

THE IRAQI QUESTION IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT AND ITS DOMESTIC REFLECTIONS

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ABSTRACT:

The occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi forces in August 1990 marked the beginning of a regional transformation in the Middle East that would last up until now. That occupation, although basically an issue between the two states, immediately became an international event of primary importance in the short run and also a chain of events triggered by the same event caused the rise of a new regional configuration. During the same years, the world witnessed the transformation of the global system, and experienced new openings that would affect not only the Middle East but also the whole world. As a result, a research on the future of Iraq now would have to simultaneously deal with systemic issues at the macro level, and should take into consideration the parameters originating both from within and outside the region. The future of the political regime and the territorial integrity of Iraq will certainly be determined according to a compound result of various factors. Accordingly, this paper seeks to promote a discussion on the future of Iraq within the framework of the above-mentioned approach.

KEYWORDS:

Iraq; Middle East; US Policy in the Middle East; Occupation of Kuwait; International Sanctions.

1. Introduction

The occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi forces upon the order by Saddam Hussein in August 1990 marked the beginning of a regional transformation in the Middle East that would last up until now. That occupation, although basically an issue between the aforementioned two states, namely Iraq and Kuwait, immediately became an international event of primary importance in the short run, and also a chain of events triggered by the same event caused the emergence of a new regional configuration.

Meanwhile, some authors claim that the timing of this occupation was accurate for a group that they call "American Security Community".¹ Some others look for US interference in the occupation of Kuwait. In his book about the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq, Hamdi Hassan deals with the occupation issue with a realist perspective, claiming that the US did not pronounce any absolute discourse to stop Iraq before and during the event.² In the very roots of that kind of a point of view lies the belief that the US is in search of a means to continue its existence in the Middle East after the end of the Cold War. As a matter of fact, the developments started with the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait have consolidated the American existence in the region. In line with the same view, the same crisis also provided Israel with additional powers in the region. Those that put forth that idea opened to discussion the question of whether the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait has a special effect in the political historical sense. What was the reason that paved the way for the rise of such immense and complex events that occurred as a result of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait?

First of all, one should immediately state that the said occupation violated one of the principles of the international law on which a consensus can be reached easily: The principle of non-intervention. But at this point whether this occupation is the first of its kind is what bears importance. When we look at the political history through the same perspective, Morocco, invaded Western

¹L. T. Hadar, "The Rise of the Middle Eastern Bogeyman: Toward Post-Cold-War Interventionism", *Foreign Policy Briefing*, 5 September 1990, No. 2 (www.cato.org).

²H. A. Hassan, *The Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait*, London, Pluto Press, 1999, p. 45.

Sahara in 1995 and in the same year, Indonesia annexed East Timor and Israel also has attempted that kind of violations against the territories of its neighbours ever since its establishment. But, in none of these events, did one witness a wide-range international reaction. On the other hand, the US had interesting relations with the members of the Security Council to legitimise a military intervention to Iraq within the framework of United Nations organisation. For example, China, which did not approve of an intervention under US leadership, received a promise from the US that the trade embargo would be lifted; and in order to gain the support of the USSR, the US suspended a conference that was being held in Paris on the topic of Soviet oppression in Baltic states; and, in addition, the US promised to provide material support to the non-permanent members of the UN Security Council such as Colombia, Malaysia and Zaire. The US also provided as much as US\$ 70 million to the government of Yemen, another non-permanent member of the Security Council that was also opposed to the intervention to Iraq.³

2. Contending Dynamics on Iraq

The event that rendered the developments more complex and even more interesting was the global transformation experienced along with the said reconstruction process in the Middle East. During the same years, the world witnessed the transformation of the global system, and experienced new openings that would affect not only the Middle East but also the whole world. As a result, almost all works on the Middle East started to include a variety of topics affected by many factors in the theoretical sense; especially the factors originating from the system itself. This is also necessary for a research on the political future of Iraq. As a matter of fact, a research on the future of Iraq would have to simultaneously deal with global issues at the macro level, and also should take into consideration the parameters originating both from within and outside the region. The future situation of the political regime and the territorial integrity of Iraq will certainly be determined according to a compound result developed by the said similar factors.

³See, Stephen Zunes, "The Function of Rogue States in US Middle East Policy", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 5 (2), 1997.

Accordingly, this research seeks to promote a discussion on the future of Iraq within the framework of the above-mentioned approach. The main issues to be dealt are as follows:

US plans on Iraq: As a country developing policies on Iraq and waging war towards it, the US plays a leading role among the main actors on the issue of Iraq's political future. As a result, the most crucial country where discussions and projects regarding Iraq's future are shaped is the US. The aim of the Iraqi policy of the US and the instruments used in order to realise this end are directly relevant to our research in this context.

The domestic political and social dynamics in Iraq and their projects about the future: The central government of Iraq represents a power restricted in terms of both national and international angles. As a result, the political future of Iraq is also directly related to the other existing domestic powers or those struggling against the said restricted central government.

Undoubtedly the above-mentioned factors organised under two headings do not point to all the factors that affect the way Iraq's future will take shape. These two headings only point to two centres where various projects regarding Iraq's future are developed. However, the political configuration of the government in Iraq and how different parts of this configuration will react to it will continue to be determining factors with respect to other issues like the points of views of the regional countries.

When summarised, there are several determining factors as to where Iraq is heading;

Domestic factors will be both more influential and important than the external ones regarding the future of Iraq. By domestic factors, it is meant here those identities and institutions that traditionally shape the social and political structure of Iraq and also the social and political structure of Iraq that has evolved in quite adverse conditions for the last ten years.

The economic situation in the country, the society's welfare problems and more importantly the problems of legitimacy and stability of the country after the reign of Saddam Hussein will be

the determining factors. Another important aspect of the said problem is that, any regime change of Western origin in Iraq might prompt aid programs like the Marshall aid plan.

It is impossible to solve the Iraqi question only in an American centred way in the international scale; other issues such as regional powers and the peace process will also be effective in the resolution of the problem.

3. Disputes over Iraq after Saddam: The Questions of Identity and Legitimacy

One of the main problems of the US regarding Iraq, is the removal of the current Saddam Hussein regime from power. This problem has so much importance as the first condition of all the credible scenarios about the future of Iraq is the realisation of a coup against the Saddam Hussein's regime. On the other hand, the answer to the question of "What kind of an Iraq in the future?" is also directly related to the situation that will be dominant in Iraq after Saddam. In this context, the following questions should be taken into consideration:

What would the overthrow of the Saddam regime mean for the Iraqi society?⁴ What would Iraq after Saddam mean for the US? What would the Iraq after Saddam mean for the Middle Eastern countries? For example, what would an Iraq weakened after Saddam and suffering from a Kurdish movement that has become *de facto* state in northern Iraq mean for Iran and Turkey? What would be the main characteristics of the Iraqi regime after Saddam?

There are numerous questions that follow in like manner but the main issues which all of them deal with are nearly the same: How will the Iraqi society define itself in the future? What will be the importance of how the Iraqi society defines itself for the stability of the region? In order to give fair answers to all of these and similar questions, one should put forth some views about the

⁴ For a article that deals with the similar questions, see, E. Laipson, P. L. Clawson, A. Parasaliti, and R. R. Francks, "After Saddam, What then for Iraq?", *Middle East Policy*, Volume 6 (3), February, 1999.

new government model and the governing elite that will rise after Saddam. Who will succeed Saddam? How will the successor of Saddam succeed in gaining the confidence of the US at first and also the international society, and in being reliable in the domestic politics? How will it be possible to form a legitimate government in a country suffering from divisive lines in itself?

The concept of legitimacy is quite important in the Iraqi case. When one takes into consideration what Donna Bryson says, one infers that, societal perceptions do matter: "Saddam is increasingly popular among Arabs because of his denunciations of Israel and his pledges of monetary support for Palestinians in their confrontations with the Jewish state".⁵ The problem in Iraq, then, becomes an identity-related one that should be dealt with against the West, because all of the Middle Eastern societies, including the Iraqi society, have the common denominator of being Muslim and being Arab. We have to take into account the words of David Hirst that "...[A]rabs have been rallying so forcefully against the sanctions... because these are seen to typify double standards on the part of a superpower that penalises Arabs for their misdemeanours but never Israel".⁶ As a matter of fact, the future domestic stability of Iraq will be directly related to the society's perception of legitimacy. The successor of Saddam needs to be legitimate in the eyes of his society and also in those of the other Middle Eastern countries.

4. Some Scenarios about the Post-Saddam Era and the Possible Political and Social Impacts

One of the most important issues regarding the future of Iraq is the overthrow of the Saddam government. Although overthrowing Saddam is one of the main aims of the US policy in Iraq, one should take into consideration the various aspects and dilemmas regarding this project.

⁵D. Bryson, "Saddam's Popularity at Decade-High", *Associated Press*, 17 January 2001.

⁶D. Hirst, "Bush inherits his father's legacy in Iraq", *The Japan Times*, 20 January 2001.

Ellen Laipson states that, almost every project that would dare overthrow the Saddam regime in Iraq would face some basic problems.⁷ According to Laipson, the first problem is the question of whether Iraq after Saddam will be able to keep its territorial integrity or not. She continues to argue that, the government of Iraq after Saddam will definitely not be held by the members of Saddam's family or by Tikritis. Moreover, Laipson expects that the Baas Party might be degraded in the eyes of the people. However the Baas Party, currently playing a central role in Iraq, may reactivate itself, as is evident in the case of the communist parties of the Eastern Europe, after a period of silence following the Saddam era.

Even more important is the problem of Iraq's territorial integrity. Then comes the problem of stability. Who will react to the overthrow of the existing regime in Iraq and how? At this point, a possible commotion after the end of the central government in Iraq seems to be inevitable. However, territorial disintegration of Iraq still seems unlikely in the short run due to mainly two reasons: First of all, regional countries like Turkey and Iran do not welcome the idea of disintegration. Moreover, in a possible disintegration process, they will have to be effective actors. Secondly, a disintegrated Iraq does not seem attractive regarding intra-regional balances. At this point, what Israel, targeted by the missiles of Saddam during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, thinks about the idea of the disintegration of Iraq bears importance. In order for Israel to welcome the idea of a disintegrated Iraq, it should be content regarding the two main aspects: First of all, the future state, no matter what kind of a state it will be, should not perceive Israel as a threat, in other words, the new state should be able to see Israel as different from the traditional Middle Eastern Muslim States' perception of a threat. In this context, the potential new state should provide Israel with additional leverage in the region, especially against the Arabic states. The second point is that, the disintegration should not bear any positive results for Iran and Syria from an Israeli point of view. If disintegration will in a way cause a rapprochement between Iraqi Shiites and Iran, Israel will not appreciate this either.

⁷See Laipson et. al., "After Saddam, What then for Iraq?".

After dealing with the issue from a theoretical perspective, one should stress that Israel deliberately follows a Northern Iraq centred Iraq policy. According to Özdağ, one of the leading figures of those lobbying for a Kurdish state in Washington since 1992 has been Ariel Sharon, an Israeli politician and current prime minister.⁸ Moreover, according to Altunışık, another Turkish expert on the Middle East, Israel is indifferent to the political integrity of Iraq, and "Ankara was apprehensive after the developments in Iraq that the US and Israel were supportive of Kurdish nationalism, especially in Iraq."⁹ She goes on to argue that, let alone the disintegration of Iraq, Israel is deeply involved in the issue of the Kurdish autonomy. The roots of the Israeli interest in the region goes far back historically to the Kurdish Jews. Beginning with 1950s, the Kurdish Jews have been brought to Israel from the Northern Iraq. One of the interesting aspect of the issue is that, it is argued that even today, almost 30 senior executives of KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party), an important Kurdish organisation in Northern Iraq, are Kurdish Jews. As a result, when looked from a distance, it is clear that a disintegrated Iraq might provide benefits to Israel. First of all, Iraq, a powerful Arabic state, will weaken and moreover, the post-disintegration crisis will continuously impose restrictions on Turkey and Iran.¹⁰

In the pre-war period, Saddam Hussein did not play the role of a nation-building leader. In the words of Laipson, he has never carried out a mission in his country in the way Tito did.¹¹ Moreover, he has never played a role of the leader around whom a nation gathers. When such issues are taken into consideration, one can arrive at a conclusion that the absence of Saddam would not cause disintegration. Both due to the fact that Saddam has never played a nation-uniting role, and due to the adverse conditions experienced during the last ten years, the concept of "loyalty", a binding concept for Iraqi society, went beyond being a leader-based concept and the Iraqi society kept this concept within the

⁸See Ü. Özdağ, *Türkiye ve Kuzey Irak: Bir Gayri Nizami Savaşın Anatomisi* (Turkey and Northern Iraq: The Autonomy of an Irregular War), Ankara, ASAM Yayınları, 1999, pp. 180-190.

⁹M. B. Altunışık, "The Turkish-Israeli Rapprochement in the Post-Cold War Era", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 36 (2), 2000, p. 179.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 190-196.

¹¹Cited in *ibid.*

context of national borders, though in a decreasing trend. In this context, one should not ignore the fact that for Iraq, the concepts of territorial integrity and national borders still bear effective social meanings. However, the concept of "loyalty" is also directly related with a concept of transformation that will likely be experienced in the long run. If a transformation period, which would also bring about a social and economic relaxation, the concept of "loyalty" will doubtless have to be replaced by a new quest.

The second point is whether the stability will be attained after Saddam or not. In other words, whether a countrywide and long-lasting conflict will be experienced after the overthrow of the Saddam government. The way to answer this question depends on two different issues. First of all, the formal characteristics of the administration of Iraq are of primary concern. The second point is the social fissure of the society in Iraq. The government of Iraq can be defined by a diagram at the top of which reside Saddam and his family as the owner of the absolute power.¹² However within that power bloc, there does not exist internal harmony. There is a considerable amount of conflict between Uday, the elder son of Saddam, and Qusay, the younger son, who seem to be in a competition for leadership after Saddam. Until the assassination attempt against him in 1996, Uday was considered to be the successor of Saddam. But after that date, Qusay increased his power and influence.¹³ Moreover, Qusay has a considerable amount of influence upon the Revolutionary Guards and the General Intelligence Service. Qusay is also the commander of Northern Military Region, the military aim of which is to suppress the separatist Kurds and to hinder any possible Turkish attack. Uday, on the other hand has gained popularity in the eyes of the people. He is the leader of the Iraqi Olympic Committee and Football Federation that have an attraction in the eyes of the society. Uday is also running a newspaper called *Babel*. As stated by one source that closely follows Iraqi politics, "Saddam wants to keep power in the family rather than allow it to pass to his Baas

¹²A. Bairam, *Building Toward Crisis: Saddam Husayn's Strategy for Survival*, Washington, Washington Institute for Near East Policy Press, 1998, pp.7-37.

¹³Cf. G. Myre, "In Iraq, Saddam's Sons Amass Clout", *Associated Press*, 18 January 2001.

Party".¹⁴ This intensity of power at the summit points to a lonely actor, since there is no accumulation of power under the authority of Saddam and the circles close to him.

Although there is a power gap under the leading power of Saddam, there are Sunni tribes that are further below struggling for power. Between them and Saddam and the circles close to him, there exists a power gap. However, this gap was intentionally planned by Saddam himself as it reduces the threats to the isolated power centre of Saddam because the gap between the top ruling group and the tribes, existing as two layers beyond the ruling group, carries out some political functions. The Sunni tribes such as *Tikritis*, *Jubburis* and *Duris* struggle for power under the government of Saddam. Moreover, the government of Saddam tries to keep this conflict for power alive sometimes by using various means of the government, including appointments. In fact the tribes from the very beginning have never opposed to the Saddam regime, and there has been a kind of cohabitation between the government and the Sunni tribes.

In parallel with this view, the first group expected to react against the idea of removal of Saddam in Iraq is the Sunni elite. First of all, this group perceives Saddam as the symbol of the country's integrity. Secondly, they will naturally lose their 'political and economic subsistence' in a Shiite oriented regime that would be on the move in post-Saddam period. Despite all negative conditions, this group guarantees its survival in a Saddam oriented regime.¹⁵ The fall of Saddam Hussein, on the other hand, means loss of reputation, money and office for the Sunni elite. According to Brown, a new social structure has started to emerge in Iraq since 1991, which marked by extreme poverty and intrigues caused by it. However, it also created a group of people that relied on this *status quo* for subsistence. The existing regime, moreover, has come to view this split as a means to provide its political continuity.¹⁶

¹⁴Cited in Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid, pp. 8-9.

¹⁶S. Graham-Brown, *Sanctioning Saddam: The Politics of Intervention in Iraq*, New York, I. B. Tauris, 1999, p. 179.

In general, the problems envisaged by Sunni elite to occur after the end of the Saddam regime are as follows: First, the model of administration implemented by Saddam, no matter how oppressive, prevents for the time being the North and the South from splitting. Bloody conflicts between the North and the South might take place after Saddam. Fearing from such a possibility, the central elite will not be prone to accept the removal of the Saddam Hussein administration. Second, a strong possibility is that a government with a Shiite tendency might accede to power especially with the influence of Iran after the removal of Saddam. All in all, it is the pro-Saddam tribes like the *Tikritis* that maintain the Sunni authority in the country. Therefore, a natural pact is formed between the central elite and the Saddam administration. Finally, a fear shared by the central elite is that neighboring countries such as Turkey, Iran and Syria might become influential in Iraq after Saddam. That the US influence might grow in their country may also be part of such fear.¹⁷

When this model of government is taken into consideration, any US based plan of overthrowing Saddam may cause a chaos in the country since it is impossible for one tribe to be dominant among others struggling for power in the short run. Furthermore, if any of them becomes 'dominant', it is impossible for it to gain legitimacy in the eyes of others. Under these conditions, it is possible that new conflicts would arise in the long run. Moreover, the overthrow of the government of Saddam, no matter by which method and no matter by which source, would trigger a struggle among tribes. Today, it is obscure who will have what kind of a rule in Iraq after Saddam. However, the current structure of the Iraqi government presents the means to be used to overthrow the Saddam government. Generally, one could choose between two main means to overthrow a government:

- To carry out an armed coup;
- To organise a social commotion against the government in which it is possible to gain a wider societal support.

¹⁷S. Yetiv, "Saddam is the Devil They Know", *Los Angeles Times*, 15 December 1998.

Both of these means are problematic choices regarding the model of government in Iraq. First of all, carrying out a coup against Saddam, which was tried before, is problematic. No power in Iraq outside the central authority has the capacity to carry out armed coup alone. Moreover, it is also problematic for an outside power to carry out a coup against the government of Saddam jointly with other powers in the other regions of the country. When it comes to the second alternative, as stated before, no tribe in the country has the power to unite all the society. A provisional alliance to be formed among the tribes might soon evolve into a bloody domestic conflict. Besides, soon after an all-encompassing riot would give rise to an internal conflict, the problems of order and the formation of an effective government. In order for an all-encompassing riot to be successful, there is a need for some unexpected developments, the most important of which might be the involvement of the Revolution Guards, although partially, in such an anti-government riot. Such a possibility, although difficult, is not impossible to be realised because there are examples of disharmony within the army of Saddam Hussein. As a matter of fact, according to the news of *al-Zaman*, published in London, some conflicts were experienced among the Iraqi army on 24 May.¹⁸

On the other hand, how will Saddam, as a figure of power in the centre be destroyed? For example, can the spies of the US kill Saddam Hussein? Some policy makers like Richard N. Haas claim that it is nearly impossible.¹⁹ On the other hand such destruction would create a legitimacy problem. Furthermore, the US, which will lose its prestige as a result of such an action, would become exposed to similar attacks. The possibility of the US involvement in an armed coup by supporting any of the said scenarios to overthrow the government of Iraq will put on the agenda more complex calculations. The problems of such an action can be summarised as follows:²⁰

¹⁸*Al Zaman*, 3 June, 1999.

¹⁹R. N. Haas, "Containing Saddam is the most likely US Policy", *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, 1 March 1998.

²⁰For a discussion of this topic, see, M. E. O'Hanlon, "The Butcher's Bill for Invading Iraq", *The Washington Post*, 19 March, 1998.

According to experts, such an action would mean the deployment of tens of thousands of US soldiers in the region. But this time the task would be more difficult than before: Fighting against the enemy while simultaneously invading all necessary parts of the country. At this point, one should take into consideration a point that O'Hanlon reminds: Iraq's territory is nearly as large as that of Germany's. On the other hand, during such an operation, the opposition in Iraq should takeover some important cities from the government of Saddam. This necessity becomes clear when taking into consideration the fact that it would not be possible for the US powers to bomb each of these cities and it would be difficult to invade each of them.²¹

When the cost of the Desert Storm Operation, US\$ 60 billion, is taken into consideration, it is clear that a military operation of above-mentioned scale would be expensive. But today, to expect that Germany, Japan, Kuwait would pay most of the costs as was the case in the first operation is imaginary. During such an operation, there would be a large amount of loss that would make the US society react soon.

Another problem, related to the post-Saddam era in Iraq, is the characteristic of the future regime in Iraq. In other words, the problem is the question of whether it would be a dictatorship or a relatively democratic government. The result to be inferred from both the political and historical tradition of the region and from the special situation of Iraq is the fact that, in this country, building a participatory and democratic regime is almost impossible. Another important point is that, a multilateral consensus regime to be found after Saddam would be antidemocratic in itself. This would mean that, the realisation of a "consensus regime" after Saddam among all the parties, the Kurds in the northern Iraq, central Sunni tribes and Shiites in the south is difficult in practice and also each party does not give any hope for democratisation in its own ruling sphere. That is to say, in the case of such a loose consensus regime, it would be imaginary to consider that KDP or another local (or, peripheral) power centre would promote democratic rights in its own ruling sphere. On the other hand, even a consensus on the aim of having democracy is a project that can

²¹D. Byman, K. Pollack, G. Rose, "The Rollback Fantasy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78 (1), 1999, p. 26.

be realised in the long term regarding the social realities of the country.

The fourth point is related to the new political identity values that might rise in the political system expected to be structured after Saddam. In this context, it is possible that the powers that are based on Islamic values might gain political power. The main reason of the possibility of the rise in the religious values is the feeling that the religious discourse could overcome the formal dichotomies existing in the country. However, when one remembers dichotomies such as Shiite-Sunni, Turkoman-Kurds, the rise of such a discourse also seems to be problematic.²²

Within the same context, it is necessary to deal with a monarchic model around the Hashemite dynasty. Especially according to some points of views of British and American origin, the monarchic regime in the Middle East symbolises stability. The lack of social, cultural and economic conditions that constitute the prerequisites of a functioning democracy reminds one of other formulas in this region to unite the people. On the other hand, as expressed by al-Khafaji, the attainment of a democratic regime for today's Iraqi society that is almost an atomised society is a very weak possibility.²³ According to the same view, after Saddam, a reconstructed Hashemite dynasty can function as a uniting power in Iraq regarding the monarchic rule instead of a conflict among the tribes. But the important point to be remembered when thinking of a monarchic rule is what the former monarchic rule that broke up in 1958 meant for the Iraqi society. Especially during the period before 1958, the monarchic rule did not have any popularity among the society. Moreover, for a considerably large part of the society, the British (the imperial power), imposed

²²When various sources are taken into consideration, 97% of the population of Iraq is Muslims, of which 57-60% is Shiites and about 37-40% Sunnis. Christians constitute 3% of total population. When it comes to ethnical formation of the population, Arabs constitute 75-80% of the total population while the Kurds constitute 15-20%. Turkomans and other groups constitute the 5% of the population.

²³I. al-Khafaji, "State Terror and the Degradation of Politics", cited in F. Hazelton (ed.), *Iraq Since the Gulf War: Prospects for Democracy*, London: Zed Press, 1994, p. 30.

the monarchic rule in 1920.²⁴ The only point that supports the re-foundation of the monarchic rule is the existence of the Baas regime that has made the people suffer for thirty years. As a matter of fact, for the similar reasons, among a very small part of the society, the monarchic regime symbolises the golden years of Iraq regarding the stability of the country. Therefore, it should be kept in mind that, it would not be surprise after the destruction of the Saddam regime that this possibility might be again put on the agenda by foreign sources. According to Graham Fuller, the idea of democracy discussed upon the basis of some hypotheses could cause certain regional problems. According to him, a functioning democracy might cause regional instability in Iraq. Because the Shiites would gain power by the democratic means and they would further organise themselves ideologically, in the long term, as a result, Shiite-Sunni turbulence might rise.²⁵ Among the already existing parties of such turbulence are countries such as Iran and in an indirect way, Bahrain.

According to Roger Hardy "regarding the vision of a future Iraq, policy makers in Washington and London depict a free and democratic country, [living] at peace with itself and its neighbours" in an Iraq without Saddam Hussein. This makes clear the "one of the dilemmas of the West and its allies in the region", in the words of Roger Hardy, "to decide which they fear most; an Iraq ruled by Saddam, or an Iraq without him".²⁶

5. The Question of Iraq in the Regional Context

Another important point to be taken into consideration regarding the scenarios developed with respect to Iraq is the ideas and the policies of the neighbouring countries, because the future of Iraq will be shaped by the complex relationship between domestic and external factors. It is important for the regional peace

²⁴To see the role played by the Hashemite dynasty in the foundation of Iraq, see, M. Mufti, *Pan Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq*, New York, Cornell University, 1996, pp.23-42.

²⁵G. Fuller, "Respecting Regional Realities", *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 41(83), 1991, p. 124.

²⁶R. Hardy, " Analysis: Saddam and the future", *BBC World News*, 16 January 2001.

and stability to foresee what would be the attitude and the reactions of the neighbouring states when developments lead either disintegration, civil war or transition to a new regime in Iraq?²⁷

Undoubtedly, the developments after the overthrow of the Saddam regime would form a new balance in the Middle East. As a result, the balance of power existing in the Persian Gulf would change. At this point, the first thing to be taken into consideration should be the relation of the new regime in Iraq with the US. From a general point of view, the new government that would be founded in favour of the US in the aftermath of the overthrow of the Saddam regime by a movement planned and supported by the US would mean a decrease in the relative importance of Saudi Arabia for the US. And regarding the macro balances, the US might be expected to reduce its military existence in the region. Again as the natural result of the same process, Israel would become more credible regarding especially its eastern border.

However, one cannot always talk about such kind of positive attitude towards the disintegration of Iraq by many states of the same region. For example, even Kuwait would not support any regime change within the framework of *Iraq Liberation Act* of US. Turkey is already opposed to the disintegration of Iraq due to its worries about the northern Iraq. Iran, which has close ties with the Shiites in the Iraq, also holds the traditional suspicions about the US intentions regarding Iraq.²⁸ Iran approaches the blocks in Iraq

²⁷These scenarios have various characteristics and they have been expressed by various sources. If we have a look at a few of them: 1) *Splitting into Three Parts*: According to this plan, Iraq would be split into three parts including a Sunni state in the centre, a Shiite one in the south and a Kurdish one in the north. 2) *The Confederative Model*: According to this scenario, there would be a Shiite, a Kurdish, a Sunni and although a weak possibility, a Turkoman autonomous region. 3) *The Participatory Model*: According to this model, the Shiite part would be attached to Iran and the Turkoman and Kurd-intense parts would be attached to Turkey. 4) *The Reconstruction Model*: According to this model, Iraq would rebuild its political integrity around a powerful centre. In the framework of this model, the territorial integrity of Iraq would not be demolished but the centre would provide some rights for the peripheral regions.

²⁸Cf. B. Aras, "Turkish-Israeli-Iranian Relations in the Nineties: Impact on the Middle East", *Middle East Policy Journal*, Vol. 7 (3), 2000. http://www.mepc.org/journal/0006_aras.htm

through a discourse that has a religious context and that symbolises being both anti-Saddam and anti-US. However, Iran is not an accepted model and liberator for the Iraqi Shiites, as it did not support the Shiite based riot headed by a local Ayatollah in Iraq in 1992 after the defeat of Saddam. The reason for Iran's decline support was originated from Iran's principle that religious movements should not be supported if they do not recognise Iran's spiritual authority. But a new important trend rising in the Iranian foreign policy that separatist movements in general should not be supported. Since Iran has a multi-ethnic structure, it is increasingly difficult for Iran to develop a wholly independent policy from its domestic constraints, supporting the separatist movements in its neighbourhood.

Iran, living in fear due to the political choices of its Azeri minority in the future, pursues an almost paradoxical policy regarding the separatist movements. For example, during the Chechen-Russian conflict, Iran suffered between its traditional revolutionary foreign policy and the *realpolitik*. The minister of foreign affairs of Iran, Kemal Harazzi, said in a statement on 26 January 2000 to the Russian deputy foreign minister that the situation in Chechnya is "unacceptable".²⁹ In fact, the situation in Chechnya was an event that Iran should interfere in since there was a religious purging, but as stated above, Iran approached the event with care due to its special situation.³⁰

Another country that would be bothered by the disintegration of Iraq is Syria. After a break of twenty years, Iraq and Syria formed diplomatic relations again in 1999. As late as the end of December 1999, Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammed Saeed al-Sahaf informed the Iraqi parliament that Syria and Iraq had

²⁹IRNA, 26 January 1998.

³⁰It is important to point out here that the foreign policy of Iran suffers from a kind of "duality". In line with the same policy, Iran approaches many issues with a two dimensional approach. The first dimension is the "official" approach while the second one still continues to be the "revolutionary" one that favours approaching the events from the traditional religious-revolutionary point of view. For example, during the 1992 events in Tajikistan, Iran suffered from the same dichotomy and while the official approach tried to draw a neutral way, the traditional approach did not avoid various activities including the provision of aid.

agreed to resume diplomatic relations.³¹ A bureau was founded in the Algerian Embassy to follow the Iraqi issues. However, an important result of this rapprochement might be that the two countries will draw nearer to Russia. As a matter of fact, the common denominator for the Russia-Iraq-Syria triangle would be the limitation of the Turkish influence regarding Iraq. The same three countries have the similar attitudes towards Turkey regarding the "Kurdish Issue". On the other hand, Syria would also oppose to every development that would increase the Israeli influence.

When one looks at the issue from Turkey's point of view, it is clear that the main problem for Turkey is the possibility of the rise of a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq after the disintegration of Iraq. The policy pursued by Turkey towards Iraq may be summarized as the continuity of the territorial integrity of Iraq, and opposition to disintegration projects, especially hindering the rise of an autonomous Kurdish state.³² As a result, Turkey did not hesitate to react harshly when necessary. Especially in the US based Northern Iraq process, which started in 1992, Turkey has found it necessary to oppose the federative model proposed by the Washington agreement. Two driving forces that promote Turkey's rejection of the said proposals are the Kurds living within the Turkish territory and the important problems Turkey face in the regions where the Kurds are densely populated. The *de jure* disintegration of Iraq and as a result, the birth of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq can create a large attractive force that might be effective over the southeastern part of Turkey. On the other hand, "the controlled division theory", put forth by some circles, is an important point of view that should be dealt with here. According to this view, the US supports some formations in Iraq within the framework of the medium scale Middle East policy. As a result, the US has the intention of not overthrowing the government of Saddam for a while in order to gain time for the rise of the consequences that it

³¹Dore Gold, "The End of the Post-Gulf War Era", *Jerusalem Letter/Wiewpoints*, No. 426, 15 March 2000, at: [<http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp426.htm>]. Also see F. Farhi, "Post-OIC Honeymoon in Iran-Arab Relations", *Iran Today; Economic Magazine*, No. 20, April-May 1998, pp. 62-63.

³²Gökhan Bacık, "The Limits of Alliance: Turkish-Israeli Relations Revisited", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 23 (3), Summer 2001, p. 55.

desires in northern Iraq and in Iraqi territory.³³ As a matter of fact, with the break up of the Saddam regime, the oppositional front could create a situation that would realise a countrywide compromise in Iraq. Today, the most important national and international source of legitimacy of the oppositional entities, primarily that of the northern Iraq, is the Saddam regime. Turkey opposes to the disintegration of Iraq due to similar reasons. On the other hand, Turkey would not allow the disintegration of Iraq within the context of the rise of a "Kurdish State" and also an increase in the influence of another state, say, Iran, in the region.

Another crucial issue for Turkey is the situation of Turkomans. Although Turkey is one of the actors that affect the process in northern Iraq, Turkomans have been excluded from the process since the beginning of the Washington meetings. Turkomans, different from the Kurds, did not take an active part in the process and no effort was spent to protect their rights with respect to certain arrangements and activities that were not in their favour.³⁴ Turkoman officials, voicing their demands through various statements during the repetitive visits paid to and meetings attended in Ankara by Kurdish leaders, have been ignored in a sense. Massoud Barzani overtly rejected the Turkomans, who declared that they demanded equal representation and political rights before the Barzani-Talabani meeting in Ankara in November 1998.³⁵ From Turkomans' point of view, Massoud Barzani considers them a minority and treats them in a way similar to the one found in Baghdad regime. As a matter of fact, some Turkish papers claimed that Barzani gave "evasive" answers to questions on the Turkoman issue.³⁶ Barzani had also expressly stated in an interview to *El-Hayat* newspaper that Ankara politically manipulated the Turkoman problem to increase its influence in the region.³⁷ However, Ankara kept on not inviting the Iraqi

³³H. Arslan, "Rusya ve Irak" (Russia and Iraq), *Yeni Şafak*, 10 November, 1998.

³⁴Ferai Tınç, "Türkiye'nin Kuzey Irak Politikası Nedir?" (What is Turkey's Northern Iraq Policy?), *Hürriyet*, 2 October 1998.

³⁵*Türkiye*, 7 November 1998.

³⁶*Zaman*, 8 November 1998.

³⁷[http://www.kdp.pp.se/press/pres16_9.html]. Massoud Barzani stressed in the same interview that relations with Turkey should only be perceived as the struggle against the common enemy; the PKK.

Turkoman Party to meetings in the same period. According a news-interpretation of the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, Turkey has shifted its policy of supporting Turkomans. In this regard, disturbed by the Washington agreement, Turkey revised its policy of extension of support to Turkomans a policy not accepted by the KDP as well.³⁸

However, following the last US campaign, after cases of detention and suppression occurred around Kirkuk, Turkomans directed their complaints to the US and Turkey again. The Turkoman Front demanded a more active solution stating that Turkey wrongfully fixed its overall Northern Iraq policy with PKK in mind and therefore considered close relations with KDP the only way.³⁹ Relevant officials in Ankara claimed that Turkey should never break up ties with Turkomans, speaking in reply to the criticisms with respect to Turkomans. Washington also delivered likewise statements and remarked that it maintained equal distance to all parties in Northern Iraq.⁴⁰ Mustafa Ziya of the Turkoman Front expressed that they were not informed of the publications regarding the preparation by Ankara of a plan including 12 articles aimed at solving the problems of the Turkomans.⁴¹ Speaking to *Turkish Probe*, the Turkomanli Party Chairman Riyaz Sarikahya ask Turkey and the other interested parties to oversee Turcoman interests as much as they do for the Kurds.⁴²

It becomes obvious that Turkomans were excluded from the Northern Iraq process that had its reflections in the international arena. They did not possess any comprehensive place either within the alternative processes that Turkey was trying to establish. As seen in certain criticisms, the fact, as asserted by Turkomans themselves, that they were "neglected" has its roots in Turkey's approach towards the region. Lest it yields a Kurdish state, the US policy is interpreted in a Saddam-oriented way by Turkey. As such, Turkey unwaveringly makes Iraq's territorial integrity topical issue, and extends diplomatic support to an Iraq which has been

³⁸*Cumhuriyet*, 11 November 1998.

³⁹Semih İdiz, "Türkmen Cephesinde Son Durum", *Star*, 22 July 2000.

⁴⁰*Zaman*, 24 January 1999.

⁴¹*Zaman* 15 February 1999.

⁴²*Turkish Probe*, 24 January 1999. pp. 12-13.

losing partners. As a result, Turkey's *de facto* policy with respect to Iraq's territorial integrity contradicts its support for Turkomans to have the same rights as an equal party within a process where federative solutions are being discussed. Yet, excluding Turkomans from the process together with other groups in the region in a political formation that will receive international support in a country where a central authority that has lost all its effectiveness is being experienced might bear adverse effects for Turkey in the long run. The applicability of an Iraqi model that is strongly emphasised by Turkomans recently, which is composed of states with equal legal status, depends on the approval of the international actors. A "disintegrated Iraq" shall also leave the Turkoman problem to Turkey to deal with within the package called "Integration with Turkey".

The US policies hitherto in effect have come to produce a *fait accompli* as regards the countries in the region. It seems that instead of obtaining the full support of the countries in the region such as Turkey, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, the said countries are requested to comply with the decisions made in Washington. Undoubtedly, such an approach does give political and economic harm to these countries. In addition, due again to the US-centred policies, the Northern Iraq problem remains insolvable as long as the Saddam Hussein regime stays in power. How a tie of loyalty shall be set up from the periphery to the centre while territorial integrity of Iraq, an issue so insistently stressed by the neighbouring countries, is maintained, lies before us as a significant future problem. However, the existence of the Saddam Hussein regime that brings the matter to a paradoxical point is far from stopping the process that is claimed to proceed towards 'becoming a state' in the formal sense, or towards any other one howsoever called.⁴³

6. The Meaning of the Sanctions for the Iraqi Society

The US implements an exclusionist policy towards Iraq through the application of economic and political sanctions. Among the objectives of the sanctions are the destruction of

⁴³M. M. Gunter, *The Kurdish Predicament in Iraq: A Political Analysis*, London, Macmillan Press, 1999, p. 136.

Saddam Hussein's regime through weakening it and preventing Iraq from manufacturing chemical and nuclear weapons. Yet, taking into consideration the existing conditions, one sees that there is a diversion from the original objectives of the sanctions.

Generally, sanctions are aimed at excluding the government of a certain country from international recognition and advantages that it carries with. Nevertheless, it is the innocent people who suffer from sanctions. Same is also true for Iraq.

The humanitarian losses caused in Iraq by the US sanctions are increasing each day. In an article published in the *Foreign Affairs* magazine, Karl Mueller claims that the economic sanctions shall cause as many damages and losses of lives as those throughout the Cold War era. The annual death rate arising out of insufficient medication and nutrition with respect to children under 5 years old amounts approximately to 40.000.⁴⁴ More importantly, as stated by Dennis Halliday, the sanctions prevent Iraq from restructuring itself in terms of culture and education, and result in the occurrence of social and structural problems that are not likely to be solved in the long-run.⁴⁵

In this sense the US-forced sanctions have gone bankrupt in terms of its results. According to the "Situational Analysis on Iraqi Women and Children" issued by UNICEF in 1997, problems such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and malnutrition have extensively increased. There have also been extreme rises in the death rates with respect to children under five years of age.⁴⁶ The US government keeps stating that it is Saddam Hussein, not the US government, that is responsible for these deaths. According to a statement by Madeleine Albright, the former US Secretary of State,

⁴⁴K. Mueller, "Sanctions of Mass Destruction", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78 (3), 1999, pp. 43-54.

⁴⁵D. Halliday, "Sanctions Have an Impact on All of Us", *Middle East Report*, Winter 1998, p. 3.

⁴⁶For certain adverse effects of the sanctions, see, G. Simons, *The Scourging of Iraq: Sanctions, Law and Natural Justice*, London, St. Martin Press, 1998, pp. 122-135.

accusations regarding US on these grounds are nonsense.⁴⁷ But, one must not forget that as long as the sanctions aimed at keeping Saddam away from power are not successful, the US will get most of the blame in this regard.⁴⁸ As a matter of fact, in a statement, Noam Chomsky did not refrain from defining the sanctions as a file of crimes.⁴⁹ Therefore, in a sense, the US seems to have lost the 'propaganda war' that it waged against Iraq. The humanitarian problems caused by the sanctions results in Iraq's receiving the sympathy of many other countries.⁵⁰ The situation in Iraq has come to affect the reputation of the US.⁵¹ Each New Year's Speech delivered by the US President since the Gulf War, has been received as a psychological victory in favour of Iraq, argued Jim Hoagland.⁵² Moreover, the Saddam administration is gaining power both inside and outside of Iraq because of the sanctions.

When taken into account the reports including humanitarian matters issued by such international organisations as UNICEF and FAO, it is seen that the situation in Iraq is going worse by the day, and the sanctions are not serving in any way to change the government in Iraq. Recently, Iraq has formed a new foreign policy approach. This approach sets sight at improving bilateral relations with other countries at international platforms other than

⁴⁷For a view considering the troubles suffered by Iraqi people as a result of Saddam Hussein's policies, see, S. K. Aburish, *Saddam Hussein: The Politics of Revenge*, London, Bloomsbury Press, 2000, pp. 346-365.

⁴⁸G. Gause, "Getting It Backward on Iraq", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78 (3), 1999, p.54.

⁴⁹See Naom Chomsky, "Bombing Iraq - A Response", at:[<http://www.fas.org/news/iraq/1998/12/21/981221-nc.htm>], 21 December 1998; "The US and War Crimes in the Middle East", *Middle East Realities*, January 1999, at: [http://www.middleeast.org/archives/1999_01_03.htm]; Noam Chomsky, Edward Herman, Edward Said and Howard Zinn, "A Call to Action on Sanctions and the US War Against the People of Iraq", at: [<http://www.zmag.org/chomsky/other/990108-iraq-call.htm>].

⁵⁰R. N. Haas, "Containing Saddam", *Washington Times*, 10 November 1998.

⁵¹W. Strobel, T. Omestad, "The US Strategy to Hammer Saddam", *US News & World Report*, Vol. 125 (20), 1998, p.18.

⁵²J. Hoagland, "Saddam's Staying Power", *The Washington Post*, 2 March 2000.

those such as the UN. As a matter of fact, the free trade agreement signed between Egypt and Iraq in January 2001 proves the functioning of the new policy.⁵³ Iraq thereby plans to escape from being surrounded and isolated with the support from the countries with which relations have been improved, and in addition, to get rid of the economic bottleneck with the help of the similar new relations. The most important means that allows Iraq to pursue such a policy is the oil that UN allowed Iraq to export. In essence, Iraq tries to establish economic relations with different second countries through the proceeds of oil sales. Other countries desiring to invest in communications and construction sectors in Iraq are also improving their relations with Iraq. The new foreign policy of Iraq is by no means a unilateral one, which receives positive reactions from many countries. Thus, the Iraqi government has established relations with countries ranging from certain European countries to regional Arab states. Seen from this perspective, one must argue that the US-forced sanctions are not producing desired affects.

7. The Risky Policies of the US

An important cornerstone of the political discourse employed by the US towards the Middle East was the recently abandoned 'rogue state' concept. Stephen Zunes defines these states as "countries that have significant military power, that spend efforts to improve this yet, and that do not tend to accept international norms".⁵⁴ Anthony Lakes, a former national security adviser to US government said in a speech that "our policy must somehow confront not only those countries isolating themselves from the international community but also those trying to destroy the core values that this community relies on."⁵⁵ As it is clear in the above lines, although the concept of the 'rogue state' was abandoned, this did not change the general tendency towards calling some states as 'rogue state'.

⁵³"Egypt and Iraq Sign Free Trade Agreement", *IRNA*, 18 January 2001.

⁵⁴Zunes, *The Function of Rouge States*.

⁵⁵Anthony Lake, "Confronting Backlash States", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73 (2), March-April 1994, pp. 45-46.

The US policy towards these countries is constructed on certain grounds. According to Zunes, the bases on which the US policy regarding these countries are as follows:⁵⁶

- Pursuing the thesis that economic, social and security-related problems in allied countries have foreign origins.
- Insisting always on military solutions even if the problems result from economic and social reasons.
- Pursuing the idea that terrorism is the greatest danger instead of dealing with the social and economic problems that give way to it.
- Employing the threat of nuclear, chemical and mass destruction weapons as a policy means.

US policy toward the Gulf has been employed in line with the views similar to the doctrine summed above.⁵⁷ For that reason, one of the main problems of the US policies is that they adopt a unilateral view. For instance, as maintained by the traditional American view of the issue, Iran, which is expected to create potential threats with respect to the flow of oil, is defined as a country that is the potential creator of threats. However, as stated by Saif Abbas Abdullah, a Kuwaiti scientist, not any single Iranian soldier has taken part in any military campaign in this sense. Similarly, a former Kuwaiti parliamentarian, Hasan Cevher did not avoid stating that the *Iranophobia* originates from "ideological and political" reasons.⁵⁸ Still on the same ground, when dealing with the grounds of the US policies toward the Gulf, Fareed Zakaria, the editor of the *Foreign Affairs* magazine, argued that "if there hadn't been a Saddam Hussein alive, we would have to find one".⁵⁹ This lays out the fact that US policy toward the region has been produced within generalised formulas, interpretations, and views

⁵⁶Zunes, *The Function of Rouge States*.

⁵⁷For the critical consideration of the US policy toward Iraq, see, A. Tarzi, "Contradictions in US Policy on Iraq and Consequences", *Middle East Review of International Relations*, Vol. 4 (1), 2000.

⁵⁸Cf. A. Al-Shayehji, "Dangerous Perceptions: Gulf Views of the US in the Region", *Middle East Policy Journal*, Vol. 5 (3), November, 1997.

⁵⁹Cited in, *ibid*.

neglecting many points. Another formula produced out of a unilateral approach is the laws regarding sanctions. Therefore, after the US prevented its firms from trading with countries like Iran, European firms rapidly filled the space. It would otherwise be very difficult to explain the logic of economic sanctions in a global world.⁶⁰

The US allocated some US\$ 97 million from its budget to officially organise and extend material help to the opposition in Iraq. The decision held by the US about allocating resource within the framework of a new plan in order to overthrow the government of Saddam in Iraq gave a new dimension to the developments. On 31 November 1998, former US President Bill Clinton ratified an act called "Iraq Liberation Act" including a US\$ 97 million aid to the opposition in Iraq.⁶¹ As contemplated by Article 3 of the act, the US policy aims at removing Saddam Hussein from power. Still according to the act, the aid shall be utilised to purchase means of propaganda, weapons, and other materials.⁶² However, there are rumours that the aid provided has been used ineffectively. In any case, when one looks into the political ideologies of the organisations chosen to receive aid, it is obvious that such aid would not yield remarkable results. Meanwhile, regional countries including Turkey had doubts over the US aid policy and followed closely how it was implemented. Kurdish leaders on the other hand surprisingly declared that they were in favour of overthrowing Saddam Hussein, but this had to be initiated by an internal movement rather than by an arrangement of external origin.⁶³

⁶⁰For the adverse effects of the US sanctions on US commercial interests, Cf. R. N. Haas, "Hearing on the Use and Effect of Unilateral Trade Sanctions", *Speech Delivered to the US House of Representatives Commerce Subcommittee*, 27 May 1999.

⁶¹Seven organisations, that would use the aid as per the said act, chosen from among the eighty others on 16 January 1999, are as follows: Iraqi National Congress, Kurdistan Islamic Movement, Constitutional Legitimacy Movement, The High Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). For the full text of the act ratified by President Clinton indicating all of the seven organisations see, [<http://www.usembassy.org.uk/midest100.html>] and also [www.senate.gov/legislative/index.html].

⁶²[<http://www.medeia.be/en/index394.htm>].

⁶³*Radikal*, 10 February 1999.

According to Talabani, it might be improper to overthrow Saddam before building democracy. He also stated that they could accept an unconditioned US aid, but if there were any conditions, they would be carefully analysed.⁶⁴ Speaking to *el-Hayat* newspaper, Massoud Barzani said that plans to overthrow Saddam Hussein as such were not feasible and applicable, and added interestingly, that "they could give US\$ 10 million if it would help".⁶⁵ Other conflicting statements followed. For example, shortly after US Deputy Secretary of the State Martin Indyk had stated that Saddam Hussein government might end soon, Massoud Barzani expressed that they were open to political dialogue with the Baghdad government, making matters difficult for the US. Massoud Barzani later on told that they would not allow those movements to overthrow the Baghdad government to have bases in their territory.⁶⁶ The reluctance of the Kurdish groups to disturb the Saddam regime in this way emanates from their fear to do so and from the fact that the rapid flow could cause undesirable results for them.

Richard K. Hermann points to an important side of the matter in an article he authored in the early nineties. According to Hermann, the US was supposed to conduct its policies on a political rather than military ground if it aimed to survive in the Middle East and to guide the course of the events. To Hermann, US efforts to survive in the region, depending on the existing grounds, were like the efforts by the USSR to maintain power through military means in Eastern Europe. Therefore, the US should develop a kind of 'positive' relationship model with Middle Eastern countries.⁶⁷

⁶⁴"An Interview with Jalal Talabani", at:[<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saddam/interviews/talabani.html>]. Also see, ADC's Foreign Policy Symposium, "What Next: Towards a Responsible Iraq Policy", American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, at:[<http://www.adc.org/Symposium/transcript99.htm>].

⁶⁵For the full English text of the interview published in *Al Hayat* newspaper on 15 September 1998, see: [http://www.kdp.pp.se/press16_9.html].

⁶⁶See, "Interview: An Unlikely Ally Against Saddam", *Christian Science Monitor*, 16 December 1999, Vol. 91 (55), p. 56.

⁶⁷R. K. Hermann, "The Middle East and the New World Order", *International Security*, Vol. 16 (2), 1991, p.43.

Then comes the issue of the prospective developments in the relations of Iraq with the US during the presidency of George Walker Bush, the son of George Bush who was the US president during the Gulf War. As reported by *The Telegraph*, the Iraqi deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz gave the signals of a dialogue with the new government in the US.⁶⁸ Shall we expect a turning point in the US policy towards Iraq with the new government? Though one can argue that, after Clinton administration, we might see a much more introverted US foreign policy with the Bush administration, it is not clear yet where this foreign policy will lead the US in the Middle East. Steven Mufson reports in the *Washington Post* that Bush accused Clinton of intervening for humanitarian purposes and 'nation building' in places where there was no clear US national interest, whereas the same person reported Colin L. Powell, the new secretary of state, saying that the US has interest in every place of this earth.⁶⁹

8. Conclusion

It is for sure that the future of Iraq shall neither be like its past nor the *status quo*. Assuming that a change is inevitable, it will be proper to define the future of Iraq by using political, regional/foreign and social parameters.

As such, there are two different centres producing power and decisions with respect to the future of Iraq: These are first of all regional and foreign centres of power such as the US, Turkey and Iran. Secondly, there are the domestic political power centres having a certain form of relationship with the foreign ones. Yet, the two different power centres do not totally cohere. There are certain conflicts and disharmonies within this power relation model. At this point, it is the social structure of the country that will determine how the definitive configuration originating from both internal and external sources will be shaped in the future, or, more importantly what kind of an Iraq this configuration will form. Because, all internal and external developments regarding the country shall in

⁶⁸A. La Guardia, "Iraq sends mixed signals to Bush.", *The Telegraph*, 17 January 2001.

⁶⁹S. Mufson, "Powell Vows Activism in Foreign Relations", *Washington Post*, 18 January, 2001.

the long run be interpreted and construed within the Iraqi social structure. For instance, a political model produced by some centres of US origin that envisages an Iraq close to the US in the post-Saddam Hussein era shall not be readily accepted by the Iraqi social structure. In the same vein, domestic and foreign political factors intending to realise the Sunni-Shiite split in the country shall not be able to adopt a preventive or problem-solving role with respect to a potential clash of religious origin.

In conclusion, the future of Iraq obviously envisages a change model. The ultimate definitive factor of the model shall be the dynamic elements that make up the social structure of Iraq. Perceptions of identity and belonging regarding these elements shall form the new Iraqi political structure.