

The US-Iraqi Relations 1945-2003

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Abstract

This paper aims to elaborate the US-Iraqi relations through out the course of their relations. It also attempts to analyze the historical relations between the two countries according to the regional events that happened in the past. Besides, it explains why the US-Iraq relations had gone under difficult times in detail. It contributes to the political factors that have direct influence on the US-Iraqi relations.

Keywords: US-Iraqi Relations

Scope

Analysis of the variety of sources

The analysis of scholarly journals from the perspective of Iraq, Middle Eastern and Western, aims at the greater understanding of the subject matter. The reader, however, should bear in mind that the analysis is limited to the regional security dynamics in the Middle East, and excludes the important questions of the economic and social dimensions of the historical relations of US-Iraq, and its consequences in the other parts of the world. The field of Iraqi Nuclear threat is being closely tied to the international security, mainly the US and West.

Background of the Study

The main aim of writing this paper is to establish a framework for understanding the US-Iraqi relations. Accordingly, in this paper the historical relations between the two countries have been explained in detail. Hence, the first part of the paper starts by discussing the US-Iraqi relations during 1945-2003 and it gives the reasons behind the restoration of relations on one hand, and deterioration of relations on the other hand. Additionally, during this period of time more than four presidents ruled Iraq and each of them had different policy towards the United States and the West. Therefore, the United States had also different policies towards Iraq in return.

Not surprisingly, the most significant period in which the US-Iraqi relations reached its peak was during Saddam Hussein's presidency, because the U.S. was the key factor in removing Iraqi Prime Minister Ahmad Hassan Al-Bakr, as Al-Bakr knew that the U.S.A is against Pan-Arab ideology in the region and Baker turned against the U.S.

Furthermore, in this paper the role of the U.S. as key player in the Middle East is explained, due to the fact that Iraqi-US relations is being affected by all events that happened in the region. Eventually, the U.S. had armed Iraq and had given Iraq the chemical and other military assistances. Last part of this paper is dealing with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the United States' use of force against it's ally. Basically, the US-Iraqi relations had deteriorated because of invasion of Kuwait and Saddam Hussein's refusal to comply with the UNSC regulations and international community.

The US-Iraqi relations during 1945-1979

The history of the US-Iraq relations had been going on for many decades prior to the 1940s, accordingly during the World War II Iraq had good ties with the Western powers and "on March 5, 1945 Iraq was invited to the conferences of the international organizations (San Francisco Conference) by the United States, the United Kingdom, the U.S.S.R and China" (Abid, 1961:101). No doubt that this was crucial for Iraq, because it was the only Arab country in the conferences.

According to a report published by the U.S Department of States the Office of the historian “it declared that in the early 1950s, the United States Government expressed an interest in the formation of a Middle East Command to protect the region against communist encroachment” as Soviet Union was willing to influence the Middle East and this was against the interest of the United States; therefore, the U.S. wanted to prevent this from happening. Furthermore, “in 1955 Iraq has signed a pact with Turkey, Iran, and the United Kingdom, Pakistan, forming the so-called Bagdad Pact, but after the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958, the Iraqi Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kassim declared that Iraq would reconsider its membership” (Abid, 1961:90) the so-called Bagdad Pact was a Union between, Iraq, the UK, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey; its main aim was to prevent the Communist influence over the Middle East and to maintain collective security and defense for the region and its member states.

“The aim of the Baghdad Pact was to get as many Arab countries as possible to join it, but it failed with even the only Arab country (Iraq) leaving it in 1959” (Ahmad, 2008:1) interestingly, Nuri al-Sa’id was a significant leader in Iraqi history, and he had been a prominent figure during Hashemite monarchy. Also, he had been Iraqi Prime Minister many times during his life, his pro-Western attitude during the pact has brought Iraq closer to the West due to this close relationship with the West Iraq has faced difficult situation as some Arab countries have refused to become member in the pact owing to the reason that many Arab counties were against the Western imperialisms. Unfortunately, Iraq could not get support from Arab counties but from the West this was inevitable and Arab leaders for joining the pact in favor of the Western powers harshly criticized Nuri Al-Sa’id.

Although, the United States could not join the pact and preferred to be observer and support the pact from any external threat, the Americans had enormous influence over the Middle East and also had prevented Soviet Union to spread their communist ideology through the region. Furthermore, the other members of the pact also had backed U.S.; for instance: “on 21 January 1957, the governments of Iran, Turkey, Pakistan and Iraq expressed their support for the U.S. joint congressional resolution (known as the Eisenhower Doctrine) whereby the President was authorized to employ American forces to protect the independence and integrity of any nation in the Middle East requesting such aid against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism.” (Mahmoud, 1977: 1).

The U.S. declared that it would support these counties against any attack or armed aggression by the Soviet Union and any other powers. But, this mutual cooperation between the pact members and Iraq, on the one hand, and the U.S. on the other hand, did not last for long time as Iraq announced its withdrawal from the pact. The withdrawal from the pact has shown that the Iraqi Prime Minister Kassim was working in favor of Arab nationality and was less pro-Western than King Faisal II (“Faisal the second was a pro-Western young king who succeeded his father when he was three years old, he came to power in 1939 and was over thrown in the 1958 coup lead by Kassim” (William, 2008); this shift has put great pressure and risk on the U.S.-Iraqi relations on one side and other Western countries on the other side.

As a result of this the U.S. - Iranian relations have improved, as the main aim of the U.S. being to weaken Iraq by supporting Iran. Moreover, “the main intension of Kassim was to terminate relations with the West and U.S. especially, and directly after the withdrawal of the Pact Kassim denounced that his government decided to dissociate itself from the Eisenhower Doctrine in the Middle East, by this Kassim wanted to end all relations with the U.S. which had been signed before his era. “A note to this effect was sent to the American embassy in Iraq on 30 May 1959, terminating the U.S-Iraq military assistance agreement of 1954, a supplementary agreement of 1955 and an economic assistance agreement of 1957” (Mahboob, 1994, 105)

Nevertheless, Kassim’s attitude towards the Western powers had put pressure on them particularly the U.S. Owing to Kassim’s rule the U.S. during that period had lost the most fertile land in the Middle East. Moreover, Kassim had banned relations with the U.S. and the West, also he had created good relations with the Soviet Union the rival of the U.S. during that time, because Kassim’s foreign policy was “positive neutrality” according to this policy Kassim wanted to restore relations with the Soviet Union and keep relations with the West as well, hence “in July 1958 Kassim immediately restored diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and in the same year started to purchase Soviet arms, Kassim’s friendly attitude made the Soviet Union to welcome the revolution in Iraq as a tremendous blow to British-US interests in the Middle East”. (Haim, 1992:3-4).

It can be argued that during Kassim’s rule the U.S. - Iraqi relations were strained and deteriorated. Additionally, another key factor for this was the attitude of the U.S. towards the independence of Kuwait, which has made Kassim to react in such a way, “as the U.S. supported Kuwait’s independence, therefore; Iraq asked the United States ambassador in Iraq Johan D.Jernegan, on June 1962 to leave the country,” (Mahboob, 1994, 105)

The tension between Kassim and the US continued for a while though during that period the west and the U.S. needed Iraq's energy support, but Kassim made this impossible as the Second World War brought enormous damage to the West. The West, therefore; needed Iraq because of oil and this time the situation was critical for the West, which was in period of reconstruction. This explains why the importance of the Middle East was taken into consideration. "The reason was not because Middle East was oil producer but besides, the other attraction in the region was that the Middle East oil was not only an oil rich area, but the oil produced there was much cheaper than anywhere else" (Mahboob, 1994:145)

The relations with Iraq have fully dominated the American foreign policy consideration for the past decades. As, the United States has a long history of relations with this nation. And, the U.S. was always interested in the Middle East especially after the World War II because of oil. Therefore, such economical interests require political hegemony as the U.S. decisions have demonstrated in the current and past decades. That is why "The United States acted forcefully in the postwar era to consolidate control over Middle Eastern states" (Robert, 2002, 1) For years, The United States had good relations with the Iraqi government before the first Gulf crisis broke out. The U.S. has mostly supported the Baath party to come to power.

Inevitably, the United States was an instrumental factor in bringing the Baath Party to power in Iraq and it has assisted a coup against the government of Iraq that was headed by General Abdul Karim Kassim, All these acts of Kassim were considered against the United States destiny, therefore; the U.S has tried to find someone to overthrow Kassim, as he did not have friendly relations with the US. Then "the assassination was set for Oct, 7, 1959, in this activity Saddam who was 22 years old that time has taken part in it. But, this activity was not successful as Kassim was only wounded and rescued from the organized assassination by the CIA" (Sale.2003)

Accordingly, in that coup the Baathist used lists of people provided by the U.S to conduct bloodshed, systematically murdering incredible number of "Iraqi educated elites including doctors, teachers, technicians, lawyers and many other professionals beside the military and political figures" (Marianne, 2005: 2). But, life of Kassim was always at risk that is why in February 1963 Kassim was killed in a Baath Party coup, as the CIA was behind the coup to end Kassim's era. Since, he was anti- western leader and this was not suitable during his time, therefore; he has ended his rule by giving his life and he was assassinated with the support of the United States. Kassim's rule had ended with his death, and "his selected follower was his right-hand man Abdul Salam Arif during 1958, despite of the fact that Arif was sentenced to death in 1959 due to his ideological reasons.

But, Kassim has pardoned him in late 1962 and by February 1963 Arif was leading the Baathist coup which ended Kassim's era" (Garrett, 2006, 1) Kassim's overthrow by the pro-west Baathists was welcomed by the west and the United States as this event was on their favor and western powers were waiting for this moment to open a new page of relations with Iraq. The new era of relations started during Arif's presidency as Iraq's new regime opened a new page of relations. On the other side the U.S. warmly welcomed Arif to power and in Washington the State Department spokesman "entertained assurance of new government to respect Iraq's international obligations and said that the traditional ties of friendship between the two counties would be expanded and strengthened" (Mahboob. 1994, 106) that is why during the 9 months period of Arif's presidency the Iraqi government showed a definite shift in their policy towards the U.S. and the west.

Although, "at the beginning of Arif's rule the relations between the U.S. and Iraq was warm, but this did not last for a long time as during the later period of his presidency he did not make any effort to improve relations with the United States" (Mahboob, 1994:107), its considerably important to mention the Arab-Israeli conflict which has affected the U.S.-Iraqi relations. "The United States supported Israel and Iraq, as Arab- majority country was in favor of Palestine. Consequently, this had frozen the U.S.-Iraqi relations again. Since, "the United States had provided Israel with military equipment via West Germany till 1965 but in February 1966 the U.S. directly sold arms to Israel. Lastly in June 1967 Iraq had broken off diplomatic relations with the United States, and Iraq cut off oil supplies to the U.S." (Mahboob, 1994:107).

The relations had shifted to another stratum and by the 1968 the relations had further deteriorated, even though the United States were hoping to have good relations with Arif and halt the effect of the Soviet Union over the Middle East. Indeed, this was difficult for the U.S. to achieve it because of Israel-Arab conflicts during that period; hence Iraqi President Arif had opened relations with the Soviet Union and made trade with them. The Soviet Union supported Arab leader to get the influence over the region, as Arab attitude was against Imperialism, and was in favor of the USSR.

Owing to the disagreement between Iraq and the U.S. over the Israel-Palestine crisis their relations were weakened and during the end of the sixties and beginning of the seventies the Oil crisis had started. Accordingly, the US-Iraqi relations have a very complex history, and it can be argued in both ways, both countries were in need for cooperation as Iraq was petroleum rich owner, but the U.S. also had good technology, and in the oil industry this was important for both sides. Thus, at the beginning of seventies the economic relations improved as the U.S. had taken into consideration the issues that had offended the Arab leaders.

In 1966 Salam Arif the leader of the new Baathist government died in a helicopter crash and he could not accomplish what he had desired to establish Arab unity in the region. "After his death his brother, Abdul Rahman Arif who was not a Baathist assumed the presidency" (Roger, 2007:1). In 1967 the government of Iraq was near to give the concessions for the development of huge new oil fields in the country to France and the USSR. At that time the U.S. former secretary of the treasury Robert Anderson under president Dwight D.Eisenhower, had secretly met with the Baath Party leaders and come to an agreement in which both of the oil field concessions and sulphur mined in the northern part of the country would go to the US companies on one condition: that the Baath would again take over power. (Said, (1995-2008:1)

Additionally, in 1968 the United States had supported another coup that entirely handed the Baath party such power; the president of the government was Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr from the Baath party. Nevertheless, the U.S.-Iraqi relations had been going on for many years; the US leaders had good relations with the Baath party in Iraq. Although, United States tried to warm-up its relations with Iraq, but unfortunately the Baath party had lost trust in the U.S. when they saw that the U.S. was again-assisting Israel against the Arab nations. By coincidence, Iraq as Arab-majority country had taken first step to oppose the U.S. relations, as it was clear that the United States leaders were willing to disunite the Arab nations in the Middle East.

Furthermore, the Iraqi government did not stop by exploiting its relations with the U.S. but, it had tried to weaken and disregard the other Arab countries which contributed to assist the U.S. for instance in 1979 when Egypt had signed a peace treaty with Israel, at the same time Iraq succeeded in getting the members of the League of Arab states to vote for the expulsion of Egypt from the organization till 1989 (country study: 1990, via interpretation) Bakr's anti-Western attitude brought Iraq closer to the Soviet Union, therefore "in early August 1968 Bakr proclaimed that the Soviet Union occupied "the first place" in Iraqi's foreign policy" (Haim, 1992:24). Additionally, the Israel-Palestine conflict had always been an obstacle, which had frozen the US-Iraqi relations for all their history of relations since the time that Israel had been established as an independent country in the region between Arab and Muslim communities.

The fact that the U.S. had the upper hand in establishing Israel and recognized it as an independent state in the Middle East that had become the turning point in the US-Iraqi relations because of the nationalistic feelings among Arab counties. In spite of the fact that the U.S. had always been interested in being involved in the Middle Eastern affairs, it has also created additional chaos, as the U.S. has also supported Israel, losing other allies in the region especially Iraq. The Soviet Union and United States had confronted each other over Middle East; the U.S. support for Israel had many drawbacks for the Americans; for instance Arab countries have agreed on oil embargo as they used oil as political means to weaken other states and powers. The Israel-Palestine dispute affected the U.S.-Iraqi relations negatively.

As a result of this Iraq turned to the Soviet Union and had signed many agreements with the USSR "the most important one being the (Iraqi-Soviet) Treaty of friendship and mutual cooperation with the Soviet Union in April 1972, referring to the second Article of the treaty which was about the Soviet Union support for Iraq in its battle to preserve independence in exploiting its oil wealth. Importantly, article 1 was also crucial as it mentioned that "respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in one another's internal affairs." Under the treaty, Iraq obtained extensive technical assistance and military equipment from the Soviet Union" (Mahboob, 1994, 253) This was, of course, not good for the United States because the U.S. did not want Iraq to cooperate with the USSR, while, this treaty was creating good relations and opened a new page of the Iraqi- Soviet relations

Another turning point in the U.S.-Iraqi relations can be found in the Iranian revolution, which affected Iraqi- U.S. relations when Ayatollah Khomeini came to power in Iran "in February 1979 as the head of the Islamic movement which has removed the Shah from power. The United States did not like this revolution therefore; it tried to support Iraq as Khomeini had different ideology than the one promoted by Washington. Moreover, Khomeini in an interview in Paris in 1978 named his enemies; "firstly, the Shah, then the American Satan, Saddam Hussein and his Baath party" (Geoff, 1994, 274)

And also, the Iranian revolution was a new threat for peace in the region, “because his aim was to start Shia resurgence in many counties which were governed by Sunni rulers including, Iraq and Bahrain” (Mahboob: 1994, 209) as it was believed that the United States in the Middle East had an important role, on the contrary, its role had two faces because it sometimes had supported Iran, but when tensions erupted between Iran and the U.S. it had supported Iraq. Through, this attitude the U.S. benefited from both sides.

As it was explained earlier in this paper, Iraq during Kassim’s presidency and Arif brothers’ rule did not have good relations with the U.S. a situation that made the U.S. support Iran for instance, when “Iran occupied three significant islands in the Gulf, on November 30, 1971 the three strategic islands, Abu- Musa, Great Tumb and lesser Tumb located near the strait of Hormuz in the Gulf” (Mahboob, 1994:211) the United States did not move a finger, although, Iraq protested strongly against Iran’s aggression. Nothing, however, changed due to the fact that Iraq had weak relations with the United States. But, the Iranian revolution had put pressure on the U.S. as well as Iraq therefore; as Iraq was afraid that the Islamic revolution of Iran would affect the Shiites of Iraq to react against Saddam. The U.S. was also afraid that the Khomeini would spread his ideology through out the Middle East.

Another important event that took place in the same year that Iran’s revolution occurred was “the national day, 17 July 1979 when Saddam Hussein declared himself as president of Iraq, and Bakr said to have resigned owing to his poor health” (Geoff, 1994:249) even though his poor health according to many people was not convincing factor, because Saddam Hussein had encouraged him to do so, to leave the way open for Saddam to come to power. Hussein disliked the regime of Ayatollahs, The tension between Saddam and Khomeini was going on for many years due to the unsolved dispute over their border that is why, when Iraq has invaded Iran the U.S. did not react but instead supported Saddam.

Meanwhile, Hussein received good support also from western allies especially the U.S. hence, Iran reacted and declared that the U.S. had been supporting Iraq all along; Iran reacted by sowing mines in the Gulf, and the U.S. has increased its warships in the Gulf region. Not only the U.S. but also other Western allies like France, and the UK have supported Hussein to win the victory. Thus, “by the late 1980s the US-Iraqi trade was worth billions of dollars, with dozens of the Fortune 500 companies involved, enabling Hussein to rapidly expand his industrial and military strength, which was created largely through the U.S. business ambitions” (Geoff, 1994,294)

In addition, “the Iranian revolution overthrew the U.S.’s loyal gendarme, the Shah. This, plus the Soviet Union’s invasion of nearby Afghanistan, shocked the U.S. rulers. They counter-attacked, and one front was encouraging Iraq to invade Iran. The U.S. goals: weakening both countries, limiting their ability to cause trouble for U.S. interests in the region, and creating openings for increased U.S. leverage, while building up the U.S.’s regional military presence” (Larry, 2002, 1) from a political perspective, both the U.S. and Iraq had common interests through their course of relations, whether it is diplomatic, economic, or political. Whatever interests were on the eve of the war with Iran, the U.S. had accomplished of purposeful relations with the Iraqi leader.

The US-Iraqi Relations during the 1980s

The US-Iraqi relations have undeniably faced many difficulties; owing to the fact that the U.S. in its external relation’s had a dual face both confrontation and cooperation like any other country. The 1980s brought the Iran-Iraq war in which the U.S. had backed Iraq but it had denied that it gave Iraq a green light on September 22, 1980 when Iraq invaded Iran. Although, the U.S. refused to admit giving Hussein green light there is real evidence which approves that the U.S. had backed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, because five months before the invasion “on April 1980, the U.S National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski had emphasized that the U.S. is willing to work with Iraq. As the Brzezinski had directly met with Saddam Hussein in Jordan two months before the Iraq assault”. (Larry, 2002:1)

As a matter of fact during eighties the U.S. showed that it would not oppose the separation of Khuzestan (in the southwest Iran) from Iran. According to former Iranian president Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr the aim of the meeting between Brzezinski and Saddam was to join efforts to oppose Iran. But other people claimed that Washington had encouraged Iraq to attack Iran. This was the reason why Hussein took it as green light because there was no explicit red light. (Larry, 2002:1)

Historically the United States played a leading role in Iraq-Iran war, due to the fact that Iranian-U.S relations at the beginning of the eighties were in tension because of the U.S diplomatic hostages held by Teheran since November of 1979. Besides, the American policy of "neutrality" toward the Iraq-Iran war, first adopted by the Carter Administration and supposedly continued by its successor” was confusing.

Although, the United States declared Neutrality policy in this war nevertheless, in favor of Iraq through out its whole duration as it had restored its relations with Iraq during the eighties. "Despite the Reagan Administration's best efforts, the provision of political, military and economic assistance by the United States, its NATO allies and Middle Eastern friends to Iraq proved insufficient to stem the tide of Iranian military advances" (Francis, 2009:1) the United States, therefore, wanted Iraq to be the victorious, because Iraqi defeat was not in the US interests, hence Reagan assumed that before this could happen he would have to take steps to prevent Hussein's defeat.

In addition to that the Reagan administration let other western allies to sell arms to Iraq. The mere thought that the radical Shiites would install in Iraq made the U.S. to assist Iraq in order to defeat Khomeini's regime. But, another risk, which Reagan Administration took it into consideration, was the possibility that the Soviet Union could get involved in order to defend Iran.

Because, according to the Russo-Persian treaty of February 26, 1921 between Soviet Union and Iran, Article 6 grants the right for the Soviet Union to deploy troops in Iran's territory if necessary for self defense, hence, the Reagan Administration needed to seek a way to restore diplomatic relations with Iran regardless of the hostage's crisis. This is why Reagan had to repudiate from Carter Administration's policy of neutrality towards the war. Most importantly Reagan called all states to terminate their military assistance to Iraq and demanded from both sides that "The dispute between Iraq and Iran over the Shatt al-Arab estuary should be submitted to the procedures for compulsory arbitration set forth in article 6 of the 1975 Iran-Iraq Treaty on International Borders and Good Neighborly Relations" (Francis, 2002:7)

The United State had provided Iraq with Chemical and Biological Weapons during Eighties

Paradoxically, United States leaders had played a significant role in arming Iraq and creating a dictatorship in the country. Whistle, there are many governmental documents and interviews with the former U.S policymakers who declared that the U.S. had its hand in many issues, which have been done by Iraqi regime. One of the inhuman acts of the Iraqi leader occurred during the Reagan and George.H, W. Bush administrations, when Iraq has received good support in military perspectives even including poisonous chemicals and deadly biological viruses like Anthrax, Bubonic plague, etc. the US continuous support made Saddam to be powerful and independent in his acts.

Hussein used chemical gas against his own home country population obviously on 16, March 1988 when he attacked a Kurdish city of "Halabja" in the northern part of Iraq "Kurdistan Region; the chemical gas killed more than 5000 people all civilians including women, children, and men as well. However, the U.S. publicly condemned Hussein's inhuman acts but it should not be forgotten that the Iraqi leader had learned war strategies and tactics from US advisers. In fact, the U.S. secretary of defense Frank C. Carlucci had acknowledged that what was provided to Iraq "was general order of battle information, not operational intelligence." And he said that "I certainly have no knowledge of U.S. participation in preparing battle and strike packages, Carlucci also emphasized that he did not like Iraq to lose the war, but he said that he had not anticipated that Iraq would use chemical weapons". (Patrick, 2002: 1)

Although, the United States publicly condemned Hussein for using chemical gas both against his own population and on the battlefields with Iran. It should be recalled that at the beginning of the eighties the U.S. had restored diplomatic ties with Iraq as Reagan decided to revise the U.S. policy towards the Middle East to ensure regional security. Accordingly, shifting the policy implementation in favor of Iraq was countering the Iranian interests in the region "By the summer of 1983 Iran had been reporting Iraqi use of using chemical weapons for some time. The Geneva protocol requires that the international community respond to chemical warfare, but a diplomatically isolated Iran received only a muted response to its complaints" (Joyce, 2003:1)

On the contrary, the U.S. did not prevent Hussein from perpetrating such bloody deeds because the western power was afraid that Iran's Islamic movement would succeed controlling the Gulf region. Thus, the outcome would negatively affect the U.S. interests in the region. In deed, Hussein's survival and victory were crucial for the U.S. "Saddam Hussein had been America's de facto ally in what would become a bloody eight-year war against Khomeini's Iran. The United States fed the conflagration, providing billion dollar loans, weapons and satellite intelligence that enabled the Iraqis to precisely target Iranian troops with chemical weapons" (Barry, 2007:1)

Indeed, the United States leaders had encouraged and enabled Hussein for defeating Iran since 1983 when President Reagan was afraid that Hussein might actually lose the war. "Reagan chose Rumsfeld as his emissary to Hussein, whom he visited in December 1983 and March 1984. Inconveniently, Iraq had begun to use chemical weapons against Iran in November 1983, the first sustained use of poison gas since a 1925 treaty banning that". (Peter, 2006:1) but, unfortunately, Rumsfeld, Reagan, and Bush, had never discussed with Hussein that he was violating international law and human rights. Instead they were sharing hostility towards Iran and Iraq's separatist groups such as Kurdish and Shi'is. It can be argued that the U.S.-Iraqi relations had been based on mutual interests but this had devastated civilian rights.

However, the U.S. had declared neutrality policy towards Iran-Iraq war but this was just officially not in real terms. Moreover, the U.S. always claimed that it armed neither side, although Iran received arms from Israel, Europe, and Asia, whereas most of these military supplies were originally from the U.S. The United States had aided Iraqi regime by many means. Even after Iran-Iraq war finished, the U.S. had continually supported the Iraqi government because of its huge petroleum reserves. For instance "On Aug. 25, 1988 -- five days after the Iran-Iraq War ended -- Iraq attacked 48 Kurdish villages more than 100 miles from Iran. Within days, the US Senate passed legislation, sponsored by Claiborne Pell, Democrat of Rhode Island, to end the U.S. financial support for Hussein and to impose trade sanctions. To enhance the prospects that Reagan would sign his legislation, Pell sent me to Eastern Turkey to interview Kurdish survivors who had fled across the border.

As it turned out, the Reagan administration agreed that Iraq had gassed the Kurds, but strongly opposed sanctions, or even cutting off financial assistance. Colin Powell, then the national security adviser, coordinated the Reagan administration's opposition" (Peter, 2006:1). However, many other documents convicted the U.S. as Hussein's ally because the U.S. was aware of the Iraqi regimes brutality, but remained silent because of their national interests. The United States imagined that Iraq was a reliable ally in the Gulf region and Iraqi leader Hussein would help the U.S. in solving the Arab-Israel conflict. All these were, of course, illusions; as it was obvious already at that time that Washington would never obtain anything of such relationship.

Overall, the main problem during the 1980s was about the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution that was the main concern for the U.S. and its motivation to help Iraq in the war against Iran as this revolution was considered to be risky for the future of the Middle East. Therefore; during the 1970s and 1980s the relations between the U.S. and Iraq were warm because both countries needed each other. These relations were based on mutual interest, such as trade and regional security.

Significantly, the warm relations were not continuing as during 1984 Saddam had desire to end the war with Iran and this was the reason that the U.S. had sold weapons this time to Iran. As far as diplomacy is a tricky game and the player wants to win always, hence shifting in the relations of any country is predictable as the states follow their national interests. Additionally, an embargo was attempted against Hussein in 1988. When Hussein revealed that the U.S. had secretly sold military assistance to Iran during 1984-1985 this caused the relations to freeze. And this act of the U.S. has been considered as a turning point and has been taken into account seriously by Iraqi officials according to Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yasin Ramadan, who said that the U.S. acts were "a poisoned dagger" aimed at the heart of Iraq. (Petersburg times 1987: 1)

Moreover, in the same issue of this newspaper the arms sales to Iran by the US were considered as "act of aggression" by many Iraq officials. Additionally, the Iraq's urban deputy foreign minister Wisam al Zahawie in an interview had expressed his opinion that "we do not have any objection to the U.S having relations with Iran" but, he said he did object to the underhanded manner in which it was done by the U.S. Due to the fact that the U.S. had declared neutral policy in the gulf war, Washington's rapprochement to Teheran created distrust and shook the confidence in the US administration among Iraqi officials. As Hussein understood that the war was in favor of the U.S. interests, both belligerent countries reached agreements to end the war, which was prolonged for eight years between the two neighbors.

In an interview with a NPR diplomatic correspondent, Mike Shuster on September 22, 2005, answered the question whether the United States created Hussein or it just indirectly helped Hussein, especially during the war. As the United States was afraid that Khomeini might win the war against US interests, and this was not in favor of the US, and he further, said that there was irony in the way the U.S. policy towards the war shifted, because the US had sold arms to both sides.

Additionally, he said that many people thought that the U.S. created Hussein but he added that the U.S. just indirectly provided Iraq with military equipments and he said the U.S. was not the only country that supported Hussein. Other Western allies like France and Germany also supported Hussein. Accordingly, he also admitted that the U.S. was secretly aware that Hussein had used chemical gas in war fields and even against Kurdish population in north, but the U.S. defended Hussein by opposing the embargo on Iraq. One can conclude that the U.S chose Iraq to be its ally in the region.

The United Nations investigators in 1984 reported that the Iraqi regime had used mustard gas and the nerve gas Tabun in Iran. A subsequent report (March 1986) showed that the Iraqi forces had deployed chemical weapons in violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and that the use of chemical weapons in 1986 appears to be more extensive than in 1984. As a result of using chemical weapons, UN inspectors revealed that there had been many casualties. Perez de Cuellar, UN Secretary-General said that Iraq had continued to use chemical gas to defeat Iran and he added that an obvious act of aggression and violence was that Hussein in April 1987 used chemical gas against one of the villages in north of Iraq by name of (Sheik Wasan) Cuellar said Hussein had over and over used chemical gas which was violation of human rights and threat of national security of the Kurdish ethnic groups generally.

At this point, the U.S. thought that this was extremely risky and Hussein had to be restricted by one way or another. That is why at the end of the eighties and beginning of the nineties there was a shift in the US-Iraq relations. Eventually, the US thought about his reputation in relations with Iraq, so he tried to ban relations, due to international community respond to human rights violation in Iraq.

The 1990-2003 Relations “Occupation Era”

Before Kuwait’s invasion Saddam Hussein had met as usual with the U.S. ambassadress April Glaspie to Bagdad. In the 1990s tensions with Kuwait had escalated. This meeting with April Glaspie US Ambassador as this meeting had been considered as a high-level one contact between the two countries. Basically, Glaspie has told Hussein that her government was seeking better relations with Iraq and emphasized that “We have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait. Even thought, the United States may not have intended to give Iraq a green light, but that is effectively what it did” (John & Stephen, 2003:1)

The issue is debatable as Hussein got wrong impression that the United States will not intervene into the crisis because Hussein had kept in mind, the State Department’s spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler’s speech on July 24, 1990 that “we do not have anySpecial defense or security commitments to Kuwait” (Karsh & Freedman, 2002, 269-270). Hence, Hussein thought that The U.S and international community will not back Kuwait when Iraq uses force and invade Kuwait. Although, the U.S. did not warn Iraq from invading Kuwait but the U.S. on the other hand had promised Kuwait government secretly that if Iraq attacks then they will offer help to rescue them (Barry, 2007:1).

Before the invasion the U.S intelligence knew that Hussein was moving troops to northern board of Kuwait this is the reason for “Bush’s telegram message to Hussein that told him indirectly that the U.S. did not want him to use force in his disputes with neighbors, without, however, directly alluding to Kuwait” (Con, 2009:1). Tariq Aziz, Iraqi minister of Foreign Affairs in an interview in 2000 said that Iraq leaders were fool not to realize the fact that the U.S. policy was already negative towards Iraq and the U.S. would not support Iraq in invading Kuwait, and that Hussein and his government were naïve to believe that the U.S. would not interfere in the regional affairs.

After Kuwait’s invasion by Iraq the United States changed the foreign policy towards Iraq and during Bill Clinton’s presidency the relations were at freezing point due to the fact that Hussein had refused to accept the United Nations Security Council resolutions, and did not accept the UN inspectors to access weapon storage sites freely. Therefore, the U.S. challenged Hussein on some occasions, like “In June 1993, following an abortive Iraqi attempt to assassinate former U.S. President George Bush during a visit to Kuwait, the U.S. bombed an intelligence center in Baghdad. In October 1994, Saddam Hussein moved his army toward Kuwait and the U.S. responded by airlifting military forces to Kuwait and warning Iraq not to invade, a threat that achieved its purpose. (Freedman, 1999:1)

Basically, The U.S. imposed no fly-zones in northern and southern part of Iraq this was crucial to weaken Hussein’s regime by isolating him from the international community. Hence, Hussein’s reaction against the United States came in the fall of 1997, when the United States weapon inspectors participating in a UN inspection team (UNSCOM) were prohibited by Iraqi government to carry out their mission.

As a result of that the inspectors left the county, and the U.S. threatened Iraq by use of force against Iraq. It seems that the reason why the Clinton administration eschewed using force directly against Iraq was Clinton's fear that he would not get support from the Arab allies for a bold treatment of Iraq. According to Al-Ahram the Egyptian daily newspaper March 15, 1999, cited in Robert.O.Freedman's report on American policy towards Iraq and Iran in Clinton's second term revealed that despite U.S support for the "Oil for food" the agreement that allowed Iraq to import food and medicine supply, the American position toward Iraq cannot be described as any thing but coercive, aggressive, unwise, and uncaring about the lives of Iraqis, who are unnecessarily subjected to sanctions and humiliations.

Moreover, the role of the Saudis should be taken into account, because Saudi Arabia in 1998 declared that they would not permit the U.S. to use their soil to attack Iraq "Saudi Arabia, a key U.S. ally in the Middle East, said Sunday it would not allow the United States to use facilities in the country to attack neighboring Iraq, even if a strike was sanctioned by the United Nations"(Ghantous, 2002:1) this was another factor which made the United States to delay the war on Iraq because it would have been difficult for the US to attack Iraq without use of Saudi Arabia's air space. Lastly, Saudi Arabia made a rational decision; because Riyadh's concern was that the attack would hurt Iraqi civilians and was likely to further destabilize the region.

But what accelerated the war was the systematic refusal by Bagdad to let the UN inspectors to access the weapons sites. This made the U.S. and international community to answer by military means. No one can deny today that Hussein was the source of all problems that happened in Gulf, because he was not cooperative with the United Nations inspectors and also was not willing to implement the United Nations resolutions. This led to the conclusion that Iraqi leader was responsible for ruining the relations and damaging Iraq, and for all sufferings of his own people.

Hence, the use of force by the U.S. was predictable "before the United States launched the attack on Iraq, National Security Adviser Samuel Berger articulated the administration's strategy toward Iraq in a speech at Stanford University on December 8, 1998. He noted that the U.S. would be working "step-by-step, in a practical and effective way" to undermine and eventually oust Saddam Hussein, and Berger linked that goal with a pledge "to use effective force if necessary." His statement was coupled with incentives for people in the center of power in Bagdad to overthrow Saddam" (Freedman, 1999:1)

Even though many Arab leaders and the United Nations tried to prevent the eruption of war in the region but the U.S. did not give chance to peacefully settle the dispute. For example the Iraqi government step by step accepted to implement the UN resolutions, and the most important resolution that Hussein implemented was S.678 (November 29, 1990) in which Iraq withdrew all its forces from Kuwait. In addition to that this sent a message that Iraq sooner or later would comply with all UN resolutions and the demands of the international community in order to maintain international peace and security in the region. It should be understood that Iraqi government did not comply with all UN resolutions but that also the United States was in rush to end this crisis.

As a result, the relations between Iraq and the U.S. were no longer on the friendly level, interestingly, after Kuwait's invasion the United States had different policy towards Iraq. At the same time Iraq also had different opinion about the U.S. that is why in 1997 Iraq had expelled all U.S. members of the inspections team, acknowledging that the U.S. was spying on Iraq. Moreover, in 1999 relations were still intense. Once again the inspections team was replaced by another one that began inspections in 2002.

Another crucial event that is needed to be mentioned is the process of Iraqi Libration Act of 1998. A report written by Laurie Mylroie, September 29, 1998 on liberation Act was introduced into congress, as it was clear that both the Senate and the House of Representatives were fed up with the Clinton administration's do-nothing policy on Iraq. The main points which were mentioned were: first, it condemned the Iraqi invasion of Iran on March 16, 1980, as the first step in which Hussein started destabilizing the region and threatened international peace and security also violation of human rights by using prohibited substances such as chemical weapons during the eight-year war.

Secondly, in February 1988 the Iraqi government forcefully relocated the Kurdish civilians from their home villages in the Anfal campaign and killed approximately 180,000 Kurds. The exact number of the victims has been impossible to know accurately, as still today their bodies have not been found and many families are still waiting them to be back. Unfortunately, this is a dead dream of many people. In addition to that there are many other points that weakened Iraqi-US relations that are the reasons that the United States started to seek a way to remove Hussein's regime, and to promote a democratic government instead of a brutal regime.

From this point on, Hussein should have understood that either he should get rid of all Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and comply with all United Nations resolutions, or he would have to face the consequences of his stubborn attitude. Or, if he accepted to destroy all WMD and accept UN and international obligations, he would not be replaced. As a result of the lack of cooperation from the Iraqi government, the U.S. sought a way to change the regime in Iraq and threatened to resort to force, if Hussein would not comply with all UN resolutions and international obligations.

In fact, Hussein committed its worst human right violation but all these acts were during the period when Iraq had good ties with the U.S. After Kuwait's occupations by Iraq the U.S. had different policy towards his old ally in the region, and hostility between Iraq and the U.S. begun to grow more and more. As it has already been mentioned, the Bush administration proclaimed the regime change and led a coalition to liberate Kuwait. It is also important to acknowledge the effect of September 11/2001 on the phase of Iraqi-US relations. Owing to the fact that "The Bush administration linked Iraq with North Korea and Iran as a so-called "axis of evil." Yet only Iraq is singled out for possible military attack" (Bennis, 2003:4). Linking Hussein with al-Qaeda and with terror attacks on the United States did not have any legal basis and this was false link.

But, this accusation of Iraq was entirely important tactic in the policy of Bush to get support from the public and international community, because Hussein had never had any ties with Islamic groups. The true reason behind this stratagem was that the U.S. wanted to control oil resources in Iraq and to set the price of oil on the world markets. These messages of the Bush Administration were all threats for using force against Hussein to remove him from power and to change the regime.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attack against New York and Washington D.C had affected Iraqi-US relations negatively. The U.S. president gave a speech after the 9/11 attacks, on August 8, 2003, stated in remarks to the press from his Prairie Chapel Ranch in Crawford, Texas: "We learned a lesson on September the 11th, and that is, our nation is vulnerable to attack. And we're doing everything we can to protect our homeland by making the homeland defense department effective and securing the borders. But the best way to secure America is to get the enemy before they get to the U.S. and that's what's happening in Iraq."

Another sensitive speech by Bush that had captured the heart of Public was "On September the 11th, 2001, our nation was confronted by a new kind of war. See, we're at war. This is a war. This isn't a single isolated incident. We are now in the first war of the 21st century. And it's a different kind of war than we're used to. I explain part of the difference is the fact that the battlefield is now here at home" (CCN: 2002:1) Nonetheless, the attack had shocked people around the world and the American people especially.

The 11/9 attacks was the most sadistic moment in the history of the U.S. Because the United States could not prevent the accident to happen and even did not prevent it. Apparently, this made American people to feel fear and this was the reason many people got ready to work to defend their country. Even though, there was disagreement among the U.S. head of States and Congress on the issue whether Iraq had any ties with this attack or not. Some of them like Bush blamed Iraq because this was the best justification to led war on Iraq and for the sake of changing the regime. Dennis Kucinich, MA, U.S. Representative (D-OH), stated on his website (accessed Apr. 27, 2006)

"We have seen that there has been nothing but a trail of lies that led the United States into its involvement in Iraq. That Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11. Iraq had nothing to do with Al Qaeda's role in 9/11, nor with the anthrax attack upon this country. Iraq had neither the intention nor the capability of attacking the United States".

Besides, there are many other different opinions about war on Iraq, because as of the September 11 event the Iraqi-US relations were dead and the U.S. considered Iraq as its enemy and wanted to change the regime, even using military means was normal. The Iraqi-US relations are an extremely controversial issue, because it should be noted, during the history of their relations there have always been obstacles, which prevented both sides to cooperate and confront. Furthermore, Bush did not make any effort to find a peaceful way to prevent the possibility of breakout of the war. Instead in each and every speech he gave, he repeated the messages that there was no other way, except war against Iraq and other countries that might threaten the United States.

The End of the Relations

The Iraqi-US alliance came in fact to an end at 2 AM. August 2, 1990 while 100,000 Iraqi troops backed by 300 tanks invaded Kuwait. Not surprising, that Iraq's best ally had turned to its bitterest enemy.

After Kuwait's invasion by Iraq, the U.S. had joined an alliance against Hussein in which 22 nations had taken part. Needless to repeat that Iraq had good relations with the U.S. under most of the presidency of Saddam Hussein, as he was against the communist ideology of the Soviet Union and that was in favor of the U.S. Moreover, Hussein had worked for the CIA for a long period and the U.S. had used Hussein for their national interests. But, the relations between the two countries did not stay warm forever, as Iraq had invaded Kuwait in early August 1990. After this hour everything had changed, the friendly relations had turned to hostility. After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait the international community wanted to take measures under the United Nations Charter as Hussein had used force against another country in the region, which violated the international law.

According to Article 1/1 of the United Nations Charter stipulates that all states are equal on the legal bases. States in order to maintain international peace and security, to prevent and remove all threats to the peace and for suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of peace all states should refrain from threat or use of force. Furthermore, Article 2/3 requires all states to settle their dispute in peaceful means not to endanger international security. Another crucial point of Article 1/2 is to develop friendly relations among nations and this should be based on respect to the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and also to take further convenient measures to enforce universal peace.

That is why all states should respect the territorial integrity and political independency and self-determination of other states. If any state does not comply with the UN Charter then the Security Council will take necessary measure for the sake of maintaining the international peace and security. Besides, in Article 2/3 of the UN Charter it says that all states shall settle their disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.

The international community answered Kuwait's invasion by Iraq and all Hussein's allies had stood against him in this situation, although Hussein thought that the United States would not react against him. Because, he thought that the speech of the U.S. ambassador was giving him another green light like for the Occupation of Iran a few years earlier. Just, one day after Kuwait's occupation the United Nations Security Council condemned Iraq's invasion and demanded its immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. Apparently, "the Soviet Union the main arms supplier to Iraq called for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait's territory" (Mahboob, 1994:240) so after the invasion of Kuwait Iraq was entirely isolated and was alone there were no allies around her to back her.

The United States Use of Force against Iraq

Iraq had invaded Kuwait and violated the UN Charter and international law and this had created threat to international peace and security in the region. However, Hussein had in his opinion, green light from the U.S. as in the last diplomatic meeting between the U.S. ambassador and Hussein, Glaspié told Hussein that her country would not intervene in disputes between Iraq and its neighbors. Further, as Iraq had good relations with the U.S. and Hussein was a U.S. ally in the region. But Bush had immediately declared war on Iraq. Although, Bush had proved that Iraq violated international law and the UN Charter, the U.S. did almost the same because, the U.S. did not wait for the United Nations and Security Council to act, also to set the dispute by peaceful means.

The reason that "President George H.W. Bush had raised the specter of the Iraqi pursuit of nuclear weapons was one of the justifications for taking decisive action against Iraq. He also authorized the use of force to expel Iraq from Kuwait". (Richelson, 2004:1). Although, this was not the duty of the U.S. to solve it, but it was the duty of the Security Council to take measures to settle the dispute. But, Bush did not wait for the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to take measure against Iraq. What Bush was seeking, was the removal of Hussein, as Hussein had the desire to annex Kuwait to Iraq and he was willing to have nuclear weapons in the region.

Therefore, "The United States can no longer rely solely on a reactive posture as we have in the past. We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today's adversaries" (Bernstein&Caves&Carus, 2009:17) Although, Iraqi government has always denied the fact but the U.S. and UN have not trusted Iraq as Iraq has used chemical gas and weapons during Iran-Iraq war.

Additionally, the United States had provided Iraq with weapons and military assistance, thus the U.S. was Suspensions about Saddam. The debates about Iraq's WMD programs had been going on for a period of time till 2001. It was increasingly clear that the U.S. would use force against Iraq, because Iraq did not fulfill its UNSC obligations, prompting the U.S. and Britain to form a coalition and publish documents in which they had precisely set their conclusions about the situation in Iraq.

Additionally, after prolonged negotiations between United States, Britain, France, Russia and other U.N. Security Council members, the United Nations declared that Iraq would have to accept even more intrusive inspections than under the previous inspection regime - to be carried out by the U.N. Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). All these attempts had made Iraq to comply with the UN recommendations, therefore in November 2002 and in the same year on December 7; Iraq submitted its 12,000-page declaration that claimed it had not any current WMD programs. (Sharon 2003, pp. 13-14)

Even though, over several months, the UN inspections continued in Iraq but Bush and Tony Blair administration were not satisfied with the process as they thought that Iraq did not completely dissolve its WMD activities. However Hans Blix (UNMOVIC) and Mohammed EL Baradie (IAEA) provided UNSC to prolong the Iraq's cooperation so as to be sure whether Iraq had or had not to hidden the WMDs. But, Blair and Bush declared that if the situation was going on in this path they would take serious actions and the invasion of Iraq and removal of Hussein would be the best solution.

The U.S and British government preferred an immediate military action against Iraq whereas other UNSC members including France, Germany, and Russia emphasized that the inspections were working and that the inspectors should be allowed to fully complete their program. However, there are many UN resolutions about Iraq situation but in none of them did the UNSC explicitly recommend the use of force against Iraq. But, the U.S and U.K did not wait and in March 19, 2003 launched the Iraqi freedom operation. The military action had soon brought Saddam's regime to an end. (New York Times 2003-2004)

Besides, in May 2003, after US has invaded Iraq, as the Bush administration was not sure about what the UN had done and did not find any WMDs. So Bush decided to establish a specialized group about 1,500 individuals by the name of the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) for closer examinations in the country for WMD and for replacing the 75th Exploitation Task Force. (New York Times, June 12, 2003, p. A14). However, the UN inspectors did not find any evidence of what the U.S. had propagated about the weapons of mass destructions. Because, the ISG had searched the country but nothing was found, and failed to find weapons stocks or nuclear sectors. In the aftermath of this war, one may conclude that the whole affair was "Much Ado about nothing" title of a play by William Shakespeare, CA, 1598.

Conclusion

To conclude, up on the facts that had been mentioned in this paper, it can be concluded that the US-Iraqi relations had faced many difficulties. Therefore, the relationship between these two countries some times had been in favor of both sides, while sometimes just serviced one side, especially for the US. As it had been mentioned above the U.S. had long history of friendship with Iraq, but unfortunately, Iraq had faced difficult times after the Iraq-Kuwait invasion directly. Because, the U.S. had waged war against Iraq and toppled Saddam's regime. Additionally, Hussein had misperceptions that the United States would be his ally forever, but time showed that the U.S. interests are the core of the US-Iraqi relations. Ultimately, the mutually beneficial relationships between these two countries were turned into a bitter and eventually disastrous one because of repeated miscalculations and misinterpretations by both sides of the true intentions of the other side. This led to regime change and the occupation of Iraq by the US forces.

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