as a political apparatus to influence State activities (Ira, 2008).

The Neutrality of the Iraqi Government in Religious Matters

Religion remains an important aspect of human rights (Genauer, 2021; Ira, 2008) and its role in Iraq's national and international politics is a major force to reckon with. With the emergence of religious values portrayed by religious extremist groups like Al-Qaida and Boko Haram (Abubakar, 2016; Kaválek, 2015), and how their ideologies have spread around other countries like Nigeria (Ajah, Dinne & Salami, 2020), one can contend that the intervention by other States such as America (Smock, 2003), Turkey (VOA Reuters, 2022), Iran (Ismail & Davison, 2022) and Saudi Arabia (Ababakr & Khaddar, 2021) in Iraq's political affairs is a worthy cause. The neutrality of the Iraqi government in religious matters continues to dominate headlines in international politics. One of the major angles through which neutrality of the Iraqi government in religious matters, is the spread of Kurdish ideologies in countries like Turkey (VOA Reuters, 2022) and Iran (Pourahmadi, 2022), which the two governments fear will trigger similar uprisings in their respective states. Hence, the need to

intervene in neutrality matters involving the Iraqi government in its religious matters can be said to be a political move aimed at safeguarding social and political stability in other States sharing similar ethnic values. This can be evidenced by the recent uprisings that have seen Kurdish minorities causing political instabilities and demonstrations around Iran (Pourahmadi, 2022).

Neutrality plays an important role in both national and international politics because it is tied to secularism and serves an instrumental role in ensuring that States assume a neutral stance on any religious issue. Following arguments raised in a study by Mojtabehi and van Wijk (2019), secularism is seen as vital in ensuring that public authorities do not instruct numerous religious creeds but rather belong to communities and individuals entitled to basic religious freedom. As a result, Iraq's political problems that have spiraled into international political domains are equated as reflecting the Iraqi government's inability to appraise the legitimacy of religious matters. Furthermore, raised arguments to pinpoint issues about the Iraqi government as spiritually incapable and incompetent in appraising the legitimacy of Iraq's religious matters (Baram & al-Maliki, 2022). Moreover, some arguments are based on the fact that states are to a large extent incapable of distinguishing between specific groups' religious orthodoxy or heterodoxy. Nonetheless, the neutrality of the Iraqi government in religious matters does not exclude the fact that both Christian minorities, Shiite and Sunni Islamist movements must comply with designated religious laws instituted by the Iraqi government. This demands that the state conduct authenticity checks of religious organizations through public authorities, as well as supervise and monitor their activities. As such, Roomi and Kazemi (2021) contend that religious institutions together with their representative organs must comply with formal procedures and requirements, especially those prescribed by the Human Rights Commission (HRC). Besides, Article 18 instituted by the HRC reiterates the importance of such strategic courses of action and upholds that they reflect the concept of secularity (Smith, 2022). Therefore, the Iraq state can at this stage be encouraged to adopt "acts of faith", when establishing terms "religion" or "belief" through which "the right to religion, conscience and thought" become the foundation on which constitutional terms will be derived. In other words, the neutrality of the Iraqi government in its religious matters ensures that the government of Iraq does not

profess any religion or belief, atheist beliefs, or non-theistic and theistic beliefs as a way of broadly interpreting such rights.

Meanwhile, the Iraq constitution through Section A contends that religious groups pursuing goals or using criminal means are subject to prosecution and to be treated as illegal and hence may not be registered as religious institutions under the religious Act. Furthermore, the neutrality of the Iraqi government in its religious matters entail dealing with challenges undermining religious' groups' ability to exercise religious freedom and these are (1) violation of morality, health and public safety aspects of public order and (2) violation of morality, health and public safety aspects of public order¹. Nonetheless, Article 3 of Section 2 is controversial as it establishes that activities, aims and entities related to the study and research of psychic or parapsychological phenomena or humanistic or spiritualistic values or other analogous ends foreign to the religious world are outside the constitution's scope and should not be registered under the governing religious authority of supervising ministry. As a result, Farhan and Sharif (2021) outlined that a judgment was passed by the Iraq Constitutional Court 46/2001 asserting that the Iraqi government is subject to upholding the following values and rights:

- a) Public order and other individuals' fundamental rights are not violated by any religious group.
- b) All religious groups wishing to register their organizations are not excluded from Section A and B' propositions and legalities as implied in the Iraq constitution.

It can also be inferred using ideas presented in this section that Iraq that religious rights, control and/or freedom should not be subject to qualification but rather on verification concerning acts contradicting public order or fundamental rights. As a result, political crimes and human rights violations perpetrated by religious groups in violation of public order and fundamental rights must not be interpreted using preventive elements about potential political consequences. Consequently, legal and religious assumptions must not be used in limiting the ability to exercise religious freedom by using public order clauses but rather on sound verification when the above-mentioned are fit for critiquing.

Cycles of Engagement and Disengagement

Cycles of engagement and disengagement with the central government have been a common feature among the Sunni Arab population and leadership since 2003. There is considerable evidence supporting that such features have been to the disadvantage of the Sunnis. Drawing from Mansour's (2016) propositions, it is widely highlighted that the shaking Sunni standings are a result of a lack of engagement with the central government. In support of this, Haddad (2014) discloses that the comparative outcomes of engagements have been significantly reaped by the Kurds and the Shia who have over the years managed to actively engage the central government. With the engagements themed the Sunni Awakening (*al-Sahwah al-Sunniyah*) or Sons of Iraq (*BNA al-Iraq*) from late 2007 to 2010 (Mansour, 2016), one can contend that the participation of both the Sunni and Shia together with the Kurds is of huge importance. Besides, the ability to curb Al-Qaeda, which had been imposing huge threats on the peace and stability of the entire Iraq region required not only the intervention of the US government but also combined cooperation and support of the Sunni, Shia and Kurds. Malik (2018) contends that the participation of religious clerics and tribal sheikhs in the fight against Al-Qaeda is what offered a huge blow to Al-Qaeda's attempt to establish a stronghold in Iraq. Hence, al-Qarawee (2016) argues that such cooperative support by religious clerics and tribal sheikhs should continue and extend to encompass participation in the central government's political process. With Al-Qaeda being driven into obscurity, other tangible benefits have been visible on both local and international scales. For instance, the successful provincial electoral process held in 2009 and the 2010 national parliamentary elections are also attributed to the increased engagement of the central government with religious clerics and tribal sheikhs of various ethnic groups (Ottaway & Kaysi, 2012). Even though the Sunni preferred the Iraqiya coalition that was later dissolved, it attained an astonishing victory following their win of 91 parliamentary seats in 2010 against 89 seats won by the State of Law Coalition led by Nouri al-Maliki (Mansour, 2016). As a result, Sunni's choice to have their own prime minister for the first time started taking a visible shape and served as proof that minority groups can achieve political success. Most importantly, such results were a strong indication of the positive benefits of engaging the central government. However, the Sunni through their

leadership is widely known for pursuing a disengagement policy (Al-Qarawee, 2016; Haddad, 2014; Mansour, 2016). Consequently, Malik (2018) contends that the Sunni has been losing trust in the central government and opting to use extralegal or alternative sources of representation. The major drawback of such actions is that they have proved to be unfruitful and worked against the Sunni. Similarly, Mansour (2016) highlighted that disengagement policies will never yield the effective results desired by the Sunni, especially when equal representation is concerned. It is of huge importance in this state to note that a policy of disengagement from the central government creates security and political vacuums, which facilitates the prevalence of Salafi-jihadi groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS. Therefore, the post-2003 political situation as it stands demands significant levels of policies of engagement between the central government and the Sunni, Shia and various minority groups like Christians.

Meanwhile, the possibility of eliminating disengagement policies seems far from none because of the political situation and other local factors. Besides, history itself has shown that a lack of political trust has been stirring other oppressed and minority groups to resort to disengagement policies as a way of expressing their distrust and pleasure with the central government (Haddad, 2014; Mansour, 2016). Other studies highlight that disengagement policies were inevitably the best course of action, especially when the Sunni Arab community was always against the bringing to power of the Kurds and Shia in Baghdad through the U.S.-led regime change (Haddad, 2014; Mansour, 2016). Others criticized the new regime about it was linked to the previous regime and cited that its involvement in Iraq's politics was of no good to the Iraq community (Al-Qarawee, 2016; Ottaway & Kaysi, 2012). As a result, the rejection of the U.S.-led state-building process by individuals like *Hayat al-Ulema al-Muslimi* an Association of Muslim Scholars led by Harith al-Dhari was a clear indication of the existing policies of boycott within Iraq's political activities (Al-Qarawee, 2016). Furthermore, Malik (2018) outlined that several Sunni leaders were compelled to boycott the political process and support Dhari's fatwa. This entails that there were not in support and were not going to participate in Iraq's constitution drafting process. Consequently, they had little or no say in Iraq's new supreme and preeminent law. In addition, Mansour (2016) notes that the Sunni did not participate in 2005's 'two votes' (the ratification of the Iraq

constitution and parliamentary seats). It was observed that the voter turnout in the Sunni-majority Anbar Province, hardly reached 2% during the parliamentary seat elections (Ottaway & Kaysi, 2012). Such acts significantly contradicted the Shia community's political approach. As such, Haddad (2014) outlines that the Shia is mandated to support Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani's ruling and hence, were obligated to participate in the electoral process, which on its own serves as an act of engagement. On the other hand, the Kurdish community considered the constitution ratification vote and parliamentary election as a prism of independence. Thus, the Shia and Kurds have been engaged with the central government since 2003. Therefore, the Sunni have to a large extent been unequally represented in matters pertaining to Iraq's constitution and other political decision-making activities governing the affairs of the state. Besides, the Sunnis on their own have been opting to remain on the sidelines and thus, making themselves improperly represented in the transitional national assembly.

Given the provided insights, it can be noted that the political challenges that have been shaping Iraq's national and international politics cannot be entirely blamed on the Shia-dominated post-2003 central government. Another line of studies supporting similar propositions though relatively distinct shows that representatives of the Sunni Arabs have always themselves in traps that compounded their problems and weakened their political positions in the formation of the new Iraq (Al-Qarawee, 2016; Malik, 2018; Ottaway & Kaysi, 2012). Other studies argue that the strategic actions and decisions made by the Sunni have long proved to be ineffective in delivering the desired political turnaround results (Haddad, 2014; Mansour, 2016). In another instance, it is shown that the Sunni Arab representatives have to a large extent been reluctant to in Iraq's new political initiatives (Ottaway & Kaysi, 2012). However, this does not rule out that de-Baathification crippled the Sunni Arab representatives' ability to participate in Iraq's new political initiatives (Mansour, 2016). To further buttress this argument, Ottaway and Kaysi (2012) contend that the Sunni lacked an effective leadership structure capable of bringing to fruition their political goals and vision. Similarly, Kirmanç (2013) cited similar concerns but hinted that the major problem is that the Sunni has not been in a good position to assume the desired sectarian-based identity for successful political mobilization in post-2003 Iraq. With evidence such as the refusal to publicly use

the word “Sunni” (Mansour, 2016) and rejection of the state of components (*newfound dawlat al-mukawanat*), one can contend that the post-2003 Sunni problems were self-inflicted. On the contrary, the Shia and the Kurds had little or no problems associating themselves with sect-centric elements as opposed to the Sunni. Lobanov-Rostovsky and Kiss (2022) establish that the Sunnis neither wanted nor resorted to using Shia or Kurdish myths or symbols to mobilize their masses. Thus, in an identity-based political system, the Sunni were the least among their counterparts, whom they regard as having obtained legitimacy through sectarianism.

The period 2010-2014 is marked by severe incidences of Sunni repression and is considered to be the main reason why ISIS was preserved in Iraq (Haddad, 2014). Following the loss of the election by the 2010 Iraq prime minister Malik’ to Sunni-favored Allawi, tensions ensued following Malik’s refusal to exit the office of power (Malik, 2018). It is widely documented that Malik started engaging in malpractices and overcentralized campaigns aimed at silencing opponents (Al-Qarawee, 2016; Mansour, 2016; Ottaway & Kaysi, 2012). The resultant effects were undeniably felt and left a huge void in terms of representation as studies contend that misrepresentations of ethnic groups were a major issue to reckon with during the 2010-2014 period (Kirmanc, 2013; Lobanov-Rostovsky & Kiss, 2022; Malik, 2018; Mansour, 2016). The repression of the Sunni during this period was significantly high to an extent that this period is dubbed the period of Sunni repression (Al-Qarawee, 2016; Mansour, 2016; Ottaway & Kaysi, 2012). Several Sunni leaders were imprisoned while others were either sidelined or exiled abroad or to the KRG. The resultant effects on Iraq’s initiatives to boost cooperation and unity among its diverse ethnic groups were dampened as a result of Malik’s courses of action. To reinforce this notion, Mansour (2016) notes that the Sunni community lost hope and trust in political engagements’ ability to bring the desired political reforms. Other Sunni individuals were documented as Sabhan Mulla Chiasaid said: *“We do not even have a state” and “We do not have a representative state.”*

The political situation in Iraq took a different turn following Malik’s heavily criticized approach to his opponents. For instance, Mansour (2016) contends that Maliki was politically determined to weaken his opponents mostly Sunnis representatives as evidence points to the delegitimization of Allawi, who

had won the election in part with the Sunni vote. Others contend that Malik uses imaginary positions such as the head of a national security council, which he never took an action to materialize their underlying goals and objectives (Abubakar, 2016; Kaválek, 2015). Most importantly, the ability to foster the desired political turnaround in Iraq following the departure of Saddam Hussein was considered impossible because of Malik's approach to politics (Abubakar, 2016; Kirmanc, 2013; Pourahmadi, 2022). To a large extent, Malik was accused of using the divide-and-rule strategy through which, he directly and indirectly used methods divided that cause tensions and misunderstanding between other political groups (Abubakar, 2016; Kirmanc, 2013; Pourahmadi, 2022). With examples such as money being given to affluent Sunni leaders and higher political positions but with insignificant influence being accorded to the Sunnis, Malik is believed to have adversely hampered engagements and other political initiatives aimed at promoting peace, stability and security in Iraq (Althubetat, 2022; Mirkan, 2021). Consequently, Kirmanc (2013) contends that Iraqiya split into numerous parties that jeopardized Allawi's leadership and destroyed the unity that he had built.

Incidences of senior Sunni representatives being legally targeted by Maliki through his personal influence in the judiciary were not overruled as this is one of the major criticized areas that undermined Sunni equality (Kirmanc, 2013). This can be evidenced by incidences that forced Tariq al-Hashimi, the then vice president to forcefully flee a death sentence in December 2011 (Kirmanc, 2013). Other unacceptable acts such as the application of SWAT-style raids that forced the senior Sunni representative to resign and the arrest of the then finance minister Rafi al-Issawi provide a detailed picture of Iraq's political landscape (Kirmanc, 2013).

Other events transpired between the Sunni and the central government that played vital roles in shaping Iraq's national and international political landscapes. For instance, the emergence of *al-Harak al-Shaabi*, an Arab Spring-related movement in 2011 engulfed significant parts of the Middle East (Baram & al-Maliki, 2022; Kirmanc, 2013). With countries like Turkey (VOA Reuters, 2022) and Iran (Pourahmadi, 2022) fearing that similar trends of activities can spill into their borders, Iraq's political activities have been a huge toll on international politics.

Nonetheless, the Sunni demanded representation in the central government following an increase in incidences targeting their leadership (Mirkan, 2021). To no avail, both their demands and activism were quashed following the oppression of the activists through the deployment of the Iraqi Security Forces by Maliki (Kaválek, 2015). As a result, the Arab Spring did not yield the much-desired results among the Sunni but left a huge political trail on both Iraq's national politics and international political landscape. In order to impose more fear on the Sunni activists, Maliki labeled them as al-Qaeda-linked "insurgents" or "terrorists" and charged the perpetrators with terrorism (Baram & al-Maliki, 2022). There are further indications that the imprisonment and torture campaigns held in Baghdad's Green Zone were overseen by Maliki's son, Ahmed (Baram & al-Maliki, 2022). As a result, the period 2010-2014 was marked by a severe Sunni representation crisis, that stirred a series of tension that manifested as Sunni street demonstrations.

Studies that raise concerns about the Sunni and Shia relations, opine that centralization campaigns by the central government were to blame for increased tensions observed in Iraq. With incidences such as the nullification of the Iraq parliament (Farhan & Sharif, 2021), the ability of other minority groups and the Sunni to directly voice their concerns was reduced. Consequently, tensions among the Sunni were stirred by knowledge, beliefs, activities and events convincing them that their representation in matters involving the ruling of Iraq's affairs was limited and in the hands of the oppressors, the National Iraqi Alliance (Farhan & Sharif, 2021). Furthermore, the electoral list was highly dominated by the governing Dawa Party and Shia political actors (Genauer, 2021). Such activities have been attracting the attention of international actors determined to promote equality and the upholding of human rights in Iraq. To a large extent, Kirmanc (2013) and Pourahmadi (2022) mention that the incarceration of Faraj al-Haidari the head of the Independent High Electoral Commission, for corruption allegations in April 2012 provided other national and international state actors to intervene in Iraq's political affairs. Both on a national and international political scale, such de-Baathification incidences do not only restrict and further widen Sunni Arabs' representation crisis but thwart efforts to promote freedom and equality in Iraq as well as the preservation of human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) emphasizes the

importance of discriminating against and restricting certain needs, wants and services based on race (Pourahmadi, 2022). Hence, the Shia's stance against the Sunnis was clearly a matter of human rights disparities that needed to be addressed to establish peace and stability in Iraq. Under such conditions, attempts to promote peace and stability are ineffective as conflicts, demonstrations and advocations for equality and human rights continue to increase. This can be evidenced by Sheikh Mounir Hashim Obeidi's statement, "Until there is no more de-Baathification, there will be no reconciliation" (Kirmanc, 2013). This implies that antigovernment protests were the order or norm of Iraq's national politics and the international political landscape was marked by the huge involvement of other state actors calling for political reforms.

Meanwhile, problems of proportional representation between the Shia and the Sunni were also considered to be prevalent and affecting Iraq's elections (Kirmanc, 2013). This is because electoral disparities were always raised as a major political concern hindering attempts to foster equality among Iraq's ethnic groups (Abubakar, 2016; Kaválek, 2015). Besides, the Sunni community themselves believed that election results contradicted demographic realities. This can be evidenced by events that transpired during the 2014 national elections, which led several leaders in the Sunni community to claim garnered 35% of the total votes and yet constitute about 70% of the governorate's population (Kirmanc, 2013). Though it is practical to determine Iraq's demographic features in any province, similar issues have been raised by other clerics and religious leaders, especially in Saladin and Nineveh who raised similar election results misalignments and misrepresentation problems (Kaválek, 2015). As a result, political tensions in Iraq linked to differences in ethnicity have been predominantly shaped by efforts to address misrepresentations of the Sunni in legal matters involving the ruling of the country together with their freedom and legal rights as well as those of other minority groups such as Christians. However, the granting of the Kurdish Regional Government a status to efforts to legally change governing districts from governorates to autonomous regions (Pourahmadi, 2022), is a step towards democracy and efforts aimed at unending long-standing democracy and misrepresentation issues that have been affecting Iraq. However, much still needed and need to be done, especially

considering that Maliki was against the notion of having Diyala administer a referendum and initiate legal proceedings to establish a region (Pourahmadi, 2022). With ideas contending that the Kurdish referendum was a mistake, Abubakar (2016) shows that the establishment of martial law and the deployment of forces to the province serves to correct errors made by Malik and will be a legal region in Iraq. This follows increased efforts by Sunni Arab representatives demanding similar rights to establish a region (Kaválek, 2015).

The other key feature of the Sunni and Shia relations that have shaped Iraq's national and international political landscapes is the lopsidedness between proportional representation and demographics that has been extending to the security sector. Drawing from documented evidence provided by Kirmanc (2013), it can be noted that 70% of Iraq's army officers are Shia even though they constitute less than 60% of the population.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations as the results of this research. Analysis and interpretation of International Relations are one of the most important and complex theories of politics that in different concepts try to analyze foreign policy logically or critically, materially, or spiritually. The new world system reflects the total scientific, technological, political, economic, cultural and social development of society; it is not the invention of a single state or power alone. It affects the destiny of the world's states and nations regardless of civilization, race, religion or culture. Additionally, the concept of sovereignty changed, and it was no longer the absolute power of the state; Instead, the state was forced to give up some of its sovereignty both domestically and internationally, which ended up in favor of the cause of the subjugated nations. More than ever, foreign policy and diplomacy have come out of the control of the state and are no longer the sole domain of political actors with international personalities; instead, many other non-state actors, such as NGOs and the liberation movements of the oppressed peoples, have had the opportunity to carry out diplomatic activities more actively than ever before. The dominance of the United States over the world's international system is a significant feature. There are other poles in the system, but none of them is as strong as the United States; this is because it has all the military, economic, political, cultural and technological conditions necessary for the world's leading state.

Iraq has not established the principles of true federalism and suffers from a number of deep ethnic and religious problems, and it is unlikely that peace will be established in the near future. In contrast, the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government has succeeded in attracting large international companies to invest in the oil sector, which undoubtedly influences the policies of developed countries.

Talking about oil has different dimensions. In terms of the impact on the political situation, according to the statistics available in the oil-rich countries, it is clear that the abundance of oil revenues does not necessarily affect the development of the economic, political and social situation. This is evidenced by the weak growth of most oil-producing countries, in addition to the lack of

democracy and public freedoms, despite the fact that oil sales provide a lot of revenue for these countries.

However, it has not helped to create a free environment for the political process to develop democratically from within. On the contrary, it has strengthened the closed system of governance, although this does not mean that the problems themselves are the cause. Rather, it is the way the authorities use oil revenues. For instance, Norway is one of the countries where oil revenues have contributed to comprehensive political, economic and social development, due to the existence of strong and stable institutions and a clear understanding of how to use oil revenues for the country's present and future. Some of the international issues that Iraq will be faced related to geographical problems such as climate change that affects environmental sustainability and the economy that must be solved. The attitude of the international community, in general is not clear on the issue of the international position of the regions, rather, it acts in the same way as the federal constitution gives power and status to the regions at the international level. It was also pointed out that many regions, although not given appreciable position in the federal constitution at the international level, but still has been able to participate in international relations by taking advantage of the positive attitude of other states (Soran, 2008).

Good Governance Methods are an important criterion and method by which a country or region is measured in the governance of human society. This method is based on several principles, including:

- a. Rule of Law
- b. Effectiveness of institutions and their capabilities Effective and Efficiency
- c. Comprehensive and Equitable and inclusiveness
- d. Responsive and transparency in governance
- e. Sense of Accountable responsibility
- f. Compromise and Consensus Oriented
- g. Participation and Partnership between the parties

The factors that create domestic and international problems for Iraq should also be stated. The first one is the internal factors such as the instability and complexity in implementing Iraq's constitution as there is no balance,

partnership, or agreement between the main structures of Iraq. Secondly, the external factors should be stated as the direct and indirect interferences of other countries to rule the Iraqi government. Also, like the politics of oil, the use of water is treated as a political and economic tool. Discussions on this strong geopolitical factor will be an important part of Iraq's foreign relations, especially with the neighboring countries.

The dispute between the government of Iraq and the government of the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government is related to the implementation of the federal constitution of Iraq. On the other hand, the international laws for the KRG are limited within the framework of the Iraqi government's constitution; for example, the deprivation of international relations, including restrictions on signing international agreements, as well as the lack of a good organization for the distribution of authority between the region and the federal government, is one of the basic problems of the Iraq federal government, which cannot expect a stable future for the process of Iraq's international relations. Despite the limitations from the Iraqi government and the lack of space in the federal constitution, the KRG has been able to participate at the international level; for instance, It has been able to participate in diplomatic activities and opening special offices to organize foreign relations, as well as through the conclusion of international agreements and contracts.

Recommendations

At the end of the research, this thesis recommends further research for future research. The US strategic interests require US foreign policy to try to make the Middle East a branch of a system that should not be dominated by narrow nationalism, radical religious ideology, terrorism and dictatorial systems and destroy the source of weapons of mass destruction; to do this, the United States must review the type and extent of its alliances with the states and nations of the Middle East; in particular, it should rely more on those who have helped fight terrorism and undermine the peace process; such as Iraq, whose relations with the United States should be based on common interests according to their strength. It is expected that the state will no longer be the sole actor in all domestic and international affairs at the domestic and international levels;

instead, global NGOs and institutions are becoming more than ever partners of the state in running affairs and implementing the concept of sovereignty.

Iraq should try to establish various NGOs in order to strengthen its relations with global world and improve its international reputation. The government should have a comprehensive national development strategy in the light of which it should implement plans and policies related to the natural resources of the oil and gas sector. Oil as an important raw material is becoming more important day by day after discovery and production, not only economically as a material that enters most industries, but the political importance of oil is no less than the economic aspect and many of the regional and international conflicts are directly or indirectly related to the seizure of the world's oil fields. Oil policy must be based on national consensus and agreement of all parties because of the sensitivity and importance of oil on the present and future of the government. The field of oil production and exports and oil revenues must be clearly managed through strong institutions and deputy democracy to protect ourselves from the dictatorship of oil power. The support of the world's largest companies, which have great economic influence and invest in Iraq, should be used to develop the industry and economy in Iraq. Through a specific policy, try to take advantage of the ability of the large oil companies that invest in Iraq to gain the support of powerful countries that influence international politics. On the other hand, the government must strengthen its position in the international arena and the interests of the powers to gain international support for its oil policy, especially those forces that affect the future of Iraq.

Oil revenues must be used to diversify the economy and develop industry so that the government can have a developed economy rather than relying solely on oil revenues, which is known as drastic change. Federalism will be the appropriate solution to the multi-ethnic, religious and cultural problems and under the shadow of all Iraqi nations will achieve their rights; it will not dissolve the current political and geographical map of the Middle East. Future changes and new developments will lead to new attitudes, policies and frameworks; therefore, it is the responsibility of the political leaderships to blend these concepts and attitudes in such a way that they can be exploited and not miss opportunities. The government should pursue a multidimensional policy with

foreign actors to protect the region from fierce conflict with regional forces. It's important that Iraq's political headship should benefit from the USA's strategy of "balanced democracy" to deal internationally that base on general concerns, not particular interests. At the Iraqi level, the political forces and parties must establish a democratic front among themselves to draw up the general lines and principles of modern policy that will lead to the achievement of rights and the enrichment of the relations between parties. It is recommended that there be more books in English on these subjects in Iraq because the public library is really poor in this field in English.

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Appendices
Appendix A
Ethics Committee Approval



NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

19.01.2023

Dear Jawaheersedeeq Hasan

Your project **“The Role of Internal Factors in Shaping Post-2003 International Politics of Iraq”** has been evaluated. Since only secondary data will be used the project does not need to go through the ethics committee. You can start your research on the condition that you will use only secondary data.

Prof. Dr. Aşkın KİRAZ

The Coordinator of the Scientific Research Ethics Committee

Appendix B

Turnitin Similarity Report

THE ROLE OF INTERNAL FACTORS IN SHAPING POST-2003 INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF IRAQ (18.01.2023)

ORIGINALITY REPORT

12%	10%	2%	3%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	docs.neu.edu.tr Internet Source	3%
2	carnegie-mec.org Internet Source	2%
3	Submitted to Yakın Doğu Üniversitesi Student Paper	1%
4	carnegieendowment.org Internet Source	1%
5	www.usip.org Internet Source	<1%
6	worldpopulationreview.com Internet Source	<1%
7	www.rosalux.de Internet Source	<1%
8	GARETH STANSFIELD. "The reformation of Iraq's foreign relations: new elites and enduring legacies", International Affairs, 2010 Publication	<1%