

THE EFFECTS OF THE CHANGING US POLICIES ON IRAQ & THE MIDDLE EAST

A Thesis
presented to
the Faculty of Law and Political Science
at Notre Dame University-Louaize

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in International Affairs and Diplomacy

by

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MAY 2021

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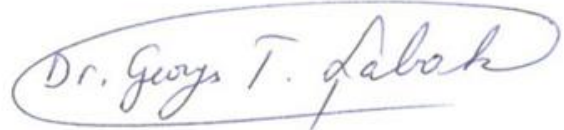
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Abstract

Mesopotamia back then, Iraq and neighbors today were the Cradle of Civilizations, all the firsts were born there, first concept of cities and villages, first law, philosophy, arts, ceramics, the concept of religion and construction of temples, concept of politics, sciences and technology, medicine and literature were also created first in Mesopotamia as well as the creations of the beer and the wheel. This Civilization exported all its creation to the world, philosophy, literature, science, technology, medicine, arts, education, industry, and manufacturing were all exported from Mesopotamia to the world. The world received the exports and developed them, and each country became the pioneer in a specific development. After that, thousands of years have passed. It was not expected that the mother of the world's earliest civilizations turns into an authoritarian state that repressed its people, it was not expected that wars occupy the region for decades and sponsor terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism instead of spreading technology and science. September 11 attack changed all the equation and turned President Bush from an introvert to an extrovert. He declared the war on terror and considered Iran, Iraq, and North Korea the "Axis of evil," and decided to fight terrorists in their homes instead of waiting till they come to the US and harm its people and challenge its sovereignty.

This research will study the effects of the changing US Policies under Presidents Bush, Obama, and Trump on Iraq & the Middle East.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The New Era

21 years ago, people all over the world were living in a new political system, where they needed no visas to travel from one country to another, boundaries and borders were not existing anymore, traditional nation states were irrelevant, the world was a small village where people and goods could move freely from one place to another, globalism and liberalism were the new model endorsed in the international relations and the foreign affairs. Francis Fukuyama in his article “The End of History?” claimed that the pages of Foreign Affairs’s yearly summaries will be empty because of the lack of events to fill it (Fukuyama, 1989). Citizens of the world were able to enjoy a meal of McDonald wherever they were living, they could buy virtually from Amazon or Ali Baba using their virtual money and credit cards, they could also receive their items on any spot on earth. Technology was available for everyone with no exception. People everywhere could vote, chose their governors and practice democracy freely. Peace was achieved through democracy. This is not an illusion or a dream, this was the anticipation of some political scientists in the world like Francis Fukuyama.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, democracy and peace were expected to be spread and converted by most of the states since

communism was the biggest competitor if not the only competitor of liberalism. The common sense was that the only way to defeat communism is to spread liberalism and by doing so communism will shrink and die slowly, a solo player will be dominating the world instead of the two major superpowers, the US, and the Soviet Union, but the incident of September 11, 2001 changed all the equation. Communism seemed to be the only competitor of liberalism but in fact when US was busy fighting the spread of communism, “Islamofascism” or Islamic fundamentalism was rising. US cultural myopia and the focus on defeating communism prevented the American administrations that preceded to see that not all the cultures are ready for modernization and not all the cultures are willing to adopt the western values; the rule of law, freedom, and equality; not all societies and cultures were prepared socially, economically, and geographically to step into globalism.

Aziza an Afghani girl in her mid-teens who was forced to marry a 60-year-old man explained: “My father was sick, and my family could not afford to pay for his treatment, therefore I saw no other way out than to marry the old man who was willing to pay the bride price demanded by my family” (Muzhary, 2016). In Afghanistan girls are forced to get married at a young age to improve the economy of their families, the rituals there are that the groom must pay the “price” of his future wife to her family, to the father specifically if he is alive and to her elder brother if he is not. The “price” of the bride differs from the “Maher” that is an Islamic dowry stated in al Shari’a where both families agree

on a sum of money or certain property as a guarantee for the woman in case her husband divorced her or died, she can live and raise her children without the need of anyone. Nevertheless, families decide on the “price” of the girl according to her social status or education level or skills, or sometimes in some situations the family of the girl “sell” her or exchange her for their debts. This concept encourages the parents to marry their underage girls starting eleven years old and make money from them. In those societies, girls are usually burdens for their families and bring shame (this is an old thought that if a girl lose her virginity before marriage then no one will accept to marry her, and this will bring the shame to her family, in those societies the virginity of a girl is related to the integrity and honor of her family) and that is another cause to get rid of them. Also, men are physically stronger and are the providers of their homes and that is why they used to get happy when they give birth to a baby boy.

This is not only the culture in Afghanistan or in the Islamic world, but this was also (and still is in many countries) the culture in the ME and even for some people in Lebanon that is considered the only democratic country in the Arab world before the war in Iraq in 2003 and the removal of the totalitarian regime. As part of the Afghani culture as well, the family of the groom chooses on his behalf the bride and both groom and bride are not allowed to choose each other and even see each other before marriage. Occasionally parents and

families choose the bride and accept the groom according to their interests (Muzhary, 2016).

On the other side of the sphere in the USA, the Supreme Court in 2015 ruled gay marriage is legal nationwide after a long journey that started on September 21, 1996, when President Bill Clinton signed a Defense of Marriage Act forbidding federal recognition of same sex marriage. On this occasion President Obama stated that the ruling was a “Victory for America,” “When all Americans are treated as equal, we are all more free” (BBC, 2015 & CNN, 2020). Between the Afghani marriage tradition and the US same sex marriage law there is a huge gap, in the US and in the Western countries people are living on almost another planet, they are hundred years ahead of the under-developed countries like the African ones, the Latin American ones, the Arab ones and many Asian ones. To make the long story short, the developed countries are far from the third world countries by a lot, they have different culture, technology, development, way of thinking, their people are educated and cultured they have rights and most importantly they know their rights, they can raise their voices, they are modern and they have the privilege of living and enjoying life, they have the opportunity to dream to follow their passion to choose their occupation, they have an option, they have a choice. Contrary to the other side of the world, in the third world countries, the Islamic countries, the conservative countries, the people are poor, the illiteracy level is high, the education is not modern, tribes and families are dominating the societies, openness is rare, technology is old,

citizens are not cultured about their rights if they are found. The families marry their girls to make money, get rid of them because they are not able to feed them, awareness is not common, and by the way this does not mean that the people of the developed countries are superior from the under-developed ones, this just means that they do not have the same chances and opportunities as the citizens that are born in the developed countries.

Back to the Afghani Marriage tradition, it is a small example of many more traditions and rituals in the big conservative Islamic world and communities, many of the traditions, customs and way of thinking are mentioned in their Holy Book, Al Qur'an. Killing in the name of God and going straight to heaven is one of the common thoughts that is also mentioned in Al Qur'an. This thought is not spread in one Islamic country or society, it is a whole world that may begin from Asia to the ME: Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Indonesia, and in any spot in the world where a non-moderate Islamic person, or a fundamentalist, is living. So how a big hegemon like the US would believe that conservative fundamentalist communities would like to step out from fundamentalism into Globalism and Capitalism? The conflict is not religious between the West and Islam, or the US and Islam, the conflict is political. Islamists are refusing the new international relations system where the US is the only Hegemon. Islamists are upset with the imperialism and the superiority of the Western countries and as response to modernization the revival of Islam and the Islamic resurgence has risen.

Most of the Islamic states are ruled by authoritarian rulers that make sure to keep their people hungry, poor, and uneducated, or educated in a way that is convenient for the regime in a way that prevent the people to think about rebellion, human rights, Liberalism, Capitalism or even Communism. The people of those societies are deprived from development on many levels, self-development, society development, economic development, infrastructure development, educational development as well as technology development. Technology development is most important one especially in our era because the last is leading the world. The world has moved from one place to another thanks to technology; the medicine has evolved due to technology, the people's way of living, their economic system, their banking system, and the biggest technology advancement is the internet.

The Internet has connected the world to each other, people from all over the world can talk, chat or video chat with each other, they can work online, they can watch or know about any event in any spot in the world at the same time of its occurrence, internet made the impossible possible. Internet conquered the world, and the closed societies were not an exception. Internet made states lose somewhat of their sovereignty because states did not have full control over their people anymore, so despite the oppression and the limitation of access to the internet, the last has reached conservative societies where any ordinary person can have access to the world. The limitations did not stop people that are living under the dictator regimes to connect and organize demonstrations and

rebellions. In fact, the internet was one of the means that helped in the rise of the Arab spring.

Internet was also a mean to help terrorists to spread terrorism, to invite people to join their fundamentalist organization, it was a mean to meet and chat and organize terror attacks. It was a mean for the fundamentalist organizations like Da'esh and Al Nusra to post videos of their terror, their genocides, and their executions as well, also to send a certain message to their opponents. Fundamentalist organizations took advantage of the poverty and illiteracy of the people living under very bad circumstances, the lack of development and technology, the high birth rate in the Islamic communities that created a young generation that was also poor and illiterate and fragile and had tendency to join fundamentalist organizations, they supported them with medical health services, finances, welfare, and educational system that reflected their values, vision and ideology, their fundamental ideology and these people became loyal and supporting to those Islamist organizations.

Another reason for the revival of Islamism was the friendship between US and Israel. For most of the Arab countries, U.S. and the West are always on the Israeli side, Israeli interest is a priority in the US foreign policy in the Middle East and all the policies come most of the time in favor of Israel. Israel and Iran are two major regional players in the international affairs in the Middle East, but Israel is allowed to develop weapons of mass destruction but on the other end the development is forbidden. The relation between US and Iran is not

new; it started when the CIA orchestrated the overthrowing of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mosadegh and restoring Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi to power, the relation began to suffer when Iranian revolution forced U.S. backed Shah to flee in 1979, then the relation got worse on November 4, 1979 due to the embassy hostage incident (Tolan & Flesh, 2002), the relation continued to worsen through the years until the US President Barak Obama and the other UN members (P5 +1 : US, France, China, Russia, United Kingdom and Germany) reached a deal with Iran regarding its nuclear program to be later aborted by President Trump and returning to sanctions and embargos (BBC, 2018).

Contrary to the bad relation between US and Iran, Israel is the ally of US in the Middle East, it is more than its ally, US is applying the Israeli interest in the Middle East. For US and Israel, Iran, Iraq and Syria have Islam as a major religion in common, they are also Rich-in-Oil (the oil is mainly in Iran and Iraq) and they are not abiding by the Non-Proliferation treaty rules, so the alliance of the three countries threaten directly the existence of Israel in the Middle-East especially in the late 90's early 2000's when Israel was not powerful as today, and this is one of the reasons behind the blind eye of US and the West on Israel Nuclear Development (Boger, 2014). The difference between Israel and Iran is that Israel did not join the Non-Proliferation treaty in 1970, which is an international treaty which objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, so basically it cannot violate the treaty, while Iran is a state party of the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) and when it does not abide by its rules it is basically

violating the treaty and will be sanctioned according to the law of the treaty. It is true that Israel is not a state party of the NPT and Iran is, but the danger of the nuclear development on the Middle East and on all the other states is the same. The first Israeli nuclear weapon was thought to be made in 1966 and a bomb was tested nearly half a century ago. US, Britain, France, and Germany turned a blind eye on it, so if the Non-Proliferation Treaty was not violated, surely national and international law restricting trafficking in nuclear technologies and materials were broken as well as the treaty of banning nuclear tests (United Nations, 2020).

US is not putting Israel's interest as a priority on its agenda because of the friendship of the two countries. Jews are among the largest lobby groups in the US, they are influencing the economy, media, government, and the congress, US and the US Presidents, Democrats or Republicans, have an interest in keeping Israel and Jews happy. In January 2021, Israel thanked US former President Donald Trump for what he has done for Israel and its people in the ME and Africa since he took office. The Peace agreements with the United Arabic Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan to normalize their relations with Israel is one of the big steps that Israel has made in over 25 years and none of this could be possible without the help of the US Administration (The White House, 2020). Applying Israeli agenda in the Middle East through the years upset the Arab States and surely contributed to the creation of the Islamic fundamentalist ideology and led to terrorism.

Terrorism is an instrument of foreign affairs for the weak groups or people that have experienced oppression or tyranny or simply their voices are not heard, it is the act of confronting and challenging the states and putting on the table their issues. Terrorism is a violent attack on innocent civilians to achieve a political objective. Terrorists usually have an important issue, and they are weak enough that no state will listen to this important problem so they attack innocent people and civilians to leave a big impression, to take the breaths away to make the people wonder, how could they? By this mean they put on the agenda of the big states their issues. The first reaction of the whole world, big states, hegemons, and the humanitarian organizations will be, how could they? To wonder later, why did they? And the target is to work on the psychology of the people and to change the question from, how could they? To why would they? To attract the attention to find solutions and reach an agreement. The scarier the action of terror, the bigger the reaction; the more the abnormal, the more the attention. History has shown for many years that terrorists were invited to the big state's tables, The White House table, to Switzerland, welcomed by US presidents, Russian, German and many other Presidents and perceived later as peace makers and to win Noble Prizes for peace. One man is a terrorist for someone, and for another he is a freedom fighter.

Terrorists can also be sponsored by states that cannot go directly to war with other states or cannot confront face to face other states, so they sponsor terrorism by sending clandestine people instead of them to do the work. This can

be the case of the states or tribes that are governing conservative communities and cannot directly confront modernization or US and Western values, Capitalism and Liberalism they send a group of people to do the work instead of them.

In 1972, a terrorist attack killed 9 athletes during the Olympics in Munich, Yasser Arafat the chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and the President of the Palestinian National Authority from 1994 to 2004 was responsible of this attack. The Olympics is the idea of competing with one another without using force or weapons, it is the symbol of peace in ancient Greece where various city-states sent athletes to compete peacefully to honor the gods, so they give up weapons and force that they were using during all the year to compete peacefully (The Ancient Civilization). So, committing terror on the Olympics territory where peace must take place instead of war provoked the people watching worldwide, scared them, took their reaction to the extreme and made them wonder, how could he? And then people began to change the question from, how could he? To why would he? What is the problem? His target was to go to the extreme to promote his cause, the Palestinian cause. Arafat that was recognized as a terrorist, was later invited to the White House, President Bill Clinton shook hand with him as a peacemaker, to later win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994 for his effort to create peace in the Middle East (The Noble Prize, 2020).

September 11 attack was not different from the Olympics attack or any other terrorist attack in terms of terrorism. In the morning of September 11, 2001, 19 hijackers took control of four aircrafts where two of them were flying from Boston and New York, one from Washington, and the last from Newark, New Jersey. The first aircraft was crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York, 17 minutes later the Second aircraft was piloted into the south tower of The World Trade Center, the third plane crashed into the southwest side of the Pentagon, and the fourth plane was crashed in Pennsylvania after one of the passengers was able to take control of the plane, so it did not reach its target. The outcome of this attack was the death of about 3000 people, 40 in Pennsylvania, 184 at the Pentagon, 2750 people in New York, 400 policemen and firemen were also killed when they rushed helping the victims on the scene, plus the 19 hijackers who all died. Too many people were injured, a lot of families lost their loved ones, the two towers collapsed, smoke lasted three months due to the fires, other towers were also affected, but the biggest damage after the life loss of innocent people was the challenge of the American Administration and US as a mono Supper Power. Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda was responsible for the terror attack under the patronage of Osama Bin Laden the leader and mastermind of this organization (Bergen, 2020).

All eyes were on the US that day, people all over the world were wondering how can the terrorists kill innocent people? They felt for them and

for their families and loved ones. Every person was putting him/herself in the same situation. Later they began to ask the question: why would a group of people commit such terror? What do they want? What is their purpose? And the questions did not stop here like in any other terrorist situation, the biggest question that was asked back then was who would dare to challenge the solo hegemon of the world? Who got the nerves to challenge the US, the Mono Superpower, and the biggest influencer? Who would dare to challenge or attack a State that has that much power? That can go into any war and return as a winner? Who is challenging the state that defeated communism and ended the Soviet Union? And the Answer was the Extremist Islamic groups, the people that did not accept US as a superpower and as a mono Superpower. Extremist organizations and conservative societies that do not want to jump into modernization, communities that may still trade goods instead of adopting the new economic system that were not ready for Capitalism, or maybe a group of people or cartel and not all the people or citizens governed by the extremist Islamism. Fundamentalist organizations aim to protect their power and money by using the poor citizens and people and drag them armed with the Islamic religion as a mean to convince and brain wash the communities and make them conservative and underdeveloped.

Nevertheless, using religion and under the name of God those groups from Osama Bin Laden to Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, to Mohammed Atta, Ayman al Zawahiri and to many more known and unknown individuals,

foundations or States that cannot face to US or the modern world directly succeeded in creating an enormous Islamic conservative ground, that support them, believe in fundamentalist ideas, hate the US and the West and ready to kill or commit suicide in the name of God, in all over the world from Asia, like Malaysia where meetings for the preparations for September 11 attack were made to Pakistan and Afghanistan that were the base of Osama Bin Laden, to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, etc. President Georges W. Bush responded to the September 11 attack with what became known later as the Bush Doctrine that consisted of “Launching” the war on Terror; he claimed that “America is at war,” American Administration has the obligation “to protect the security of the American people” (The White House, 2020).

For President Bush, America must continue to lead, its duty is to fight terrorists in their homes, it must not wait for them to commit terror on the US territories and threaten the American people. American’s Administration will take the path of President Harry Truman and President Ronald Reagan in applying the US foreign policy. It is the path of freedom, of peace, of international stability, the path of human dignity, democracy, and justice. The path of economic prosperity, of strong friendship and alliances. To follow this path America must maintain and expand its national strength to deal with any challenge or threat of terrorists and enemies. The war on terror requires sacrifices, but sacrifices will assure the future peace for America and the rest of the world. The misrule and oppression and tyranny at home give birth to

terrorism and instability abroad. It is American duty to tackle the oppressing dictators, like Saddam Hussein, and many other dictators and spread democracy to achieve peace and prosperity. The countries that are sponsoring terrorism directly threaten the American interests. President Bush considered Iraq, Iran, and North Korea “Axis of Evil” March 20, 2003 was a turning point, the President declared war on Iraq, interfered militarily to fight terrorists on their territory aiming to spread democracy. All those consecutive events led to a New Era.

This thesis will study the outcomes of the US invasion, on the Iraqi level, the Middle Eastern regional level, the international level and on the US itself. An examination of whether the US reached its target in spreading Democracy and Peace and making Iraq a democratic model for the rest of the authoritarian Middle Eastern regimes will be made. A research on whether the cost that the US spent on the Iraqi war was higher than the benefit will be made. This thesis will analyze, discuss, and examine the influence of the changing US Administrations on Iraq especially and the Middle Eastern powers and international powers generally under Presidents Bush, Obama, and Trump. My research question is what were the effects of the changing US Policies under Presidents Bush, Obama, and Trump on Iraq & the Middle East? My research will apply the qualitative analysis methodology. It will review writings, reports and investigations of other scholars, reporters and journalists, it will discuss and analyze them. It will also review the different speeches of the three Presidents

Bush, Obama, and Trump; it will analyze them, compare them, and it will also compare the changing American foreign policies and analyze its effects on Iraq and the Middle East.

Chapter 2

Democracy from Different Perspectives

The Four Presidents

President Woodrow Wilson in his Doctrine argues that The Imperial German Government had sunk every vessel that approached the ports of the western coast of Europe, or the ports of Great Britain and Ireland or any ports controlled by the enemies of Germany within the Mediterranean. The German submarines have sunk all vessels of every kind without taking into consideration to whom these vessels were, whatever the flag, the character, the cargo, the destination, all was sent to the bottom without warning or giving any chance to the crew to escape and save their lives.

President Wilson was surprised that any government could take these actions against humankind especially that the German government was subscribed to the humane practices of civilized nations. The German government did not abide by the international law that made it clear that no nation had right of domination upon the sea. President Wilson was not concerned about the lost assets and materials, his main concern was the loss of lives of innocent people, of children, of women and men who were not combatants or involved in war and for him the war declared by the German government was war-fare against mankind, against all nations, against America. American vessels were also sunk and innocent lives of the Americans were

taken away, the ships of neutral states were also treated in the same way, no discrimination was made, so every nation should decide for itself how it will respond to these criminal actions (Wilson, 1918).

For Wilson, the choice must be taken with moderation, and revenge was not the aim, the motive was the vindication of right and of human rights. America had a right to protect the American people against any violence, there was no choice of submission and suffering, the United States must exert all its power and employ all its resources to bring the German government to terms and end the war. The target was to spread the principle of peace and justice against selfish and autocratic nations. Neutrality was not feasible where peace and freedom lied in the existence of the autocratic governments, the American Administration had no feeling of hatred for the German people, for the President, Germans were innocent, and they did not take these unhuman decisions, they were not consulted by their rulers, it was the German Government that must take the blame. German Government made it clear that it entertained no friendship for the United States and meant to act against the peace and security of the US. Peace cannot be maintained without the partnership of democratic nations; autocratic nations cannot be trusted to keep faith within it, and the US cannot be friends with Nations that cannot assure security for the Democratic Governments of the world.

President Wilson declared that his administration had no desire to conquer or dominate the world but the last must be made safe for democracy,

political liberty foundations must plant peace, the US is the champion of the right of humankind, it does not seek self-interest or have a certain desire, its only objective is to secure the right to freedom. “It is fearful to go to war and spend blood, but the right is more precious than peace, US must fight for democracy, its duty is to make the world a safe place to live in, to help the people under authoritarian regimes to be free, to have voice in their own governments.” Democracy is the principal that have given birth to America and it is a privilege to spend blood while defending this concept (Wilson, 1918).

President Bush’s Doctrine was similar to the Doctrine of President Wilson to a certain degree, where President Bush declared war on terror and invaded Iraq to spread Democracy and to achieve peace. For President Bush, to provide enduring security for America and its citizens, the United States must support democratic governments and institutions in every nation and culture. The aim is to end tyranny in the world and help to create states that can provide their citizens with their basic needs and protect their rights and freedom and act as responsible states in the international system. The United States faced fascism and communism and won the Cold War and had succeeded in spreading democracy and liberalism, but in the twenty first century the challenge was different where the US was fighting a new totalitarian ideology of Islamism. To win over this ideology, the Bush Administration had to focus on essential tasks like enhancing its relationship with its alliances to defeat terrorism and prevent the terrorist attacks against them and their friends, enhancing the development of

global economic growth by opening to new markets, opening societies, and building the infrastructure of democracy to enhance the circle of development, confronting the challenges of globalization, and protecting human dignity. For President Bush, the US must advance the ideals of human rights, freedom, and human dignity and defend liberty and justice because these principals are rights for all people everywhere (The White House, 2002).

In 2003, the US Administration made progress in spreading freedom and democracy in Iraq, an oppressing dictator was toppled, a free election was made for the first time, and 12 million Iraqis elected their government, and a constitution was created. In Afghanistan, a freely elected government replaced Taliban's oppression and a written constitution was ratified for the very first time. Saudi Arabia took preliminary steps to give its citizens voice in their government, Kuwait and Morocco made some reforms on the political level. The United States must lead an international effort and extend worldwide to spread freedom and democracy to protect its Nation and cherish its values. The governments that oppress their people threaten the peace and stability of other nations, and the governments that respect human rights and protect the dignity of their people uphold responsible conduct toward other nations, because democracy provides stability in the international system, reduces regional conflicts and defeat terrorism, stop the export of terrorism, and extend peace and prosperity. For President Bush, Belarus, Burma, Cuba, Syria, Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are suffering from tyranny which is a

combination of poverty, corruption, instability, and brutality; All tyrannies threaten directly the world's interest as well as the American interest because some pursue weapons of mass destruction, others sponsor terrorism and for him "the misrule of tyrants at home leads to instability abroad" (The White House, 2002).

By spreading democracy and not tolerating tyranny the globe will get less ill, the poverty rate will decrease as well as the disputes and disorders. The US must help states that take freedom newly to build effective democracies, by being responsible towards their citizens, respect their will in elections and governments, protect the sovereignty of their states punishing crime, embracing the rule of law, protecting the independence of justice, resisting corruption, cherishing human rights, freedom, dignity, freedom of expression and speech, assembly and associations, protecting the institutions of civil society including the family, religious communities, private property and market economy. Politics, religion and economy are partners, they advance together and reinforce each other, and if in a society one of the three is restricted the system will not work. Building institutions that ensure that the government is responsible and accountable to its people and protect individual liberty, and elections that protect the rights of minorities, civil liberties, and equality of all citizens, are the most visible signs of democracy and the American Administration aims to help all states to reach this goal so it can protect its security (The White House, 2002).

President Bush in his Doctrine argued that the culture of each land will reflect the form of democracy in it, and it is the responsibility of the US to promote it and promote human freedom but the last cannot be imposed, the people must choose it. The US will support and be the voice of people living under tyranny in all lands. Sometimes the US will support freedom through visible and vocal steps and on other times it will support it quietly, the means and tactics will vary but the US will support all nations to end tyranny and convert to democracy. A balance between seeking the security and well-being of the American people and supporting freedom and democracy will be made, and to support democracy and end tyranny the American administration will take many steps including: enhancing other nations to not support oppressive regimes, supporting free trade agreements to encourage countries to fight corruption, hold accountable, enhance the rule of law; imposing sanctions and embargos on authoritarian regimes, supporting the development of free and fair elections, human rights, women's rights, civil society, rule of law; enhancing the role of the non-governmental organizations, holding high-level meetings at the White House and the Department of State with democratic reforms in oppressive states to support them, enhancing the alliances with other democratic counties to spread and promote democracy and human rights and dignity, supporting establishing democracy charter in the oppressive countries that are stepping into democracies through organizations like the United Nations and the World Bank or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, standing against

violation of human rights, standing against human trafficking, children labor, defending the right of people to believe and practice their religion as well as protecting the right of non-believers, protecting minorities from the coercion of the majorities or of the state; nations cannot be free or democratic if half of its population is oppressed. The US Administration supports and stands with protecting human dignity, women's worth and fight against slavery because for President Bush "future generation will not excuse those who turn a blind eye to it." All Nations and States share the interest of democracy so all nations should stand side by side with the United States to spread freedom and democracy to reach peace (The White House, 2002).

President Obama had a different point of view, he argued in his Doctrine that the US must reposition itself in the world, it is much extended, especially in the Middle East. The US should ask the question why the enemies of the US are its enemies and why its allies and friends are so? President Obama believed that withdrawing from Iraq is a must and the US should not spend the blood of its military in the Middle East wherever and whenever the National Security interest is not in direct danger. The US cannot be the savior of all the humanity, when the US can interfere at a bearable cost to spread its values, democracy, and peace it will do so but there will come times when the US's interest conflicts with the intervention to defend innocent people, then the US will not interfere. President Obama considered Syria as a slope potentially as slippery as Iraq, the

President did not want to repeat the mistake of his predecessor President Bush in Iraq.

For him the intervention in Iraq was a mistake. The US Administration spent huge amount of money; many American soldiers have lost their lives, besides the traumas of the American soldiers who were involved in this war; hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis have also died; terrorism was spread more than ever; and the Middle East for him, will not be fixed neither on his watch nor on the watch of the next generations. The best decision to President Obama was to withdraw from Iraq and the Middle East, make a nuclear deal with Iran and let Saudi Arabia and Iran share and balance the power between them in the Middle East. For the President, the Middle Eastern Muslims must learn to reconcile their grievances and make some internal reforms to resolve their conflicts and step into modernization because no interfering country can do this job on their behalf.

President Obama in his interview to the Atlantic in 2016, argued that he was pressured to interfere in Syria and topple Assad, and he was criticized for his actions towards the Syrian war, but the President was convinced that his administration will support the Syrian revolts financially and morally but will never interfere militarily and put the lives of the American soldiers in danger. He was afraid of Iraq number two. For him it was not a tactical plan to interfere to topple a regime and dictator that was backed up with two powerful countries, Russia, and Iran. President Obama was determined to not interfere militarily in

the Middle East unless threatened by al-Qaeda or when the existence of Israel is in danger and its security is threatened by the nuclear arms of Iran for example. For him, the Assad regime did not rise to the level of these challenges and do not put the US's interest in direct danger.

President Obama continued and argued in his interview, that when Assad was accused of using chemical weapons against his people that are forbidden by the United Nations and International law, President Obama was pressured more than ever to bomb Syria. So, his Administration warned Al Assad to get rid of the chemical weapons because using chemical weapons was crossing the red line otherwise the US will strike Syria. His Secretary of Defense at that time, Leon Panetta, said that he did not think that this day was coming. Later, President Obama Stated that the national security of the United States is in danger because of the use of chemical weapons against 1000 innocent people including children and women where these weapons should not be used even at wars, and by doing so the American norms and values were violated. America's closest allies in Europe and across the Middle East believed that Obama was threatening militarily, the Pentagon was ready to bomb as well as the allies of America like President Holland of France, but the American masses were not supporting the Syrian attack, neither the German Chancellor Angela Merkel who President Obama respected.

President Obama had doubts about interfering militarily and he believed that he was walking into a trap from his allies and adversaries and he believed

that he was dragged by al- Assad to the attack, so the President took the decision of standing down and not attacking anymore. This decision upset the European and the Middle Eastern allies and the advisers as well, because the last believed that the President was damaging the credibility of the US seriously and for a long time. President Obama backed down because he believed that his Administration should not bomb to just prove that it can do so, another reason was that there was UN inspectors that are working on the Syrian ground and attacking will put them under risk. Also, Obama believed that when striking, the chemical weapons won't be eliminated or destroyed, it can only inflict some damages on al Assad, the last will survive the strikes and will claim that he had successfully defied the United States, he will claim also that the US had violated the UN mandate and that will put him in a better position than weaken him (Goldberg, 2016).

Also, President Obama as well as his Vice President back then, and the US President now, Mr. Biden believed that the support of the Americans is a major factor when entering war and Obama did not have this support. "The Americans were not enthusiastic about the attack and did not want to repeat the Iraqi experience". Biden asked "what happens when we get a plane shot down? Do we not go in and rescue?" "You need the support of the American people." President Obama was proud and satisfied of the decision he took even though he was pressured and his credibility as well as the American credibility were at stake, for him he took the decision according to the America's interest, and

homogenously with the American values of democracy and peace (Goldberg, 2016).

Later, al Assad agreed to remove his chemical weapons pressured by the Russians after President Obama met President Putin and provoked this issue so for President Obama using soft power was better in this situation than the cost that would be spent when entering war. President Obama preferred to spend the money in Asia and Africa and Latin America and focusing on the rising China. For him “Asia is the future and focusing on the consuming Middle East was a strategic fault.” The Middle East is full of hatred and extremist Islamism and terrorism. Contrary to that in Southeast Asia, which still has poverty and corruption and enormous problems, “people are not thinking how to attack America and kill Americans, people are ambitious and energetic, they are fighting and struggling to build businesses, to find jobs, to get better education and better infrastructure” (Goldberg, 2016).

People in Latin America and Africa are seeking self-improvement, modernization, wealth, and education. President Obama claimed: “They are not thinking about how to kill Americans” “What they’re thinking about is how do I get a better education? How do I create something of value?” President Obama believed that China is rising and rising fast and it is very clear for him that a weakened threatened China is fearful than a successful rising China; China has the potential to be the partner of the United States in sharing the burden and

maintaining the international order if it continues to rise peacefully (Goldberg, 2016).

For the purpose of focusing on Asia and rising China, President Obama withdrew from Iraq leaving a vacuum that ISIS, Iran, and the regional powers ran to fill, costing Iraq more ethnic conflicts and less peace and democracy. Contrary to President Obama, President Trump saw in rising China a big threat, for him china is an abusive country that is involved in the theft of intellectual properties and technology. Three million manufacturing jobs were lost when China joined the WTO and the US racked \$13 trillion in trade deficits over the last two decades (Deutch, 2018). President Trump's target was to make America great again, by adding trillions to the American wealth, enhancing the stock market, adding jobs including manufacturing ones, strengthening the security of the American borders and construction of the border wall, giving the American military more power. His aim was to make the US stronger, safer, and richer country than it was.

President Trump in his speech at the United Nations General Assembly claimed that he honors the right of all states to pursue their traditions and beliefs, he will not interfere in those states and tell them how to work or live, but he is only asking them to honor the sovereignty of the US in return. President Trump was against the Military intervention in the Middle East, all his plans were based on economic sanctions and embargos, he aborted the Nuclear deal with Iran because for him the deal was a windfall for Iran's leaders (Deutch,

2018), and he enhanced the sanctions on Iran, and the embargos, as well as on Hezbollah in Lebanon which is the ally of Iran, because he believed that no military intervention is needed when economic punishment can be imposed because the last are more painful and give more results with less cost and will affect the people living under those regimes and that will push them to revolt against their rulers. President Trump withdrew from Iraq after defeating ISIS leaving only four military basis and his changing foreign policy also affected the Iraqis and the Middle Eastern region (BBC, 2020). What were the opinions of the Iraqis towards the war and the changing US policy of the three presidents? Would they prefer democracy or stability?

Democracy or Stability?

In an interview that was made on BBC on the 18th of March 2013, that took place in the book market of Baghdad on whether the bloodshed over the past decade was worthy and if democracy was achieved, the opinions of Iraqis were divided. An old man believed that Iraqis are hopeless, and the future was dark, and democracy was neither felt nor applied, and for him the 10 years of war were not worthy. A young woman agreed with this man and argued that no one in Iraq was happy nor satisfied with the result and the situation back then, and Iraqis were not feeling that they were free and democratic. On the other hand, two other men (one of them is in his late 20s and the other in his mid-40) didn't agree with the lady and old man. The mid-40's man believed that the bloodshed in the last decade was worthy, the situation was better for the great majority

which were the Shiite in Iraq and under the previous regime (under Saddam) they were oppressed, and they did not have a say in the government. The young man shared the same opinion with the elder one, for him in 2013 he was free, he could say whatever he wanted and was capable of expressing freely on social media, on TV, and even the newspapers were free and Iraqis could write whatever they wanted, and the war was worthy (BBC, 2013).

Whereas Chris Maume in his article “It Was Better to live In Iraq under Saddam” argued that the country used to be much happier and safer place to live, the state was never in this chaos neither in 1983, nor in 1986. The author questioned himself whether the life of ordinary Iraqis was better under Saddam and he answered himself by yes, their life was better and maybe toppling Saddam was never a good idea and invading Iraq was not a good idea, moreover the invasion of US and Britain of Iraq turned out to be of no good reason, for him life was “OK” under Saddam dictatorship, he continued and argued that it was true that there was not a lot of shops but Iraqis had all what they needed to get by. It was true that Saddam Hussein was on the first cover of all newspapers, but people were not starving, and living on the streets’, there was stability and safety. There was universal health care in Iraq as well as universal education and Iraqi’s that the author came across adored Saddam, “even if it was a brainwashing” and used to invoke his name screaming “Sadaaaam... Sadaaaam” and for him Iraq without invasion was better (Maume, 2014).

On the other hand, The Economist in the article: “Fifteen Years after Americas’ Invasion, Iraq Is Doing Well” argued that Iraq was doing much better then, Iraq had defeated terrorism, prevented the wave of violence from Shiites on Sunnis, the oil production was increasing and new beneficial deals were converted, the state had more money, and Iraqi politicians had learnt how to diminish the interference of US and Iran in their affairs. Iraq held an election and affirmed its status as a democratic state in the Middle East (The Economist, 2018).

Karolina Chorvath in her article “Fifteen Years after the US Entered Iraq, Baghdad Breathes New Life” argues that Iraqi businessmen and investors were coming back to Iraq seeking new beginnings, many of those Iraqi investors were living abroad under Saddam regime and came back to enjoy the new Iraq, for them Iraq had a big potential in developing and rebuilding, Iraq was one of the largest oil proven reserves in the world and could do much money from oil industry that was a great target for the investors. Apart from that, Baghdad streets were packed with young Iraqis, the restaurants were full at night and people were enjoying freedom. Chorvath believed that it was the first time from 7000 years of history that Iraq enjoyed democracy, it was an opportunity that Iraqis must take. Good democracy means better economy, better stability and prosperity (Chorvath, 2018). Despite the division of opinions of the Iraqis between supporters of democracy after the invasion and supporters of stability under Saddam, ethnic conflicts and international interventions influenced

negatively both democracy and stability, and made the occurrence of both difficult.

Ethnic Conflicts and International Interventions

Reviewing a little bit, the theoretical writings and opinions on international interventions, Carter Johnson in his article Partitioning to Peace, Sovereignty, Demography and Ethnic Civil Wars said "...a third-party transfer would be better than forced transfers perpetrated by enemy militias aiming for ethnic cleansing or worse" (Johnson, 2008). There he means that the interference of a third party may play a positive role in peace making because both parties don't trust each other and they are afraid of betrayal and the international intervention may prevent violence and ethnic cleansing. On the other hand, Michael C. Horowitz argues that "international community should not promote partition as a strategy to end ongoing wars.... and partition depends on outside interveners being willing to facilitate the transfer of populations, which they are reluctant to do given the violation of international law involved" (Horowitz, Weisiger & Johnson, 2009). Here there are two points to discuss. First, Horowitz is highlighting the role of international community in ending an ethnic war because in this paper he was discussing the importance of international community to influence the solution, and in his opinion, int'l community should not spread partition as a first solution to end ethnic conflicts. He also talked about how important it is, that international community has interest in facilitating the transfer of population and he gave example of Somalia 1993 and

Rwanda 1994 when outside interveners did not help the people. He also gave example of how Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict ended when the soviet intervener withdrew support for Ethiopia, and forced it to settle for an agreement, and here showed the importance of the international interventions of playing a role in making war or even forcing peace.

Downs B. Alexander in his article More Borders, Less Conflicts? Partition as Solution to Ethnic Civil Wars, sees that a third party is needed to negotiate settlement agreement in ethnic war because parties that have conflicts mistrust each other and are afraid of betrayal and may need a forcing agreement sometimes and he said “third party intervention- often recommended as a means to reassure and protect the parties in the transition period- is inevitably temporary, which causes actors to worry how their former adversary will behave after the intervener departs” (Downes, 2006). He also argued that sometimes interveners impose agreements that one or both opponents do not want or do not agree to, for their own interest and this may lead to more conflicts. “Moreover, third parties often intercede in conflicts to impose agreements that do not match what one or both of the belligerents want or believe it can achieve by fighting, and thus intervention may contain the seeds of further conflict.”

Nicolas Sambasis in his article What’s in a Line? Is Partition a Solution to Civil War? argued about the positive role of international interventions in ethnic conflict by giving the example of the peace in Cyprus, saying: “peace in Cyprus was partly enforced by the superior military strength of Turkey and

NATO's watchful eye" (Sambanis, & Schulhofer-Wohl, 2009). So, if the outsiders did not impose the peace, more damage and violence would have occurred, he also argued that an international recognition of a new sovereign state helps reducing the escalation of hostilities. Of course, he means that recognizing a state and declaring it as a sovereign one will reduce violence and combat between parties. Moreover, he gave example how Croats victory to secede from Yugoslavia happened as consequence of international recognition of the government of Croatia.

Another point of view of Tullberg and Tullberg in their article Separation or Unity, argued that sometimes if interveners strengthen the weaker combatant, they prolong the conflict and increase the violence. "It is hard to find a more effective way to prolong war and conflict than to support the weaker side. The United Nations with its preference for cease-fires and negotiations, tends to prolong conflicts by giving weaker combatant some shelter and opportunity to grow in strength" (Tullberg & Tullberg, 1997).

Ethnic conflicts and international interventions are big subjects that discussing them never ends. Years have proven that ethnic conflicts are difficult to end despite the agreements and peace accords between the parties that are in conflict. For international interventions, sometimes international community and super powers interfere to protect the minorities and solve the issues between different parties. They interfere, either to protect the rights of the human beings or simply because they have interests in interfering or both. Other times,

international community and super powers cannot interfere because either their interference will affect their national interests, or they cannot afford it. Interference is favorable in some situations because parties that are in conflict do not trust each other or they are not able to end the conflict by themselves, and other times interference is not favorable because it will be protecting the interests of the interfering countries and not the parties that are in conflict. In both cases, international interference is judged to be bad or good according to every situation.

Chapter 3

American's Changing Foreign Policy

Mesopotamia the “Cradle of Civilization”

By the early 9th millennium BCE, the first settled agriculture communities of the Middle East and the Mediterranean basin were originated in Mesopotamia known today by Iraq. This region gave rise to some of the world's earliest civilizations, including those of Assyria, Akkad, Sumer, and Babylon. This wealthy region was invaded by Persians, Greeks and Romans to become later a central part of the Islamic world. The region was later invaded by the Ottoman Empire and the nation states took independence after WWI (Khadduri, 2018). Mesopotamia was known as the “Cradle of Civilization” for the innovations and inventions which first appeared there 10,000 BCE from the first temples, to the creation of ceramic, and of intricate arts; the concept of government and private land ownership was developed in this era, as well as the trade concept. Imagination of invention was encouraged in warfare, political theory, agriculture, and trade; and technology and political system were first developed in this age, the Bronze Age. Mesopotamia was the home of cultural and technology advancements, that include mathematics and astronomy, writing and literature, the time concept, science and technology, medical practices (including dentistry), long distance trade, religion, agriculture techniques, astrology and the development of zodiac, and the domestications of animals. The writings, the city

concept, the wheel, and the beer were first invented in Mesopotamia, it was the home of the “first firsts;” the first school, first historians, first moral ideals, first pharmacopoeia, first animal fables, man’s first cosmogony and cosmology, first proverbs and sayings, first recorded war, the first St. George, the first sex symbolism, the first library catalogue, and the list never ends (Mark, 2020).

After that, thousands of years have passed. It was not expected that the mother of the world’s earliest civilizations turns into an authoritarian state that repressed its people. It was not expected that wars occupy the region for decades and sponsor terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism instead of spreading technology and science. A mother passes to her children everything she knows, she tries to provide them with best alimentary system, with best education, best culture; she passes to them her experiences, her talents. She tries to make them learn everything she knows to better their future and she develops herself to ensure their evolvment; the same logic must be applicable on the “Cradle of Civilization,” on the mother of civilizations.

The first inventor of literature and poetry, the first builder of temples, the first creator of arts and the city concept, the first inventor of the political system should be today giving lessons to the rest of the world about democracy and peace, about science development and technology, should be the leader in medicine, in engineering, in construction, in human development, and above all in human rights and dignity. The mother of civilization must give birth to better generations, to better people inhabiting its territories, to modern minds and open

ones; to a best economic system and world trade since it was the first who created the concept of trading. The mother that invented literature must distribute philosophy and language and poetry to the world. Mesopotamia back then, Iraq and neighbors today must be engaged and involved in the world's international affairs as a main player if not the hegemon. The area has all the criteria of an international big player, because besides civilization and culture and agriculture, what gives this area a privilege over the others is its possession of oil.

Iraq is highly rich in oil, according to NS energy Iraq alone ranks the 5th between the top 10 countries with the world's largest oil reserves (NS Energy, 2020). Oil is a scarce resource and a political commodity that states are concerned with its continued availability, a good management of oil reserves and industry, and good relations with neighbor states and international community could have reserved the place of Iraq in the world of international affairs and insured the prosperity and improved economy and living standards of the Iraqis. Instead of leadership on the regional level and instead of prosperity and peace, the Ba'ath party took power after a coup d'état in 1963 and Saddam Hussein came to power in 1979, taking the country for more than two decades to a totally different place. Saddam, who is an authoritarian ruler, repressed the Iraqi civilian population, declared war on Iran and invaded Kuwait. His oppression and the estimation of possession of weapons of mass destruction and the wars that he embarked on, led the UN to impose sanctions against him and

against Iraq, international community cut relations with him as well, and under the slogan of democratization and fighting terrorists in their homes and under the threat of weapons of mass destruction, the US invaded Iraq in 2003, toppled Saddam Hussein and changed the whole situation (The White House, 2016 & Fawcett, 2016).

Under President Saddam

Stability

Threatened by the Iranian revolution Saddam declared war on Iran. This war was the longest controversial war in the 20th century. It began in 1980 and ended in 1988. The consequences of this war were more than 1,000,000 Iraqi soldiers died (The Economist, 2018), too many were injured, and several civilians have also died. Two years of calm followed the Iraqi-Iranian war and again Saddam decided to invade Kuwait. Conflicts and wars and violence undermined the health of the Iraqi population, it created a long-term circumstance that has affected the quality of physical and mental health of the population and especially the ones who were involved in this war as well as their families. Also, bad infrastructure, transportation, communication, water, and electricity, were consequences of those wars and have affected the stability of the Iraqis (Shang, 2016). It is not true that under Saddam there was stability, Iraqi people were faced by all the difficulties mentioned above and were affected negatively in a way or another. Moreover, Saddam was accused of violence against women. UN

reported that imprisoned Iraqi women were raped by Iraqi personnel and were suffering from physiological trauma.

Also, many women were raped and videotaped, and the videos were sent to their family members to threaten and abuse them if they spoke against Saddam or opposed the regime. The wives and mothers or sisters of detainees were raped in front of them as punishment of opposition. A mother of three revolt men was executed and her body was left in front of everyone to seed fear in the hearts of Iraqis who think about opposing the authoritarian regime. Iraqis, and specially Kurds, were exposed to illegal chemical experiments, authorities amputated the tongue of any person who criticized Saddam, families that refused to enroll their children in the army or when the government needed them for certain programs or experiments, or weapon training, were threatened with losing their food ration card, and children labor was forced by the government. Iraq also, had the highest record number of disappearances worldwide with a number of 16,000 Iraqis that disappeared every year (The White House, 2006 & The World Bank, 2018). All the mentioned above are indicators of instability, and for the ones that argue that Iraq was more stable under Saddam this is a big proof of the contrary.

Lack of Democracy

Under Saddam the regime was an authoritarian one. Saddam was the only decision maker, no freedom of expression was allowed, no governmental representation, and any political opposition was subject to murder. Saddam was

Muslim Sunni, ruling a country that has a Shiite majority. Public meetings and gatherings for Koran readings for Shiites were prohibited, funerals of Shiites were not allowed if not organized by the government, Shiites were not allowed to broadcast on TV or radio stations, publications of Shiite books were also prohibited including prayer books, the government interfered in Shiite education, gatherings for Shiite holidays and Achuraa were not allowed and anyone who attended these events was putting him/herself under risk of murder (Chalabi, 1991). Iraqi government had conducted through the years murders and executions against Shiite Muslims and arrested their leaders. Shiite majority was living for a long time as minority, they shared a common memory of mass executions, nobody knew the real number of executed Shiites but at least the number was in tens of thousands.

This was not the daily struggle of the Shiites only; Sunnis and Kurds were living under the same circumstances. Sunnis that were not originated from Saddam's district of Tikrit were also deprived from their basic rights and were subject to collective punishments and were oppressed as well. Kurds were subject to ethnic cleansing and were expelled from the government. Non-Arab Iraqis were forced to change their names to Arab names or at least they had to adopt an Arab one, anything else will risk their homes and food rations card. When Kurds tried to revolt, they were faced by oppression and murder. They were forced to sign an agreement with Saddam and were threatened by the food supply as well as by fuel and food cuts. Moreover, freedom of speech was

prohibited (Cockburn, 2003). UN reported that 500 journalists were executed or killed through the years. Persons close to Saddam were controlling the media (Television, Radio, newspapers...). Foreign journalists had to work from governmental offices, and there was no privacy; emails, telephone conversations, reports were under surveillance. Internet and web were under surveillance as well, and not all webs could be accessible for Iraqi population (Waterbury, 2018).

Economic Prosperity

Due to the sanctions imposed by the UN against Iraq under Saddam, Iraqi people were extremely poor. The sanctions prohibited the trade between Iraq and all the other countries, except for humanitarian and medicine trade. Sanctions negatively affected the living standards of Iraqis, they declined the economic growth, harmed the industrialized and non-industrialized districts, affected the income of the population and caused famine and high rate of infant mortality (Real numbers are not available due to the authoritarian regime that was prohibited the UN and other NGOs to make research and statistics). UN signed with the Iraqi government the agreement of “Food for Oil” program because of the extreme starvation and famine of the population, in a way that allowed the government to sell a limited quantity of oil in return for food (UN, 2019).

Under President Bush

President Bush was a conservative Republican, coming from a rich family, had money and social class; he was religious and influenced by Protestant conservatives which helped in shaping his political vision. As isolationist American he used to claim that US is much extended, and if the 9/11 attack did not occur he would have probably limited the extension of the US in the world and concentrated on the internal affairs. After 8 months of his election, September 11 attack occurred and changed President Bush's ideology and vision upside down. The Bush Administration considered the attack as a declaration of war on America, its politics, and its ideology. In March 2002 President Bush gave a speech that was known later by the National Security Strategy of the United States of America and considered as the Bush Doctrine. The President claimed that "America is at war" (The White House, 2002), and it is the responsibility and obligation of the US administration to protect the people and the interest of the country, even if that means fighting the terrorists in their homes; that transformed President Bush from a conservative President to an intervening one. At that point President Bush believed that the interest of the US contradicted its vision which was isolationism, and the interest and the obligation then were to apply the extreme contrary concept and involve militarily in the world. The theory says that in order to spread peace and achieve a better world, one state goes to war and spread democracy; was President Bush's ideology Realist or Idealist one?

Realism and Idealism are two ideologies that differ by their concepts, but at the end of the day both share the same objective and aim to achieve peace and prevent war. Idealists or Liberals believe that humans are good in their nature but the set of rules that humans created for themselves are bad, and institutions, rules and laws can be fixed or changed to achieve peace. For them, states and non-state actors play a role in the global system and world politics, they also argue that economic or other forms of interdependence between states and non-state actors do have a big impact on the behavior of the state. For them, security and military are not the most dominant issues in the agenda of international politics, sometimes economic, social, or environmental issues may be more important.

Realists in their basic view of humans and human nature argue that people do bad things and pursue self-interest. States are like humans, they seek self-interest, and in the absence of world government, realists believe that each state is the final judge of its cause, and each state will try to maximize its power and use it to achieve its interest and defend itself, and if not peacefully, states will go to war. Realists believe that states are unitary: the state faces outside world as integrated unit, and a rational state always analyzes its cost vs its benefits to take the right decision. Realists seek management of world affairs and do not accept the notion of world peace. They only believe in balance of power and hegemony (Viotti & Kauppi, 2014). For them, power is defined by the population of a state, its territory, resources (oil, gas...) economy, military

power, technology, political stability, nuclear weapons, and any other resources or factors one state can use to influence another state. Not to forget to mention that power is measured by the ability of using it, for example, if one state possesses nuclear weapons and cannot use them when in conflict with another state, then the nuclear weapons do not count in that situation as an indicator of power. The more a state possesses of the indicators of power mentioned above, the more powerful it will become. Between Realism and Liberalism, President Bush adopted Wilsonian Liberalism, he went to war to spread democracy and defeat terrorism to protect the US. The notion is, the more the state is democratic, the more peace it will achieve, the more prosperity and better quality of life its people will be enjoying.

When a state is democratic, the human rights are respected, the rule of law is applicable, human dignity, freedom of speech and expression are protected, and terrorism will fade. When a state makes other states want what it wants which is democracy, peace will be achieved; if states are enjoying prosperity and good quality of life, if people are living with dignity, if they are not oppressed, murdered, kidnaped; if they have the stability enough to think about business and trading and making a living, if they enjoy capitalism, then they will not have hatred feeling for the successful countries, they will not spread terrorism, they will not get in conflict with other countries. To the contrary, they will have a common interest to protect; if a state exports its industrial goods and surpluses and imports what it needs then both importers and

exporters will be happy. In fact, it is a win-win situation for all democratic countries.

Take Iran for example, if it were a democratic country and did not have problems with the US about its nuclear development program, it will be in a completely different level of prosperity and economy. The sanctions prevented Iran from trade worldwide and exporting its oil. In fact, Iran is ranked 4th in the top 10 countries with world largest oil reserves, with 156 billion barrels and is also home to the world's second largest natural gas reserves- 32 trillion cubic meters and shares ownership of the world's largest gas field with Qatar (NS Energy, 2020). With this huge industry of oil and gas, and with clear vision and mission, Iran could have reserved its place between the top 20 if not 10 largest economies in the world. With its natural resources oil and gas mainly, its population of 82,913,906 according to the latest study made by the World Bank in 2019 (World Bank, 2020). with its military, its territory of 1.648 million kilometers, with its Middle Eastern location, Iran if democratic, could have played a big role in influencing positively the Middle East. It could have big potentials in influencing the international economy since it owns oil that is a scarce and necessary resource for all countries. Iran could open new big markets with high number of consumers to US, EU, China, and all the trading countries, it could have sold its goods and exported oil mainly in less prices because the more there is oil production worldwide the less the price will be.

This situation will be definitely a win-win situation, Iranian people and government will be busy enjoying good economy instead of conservatism, and conflicts and sanctions will turn into trade and good relations between the involved countries. President Woodrow Wilson in his Doctrine: the World must be Made Safe for Democracy, argues that, “neutrality is no longer feasible or desirable where peace of the world is involved” (Wilson, 1918). For President Wilson, the target is not to dominate the world, or to conquer it, the aim is to make a peaceful world, a safe one, where people have voices in their own governments. For him, it is a privilege for Americans to fight and spend their blood for the principle that gave US birth which is democracy. It is clear from the speech of the President how much democracy and spreading democracy and fighting for democracy is important in the world of Nation States.

According to Wilson, democracy is the basis of the American Constitution, and for him to say that it is a privilege for the Americans to spend blood when fighting to achieve democracy, then it must have big significance behind it. It means that the US and democracy are not separable and to achieve peace and enjoy democracy and prosperity in the US the concept of democracy must be spread and adopted by all the other states; the democracy concept will not achieve its target and aim if applicable only in one state which is the US, it is an obligation to be spread and share with other states.

Germany and Japan are two big examples of the success of this concept. In 1944, Under President Franklin Roosevelt, the US invaded Germany and

Japan, it ended Nazism and opened Japan that was isolated from the world. US helped the two countries to rebuild their constitutions, their military, their economy through spreading peace and democracy and through spreading Liberalism and Capitalism. US influenced positively Japan and Germany and helped them to achieve peace in applying and sharing the same values that the US believes in. Today Japan is the third largest economy in the world and Germany is the fourth (Focus Economics, 2020), and none of that could have happened without the exchange of science, technology, and industry, and without the openness and trade between the two countries and the rest of the world.

Democracy for a Better World?

The target of Bush's invasion of Iraq under spreading democracy to achieve peace and his engagement in the war on terror that lasted more than 8 years, was to open Iraq and make it a model of democracy in the Middle East. By doing so the other authoritarian regimes will follow Iraq steps and the Middle Eastern huge market will open to each other, and to the rest of the countries, then a better cycle of the world's economy will be achieved, and terrorism will end. Or his target could have been to follow purely the American interest by defeating terrorism to protect the people and territory, and give lesson to the world to not mess with the US's administration. US has been always accused of putting its interest above all, more than that it was accused of interfering in the affairs of other states according to its interest.

Example of that is Al Khashoggi case; Al Khashoggi was a Saudi Arabian Journalist who was killed in his consulate, on the Turkish territories. It was proven that Saudi Arabia or the staff of the consulate covered by the Saudi ruling family was responsible for the crime, all the public opinion was against this crime, and since Al Khashoggi was a journalist, the incident took a big attention in the media because the last consider it as an attack on all media and freedom of speech and expression; if a journalist was cut to pieces because he gave an opinion or opposed the regime, then all media, journalists and writers are under threat. Journalists, since they control the media, the TV, the radio, newspapers, and magazines have raised the voice worldwide due to this murder and highly influenced the masses against KSA. When an issue goes publicly, then it cannot be hidden anymore or covered, states or judges or the responsible parties must take action.

The US under President Trump back then was pushed to punish Saudi Arabia for that crime and many pressures were made on the US in that regard; but despite that, the US refused to punish or cut relations with Saudi Arabia because the interest in keeping relations was bigger than the interest of punishing Saudi Arabia and cutting relations. US had big interests with Saudi Arabia; US and KSA signed an arms deal in which Saudi Arabia purchased arms from US totaling \$110 billion immediately upon signing and \$350 billion later over 10 years (David, 2017), so it is not in favor of Trump and the US to cut relations with KSA. The interest is higher than cutting relations; so for the critics

of US, spreading peace, engaging, interfering and influencing in the world affairs according to its interest and benefits, for them it does not matter if the president or commander in chief is a Democrat or Republican, a liberal or realist, the president will act and react according to the situation and in favor of the US benefits.

The president will apply the benefit/cost analysis and when the interest is higher than the cost, then US will influence and engage, and when the cost is higher than the benefits, then the US will not engage even though the situation contradicts with its ideology and values like al Khachoggi crime. If the US is concerned with feeding the poor, defending the ones that do not have voices in their governments, resolving conflicts and consolation between ethnic groups, then why the US and all the international community stood aside, watching the massacres and ethnic cleansing in Rwanda? If the Interest of the US was to defeat terrorism, and spread democracy, then why the American administration did not invade Iran first; knowing that the relation between the two countries is bad since Iran is developing a nuclear program that is forbidden by the UN and the non-proliferation treaty, and sanctions were imposed highly on Iran since the tackling of the Shah' by the Iranian revolution. Then, why the US did not begin with Iran as an example for democracy? Because the power of a state is measured by the ability of that state to use this power. For example, US possesses nuclear weapons but the inability of using these weapons against a country or humankind in general make it lose this power. So, the inability or the

high cost that US will pay for invading Iran was high so its interest was in the invasion of Iraq instead.

As counter argument for the mentioned above, US has always helped people all over the world when it was possible. US plus representatives of 49 countries drew up the United Nations Charter, that shares the same values and norms as the US. It shares spreading peace through democracy, liberalism, capitalism, maintaining of international peace and security, protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, promoting sustainable development, and upholding international law (United Nations, 2018). UN is highly funded by the United States, 24% of the UN funds come from the US, which makes it the biggest donor. In 2016 alone the US contributed more than \$10 billion, roughly one fifth of its collective budget (Shendrun, 2017).

The UN works on providing every child with education, it also works on spreading awareness about marrying children especially under-aged girls, they work on spreading awareness about birth control to diminish poverty rate, and illiteracy, and child labor because parents cannot afford to provide for their 10, 13, 17 children. All these contributed in bettering the society and fighting poverty and illiteracy, they contributed in making children, boys and girls, know their rights, to say no to abuse, to seek education, to be better persons and cultured individuals. The UN influences a well cultured generation that will change the world and erase terrorism someday, so what is the wrong that the US is doing in funding the UN?

It is true that the US is spreading its values, but they are good values for a better world. US also is the highest funder of the World Bank which put big emphasis on the poorest countries, it lends money to private companies and financial institutions in developing countries, it heavily focuses on infrastructure as dams, electrical grids, irrigation system and roads (World Bank, 2018). Of course, the receiving countries must follow certain leads or conditions to take the money, but again if it is applicable and for the good of the countries why not aiding to develop poor countries and bettering the quality of life of its people. US also collaborate in spreading education through the US aid program that gives the opportunity to talented children to continue their education in the most prestigious universities in the world; some scholars are really gifted and can make a difference in their communities; they aim to be doctors or engineers or businesspeople or intellectuals, but they cannot afford the tuitions of the programs. The US give them scholarships and contribute to pursuing their dreams and this make the world a better place to live in.

The US besides giving science, technology, and inventions to the rest of the world, it helped them make their lives easier. The US shifted the humans from an era to another, it shared with the rest of the world the biggest invention that is the internet. People can see and share and attend what is happening in any spot of the world from their homes through a smart phone, tablet, or laptop. The internet helped in developing the banking system, the economic system, the industrial system, and anything that anyone can imagine is related to the

internet. The US made the world a small global village, and spread modernization and globalism and that is part of democracy and peace, and that is what makes the US exceptional.

The policy of spreading democracy and American values at a bearable cost when it was possible and on the other side putting the US interest first when the last is in danger, made the US previous administrations swing between Idealism and Liberalism which contributed to keeping a certain balance in the world. Bush's invasion was also a mix between Liberalism and Realism, the interest of the US was to defeat terrorism and protect the American people, which was realism, and at the same time invading Iraq to spread democracy for peace was liberalism. Had Iraq made the same results as Germany and Japan, this invasion would have brought peace to the Middle East, improved the life of the Iraqis and defeated terrorism, and after 20 years of war, Iraq may be on the same list of Germany and Japan economic wise. Unfortunately, the results were different than expected specially with the changing American administrations and this did not affect only Iraq for the last 20 years, it has also affected the whole Middle East and changed the game and players and distribution of power in international affairs.

The Iraq Invasion

After months of diplomatic attempts to engage President Saddam Hussein failed, President Bush launched war and invaded Iraq. On May 1, 2003, the President claimed that the mission was accomplished, and the main war had ended. On

January 30, 2004 the National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice admitted for the first time that no weapons of mass destruction were found, and the American administration was mistaken. In 2004, Al Zarqawi's group declared formally allegiance to Osama Bin Laden and became known as al Qaeda in Iraq. This group committed murder, kidnappings, and bombing on the Iraqi territory. In 2005 the US contributed to establishing the first democratic Iraqi government ever. The role of this government was to prepare elections. The first elected president of the government was Ghazi Mashal Ajil al-Yawer and the country became a Parliamentary democracy (Dimitru, 2011).

In 2006, Al-Zarqawi was killed in an US air strike, and Abu Ayyub Al Masri succeeded him. Masri and Omar Al-Baghdadi another successor of al-Zarqawi, announced the establishment of the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI). In 2007 President Bush announced the surge of an additional 30,000 US troops to stop the mass of sectarian violence between the Sunnis and Shiites and US forces armed the Sunni group to fight ISI and signed a treaty to leave in 2011. In 2009 President Obama planned to end the US's mission in Iraq and withdraw by the end of 2010. In the same year Al Masri was killed by the Iraqi security forces with the support of US troops and Abu Baker al Baghdadi was elected by the ISI to be the new leader. In 2011, US troops officially withdrew ending eight years of military involvement in Iraq, and Al Baghdadi sent ISI operatives to Syria to open a new branch.

ISIS the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria launched war on all parties that did not join it. It began with its terrorist attack in Iraq and Syria bombing and killing civilians, seizing cities like Falluja and Ramadi in Iraq and al Raqqa in Syria. Abu Baker was declared the Caliph, who is the leader of Muslims everywhere. ISIS conquered many cities and one of them was al Mosul, 2nd largest city in Iraq, raped the women, abused the people extensively, and was responsible for mass executions. President Obama was obliged to return to Iraq and announced air strikes against ISIS to defeat them in Iraq and Syria. A broad international coalition composed from seventy-nine nations and institutions was created to fight ISIS including the Arab League, The European Union and NATO; and in Dec 2017 the US led coalition reported that less than 1000 ISIS fighters remained in Iraq and Syria.

In 2019, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani along with his foreign minister Jawad Zarif made his first official trip to Iraq, meeting the highest revered religious authority in Iraq Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, few hours later Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, visited Baghdad reporting that his administration was concerned about the increase of Iranian activity in Iraq. Under President Trump, Abu Baker Al Baghdadi was killed by US Special Forces in Idlib Syria, and in 2020, the powerful commander of Iran's Quds Forces was killed at the Baghdad Airport by a US drone strike (Hamassed, 2020).

The Invasion Outcomes

The war took more time than expected, it was the longest war in the US history after Afghanistan, and it lasted more than 10 years. The cost of the war was the death of around 8000 US soldiers and military contractors, estimated death of 272,000 to 329,000 Iraqis (Savell, 2018), other than the death of the people due to famine, to medical disabilities, to displacement, and traumas. It was estimated that the American administration has spent around \$4 trillion on the Iraqi war (Hamasaheed, 2020), in addition to the loss of the American masses that became against the American involvement in Iraq and asked the Administration to focus and spend money on internal issues.

The creation of ISIS was also a high cost that not only US, Iraq and Syria paid for, but all the countries and innocent people that were exposed to ISIS terrorist attacks. Another cost to pay was the maximization of the power of Iran in the Middle East region, and the creation of a new friendship between Iraq and Iran after the historical conflicts between Saddam and Iran which costed the Sunni Iraqis a high price and it did not benefit the American Administration in anyway. When applying the cost/benefit analysis the costs were much higher than the benefits, the claimed plan by Bush's Administration was to invade, topple Saddam, help the Iraqis with their constitution, spread democracy, and withdraw; instead, the war lasted 10 years followed by 10 years of chaos, terrorist attacks, poverty, displacements, devastating infrastructure, and a huge

budget spent, and the rise of new terrorist activists. Was it a strategic mistake of the American Administration? Or miscalculation?

Chapter 4

Reshuffling the Cards

The Consuming ME

President Barak Hussein Obama, a liberal democratic president took office in 2009, coming with a new vision and mission for the US that totally contradicted the vision and actions of his predecessor President Bush. President Obama was a mixture of internationalist, idealist, and realist president, as he refers to himself, believed that the US is not responsible for fixing all the problems of the globe, and overextension is not always the solution to impose peace specially when the interests of US are not affected. American soldiers should not be put at risk and American blood should not be spent to prevent humanitarian disasters if US is not at risk. In his interview to The Atlantic, that was later known by the Obama Doctrine, the President argues that there are going to be times where the US cannot do anything about violation of human rights, innocent people being killed, citizens that are oppressed, and sometimes interfering will conflict with the US interest but there are times where US can do something about it; the US security interest and the American people security and interest is above all.

The US in comparison with previous superpowers did not act based on its self-interest only, the US has been interested in establishing norms that benefit everyone, when it is possible to help and save lives at an affordable cost, the US will not be late in doing so. There is a “playbook” in Washington that US

presidents must follow when it comes to the use of military power, this playbook prescribes responses to different events and it works when there is a direct threat to the US, for Obama this playbook can also be a trap that leads to bad decisions, and he meant the interference in the Syrian war to topple Al Assad regime. He was convinced back then that interfering militarily will cost American blood and money and he was not willing to take action and the responsibility of paying this high cost as President Bush did in the Iraqi war. For President Obama, to be judged on the war he did not enter is better than being judged on the one he did.

President Obama was convinced that US should choose where it can make real impact before interfering. In his opinion, there are never going to be a time when the US can erase all the misery from the world. He also believed that the US must share the leadership in the world and act rationally and know when and where to enter and when not. Understanding of the US history with other countries is a necessity before entering, like the history with Iran and Indonesia; moreover people's background and behavior must be studied and understood before taking any action. Studies must be done when entering to countries where its people think that the US and the West have anti-Muslim xenophobia, people in the Islamic states have a pre-judgment of the West and the US that the last have phobia of Islam and as consequences these people or governments will not be convinced that the US will interfere for good reasons, or have the intentions to help. They have already an estimation in their minds about the US and is

perception of them and their culture, the intervention in that case will make more enemies to America.

“Why America’s enemies are its enemies and why its friends are its friends?” (Goldberg, 2016), President Obama asked this question wondering why his Administration does not bomb Al Qaeda leaders in Pakistan directly and why Pakistan should be considered as an American ally, as well as America’s Sunni Arab allies especially Saudi Arabia. Gulf countries and KSA under the ruling family heavily funded the Wahhabist madrassas to teach the fundamentalist version of Islam and spread it everywhere; President Obama who lived in Indonesia claimed that “Islam in Indonesia is much more Arab in orientation than it was when I lived there” (Goldberg, 2016).

For him, a country cannot involve in the modern world if it is oppressing its people and the success of a society is measured by how it treats its women, so why give privilege to Saudi Arabia more than Iran? The majority of the hijackers of 9/11 attack were Saudis and not Iranian, for him Saudi Arabia must learn to share power in the Middle East with Iran. This competition helped to feed proxy wars in Yemen, Iraq and Syria and opened an unclosed battle-ground in the Middle East. Saudis as well as the Iranians need to find an efficient solution to achieve peace to provide balance to the Middle East and let US be concerned more about other foreign issues like China and Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as he argues.

China is rising and rising fast, Asia is the future for the US and the last should not waste its time solving unsolvable problems in the Middle East. While putting all effort and losing American soldiers and spending billions of dollars in the Middle East, China conquered economically the world; so why this focus on the Middle East. After the unsuccessful Libyan intervention, President Obama was convinced that the Middle East will not be fixed neither on his watch nor on the watch of the coming generation. The Middle East was consuming the US for a long time and it is best to be avoided, it is a non-strategic plan to continue to invest in it, to the contrary, the US should withdrew from it.

President Obama inherited the Iraqi war from his predecessor President Bush, He entered the White House with the willingness to withdraw from Iraq and Afghanistan. When his Secretary of Defense Robert Gates advised him to interfere militarily in the Syrian war, he replied by: “shouldn’t we finish up the two wars we have before we look for another?” For him using force to prove that you are capable, and you can keep your word is the worst decision ever that any administration could take, and that was also part of the continuous debate of whether Obama should interfere militarily in Syria or not. “Dropping bombs on someone to prove that you’re willing to drop on someone is just about the worst reason to use force” (Goldberg, 2016).

The rise of ISIS made Obama conclude that the Middle East was a total mess, and the US can do nothing about it, for him Islam must reconcile itself to modernity and openness and take reform actions like some of the reforms that

have changed Christianity. They are the problem, and they are their own solution as well, and Islamist terrorism will not be defeated unless they make those reforms.

As a commander in chief, President Obama declared the withdrawal from Iraq in Dec 2011, where the last US troops officially pulled out of Iraq ending eight years of military involvement. The withdrawal from a country that was oppressed for decades by a Sunni Muslim Saddam, who was oppressing a majority of Shiites, followed by eight years of war between the US and Iraq and between the Iraqis themselves, and the changing of the US foreign policy towards Iraq and the Middle East had led to heavy consequences on all the parties involved in this war as well as on the major powers in the region.

What were the consequences of the changing American Administrations on Iraq, country and people, on the US itself, on the regional powers in the Middle East like Iran, KSA, Turkey and Israel, and on the world's main major powers China and Russia? All these questions will be examined and analyzed next.

Rise of ISIS

US withdrew from Iraq leaving behind it a big vacuum; by default, any vacuum would be filled. So ISIS, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria did not waste any time and took the opportunity to fill it rapidly. ISIS presented the fundamentalist and radical version of Islam and its target was to revive the Islamic state and the

caliphate by using force and terrorist attacks. As if it wasn't enough for the Iraqis the years of oppression, of tyranny, of kidnapping, of raping, misruling, poverty, discrimination according to ethnicity, non-allowance of practicing religious rituals under Saddam. As if it wasn't enough for them the loss of lives, the poverty, the famine, the displacement, the devastated infrastructure, the poor medication, the traumas, the fear, the harsh nights on the people who lost their families and loved ones. As if the instability, the lost generation, and the refugees were not enough for the Iraqis. As if their ruined cities and villages, roads, buildings, homes, lands, their past and future were not enough.

With the rise of "Da'esh" or ISIS Iraqi men, women, children and aged people have lived with a big fear, bigger than the fear under Saddam, bigger than the fear under the eight years of war. ISIS did not plant the fear in the heart of the Iraqis only, but the Syrians, the Lebanese, and the rest of the world. Terrorism is different than war. Under war the people know that they are under attack, sometimes they have a choice to leave, to stay, or to participate; also, a law of war exists and usually the international community and the UN try as much as they can to protect the humanitarian rights and the rights of the civilians or people not involved in the war. When at war there is an international law to protect the captured soldiers, to feed them, to provide them with the needed medications, to keep them alive... It is true that there is always a possibility of not respecting the rules and laws but at least there is a law and states are pressured to abide by it.

Unlike terrorism, where terrorists do not abide by any rule and any law, there is no specific time and place for the terrorist attack, so innocent people anywhere anytime can be exposed to terrorism and not protected. This was the case with Da'esh or ISIS that were committed to spread horror and terror everywhere, they wanted to spread Islamism by force and any opponent would have paid his/her life. ISIS began by committing terror on the Yazidis in Iraq, to al Raqqa in Syria, to Jourd Arsar in Lebanon, to extend to anyplace they can reach. They committed the ugliest crimes; raped women and girls under "jihad al nikah" where they allow themselves to rape women and girls and under aged girls to please themselves and reenergize themselves to continue the war. ISIS was known by the massacres and genocides that they committed against certain parties to send a certain message to this party and punish them, ISIS declared war on Iraqis in general and on Shiites in particular, their main opponents were the Shiite groups. Too many bombings, killing, executions were committed in Iraq and Syria targeting the Shiite and the Kurds, from the suicide car bombings in Baghdad killing 55 persons and wounding 288, to a suicide bombing in a funeral of a politician's relative in khormato killing 42 persons and wounding 75, to the uncounted bombings and suicidal attacks in Iraq and Syria killing and ending the life of thousands of innocent people.

ISIS declared war on Coptic Egyptian Christians, they bombed their churches and kidnaped them, they tortured and executed them and who will forget the double bombing of two churches in Egypt at the Palm Sunday that left

more than 70 deaths and many injured people (Awad, 2017). The Christian Egyptians were similar to the Shiite Iraqis for ISIS. ISIS declared war on the Ethiopian Christians, on all the Western states and Eastern States and any state or individual that opposed it. Kidnapped people were retained in cages and then burned collectively and broadcasted live or aired later through the internet to the whole world and the families of the victims to see the massacres. Women were raped right in front of their families, homes were burned and destroyed under the eyes of their owners, many young boys and men were forced to join ISIS and forced to commit crimes and rape otherwise they will be killed and that led to big traumas of those men that did not want to join or commit crimes but had no choice.

ISIS was brainwashing the masses through the religious people or Sheikhs through continuous meetings and through Internet as well and they succeeded in making Islamic people join them. Since announcing its Caliphate, ISIS was responsible of more than 140 terrorist attacks, killing more than 2000 people and wounding thousands in 29 countries other than the attacks in Iraq and Syria; from north America: Quebec, New York, Dallas, California, Philadelphia, and Orlando Florida; to Europe: Brussels, Paris, Nice, Copenhagen, Russia, London, and Germany to Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Kuwait, Lebanon; to Africa: Nigeria, Somalia; to Melbourne and Sydney in Australia, to Bangladesh and Afghanistan and New Zealand (Lister T, 2018). They shed the tears of the mothers, the fathers, the

wives, and husbands of many innocent victims. They ended the lives of the people and left a big trace and traumas in the memories of the survivors. It was a very difficult time on all the world's populations, citizens of the most powerful and modern countries in the world could not be protected from terrorism anymore.

President Bush when declared war on Iraq after the 9/11 attack, he claimed that his main target was to defeat terrorists in their homes, after eight years of war and with the changing policy of President Obama, ISIS rose from Iraq the country where a whole war and military intervention was made to defeat terrorism, but this time the terrorists where more powerful and able to break through the most powerful countries, the hegemon the US, the major powers like Russia, Germany and France; the peaceful countries like Denmark and New Zealand.

The changing foreign policy or the unfinished business that was left behind in Iraq created a big mess, the target was not reached, and terrorism exacerbated all over the world. Was Bush's strategic plan the cause of this failure from the beginning? Or the American changing policy of Obama and the vacuum after the withdrawal in 2011 was the cause? Or this combination led to these consequences? Was it the rejections by the local people themselves the cause of failure? In either case the outcome is one, more terrorism and terrorist attacks that the whole world had to pay for and the price was high because nothing can bring back the lost lives. One strategic mistake and one changing

policy had cost innocent people their lives, but maybe it was not a mistake, maybe it was the real plan and after all, hegemony and big states and superpowers count their costs and benefits on the long term, and maybe the life of thousands of people will cost less than the State's interest, so they will not hesitate to put their interest as priority.

Rising of Iran

Iran the neighbor of Iraq, and a major power in the Middle East, had historical conflicts and competition with Iraq. Iran is an Islamic Shiite State and Iraq has Shiites as majority but were oppressed by the Sunnis. After the toppling of Saddam, Iran took the opportunity to interfere in Iraq and revive the Shiite's resurgence, but the presence of American military on the Iraqi territory was a deterrent for Iran. Obama came to office and other than withdrawing from Iraq, he signed a nuclear deal with Iran. In 2015 Iran agreed to a long-term deal on its nuclear program with the P5+1 group of world powers – the US under President Obama, Russia, China, UK, France and Germany. Under the accord, Iran agreed to limit its sensitive nuclear activities and allow the international inspectors in return for the lifting of crippling economic sanctions (BBC, 2018).

For Obama, the nuclear agreement was made out of pessimism not optimism, Obama's intentions were never to open a new era of relations between the US and Iran. The target was to make dangerous countries less dangerous (Goldberg, 2016). The President's point was that when the US agrees with Iran on a Nuclear deal, than Iran will not be able to continue the

development of its nuclear weapons and program and this will minimize the power of Iran and at the same time the US will be able at any time to send experts to Iran and will have the access to visit suspicious locations and inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency monitor continuously Iran's declared nuclear sites (BBC, 2019). This way Iran will be under the eyes of the US and the danger of nuclear developments and proliferation will be prevented because even if Iran was under sanctions from UN, US and many other countries, Iran will not stop to develop nuclear weapons and that conflicts with interests of US security.

The US also, will not spend money and time on the Middle East anymore, to the contrary after lifting the sanctions on Iran, the Iranian economy will be affected positively as well as the US economy and the world economy. "Sanctions costed Iran more than \$ 160 billion in oil revenue from 2012 to 2016 alone" (BBC, 2019), so imagine how \$160 billion can influence positively the world's economy. Moreover, the world will benefit from the Iranian oil, and Iran as well will benefit from exporting its oil. States that import oil will not be exclusively dependent on the same states that export to them usually, like Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states especially, and the US will not spend any more money on the Middle East and will benefit from this unspent huge amount to invest in other places and focus on rising China. For Obama, when the sanctions will be lifted on Iran, Iran and the Iranian people will enjoy a good economy and experience a better quality of life and prosperity and freedom, they will quit

terrorism. Because after all one of the state objectives is welfare, and states as well as their citizens and people peruse happiness and a good life and prosperity, and if Iran and the Iranians are enjoying a good life why will they attack the US anymore? Why would they sponsor terrorism anymore? To the contrary they will seek to achieve peace and stability because good economy needs peace and stability.

Nevertheless, the withdrawal of the US troops from Iraq followed by the Iranian Nuclear Deal gave Iran more power because after the US withdrew, Iran as ISIS, ran to fill the vacuum that the US had left and took the opportunity to influence if not control Iraq. Iran shares Shiites with Iraq as religion as well as the borders; the Shiite majority was oppressed, deprived, offended, and discriminated by Saddam throughout the years. This majority sought revenge, and if not revenge at least felt that they had the right to govern themselves and choose their destination, and why thinking religiously, because unfortunately ethnicity and religion are planted in the heads and hearts of the Middle Easterners since they are born. The ethnic discrimination is spread and taught since day one among children, there is always the concept of us and them, a region for us and another for them, a school for us and school for them, the concept of if we do not unite, they will attack or invade us. So, with an oppressed Iraqi population passionate about governing themselves and with an unstable situation with the withdrawal of the Americans and the rise of ISIS,

Iran took the opportunity of all this mess to interfere and reinforce its position which will give it more power in the Middle East.

The presence of ISIS helped Iran to reinforce its position as well where it has presented itself as the savior to defeat terrorism and protect the Iraqis, and its country and its people as well. For a long time, sanctions, embargos, and blockades were imposed on Iran due to its Nuclear program development from the United Nations, the US, and Western countries, Iran had bad relations and in continuous competition with Saudi Arabia, Israel and lately Turkey. So, Iran found in the American withdrawal from Iraq a vent to breath. The target was big, Iran as an Islamic state believes in Wilayat al Fakihi and aim to spread its Islamic version in the Middle East. It has allies in Syria, and in Lebanon presented by Hezbollah, its main competitor is the Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia that represent the Sunni conservative version of Islam. The changing American policy opened the doors to Iran to create new allies in Iraq, represented officially in the Iraqi government, they have high number of followers, and share same beliefs and values as Iran, like al Hashed al Chaabi political party and most of the Shiite political parties. Because the Shiites are the majority, they have the biggest number of representatives in the Iraqi government and even if the Kurds and the Sunnis are represented, they are still the minority and will be represented on this basis, so the final say in all the governmental issues will be for the Shiites, from the foreign policy of the state to the economic and trading strategies, to the oil issue and everything else.

The Shiite parties were coordinating on regular basis with the Iranian state and applying its agenda in Iraq. By doing so, Iran has benefited from the trading with Iraq and that has influenced its economy positively. It has influenced the oil industry but not heavily because western foreign companies are dominating this field. Iran revived the Shiite resurgence and profited from its big masses; when a state has a bigger number of followers (most of the Shiites in Iran and Iraq) and allies that hold its same causes or issues, then this state will be able to influence more on the internal level, on the regional level, as well as on the international one.

Iran has profited from Iraq to support militarily and provide with the needed soldiers and weapons to its important ally in the region Al Assad. After the revolution in Syria and after the rise of ISIS, President Assad was not able to control the situation alone. Iran, Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon share the same political vision, are allies, and consider that the fall of one will harm the others. For these reasons, Iran was obliged to support Al Assad regime and provide him with the needed weapons, militants and soldiers, food, medication, money, oil and gas; and Iraq was the territory that the aids have passed through. The revolutions in the Arab world were supported internationally by big states, by embassies and consulates, by international organizations and by wealthy Arab states like Saudi Arabia and Qatar. President Obama himself admitted in his doctrine that the US supported financially the Syrian revolts but will not support them militantly (Goldberg, 2016). President Assad would have fallen long time

ago without the Russian support and the Iranian one, and the Iraqi territories heavily helped Iran to transport the aids because there were tight controls on helping Syria and there was lots of pressure to topple Assad.

The unity between Iran, Iraq, Hezbollah, and Syria plus the full support of the Russians prevented toppling the Syrian President and gave this group of allies more power in the region. On the Iraqi level, the Iranian interference and the maximization of its power bothered the Sunni group and the Kurds and many Shiite groups and/or any Iraqi that believes in secularism or has just the dream of living freely and peacefully in his/her sovereign country. The Kurds for example wanted to be independent from Iraq for a long time, they fought for their independence, they have passed a referendum which stated that most Kurds want to be independent from Iraq, but US, Iran as well as Turkey and the Iraqi government disallowed them from doing so, because simply the Kurds region was an oil rich region and none of the mentioned above had interest in their independence. "Al Hashd al Shaabi" invaded the Kurds region and took Kirkuk and disabled the idea of independence of the Kurds (Abdullah, 2017).

The Iraqi Sunnis also felt aggrieved. If Saddam was a dictator and mistreated his people that should not mean that it was the fault of all the Sunnis, who also lived oppression and tyranny and dreamt about a free and democratic Iraq. Eventually, the free Iraqi people, the minorities, the people who want prosperity, and peace were switching from bad to worse regimes and governments, first under Saddam, than under the US invasion, then paid the

price of the US withdrawal that was the rise of ISIS and the interference of Iran in their internal issues and heavily influence their sovereignty. Due to this interference, and due to application of the Iranian agenda, the divisions between Iraqis and the hatred have escalated. They could not enjoy democracy because it was a consensual democracy anyway, and the battleground, the war, and the disunity prevented the government to take decisions that reflect the interest of Iraq and the Iraqi citizens. Every decision taken had to be best for the Shiite parties and for Iran as well and that is not how nation states grow and develop and protect the dignity of their people.

As a conclusion, the withdrawal did not only strengthen the Iranian position in Iraq and the Middle Eastern region, it weakened the possibility of building a democratic sovereign Iraq. The Iranian aids and support for the Syrian regime contributed to the failure of the Syrian revolution and aborted the possibility of a democratic Syria. Lebanon is also influenced by Iran, where the last has allies presented by Hezbollah and applying the Iranian interest in Lebanon, they have a big mass and are represented in the government; with one sensitive difference that Lebanon shares borders with Palestine that is occupied by Israel that is in competition with Iran. Iran and Israel use Lebanon as their battleground and the maximization of power of both Iran and Israel has bad significance on this small country that is already very busy in reconciling the ethnic conflicts between its citizens after thirty years of war and occupied with the disastrous economic situation that will lead its people to famine and poverty.

The maximization of power of regional players influences badly small countries, unstable countries and countries that are weak enough for many reasons, either they have finished war recently and still are unstable like Iraq, or they have heavy ethnic and religious conflicts within the country like Lebanon or have economic issues like both Iraq and Lebanon. The weakest countries become the battle ground for the major and superpowers and only them and their people pay the highest price. President Obama's foreign policy did not achieve its target in the Middle East as well as the policy of President Bush at least at the short run, Iran and Saudi Arabia did not learn how to share power, and a peaceful Middle East was not created. Islam did not learn how to conceal their griefs and take reform actions to step into modern Islam. But at least Iran was under the watch of the US and had big interest in keeping limits and boundaries when influencing or interfering in the business of other countries or when getting in conflict with its competitors or with the US, because of the new economic era that was opened with the West, especially with Russia, China, and European countries like France, Germany and Italy. Iran had interest in keeping good relations with all of them to better its economy after many years of sanctions and embargos, and the Western countries had interest in good relations with Iran because they needed its gas and oil. First, the quality of oil in the region is high; second, Europe and Iran are geographically near, so delivering the products will take less time; and third the deals and prices will be better because of the bigger competition in the oil market.

The Realistic Foreign Policy

On November 8, 2016, America elected President Trump. Trump is a Republican President who is different than all his predecessor presidents. He is a very rich businessman, who has a different way in talking, acting, answering, and addressing the public; he has a different way in resolving problems and reacting to issues. President Trump had a different agenda from President Obama, and he was very clear about it. He argued that the world had been consuming the US for a long time and US was paying on behalf of the rest and on behalf of its alliances and friends. The trade between the US and the rest of the world was unfair for the US, also the last had been allowing all immigrants from all over the world to become its citizens and that was not appreciated. Maybe for all these reasons, and many others, Americans wanted to elect a different president who had a different vision for the US and is willing to apply a different foreign policy.

The US and especially after the cold war was playing the role of the hegemon and was the world superpower, using mostly the “soft power” that Joseph Nye talked about in his article the Two Sides of American Exceptionalism in the Daily Star; and by soft power it is meant the UN, US aid, NATO and any organization that spread the American values of democracy, peace and liberalism, to let the other states and people living in those states want what the US wants (Nye, 2018). As President Trump argues in his full transcript at the United Nations General Assembly speech in 2018, the world was abusing

the US, the US companies were cheated, the American workers were victims, and the American wealth was plundered and transformed (Deutch, 2018). The US was spending and providing peace and paying to protect the security and economy of others instead of protecting its citizens. The US gave the Chinese the technology and now the Chinese are producing the same smart phones, laptops, tablets, electronic and smart machines, and they are benefiting from this technology but the US is getting nothing in return. To the contrary, that will drive the US to lose economically.

Moreover, the trade between the US and the other states and especially China was imbalanced, and the world trade system was also unfair. States that were admitted to the World Trade Organization were violating the principals on which the organization was based, while the US must commit to the rules and norms, these countries were using the US and were rigging the system in their favor. They were engaged in forced technology transfer and the theft of intellectual property. The United States lost over 3 million manufacturing jobs and 60,000 factories after China joined the WTO (Deutch, 2018). For a long time, the US opened its economy to the world and allowed foreign goods from all over the world to flow freely across the borders and what the other states did? They simply did not grant the US free reciprocal access to their markets. These states manipulated their currencies and subsidized their goods, and this policy led the US to lose 13 trillion in trade deficits over the last two decades.

The US also spent high amount of money on military and organizations to protect its allies, and the US was the highest donor of the UN and the World Bank. OPEC and OPEC nations were ripping off the rest of the world and US is defending these nations for nothing. Also, the US hosted immigrants from all over the world and especially Latin Americans who came freely and crossed the border and that is contributing to increasing the unemployment level of the Americans. Trump argued that the US under his Presidency would not accept that any state take advantage of it. New policies to resolve these problems were imposed, America and American people's interest are first, and America will be great again.

President Trump homogeneously with his changing foreign policy, aborted the Iranian Nuclear Deal, because he was convinced that the deal was unfair, and Iran will not stop the development of its nuclear program and proliferation; the relations between the two states got worse than ever. President Trump was escalating the conflict trying to reach a better deal with Iran, but did not make any progress in this regard; to the contrary, the assassination of Soleimani in Iraq under Trump and the escalating conflict with the US gave Iran more power in the Middle East. President Trump made sure that Germany, France, Britain, Russia and China and all states that have interest with the US to cut their relations with Iran by threatening them with imposing sanctions on them, like stop trading with them, or take back the privileges that the US gave them. Countries cut the relations with Iran involuntary this time, because

European countries, Russia and China had big interest in buying the Iranian oil and gas, and this changing policy created tension between Trump and his colleagues like the French President Macron and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, as well as the relations with Xi Jinping the Chinese President that were not good anyways due to many more conflicts than the Iranian Nuclear deal.

Trump imposed hurting sanctions and embargos on Iran and its allies Syria and Hezbollah, and not only Hezbollah political party in Lebanon but all the Lebanese had to pay the price of the relation between Iran and Hezbollah, and Iran's power in the Middle East had maximized. After President Trump left and President Biden took office on Jan 2021, and as a Democratic President and specially that he was the VP of President Obama and was among the supporters of the Iranian Nuclear Deal, he wanted to improve the relations with Iran, but Iran, because of its power today that the US changing policy contributed in maximizing, is claiming that it is not willing to be played according to the changing American Presidents and according to their changing foreign policies and will have its own terms and conditions this time in case they decided to renegotiate. When President Obama made the Iranian Nuclear Deal, Iran was not in position to escalate and impose its terms and conditions, but today the situation has changed due to the American changing policy.

Israel: The Strange Body in the ME?

Israel is a strange body in the Middle Eastern region and that is what makes its acceptance very difficult. It is true that many of the Arab states have made peace

agreements with Israel but in fact it is cold peace. The people of these countries despite the peace agreements made, still have a sense of non-acceptance for Israel and that is a big weakness for her. Also, Israel did not yet reach a peace agreement with many Middle Eastern countries like Lebanon, which shares a border with it and that is a weakness point for Israel, because oil and gas are discovered in the Mediterranean Sea and since both countries are in conflict with one another they are having bad time to find a solution about defining the water borders so they can both benefit from the oil. The extremism and the racism of the Israeli government is also a weakness and identify it as a government that is difficult to accept and to deal with. Its strength in the region is the presence of Iran, which makes all countries that are afraid of a powerful Iran get closer to Israel.

The Iranian threat for the Middle Eastern countries is a leverage for Israel since Israel can balance the power of Iran. Israel also is developing a nuclear program which is a powerful tool for deterrence and gives it power in the region and threatens its opponents and make the Middle Eastern countries want peace or at least to not go to conflict with it. Israel has a good economy and good technology, lately Israel sold china technology, and besides all this Israel has all the support of the hegemon of the world, the US and is supported by most of the western and nonwestern countries and this is what makes it a major regional player in the international affairs of the Middle East.

Israel will surely influence the region and play a role in the international relations of the region and maybe peace is the solution for the Middle Eastern states if not under our watch maybe under the watch of the next generation because its presence and power is an unneglected fact; but despite that, Israel will remain a strange body in the region that is difficult to accept. The changing American foreign policies in the Middle East have always backed up Israel and that is what helped in maximizing its power to become an unbeatable country today. In the late 90's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reported that toppling Saddam Hussein and regime change in Iraq was "an important Israeli strategic objective," and in 2003 US invaded Iraq, leaving it weak and powerless for more than two decades. Saddam was a tough leader and was claiming that he possessed weapons of mass destruction. He declared war on Iran and invaded Kuwait, so Israel felt threatened by him. Of course, Israel has no interest in the rise of any power over its power in the Middle East especially a state that possesses weapons of mass destruction, military power, and the 5th largest oil reserve in the world (Tolan & Flesh, 2002).

Back then Israel did not have the same status as today, Israeli existence was in danger and Saddam could threaten it every now and then. Israel's target was not only Saddam, after the toppling of Saddam, Iran and Syria were the next targets. Israel was afraid that Iran, Iraq, and Syria would ally and create a big power. These countries have in common Shiite Islam as main religion, huge oil reserves where Iran is ranked the 4th largest oil reserve worldwide and Iraq the

5th. The combination of religion and possession of scarce resource and the position of Syria on the Middle-Eastern water could have created an enormous power that could have changed all the balance of power in the Middle East. It could have defeated Israel, or be the major influencer in the MENA region. They could have used this combination to develop a huge, unbeatable economy, they could have controlled the price of oil worldwide and its distribution terms and conditions, and they could have influenced the world's economy and oil industry. Iran was developing weapons of mass destruction and Saddam was claiming that he possessed WMDs, and all the three countries do not abide by the international law or by the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Allied together the three countries could have changed the map of the Middle East.

Due to all the reasons mentioned above, US foreign policy goal was to destroy any threat to the Jewish state, Israel. US is an ally of Israel, and Israel's interest was a priority on the agenda of the US foreign affairs, not just because of their friendship, but because Jews are the largest lobby group in the US, they are influencing the economy, media, congress and have the biggest say in the country (BBC, 2018).

They contribute to support and help the American Presidents to arrive to their positions and it is in favor of US presidents to support the Israelis back in the Middle East. The US has also no interest in a rising power like the power that could have been created, US has interest in influencing the oil industry, and to stay the hegemon and the biggest influencer in the Middle East and

worldwide. It is not in favor of the US that a big power that consists of the three mentioned countries to open to China, Russia, Europe and the world and influence heavily the world's economy, because after all the possessor of the largest reserves of oil and gas will have a big influence and say worldwide. The US will not need a competitor or at least challenger in the Middle-East. Iraq today is destroyed, it will take too much time to build peace and to keep it and to step into a democratic country. Syria is also destroyed and powerless. Iran is cornered with its economic crisis and conflict with the Hegemon. The US is pressuring Iran with all the possible means, its economy is declining badly, and all of that is in favor of Israel's interest. So as President Obama said, the Middle East will not be fixed neither under our watch nor under the watch of the next generation.

The Awakening of the Ottoman Empire

Turkey is a big country that inherited its strength from the old Ottoman Empire. Today Turkey has a big economy even though it is passing through difficult times. Turkey processes a big military, and the neighbor countries of Turkey are in war which makes it easy for her to influence and interfere and apply its agenda in the Middle East. Syria is in war, and Iraq is in war, and Turkey is taking advantage of that. Turkey entered many times to Iraq and Kurdistan and played a big role in the war in Syria and imposed itself as regional player in the Middle East after the withdrawal of the US troops from Iraq. Some Muslim Sunnis believe that Turkey is their powerful reference, especially under

Erdogan, that can protect them and their rights and existence. Turkey became close to Qatar and this put her not in good terms with KSA. Erdogan and Putin were never that close throughout the history and this is a strength for Turkey as well as a weakness because close relations with Russia will put Turkey in a weak position and bad relations with the US. The divisions in Turkey and the revolts of the Alawites and the Kurds and conflicts between them and the Turkish government is a weakness for Turkey. The close relations under Erdogan with the Muslim Brotherhood caused bad relationship with Egypt and the gulf and this reduced Turkey's influence on many Middle Eastern countries. Turkey is a modern country, but today it is dragging towards extremism. With the withdrawal of the US from Iraq and after that the US shifted its concerns towards China and Asia, Turkey as well tried to play the role of major power in the Middle East but unfortunately it tried to play this role using Islamic extremism. Turkey interfered in Iraq especially in the Kurdish land trying to play a role and profit from the oil; Turkey contributed in preventing the Kurds from taking independence from Iraq because Kurds also inhabit the Turkish lands and share borders with Kurdistan which is a rich oil region and this will create instability in Turkey if its Turkish Kurds decide to join their fellow Iraqi Kurds. Turkey is trying to revive the Sunnis resurgence reminding its followers about the Ottoman Empire glories. Turkey is competing with KSA on the Sunni leadership, and due to this competition the Middle Eastern battleground lately saw less competitions between Iran and KSA because the last is focusing on the

rising power of Turkey. The withdrawal of the US from the Middle East also maximized the role of Turkey in the region and brought a new major competitor to its conflicts, and maybe the Middle East will witness the convergence of views between Iran and KSA aiming to face or weaken Turkey.

The Comeback of Russia

Russia is the new-old player in the Middle East. After the fall of the Soviet Union the role of Russia was diminished internationally but lately under President Putin Russia is imposing herself again on the map as a superpower. Russia came back to the Middle East again but this time the competition and the conflict is not ideological. Russia has interests in the Middle East, first geographically the Middle East is near to Russia, and it can benefit from the Middle Eastern market, and the warm waters. So, the competition today is to make good relations with all the Middle Eastern countries as possible. Russia is on good terms with Israel and Iran at the same time, with Qatar and KSA. Erdogan and Putin were never that close, and Russia is very active in the last decade in the MENA region.

Russia is trying to re-establish itself as one of the main external providers of the Middle East. It signed an arms agreement with Algeria, making it a very important customer for Russian weapons. Russia helped Iran in developing their nuclear program, it has supplied Iran with S-300 missiles and sales of fighter aircrafts, and provided Iran with its nuclear reactors and may sell few more. Ankara purchased Russian air defense missiles and a Russian nuclear

reactor. Morocco, Bahrain, and Qatar are also interested in the S-400. Russia signed a large arm deal with the UAE and is exploring the possibility of gaining access to naval bases in Libya and Sudan. A nuclear cooperation agreement was signed with Tunisia. King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud conducted the first ever visit of a Saudi monarch to Russia, a deal was signed for highly advanced S-400 and anti-tank missiles, a nuclear cooperation agreement was also signed, and Russia hopes to provide at least two of the planned sixteen Saudi reactors. Russia and Saudi Arabia—who together make up approximately 20 percent of international oil production—have also coordinated policy to raise the global price (The Economist, 2020).

Russia was the main supporter of Al Assad and it helped Syria and the regime not to fall. Today Russia has an economic interest in the Middle East, but it is also obvious that Russia is trying to oppose USA whenever it can do so. When the US withdrew from the Middle East Russia also ran to fill the gap because it is trying to re-engage in the system again and impose itself as a superpower in the world and especially in the Middle East. The intervention of Russia has also influenced the maximization of power of the allies Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Hezbollah and contributed to changing the game in the Middle East.

The New Silk Road

The new Superpower that is competing in the Middle Eastern ground is China. China is rising and rising fast. It does not compete politically in the Middle East but the fact that China has this huge economy and is competing with the US

economically impose her as a Superpower in the system. Middle Eastern countries that have business with China or taking loans from it or have the intention to cooperate with it in the future will automatically be influenced by China's decisions. China has interest in a peaceful Middle East, because first the Middle East is near to China and second China has interest to sell its products and to open to the Middle Eastern region and if this region was in war its economy will be bad and this will negatively affect China and the Chinese market. China believes that conflicts in the Middle East should be resolved by its people and not by military intervention. China is always taking pro-Arab positions, it has always vetoed the decisions that it sees against the Arab interests at the UN Security Council. Beijing is believed to apply a baggage-free diplomacy through which it deals with Saudi Arabia and Iran alike, and invests in Israel and Palestine. It has close links with Egypt under Abd Fattah Al- Sisi, engaged with the Muslim Brotherhood and maintains good relations with the military government now in power. In Syria, China has relations with President Bashar al-Assad and established a relationship with the opposition. So, China is trying to compete with the US and Russia in the Middle East and it is clear that China is pursuing its economic interest in the region. The economic competition between these three Superpowers in the MENA region is high. China is trying to revive its silk road through the new plan "one belt, one road." The US plan is to withdraw from the Middle East to focus on the rising China, that has invaded economically the Middle Eastern market and is working on building good

relations with all the Middle Eastern countries, and to spread peace and stability in their markets, aiming for good trade that will maximize its economic power, which may be the highly recommended criteria for the future World's Hegemon.

Chapter 5

Towards Iraqi Democracy

The New Constitution

After the invasion, the US contributed to establish the first democratic Iraqi government ever, the role of this government was to prepare for the elections. The first elected president of the country was Ghazi Mashal Ajil al-Yawer and the country became a Parliamentary democracy. In the first election the United Iraqi Alliance, a Shia party secured 47% of the votes, Kurdish parties secured 25%, and Prime Minister Allawi's party came in third (Hamaseed, 2020). Not all Iraqi political parties were content with the results of the elections, many complained about the legitimacy of the elections. The Yezidis for example, claimed that the polling centers in their villages were not open, so they were unable to vote. Muslims, Christians and Yezidis were waiting in flocks to elect whom they wished, and no ballot boxes came where the people were waiting and people were upset because they were unable to participate and vote. High number of Sunnis boycotted the elections, claiming it was not legitimate. Turkomans also protested the elections results in two day demonstrations in Baghdad. Turkomans were competing with the Kurdish Parties under the Kirkuk Brotherhood running in Kirkuk Governorate council elections, and the Kurdish parties won 58.4% of the votes, Turkomans reported that they were not convinced with the results of the elections because no international

organizations like the United Nations were observing the procedure (Radio Free Europe, 2015).

Violence, and terrorist attacks followed the elections. Different Iraqi political, ethnic, and religious parties were dragged to unstoppable internal conflicts and fights. Iraq suffered 204 car bombings just in two months due to the Sunnis escalation of bombing campaign only after the first election. Sectarian violence continued to escalate killing several hundred thousand Iraqis from 2005 till 2020; all parties were involved in the conflicts. Sunnis killed Shiites and Shiites killed Sunnis, and the Kurds also had a share of the conflict.

As mentioned before, the Kurds attempt at independence was opposed by the US, Iran, Turkey, and the Iraqi government. Kurdish independence was foiled by “Al Hashd al Shaabi,” an Iraqi Shiite political party supported by Iran, invading the Kurdish region, and taking Kirkuk. Kurds are represented by “Islamic Union of Iraqi Turkoman,” “Democratic Patriotic Union of Kurdistan” and “Kurdistan Democratic Party.” The Sunnis are represented mainly by “Al Sahwa” political party, and “Tribes of Iraq Coalition” and some small political parties as well. The Shiites that are the majority, they are also divided, they are mainly represented by the following political parties “Al Daawa,” “Sadrist movement,” “Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council,” “Al Hashed Al Shaaby” and “Saraya al Salam,” some are supported by Iran, others by the US (Adbullah, 2018 & Salim, 2018).

Due to the continuous ethnic conflicts the Iraqi governments put efforts to arrange reconciliation between the different parties that agreed on power sharing also known by consensual Democracy. This system of governance usually applies in heterogeneous pluralistic societies, in countries where various sects and ethnicities are present, and the lack of mutual trust between different parties make it difficult for them to apply pure simple democracy. Power-sharing is “a form of governance applied in some countries. In this kind of democracy, the right for judgment on the basic issues in the state is by consensus among the groups, differentiated from each other in ethnic and linguistic assets” (Bin Abdulla, 2014). In 2005, the Presidency Council consisting of the President, a Kurd, and his first Shiite and Sunni deputies, the Council of Ministers as the Prime Minister (Shiite) and his first (Sunni) and second (Kurdish) deputies, and the Speaker of the Parliament (Sunni) and his first (Shiite) and second (Kurdish) deputies agreed on adopting the consensual democracy as a form of political system ratified in their constitution.

Table 1 explains how governmental positions were distributed by the Iraqi government:

POSITION	NAME	ETHNICITY
President	Jalal Al Talibani	Kurd
Vice President	Adel Abdul Mahdi	Shia
Vice President	Ghazi Al Yawer	Sunni
Prime Minister	Ibrahim Jaafari	Shia
Deputy Prime Minister	RowschShaways	Kurd

Deputy Prime Minister	AbedMetlaq Al-Jubouri	Sunni
Deputy Prime Minister	Ahmed Al Ghalabi	Shia
Parliament Speaker	Hachim Al Hasanies	Sunni
Deputy Parliament Speaker	Hussein Al Shahrstani	Shia
Deputy Parliament Speaker	ArifTayfur	Kurd

Bin Abdullah, 2014

Consensual democracy allows the people to vote and be under the rule of the winner, but neglect the principle of the parliamentary majority, which is the basis of democracy. Power-sharing prevents the elected party from taking a decision to develop or evolve; it encourages the winners and the losers to create a participatory government where every decision should be coordinated and approved by the other parties. This model is a failure, because when different political parties run for election they run with a certain vision and mission, with a plan to develop and evolve their country and ameliorate the life of their people. That is the whole concept of election, people elect the parties that they think will protect their interests, the parties that share with them same values, and vision of the country, the party that will ameliorate their status and better their life. When political powers share the decisions among each other within the government, the elected party will not be able to govern according to its vision and agenda, thereby when people want to judge their performance and take the decision to re-elect them or not, they will not be able to do so because it is not clear which party is really responsible for those decisions and agendas and

which one is not. When there is success all parties will be competing to take the credits, and when there is failure all parties will accuse each other and blame each other, and the truth will never be known.

Moreover, when adopting consensual democracy, the winning party will be taking decisions according to the interests of all the represented parties thereby conflict of interest will occur and sometimes, or most of the times, no decision will be taken and this will slow down the process of work. If every decision should be concerned with the interest of all the represented parties no progress will be made. That reflects the Iraqi case from the first election till today, instead of segmentation according to political parties like Islamic, secular liberals, and socialist; the Iraqi society is divided ethnically according to Shiite, Sunni, and Kurds mainly, and they are represented on this basis in the government and because none of the parties trust the others, they are sharing power.

Due to the adoption of this model the consecutive Iraqi governments were not able either to take main decisions or develop the country and defeat terrorism nor to evolve and ameliorate the life of the Iraqis. Due to the American withdrawal and the rise of ISIS and the maximization of Iran's power in Iraq and the interference of Turkey, each Iraqi group was supported by an international party and all the Iraqi parties were sharing the power inside the government, so a conflict of interest has always occurred and either decisions were not taken at all, or the parties did cede for each other aiming to pass other legislation in the

future. That is one of the causes that have contributed to the failure of Iraqi governments and the democratic state.

Power-sharing has also affected the legislation of law and parliamentary oversight because all parties were represented, and none was opposing. With the absence of opposition, there was an absence of democracy. Usually on daily basis people discuss, agree, and disagree with each other, they have different points of view, they see issues and matters through different eyes and perspectives, so opposing and criticizing for developing is needed, it is much so when adopting legislation decrees? It is a must for the different parties that are representing different political groups in the parliament and government to discuss, agree and disagree according to the interests of the people that they are representing and the absence of opposition in the Iraqi government and Parliament negatively affect the adoption of the democracy model.

The consensual model also contributed negatively to the distribution of positions within the government, where unqualified people were put in positions that they are unqualified to handle, because these positions required a Sunni person, Shiite, or Kurdish to just balance the power and distribution. Laws and decrees were also issued through political consensus among the different ethnic groups that are represented in the government. For all the mentioned reasons the Iraqi consensual model was a failure.

Not so far from Iraq, Lebanon the first democracy in the Middle East has also adopted the power sharing model. Lebanese people did not live any single

peaceful day since the end of the civil war, thirty years ago. The Lebanese government adopted the consensual democracy, where the President must be Christian Maronite, the Prime Minister must be Muslim-Sunni, and the Speaker of the Parliament, must be Muslim-Shiite. The official positions as well as the official jobs within the government should be shared according to the balance of religion and the government must be represented by all the main political parties that are supported by different foreign states that have different agendas and interests in Lebanon. This distribution prevented any party to come solo to power and take decisions and be judged according to those decisions. All parties were most of the time participating in the consecutive governments, and each party was trying to reflect and apply the interest of its sect. Judiciary system was also designed according to religion and ethnicity and judges were appointed also according to the ethnicity principle. For the past thirty years almost all the parties were committed to apply the agenda of the intervener states and if not the interest of the powerful states, then they were committed to satisfy their own interest because there was no juridical system to hold accountable those who committed crimes or thefts.

Lebanon contains 18 religious sects; due to many reasons, not all these sects saw themselves represented except through their religion, and under the slogan of making and keeping peace consensual democracy was adopted. This failed model prevented any progress on national level, economic level, and peace level; to the contrary Lebanon passed all along the years through sensitive

economic and political situations, from the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Al Hariri, to the Lebanese Israeli war in 2006, to the consecutive assassinations of politicians, military officials and journalists, to the economic crises, and the port explosion on August 4, 2020 that destroyed Beirut city and killed more than 200 people and injured more than 7000 and left scars and griefs in the heart of all the Lebanese people. Lebanese immigration movements were high since forever and got higher due to the last explosion and economic crisis. Lebanese people live in their own country with no respect, no dignity, their basic rights are not protected and in more religious bigotry inside them.

The destination of the Iraqi people will be the same as that of the Lebanese if no reforms are made, and reforms must start by the people and society itself. The reforms begin inside each and every citizen that does not look with the eye of ethnicity and religion to his/her partner and brother/sister in the same country. When the people begin to look with the eye of nationalism, where all citizens see themselves as one within the same country, where they look for the interest of their country, where they stop following the exterior and try to focus on the interior, try to focus on evolving their industry and learn to count on themselves and create self-sufficiency because only industrial sector assures a good economy. Iraq is ranked the 5th oil reserve in the world and oil is a huge industry so a combination of suitable economic plan for the oil industry and a unity among the Iraqis will assure their prosperity.

Bosnia-Herzegovina is another failed example of consensual democracy; even though it's not a Middle Eastern country but has passed through religious-sectarian conflict similar to the Iraqi one. The conflict did not end even though 25 years have passed on the peace accord between the different Bosnian sectarian parties. Discussing Bosnia-Herzegovina ethnic conflict case that is similar to the Iraqi one will help this thesis to analyze the events and ethnic conflicts in Iraq and suggest solutions to prevent the partition for the next decades.

The population in Bosnia-Herzegovina was divided as follows: 44% Muslims, 36% Orthodox Serbs and 20% Catholic Croats. Each of these ethnic parties had a different agenda and perception of the future of Bosnia. Muslim Bosniaks wanted a sovereign republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbs had the dream to unite all Serbs in one state, also Croats hoped to join their mother land Croatia. This ethnic diversity was evoked with international interventions, led to ethnic conflict and civil war during the years 1992 -1995, until Bosnian-Slav, Croats and Bosnian-Serb leaders signed the Dayton Peace Accords under the patronage of US, under President Clinton (Reuters, 2018 & BBC, 2017). In 1992 Catholic Croats and Bosniak Muslims voted for independence in referendum with the objection of Orthodox Serbs who refused to secede from Yugoslavia that was dominated by Serbia. Serbs boycotted the referendum, and European Community recognized Bosnia-Herzegovina on April 6, 1992 as well as the U.S. on April 7. Serbs withdrew from the institutions of Bosnia-Herzegovina the

second day and a civil war broke out. Minorities in regions began to quit their towns to rejoin their majorities.

Serbian President “Slobodon Miloseciv” financed and armed the ethnic-Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina considering them a minority that needed to be protected. European Community and U.S. imposed sanctions on Serbia to prevent Serbians from supplying Bosnian-Serbs with weapons and fighting material. This did not stop Serbs from launching a campaign of ethnic cleansing. Millions of Bosniaks and Croats became refugees, Serbs took over 70% of the country, and were responsible for 62% ethnic cleansing during the war (Downes, 2006 & Hayden, 2012). UN safe havens for Bosnian Muslim civilians were created in Sarajevo, Gorazde, and Srebrenica. UN commander Phillipe Marillion visited the refugee settlement in Srebrenica and announced: “you are now under the protection of the United Nations... I will never abandon you” (Axelrod, 2007). Unfortunately, Marillion couldn’t keep his promise. Serbs attacked Srebrenica, thousands of Muslim Bosnian men and boys were massacred. The ethnic cleansing included rape, murder, sexual assault, torture, beating, robbery, and inhuman treatment for civilians. International community considered this ethnic cleansing as genocide to arrest later during the 2000’s the leaders that were found guilty and responsible for this genocide.

NATO interfered and started air strikes against Serb troops and created a no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina. The United Nations also interfered and promised the refugees in Srebrenica under Phillipe Marillion that they will

protect them. Neither the rejection of European Community nor the presence of the United Nations helped the Muslims and Croats from ethnic cleansing and genocide, not even the sanctions imposed on Serbia and the intervention of NATO helped to prevent the massacres. The European Community and the U.S. refused to accept the borders that Serbs drew, they imposed an agreement to sign it. So, when the United Nations and NATO could not stop the attacks of the Serbs and when the three parties were exhausted from the war, President Clinton and EC influenced the Dayton Peace Accord Agreement, President Clinton did not interfere at the beginning to send later the US soldiers as part of the solution imposed to end the conflict.

All three parties were exhausted by war, the socio-economic situation was very bad and too many losses occurred. Bosnian Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic agreed on Dayton peace accord. President Clinton authorized 20 000 troops to supervise the separation of military groups within Bosnia-Herzegovina and make sure to apply the accord appropriately. The international community established a permanent presence in the country by establishing the office of international peace overseer. The Dayton peace accord created two entities, one for Bosnian Muslim and Croats and the other for the Serbs (BBC, 2017 & JEHL, 1994). The support of the interveners encouraged Muslim Bosniaks and Croats to act and split, and without the help and support of interveners Bosnia-Herzegovina could not take its independence.

International community can easily affect “ethnic-sensitive” countries, and by ethnic sensitive countries it is meant the countries that have different ethnicities, belonging to different groups where these groups have different perception of the future of their county and/or see themselves as minorities or have religious conflicts or race conflicts with other groups and these groups are ready to fight and do whatever is needed to protect themselves and their existence. In these countries the conflict already exists, and the hate is already spread between parties, and when a certain group reaches a high stage of hate and feel that its existence is threatened, intervention from outsiders will be very easy to occur as well as the imposed solution that maybe inconvenient for both parties, but what is confirmed is that the imposed solution will always be in favor of the interveners. “Two decades after the conflict started, Bosnia is now divided more than ever as bitter memories permeate society” (Borger, 2012), this is what Borger argues in his article Bosnia War: 20 Years on Peace Holds but Conflicts Continue to Haunt.

Despite the stability of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the ethnic conflict is bigger than ever and the different ethnic groups which are Muslim Bosniaks, Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats hate each other more than ever, the intermarriage is far less than it was before the ethnic war in 1992, moreover children living in different “ethno-cities” are growing with minimal contact with each other. People did not get over the ethnic conflict and war, and Serbs aimed to separate and declare independence. Moreover, the economic situation was very bad, and

poverty is one of the three factors that accelerate the ethnic conflict. Bosnian people were not satisfied, economic situation got worse and different ethnic groups were not homogenous together.

This is the case in all countries that were divided due to ethnic conflicts; this was the case in Rwanda between Hutus and Tutsis, in Alsace and Lorraine between Germany and France, in Corsica between France and the Corsicans, in Ireland between the Christian Catholics and Christian Protestants, in the US between the whites and blacks, between Iraq, Syria and Turkey and the Kurds.

Iraq under Saddam was oppressed but stable, Iraqis were not divided because there was no reason for that, people did not have the freedom to practice democracy, to vote, to join political parties, to express their opinions but they were not divided ethnically because all of them were oppressed. Only Saddam's family and relatives were profiting from the privileges. The Iraqis if they were divided, then they were divided between the pro-Saddam people and the people that opposed him, ethnicity did not have a role. President Bush invaded Iraq aiming to achieve peace by spreading democracy and defeat terrorism, but the American administration admitted that weapons of mass destructions were not found, and the war took much more time than they were expecting. The long war inflicted heavy losses on human and economic levels and democracy model that the Americans were helping the Iraqis to adopt was replaced with a consensual democracy model, which led to divisions and ethnic conflict that lasted twenty years. This could be identified in the following two scenarios.

The Miscalculation of the American Administration

The miscalculation of the American administration can be identified by two different scenarios. For some political scientists, journalists, and reporters, American administration and President Bush interfered but miscalculated its steps and the aftermath demonstrated that the losses were more than the benefits and the terror was not defeated but spread more around the world and the Middle East, and the democracy was not spread in Iraq but turned out to become a battleground for ethnic conflicts between Iraqis supported by the regional and super-powers. President Bush under liberalism that the US was the pioneer in spreading to create a better and safer world invaded Iraq. The plan was to create Germany II or Japan II or a new Iraq that will follow the steps of those big countries in leading the economy, in developing science and technology, in enlarging the industrial sector, in entering the oil and gas market since Iraq has the potential of doing so. The Bush Administration expected that Iraq will be the example of democracy in the Middle East that the other authoritarian regimes will follow its steps. Iraqis will enroll in the political life, political parties will be created, national issues will be evoked, Iraqi humanitarian rights will be protected, and when democracy will be spread capitalism and liberalism automatically will follow. The Middle Eastern market will open, the international market will expand, the availability of oil will increase and the control of oil market will decrease, peace will be spread and terrorism will vanish. The US will be on the right road of winning its war over Islamofascism

and be on the right track of winning the title of the solo hegemon again after defeating Communism.

Unfortunately, the plan did not go as expected, the religious and ethnic bigotry had bigger influence on people than democracy. The feeling of protectionism and the fear of groups of being unidentified and unrecognized allowed ethnicity to win over democracy. The oppression of the Shiites over the years motivated their hate feeling and the need of governing because they are the majority. The Iraqi Sunni minority was also afraid of being left behind and dominated by the Shiites, they were afraid of massacres or genocides or to be forced to displace. The dream of independence of certain ethnic groups, also played a role in enhancing ethnicity. The Kurds have always dreamed about taking independence and they took their shots and passed a referendum when the Americans invaded Iraq, but due to the international disagreement on their independence they were unable to apply it and separate themselves from Iraq. Kurds are scattered across the Syrian, Turkish, Iranian, and Iraqi territories, and there was no chance that those states ceded any square meter from their territories to the Kurds or anyone else. Moreover, the Kurdish region is rich in oil and Iraq did not cede it. This issue contributed also to the Iraqi ethnic conflict and the culture also played a role in enhancing it.

Since day one, Middle Eastern communities made sure to seed ethnic conflicts in the hearts of their population, democracy and human rights are not taught, people used to live under authoritarian regimes submitted loyalty to the

rulers and expected them to provide the minimum standards of living. Living under totalitarian regimes for long time, plus the unfamiliarity with the democracy concepts and with the human rights concepts, have contributed also to enhancing ethnicity in the Middle East and in Iraq, and have made it difficult on the Bush Administration to reach its target in spreading the simple democracy model instead of the power-sharing one, and that is scenario number one.

Scenario number two: other political scientists and journalists argue that with the changing American foreign policy towards Iraq and the Middle East under President Obama, where the last found it convenient for the American administration to withdraw from Iraq, because for him the Middle East was consuming the US financially and on human level, and the Americans were wasting their time in the Middle East where the future was in Asia and China, the gap that the Americans left was filled with the enhancement of the Iranian Shiite power in Iraq from one side, and the rise of ISIS from the other side, and left the Kurds working for their independence. Obama's changing policy as well as Trump's changing policy played a major role in strengthening the ethnic conflict between different ethnic groups. Due to the increase of power of Iran and the resurgence of the Iranian-Iraqi Shiites and due to the power of some political parties like Al Hached Al Chaabi that referred to Iran and were represented in the Iraqi government as main political party from one side; and due to the rise of ISIS that wanted to create the Islamic Caliphate and declared

war on everyone who was against them; the ethnic conflict reached its peak. The Kurds were also concerned to be dominated by any of both parties and wanted to be presented and taking their own decisions in their federal state if independence was unreachable.

So, due to the withdrawal of the supervisor that was the US, the different groups that were introduced newly to democracy took advantage to create resurgence and unite their ethnic groups under reviving ethnicity and religion. For President Obama the interest of the US was the withdrawal and focusing on China that was in her turn focusing on the Middle-East as a huge market full of oil and gas. This strategic plan was a mistake. It enhanced ethnicity, which enhanced violence and terrorism and left no choice for the US but to return and defeat ISIS. It is true that Bush's plan took much longer than it was expected and it was costly, but withdrawing at that point, costed the US more than staying in Iraq. Iraq was an unfinished business, that caused more chaos and mess in Iraq and worldwide.

If Obama put more effort in defeating terrorism and spreading democracy, in standing side by side with the Iraqi government and emphasizing on the original constitution, and if they helped in solving the Iraqi issues and divisions instead of leaving, they would have first succeeded in the eyes of their opponents and their people as well. They could have enhanced this model in the Middle East. They could have profited economically from the oil, the new market, the liberalism and capitalism. They could have collaborated in the

rebuilding of Iraq and most importantly they could have defeated terrorism, and most of all did not contribute to the death of innocent Iraqis, their displacements, their famine, and their pain. They could have contributed in the creation of a new generation that knows the meaning of democracy, of freedom, of liberalism, of living with dignity.

At the end of the day, you cultivate what you seed, if the US seeded peace and democracy in Iraq it will cultivate liberalism and Capitalism, if it had seeded a lost generation, filled with tyranny, traumas, pain, famine and divided ethnically; it will cultivate hate, fundamentalism, Islamism, and terrorism. The US was the pioneer in spreading democracy and the American values through soft power, through the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the NATO, the US aid program and many more international and philanthropic organizations. If the US had used its soft power in Iraq by educating the Iraqis and specially the new generation about the American values of democracy, liberty and freedom, and human rights, if the US worked on providing schools with new programs and if seminars in the villages and cities and among people were made to spread awareness about human rights and secularism, and how ethnic conflict lead to violence and harm and destroy the society; if industrial and agricultural seminars and investments were made and if loans were given and if the Iraqi investors that were living abroad when Saddam was ruling and willing to go back and invest were given; the right opportunities

and stability, then violence and ethnic conflict could have been prevented or at least could have not escalated to this level and peace was kept faster.

Sometimes it is better to focus on an optimal combination of soft power and the hard power to reach the target, as the political scientist Joseph Nye said that soft power is making other states want what the influencer state wants, a combination of soft and hard power in Iraq instead of changing the foreign policy and withdrawing could have changed the results of the war and could have reached the target that is the basis of the US constitution that is democracy.

The US left Iraq and the Middle East to focus on China, but China made a whole plan to revive its silk road that passed through the Middle East because of its importance on the geographical level; where China, Russia India and the Asian countries would make a transition to continue their road to Europe and the West because Iraq is connecting both the Western and the Eastern countries; on natural resources level (oil and gas); and its market level with high consumption market. Ending the unfinished business in Iraq could have brought much more economic, financial, and ideological returns for the paid cost by the US.

Was Oil the Big Prize?

Antonia Juhasz, in her article to the CNN: “Why the War in Iraq Was Fought for Big Oil” and Nafeez Ahmed, in his article to the Guardian: “Iraq Invasion was about Oil,” argued that oil was the big prize of the Iraqi Invasion. Chevron, Exxon, Shell, and BP, biggest Oil companies in the US and the world, had spent money on Bush’s Presidential election more than they had spent on any other

elections (Juhasz, 2013). In 1998 Kenneth Derr, then the CEO of Chevron said: “Iraq processes huge reserves of oil and gas-reserves, I’d love chevron to have access to” (Juhasz, 2013). So, the eyes were on the prize long time ago and the world’s oil companies were planning for decades to enter in the Iraqi oil market. A week after President Bush took office their efforts paid off when the National Energy Policy Development Group brought the oil companies together to plan the energy future of the US and the companies as well; Iraq’s entire oil productive capacity was the target. “Already by February (2001), the talk was mostly about logistics. Not the why (to invade Iraq), but the how and how quickly” said Bush’s first Treasury Secretary, Paul O’ Neill in 2004 (Juhasz, 2013). The final report of the National Energy Development Group argued that it is urgent that the areas of energy sectors in the Middle East should be opened for foreign investors and international oil companies as quickly as possible after the war.

After the invasion, the US occupation government appointed Ibrahim Bahr al-Uloum who was a group member of the State Department Future of Iraq Project’s Oil and Energy, and who tried to implement the group’s objective. Meanwhile discussions for planning Iraq’s post war industry were made between the staff of the US’s Vice President back then Dick Cheney and representatives from Chevron, BP, Halliburton, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobile and others. The executives of those Oil companies were appointed first as administrators of Iraq’s oil ministry and then as “advisors” to the Iraqi

government (Juhasz, 2013). In a report in 2001 on “energy security” commissioned by the US Vice President then Dick Cheney, it was claimed that the US is facing a global energy crisis that will lead to unprecedented energy price volatility. Saddam was standing in the way of the western Oil companies and the US. For the US Administration, Iraq became a swing producer of oil, turning its taps on and off when Saddam felt there is a strategic interest for Iraq or for him to do so. The flow of Oil in the international market became unstable and Saddam has shown willingness to threaten to use oil to manipulate the oil market, to enhance his power and enhance his image as a pan-Arab leader and pressure the US, the UN, and the Western countries to lift embargo on Iraq.

The goal was to stabilize the flow of Iraqi Oil in the international market and securing contracts with the big oil companies. The Bush Administration pushed the Iraqi government to pass the Iraq Hydrocarbons Law that would lock the nation into private investment, but the Bush Administration did not achieve this goal and the Iraqi government could not pass it due to the large public opposition (Juhasz, 2013). Despite the opposition, the Oil companies settled on different track, they started signing contracts that provided all the access to oil reserves and Hydrocarbons and the Bush Administration helped in preparing the draft contracts. Both Bush and Obama administration officials have worked for Oil companies as advisers and the target of privatizing the Iraqi oil sector and opening it to the international oil investors was achieved (Ahmed, 2014).

Despite terrorism and instability that the war had caused Iraq today is reclaiming its rank as one of the world's fastest-growing exporters, the Iraqi oil production has increased to produce 4.88 million barrels per day (Turak, 2019), while Iraqis struggle to meet their basic needs of energy consumption and 25% of the population lives under the line of poverty. Foreign companies did not keep their promises and less than 2% of the workers in those companies are Iraqis, where the Oil companies are relying on foreign workers, Iraqis were upset with these procedures, many demonstrations were made in that regard. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan wrote in his memoir, "I am saddened that it is politically inconvenient to acknowledge what everyone knows: the Iraq war is largely about oil." Chuck Hagel a Senate member and later a Defense Secretary claimed that: "People say we're not fighting for oil. Of course, we are" (Juhazs, 2013).

These claims are some of the claims among many that were made by American officials. From all the presented above it can be concluded that Oil was the main reason behind the Iraqi invasion and not defeating terrorism and spreading democracy. The former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice claimed that no weapon of mass destructions was found, President Trump as well as President Obama claimed that the Iraqi war was expensive, and US had spent huge amounts of money almost 4 trillion dollars. The Iraqi war was the longest among the US wars, and terrorism was not defeated, to the contrary terrorism was spread more than ever with the rise of ISIS and Iraq was never sovereign

with the exterior interventions, and specially Iran that took advantage and reawakened the surge of the Shiites and played a major role in the politics and economics of Iraq. Iraq was not sovereign with the presence of the Western oil companies that invested in the oil industry without collaborating in shaping the Iraqi economy, GDP, and line of poverty. Iraq is producing oil more than ever but the Iraqis are hungry and displaced more than ever. The Iraqis are spread as refugees or immigrants all over the world, especially in the western countries and the last are investing and making billions from the Iraqi oil; Iraqis are suffering from inadequate infrastructure, water, roads, their basic energy needs are unavailable while they are exporting oil and gas to the world.

Consensual democracy is adopted instead of democracy where the Iraqis are practicing voting and not real democracy. Consensual democracy enhanced the ethnic conflict between the Iraqis and created a new issue that will last for decades and decades and President Obama was right when he said in his doctrine in 2016, that the Middle East will never be fixed neither on this watch nor on the watch of the next generation, because this kind of conflicts that is based on ethnicity lasts for decades if not forever, and a big example on that is the Spanish-Catalan conflict that still rises every now and then knowing that years and decades have passed on this issue. Iraq could not make a Democratic model for its authoritarian neighbors in the Middle East, to the contrary those countries became more conservative.

So, basically Democracy, peace, prosperity, Capitalism and Liberalism did not reach their target in Iraq but the US administrations and the hegemon that is influencing the world does not enter a war that it loses if the interest is not bigger than everything spent. Every President whether he is a Realist or Liberal will apply the cost/benefit theory and where the US interests do not meet, the US will never enter; and where the US has interest and big future plans like the Oil, it will not hesitate to engage in it. It will sound that the human costs and the materialistic costs are higher than the benefits and the administration will claim so, but the real interest will be influencing the US's future or even assure its continuity as the hegemon on the long term. Oil is the Future, with insufficient oil or unstable market, or swing in the oil price, US's economy will be threatened specially with the high competition with China and all other states that are trying to play a role in the Middle East, mainly an economic one, because China is not interested in spreading its ideology, and Russia has bigger interest than ideology after it has lost the cold war. Economy is the future, the bigger the economy the more powerful the country is. The US has interest in staying the first economic country in the world to assure its hegemon title and when the Iraqi Oil was an opportunity to the US to enhance its position and guarantee its future and interest, the US did not hesitate to take this opportunity. To some people, the Iraqi war was a war for oil and the only losers were the Iraqi people.

From a different perspective, President Trump and some political scientists when analyzing the Iraqi war argue that the US had spent much more than it earned from this war. Oil price did not drop, to the contrary oil price has increased from \$20 to \$150 after the invasion. Americans did not have privileges in Iraq over other countries, they have spent trillions of dollars for nothing: “We have spent \$7 trillion, trillion with a T, and \$7 trillion in the Middle-East,” “You know what we have for it? Nothing. Nothing” (GreenBerg, 2018). That’s what President Trump has told the crowd on April 28, 2018 at a campaign-style event in Washington, Michigan. President Trump continued and said, some argue that the Americans have taken the Iraqi oil for free, but Presidents Bush and Obama did not take it, knowing that it is their right to do so: “You win the war, and you take it. ... You’re not stealing anything. ... We’re taking back \$1.5 trillion to reimburse ourselves.” He continued and argued “I always used to say ... ‘If they’re going into Iraq, keep the oil.’ They never did. They never did” (Sterwart, 2019).

From this perspective the oil was not the big prize, to the contrary the cost was more than what the Americans have earned. The Americans went to Iraq to end the oppression and spread democracy because only democracy and liberalism are the solutions to all the problems of the oppressed societies. The challenges are the adoption and application of democracy in those closed societies, and openness and secularism are the keys to achieve the target.

Secularism and Democracy

In 1787 James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and the other US Fathers, cut themselves from the outside world, from the media, from everyone for three months in the capital city of Philadelphia and decided that the amending of the already existing Articles concerning the US government were not enough, they had to write a new constitution. This constitution is based on how humans should live equally, and be free, talked about equity and a new political system different than the monarchy, a new system that focused mainly on the people, their rights and dignity. The Federalist Papers are based on liberal democracy concepts. Papers 10 and 51 are the most famous papers, they describe how a government should be created and have enough power to serve and, not control the people (Robert, 2008).

Later in WWII, US had invaded Germany defeated Nazism and helped in creating a German constitution that shares the same values as the American one in protecting human rights and freedom of speech, democracy, peace, modernization, capitalism, and liberalism. Germany succeeded in reuniting, in healing itself and adopting secularism and nationalism, it has focused on developing its industrial sector specially the sectors that differentiate it from other countries like the machinery, automotive, and aviation industry, chemical and medical industry, consumer and service industry, and energy and environmental technology industry (Otieno, 2019). Germany assured its place as the 4th world's largest economy with an estimation of nominal GDP of USD 4.6

Trillion in 2023. Japan is the 3rd world's largest economy with an estimation of nominal GDP of USD 5.7 Trillion in 2023 (FocusEconomics, 2020). Japan has agriculture, manufacturing, fishing, and tourism as main industries, it was opened also by the US where the last helped them in creating their constitution and sharing the American values specially democracy (Sawe, 2019).

The US invaded Iraq aiming that the last follows the steps of Germany and Japan, where Iraq has oil as main industry and Oil is a big industry that can assure the prosperity of Iraq, but Iraq instead of adopting democracy it has witnessed escalation of ethnic conflicts, which led to adopting consensual democracy to diminish the ethnic conflict level and this was one of the reasons that prevented Iraq from following the steps of Germany and Japan. The US, Germany, Japan, France, Spain, and many other successful states have in common Secularism and Democracy.

The US was the first country in both Western and world history that adopted a modern concept of secularism. Secularism protects and underpins many of the freedoms that humanity enjoys today. The three main concepts of secularism are the separation of religious institutions from state institutions and public sphere, the freedom to practice one's faith without harming others, and equality where people are treated equally disregarding the religion. Secularism protects both believers and non-believers where it assures the protection of the freedom of both equally, it seeks to defend the right to manifest religious beliefs and practice for all citizens as long as it does not affect or harm the freedom of

non-believers. Secularism cherishes universal human rights above religious ones, where all people are treated equally, it protects the rights of women, of minorities and of LGBT people without discrimination, and it ensures that non-believers have same rights as the believers.

In Secular democracy all citizens are equal before the law and the parliament, believers and non-believers have the same rights and obligations as everyone else. All citizens have equal access to public services like hospitals, schools, the police, as well as equal access to public and private jobs where qualifications are the only criteria. Secularism simply provides a framework for a democratic society; secularism is the best chance to create a society where believers and non-believers can live together fairly and peacefully.

Secularism is the only savior of Iraq, where ethnic conflict is spread, Iraq will never step into prosperity and freedom if it will not adopt secularism. Iraqis must learn to look at each other as partners and brothers and sisters in the same country. The democracy model in Germany and Japan succeeded because people have nationalism in common, because they share same vision of the future of their country, and because the target is not to defeat or to dominate each other; the target is to rise and grow side by side to secure the future of their coming generations.

In the US, Canada and Australia people are living and sharing everything together, the economy, the public services, the water, the nature, and the territories. A small minority of these citizens was originated from these

countries but all the other majorities are coming from all over the world; from East Asia, from the Middle-East, from Latin America, from Europe, and from Africa. The British Protestant Puritan Christians that were living their lives according to the Holy Bible teaching, mostly liberal ideologies based on all humans are equal in God, decided to leave the vice and evil and run away to build the City on the Hill, a city that is not exposed to the passion of human destruction. They were unhappy with the events happening in Europe, with the corruption and abuse and taking advantage of people under the name of God, with the deprivations; they were not happy with the wars, with the rulers, with the church and the priests under the church. For them it was not like anything like the life the Bible taught people to live. So, Puritans left Europe and left their properties, their houses and everything they owned there and decided to establish the “promised land” according to the old and new testament of the Bible, they wanted to establish the new Jerusalem, the city on the hill, the United States of America. They were seeking to establish a new city based on the ideas and morals of the Bible, that brought with it a whole vision of life, built on love and forgiveness, and that is how the idea began.

People in the US, in Canada, Australia and all modern countries developed these thoughts, jumped to modernization, to secularism and democracy and created countries that can unite all people from different ethnicities, different religions, different skin colors, different mentalities, backgrounds, and cultures. Middle Eastern citizens that fight over ethnicity in

their homelands, abide by the law when they become citizens of modern states, citizens of America, Canada, or France. Middle Easterners in Syria and Iraq that fought over ethnicity, over majority and minority in their homelands became immigrants, and refugees in Germany and in the Western states and have merged in the system and became part of the societies and the economies. In their home countries, looking with the eye of secularism and nationalism was difficult but abroad merging in the societies, abiding by laws was easy.

Peace and Prosperity are highly achieved in Australia and Canada where a cocktail of ethnicities is present. Why is peace achieved with the big ethnic differences within one society and not achieved in states that are divided between two or three groups? Simply because modern countries adopt secularism and democracy, where secularism ensures equality to every citizen regardless of his/her beliefs, regardless of their culture or backgrounds, of their looks or belongings. It guarantees an equal and fair opportunity for everyone, and democracy ensures the freedom of rights and speech, of expression, of being involved in defining the future of the country that the member belongs to.

Iraq, to follow the model of Germany and Japan, must cherish and seek to adopt secularism. Secularism must be taught in homes, at schools, at universities, through seminars at the municipalities, in the villages and the cities. Kurds, Shiites, and Sunnis in Iraq must learn to practice religion at home and practice secularism, nationalism and democracy when voting and governing the future of Iraq. When they are united against the outsider, whomever it is, they

will succeed in establishing a united country, where all citizens are living freely and with dignity. It is true that the causes behind the US invasion are many, and it is true that the main reason may not be peace and democracy, but the bright side from the war is that Iraq is finally democratic.

Totalitarian regimes are the worst regimes, people living under those regimes have no choice but oppression and tyranny. Under Saddam it is true that there was kind of stability but on the other side Iraqis could wake up and not find their children, husbands, or wives; they can wake up and find themselves exposed to torture, to rape, or in jail just because they thought about opposite ideas or sometime without valid reasons. An ideological revolution was not possible, freedom of expression, of thinking, writing, speaking was not possible, evolvement and growth of science, education, philosophy, and arts was not possible. Today, after two decades of harmful war, of tragedy, of fear and of death, Iraq is democratic, weather it is adopting consensual democracy or simple democracy, it is democratic. There is possibility to change, to develop, and to make a difference, there is a door to breath, and Iraq is breathing again. It is true that ethnic conflict is occurring, but conflict may give birth to resolution, unlike authoritarian regimes where no conflicts and no resolution can take place.

History has shown that there was always a price to pay for freedom and democracy, the Iraqi war was the price; the deaths, the displacements, and the famine were the price for democracy, but no population was given democracy for free; it was always fought for. The Iraqi grieves are massive, the lost lives,

and the lost Iraqi generation and future cannot be compensated, but Iraqis have an exceptional opportunity to rebuild Iraq better than ever before, to revive the “Cradle of Civilizations,” to unite and leave behind ethnic conflicts, and fulfill their independence dreams and develop their Oil industry. There is a golden opportunity to renegotiate foreign Oil deals, put a vision and mission for Iraq that ensures the prosperity and good living of the Iraqis as well as the prosperity of the future of Iraq, and who knows maybe it will reserve its place between the world’s largest economies and impose itself as a major power in the Middle East and the MENA region. Democracy is a sacred right, it is a privilege for all the populations to spend blood while defending it, because only by defending democracy dignities will be protected.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Towards Freedom

Mesopotamia back then, Iraq and neighbors today were the Cradle of Civilizations, all the first firsts were born there, first concept of cities and villages, first law, philosophy, arts, ceramics, the concept of religion and construction of temples, concept of politics, sciences and technology, medicine and literature were also created first in Mesopotamia as well as the creations of the beer and the wheel. This Civilization exported all its creation to the world, philosophy, literature, science, technology, medicine, arts, education, industry and manufacturing were all exported from Mesopotamia to the world. The world received the exports and developed them and each country became the pioneer in a specific development. Today the US is the pioneer in the sciences and technologies, in medicine, in manufacturing and industry, with other countries like China, Germany, Russia, Japan, India, France, Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Canada, Brazil, etc. Iraq and its neighbors, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Jordan, and the Middle Eastern countries in general, became undeveloped countries or what is known as third world countries, governed by authoritarian regimes and dictators (except of Lebanon where consensual democracy is adopted), oppressed and living under tyranny.

The citizens of these countries are not allowed to think, to create, and to develop. They don't dare to dream about a life where they are liberal, where they enjoy the smallest things that make the person happy. The sky is not the limit in these countries, people are pre-occupied with eating, with minimum medications and education, if it is found; that is the limit. The Interests of the ruler and governors are the limits, the interests of the powerful countries and their future plans are the limits. Citizens of these countries are too busy with surviving where they forget to live. Inventing, creating, opening businesses, developing science or technology always come with limits or restrictions. Waking up, going to work, having a beer, and returning home and planning vacations are dreams for these citizens. For those reasons, the Middle Easterners immigrate to Western countries searching for a stable life where they are allowed to dream and where it is possible to achieve those dreams, to develop, and to succeed.

The American dream is one of the reasons that make the Middle Easterners immigrate to the US seeking success, stability, freedom, opportunities and good living. Authoritarian regimes do not only limit their citizens' dreams and development and deal with them unfairly, they are also humiliated with fear in their hearts, where any citizen can be exposed to death, rape, jail, kidnaping, and torture or forced to join military or war and most of the times without committing any bad or crime. The UN reported that Iraqi women were exposed to rape in front of their families that are jailed to torture them. The

highest rate of kidnaping was in Iraq, and no respect for human rights and dignity was adopted. Syrians were exposed to chemical weapons including innocent women and children. Torture and tyranny were and still are common in most of the Middle Eastern countries. The level of tyranny may differ but the tyranny still exists. Saddam was toppled and regimes were changed in many Middle Eastern countries but the tyrannies did not change because many issues rose, ISIS is one of them. The influence of regional powers like Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Israel also played a role and the biggest issue that Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries were and still are facing is the ethnic conflict which did not leave a place for reconciliation and provoked chaos that will last till the watch of the future generations.

On September 11, 2001, the US was under terrorist attack, this incident changed all the calculations and strategic plans of President Bush. President Bush was convinced that the US was too extended and this extension was not needed anymore and his Administration's aim was to focus on the Americans and their internal issues. September 11 attack changed all the equation and turned President Bush from an introvert to an extrovert. He declared the war on terror and considered Iran, Iraq and North Korea the "Axis of evil," and decided to fight terrorists in their homes instead of waiting till they come to the US and harm its people and challenge its sovereignty. For President Bush, the US national security was in danger and its interest was in declaring war on terrorists.

In 2003, President Bush invaded Iraq aiming to defeat terrorism and declaring Iraq a democratic country that will be the example for the Middle Eastern countries. The aim was bigger than that, because when a country is democratic that means that Capitalism and Liberalism will be adopted. Iraq is the 5th largest oil reserve, the quality of the oil is the best in these regions and it has a huge market. So when opening Iraq there will be more availability of oil worldwide, the competition will rise and the prices will drop, the best quality will be served and the open Iraqi market will influence the economy; so better trade will occur and more investments and opportunities will open, and the economy worldwide will grow. The results were not as expected, the war took longer time than expected. Many thousands of American soldiers were dead and thousands were injured and traumatized, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis were killed and many were displaced. The US spent Trillions of Dollars in the Iraqi war, ISIS terrorist organization rose, and terrorism was not defeated.

In 2009 President Obama came to power, consistently with his beliefs he withdrew from Iraq because he was convinced that the Middle East is consuming the US. The Middle East was full of chaos and a mess and that will not be fixed neither under his watch nor in the foreseeable future. For him, Saudi Arabia and Iran must learn to share power in the Middle East to balance it. Muslims must take reform actions to reconcile themselves because no country can do this job on their behalf. For the President the US must shift its interest to Asia, Latin America and Africa, and for him the citizens of these countries do

not wish death for the American people and do not wish to commit terrorism in the US. They are energetic people, they seek better life and better education and have potential. China is rising fast and for him sharing power with China in the international system will enhance it and is best for the American interest.

President Obama withdrew officially from Iraq in 2011 leaving behind a big mess. The changing US foreign policy under President Obama contributed to the creation of ISIS where the last felt betrayed and declared their Caliphate. They invaded many areas beginning with the Yazidi's region, to al Rakka in Syria, Jouroud Aarsal in Lebanon, to all countries in the East and in the West. They committed the ugliest crimes, rape, executions, collective deaths and burnings. They killed innocent people in terrorist attacks all over the world from the US to Canada, France, Germany, Britain, Spain, Belgium, Australia, Ethiopia, South Africa, Egypt, Yemen, Lebanon and many more countries. The people living all over the globe felt in danger more than ever before because the hegemon and major powers were threatened and exposed to terrorist attacks. No country was safe anymore, many people lost their loved ones, their families, relatives, husbands, wives, children; people that survived the attacks got traumatized or affected physically and psychologically and the citizens of the World lived bad times.

Besides the rise of ISIS that was a consequence of President Obama changing policy, Iran gained more power in the Middle East. After the withdrawal, President Obama signed a Nuclear Deal with Iran and the P5+1

countries (Russia, China, France, Britain, US plus Germany). He believed that the nuclear deal came from a pessimist vision not for the aim of opening a new era with Iran. For him the Nuclear Deal would put Iran under observation. Iran would not be interested in terrorism anymore because it had interest to keep peace and stability because after the many years of embargos and sanctions Iran was in a very bad economic situation and needed to breath. More oil will be available in the market, the price will decrease and the economy will ameliorate. The deal truly enhanced the economy, but Iran gained more power after the American withdrawal.

Iran and Iraq have in common Shiism as religion. The Iraqis were oppressed for a long time by a Sunni Muslim and sought revenge, so Iran played to awaken this grievance to resurge the Muslim Shiites in Iraq and Iran after long conflicts between Iranian government and Saddam. Iran used the Iraqi mess to strengthen its power, used the Iraqi territories to support its ally Al Assad in Syria against the revolution and to provide its ally Hezbollah with weapons in Lebanon. Iran used the Iraqi government to influence the Iraqi interests where the majority of the Shiites represented in the government were influenced by Iran. The rise of Iranian power facilitated the rise of the Israeli power and the Saudi Arabian one and vice versa because all major powers in the Middle East and any region get more and more armed and strengthen their powers arguing that the rise of one country will challenge the strength of the other ones and the argument never ends.

When President Trump came to power, he aborted the Iranian Nuclear deal claiming that the deal was a windfall for Iran. This changing foreign policy also contributed to strengthening the power of Iran because it had nothing to lose anymore and was playing all its cards to maximize its power. Today President Biden wants to negotiate and Iran is imposing its terms because it has more power than before. The changing Foreign policy of Presidents Obama and Trump enhanced the role of Israel and Saudi Arabia and the old-new player Turkey on the regional level, and it has enhanced the role of Russia and China on the international level. The Vacuum that Obama left made all the mentioned countries run to fill it. ISIS as mentioned before declared the Caliphate, Iran enhanced its power, Israel also enhanced its power to oppose Iran and balance its power because for Israel, Iran is its main challenger in the region. Turkey wanted to revive the old Ottoman Empire and tried to play a role. Saudi Arabia ran to respond to the rise of Turkey because it is its competitor within the Sunni world. Russia is also an old player but this time Russia is more interested with economy than ideology. The Middle East is geographically near to Russia and China, so both are interested in having access to the warm water, importing Oil and gas in less time and best quality, and they have interest to open new markets.

Russia wants to play an international role and oppose the US whenever it can, and it has played a role in supporting al Assad and defeating the rebellion. China's aim is to revive its silk road, so it had sought peace and good relations

with all the Middle Eastern countries. US left the Middle East to Focus of China, and the last came back to revive its road and enhance its economy that is a major criteria that the hegemon country must have. In the aftermath, the US did not achieve its declared aim, it had spent trillions of dollars in the Iraqi war, lost thousands of soldiers and Iraq is not a model of Democracy for the Middle Eastern countries, but the hegemon never enters in a war that is lost. The public may see it as a miscalculation or strategic mistake, or a war that its costs are higher than its benefits; but the truth will be that the hegemon and biggest influencer of the world has biggest vision and mission for the future, and is calculating and putting its national interest above all. One of the theories is that Oil was the big prize of the invasion. Iraq did not export terrorism, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia did where most of the hijackers of the planes on the September 11 attack were from Saudi Arabia, and weapons of mass destruction were not found in Iraq after the invasion, as the Secretary of State back then Condolence Rice declared. So, the only reason left was the Oil. Big Oil companies like ExxonMobil, Chevron, BP and others confessed that their main aim was to open the Iraqi market, they needed the oil and Saddam was influencing the market. They supported financially the Bush's presidential campaign and he paid them back two years after his election. A committee was formed and plans were made to open Iraq and invest in its oil, advisers in the Iraqi governments and especially the oil ministry were members of President Bush and President Obama's administrations, where they influenced the oil industry, the contracts,

and the investments. Iraq with the 5th largest oil reserve and the best quality of it must be more than a wealthy country, the income from the oil investments must assure the prosperity of the Iraqis, their GDP must be high, they must be living with dignity and prosperity. Unfortunately, Iraqis are poorer than ever, and their basic needs are not provided.

Others argue that Israel's interest has played also a role in the invasion. Iran, Iraq, Syria and south Lebanon have Shiites in common which can be an opportunity for resurgence; Iran and Iraq are the 4th and 5th world's largest Oil reserves, together they can control the oil market and the economic market and be the big challenger internationally because of the importance of the oil. All these countries share borders and are geographically near. Syria and Lebanon have access to the Mediterranean Sea where the warm water and they are the link between the East and the West. When allied together, these countries can make an extraordinary power that challenges the major powers and impose themselves as big players in international affairs. This is not in favor of Israel and its existence, nor in favor of the Hegemon and other regional and superpowers. The US will definitely get involved to vanish any kind of threat that affects its interests and status and controls the oil. That was another reason for invading Iraq; weakening Iran through sanctions, embargos and supporting the removal of Al-Assad in Syria.

These might be the main reasons behind the invasion, but it cannot be denied that Iraq is a democratic country today. It is true that due to high ethnic

conflicts the government adopted consensual democracy which has lots of gaps and mistakes but at the end of the day it is democracy. Under Saddam or any authoritarian regime the people don't have the opportunity to make change. Their only aim will be feeding themselves and their children and stay alive, while in democratic regime even though conflicts may occur but at least there is an opportunity to change, to vote, to work through political or non-governmental organizations to spread democracy and values and make a difference. Iraqis have an exceptional opportunity to put their ethnic conflicts behind and work together to achieve peace and prosperity.

The work is hard and takes long time, maybe generations, but settling down is not an option. Iraqis need to adopt secularism, they need to separate religion from government, and they need to treat all the citizens fairly and equally, according to their competencies. Secularism cannot be found in one day or two, it is a long-term work, the process is long, secularism must be learned at schools, at homes, through seminars at the municipalities in the villages and cities because adults must learn about it to transmit it to their children. Since day one children must know that they must look to the individuals as only individuals, to not differentiate them according to religion, to skin color, to language, to origin, to region, to culture, to looks and any kind of ethnicity. Iraqis and people all over the world must learn that all creatures on earth are equal, they are different but equal, and there is nothing wrong with differences. To the contrary, differences make the world beautiful. There are no criteria that

give privileges to people over other people, all people are born equal, they have the right to live with dignity, their basic needs must be provided, they have the right of access to schools, and to hospitals.

Unfortunately, many people of the third world, of the Middle East and Iraq, do not know about their rights. They are used to live under oppression and dictatorships or with poverty and without the respect of their dignities. People after all must be aware about their rights to be able to ask for them, and then they must raise their voices and ask for them, the price may be high, but it is worth it. Terrorism, fundamentalism, war and fights create more terrorism, fundamentalism and wars, conflicts and ethnic conflicts give birth to worst ethnic conflicts; also love creates love and peace creates peace. States must try to influence each other peacefully, using the soft power to spread democracy, peace and freedom, because there is nothing more precious than the freedom and dignity of all the human beings.

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