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Role of the U.S. Interests in Iraq –Kuwait Relations after 2003

الدور الأمريكي في العلاقات العراقية الكويتية بعد عام ٢٠٠٣

Keywords: Interests, Iraq, Kuwait, cooperation, conflict

الكلمة المفتاحية : المصالح، العراق، الكويت، التعاون، الصراع

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Abstract

Iraqi – Kuwaiti relations is one of the most contentious relations in the Arab Gulf region, whereby these relationships encountered significant tension and instability during U.S. occupation of Iraq 2003-2011, as a result of the development of a set of political and economic problems. e.g., the border demarcation between the two countries, debt and compensation, establishment of the Mubarak Kuwait port, and continuation of the sanctions imposed on Iraq by United Nation (UN) after Second Gulf war. The U.S. interests are reflected directly on the conflict and cooperation relations between Iraq and Kuwait. This study therefore, examines the nature Iraqi – Kuwaiti relations in light of the divergent interests of U.S. after Saddam's regime.

Introduction

The Arab Gulf, where Iraq and Kuwait are located, is one of the areas that has received a great deal of attention by the U.S. in the modern era due to its special geographical location and huge energy reserves of oil and gas (١).The U.S. interests in the Gulf region have been associated with energy resources since 1975. Before 1975, the Gulf petroleum resources were not of vital importance for the U.S. because in 1973 the total amount of petroleum imported from the region did not exceed 7% of the total energy consumption in the U.S. But in 1975 the amount increased to 34%. Since then the increasing dependency of the U.S. on primary resources, markets and external trade has become a weak point in the overall American power making it very sensitive and responsive towards actual threats to the U.S. interests in the Arab region. Consequently, the securing of Arabic sea lanes became an American security interest with heightened priority and the U.S. control over transportation related issues in the Arab Gulf became an essential part of the U.S. maritime strategy (٢).

The U.S. administration felt that they must be firm with regards to the issue of oil security as well as preventing others from controlling the supply of oil. The U.S. has formulated its security strategy in the Arab Gulf based on its vital interests which was to ensure the free flow of oil. Accordingly, this required the prevention of any international or regional powers from threatening U.S. interests in the region (٣).Hence, the U.S. hurriedly convened two security agreements with Kuwait. The first agreement was on February 24, 1975 and the second was on January 18, 1976 and the subject of the agreements were about mutual assistance in the field of defense and logistic services(٤).

During the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), when the Iranians stepped up their attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf to punish Kuwait for giving financial support to Iraq, the U.S. agreed with Kuwait's request to put American flags on the Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Gulf to protect them from Iranian attacks(٥). Subsequently, the U.S. administration pursued a more direct way to strengthen its marine

presence in the Gulf after renting a base from the British on Diego Garcia Island in the Indian Ocean. The U.S. also extended its intervention and rapid deployment forces which started in 1979 into a full military leadership for the Gulf region which known as the U.S. Central Leadership. Then, the U.S. intervened directly in the Tankers War which emerged in the last phase of the Iran-Iraq war and thanks to the U.S. efforts; this war is over[٦].

The U.S. has exploited the crisis of the Iraq-Kuwait relations in 1990 after Iraq accused Kuwait of exporting oil that exceeded the daily quota set by OPEC which resulted in Iraq suffering a loss of 1 billion dollars annually. The U.S. seemed to be playing a double game towards both Iraq and Kuwait and one of the two possibilities may be considered. The first is that Iraq was subjected to economic pressures and forced to reduce its expenses due to the price of oil and the pressure of its debt and interests incurred during its war with Iran and thus had to reduce the expenditure of its military forces as well as military and industrial projects. The second possibility is that Iraq was grabbing its rights from Kuwait by using its military force[٧].

The U.S. has contributed to creating conflict and tension between Iraq and Kuwait despite their superficial differences when it announced in July 1990 that the U.S. would not interfere in any territorial dispute between Iraq and Kuwait thus giving the green light to the Iraqi government to occupy Kuwait in August 1990. As a result, the Second Gulf War to liberate Kuwait in 1991 occurred and the U.S. succeeded in having a permanent military presence in the region[٨]*. Although the crisis caused by the Iraq-Kuwait relations of that period is the apparent reason for the Second Gulf War, but the U.S. geostrategic goals lie in three main political objectives which they are:*

1. *To contain Iraq.*
2. *To secure the vital American interests in the Arab Gulf region in general and in Kuwait in particular.*
3. *To ensure international compliance with the U.S.*

In order to protect the U.S. allies in the Gulf region and avoid a sudden interruption in the supply of energy resources and to prevent the outbreak of another regional conflict like the Second Gulf War, the U.S. sought to maintain a security partnership with its key allies in the region, particularly Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, for a long-term period. Thus, the U.S. kept more than 15,000 American military personnel in Kuwait after 1991 to prevent the regional neighboring states from attempting to change the strategic balance in the region which is not compatible with American interests(٩).

In 2000, Iraq tried to improve the relations and restored diplomatic ties with Kuwait by resorting to the mediation of the Arab League's organization in order to reconcile with Kuwait, but Kuwait repeatedly turned all of them down. At the same time there were international pressures, particularly by the U.S. and Britain, to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime(١٠).

Soon after that, the U.S. administration announced that it will seek to achieve three objectives that are very important for the U.S. national security and they are:

1. *The war on terrorism, which was a reaction to September11, 2001 attacks in the heart of the U.S.*
2. *The elimination of the evil axis states as specified by the U.S. administration (North Korea, Iran, and Iraq) which have nuclear programs or are going to possess it.*
3. *The creation of democratic regimes in the Middle East, starting with Iraq.(١١)*

The decisive factor that has enabled the U.S. to become the solitary great power is its military superiority. This has made the U.S. administration adopt a new strategy designed to directly govern and take control over the whereabouts of oil in the Gulf region(١٢). Both Iraq and Kuwait have more than 19% of the world's oil reserves and more than 7% of the total global oil production with Saudi Arabia having 25% of the world's oil reserves and 8% of the total global oil production(١٣).

Despite the improvement of the relations between Iraq and Kuwait during the U.S. occupation of Iraq 2003-2011, but tension

and instability still exist between two countries. The U. S. failed to resolve the outstanding issues between Iraq and Kuwait with regard to the problem of the border, debt، Compensation, remove Iraq from Chapter VII of the UN Charter and issue of Kuwaiti Port of Mubarak(١٤).

This study analyzes the influence of the U.S. interests in Iraq - Kuwait relations during the U.S. occupation of Iraq. It examines the increase of growth of the U.S. interests in Iraq and Kuwait post-Saddam rule and its influence in the outstanding problems between the two countries.

Research Methodology

Our study adopts a qualitative research technique with a face-to-face interview approach to elucidate information from the key informants. The use of qualitative approach would provide better insight in understanding the way people think about issues(١٥). Qualitative research approach techniques of data collection and analysis were used for two reasons. Firstly, this approach help to understand some research concepts e.g., attitude, behavior, etc. Secondly, a qualitative research is a type of research that generates findings that cannot be reached from adopting statistical procedures or other means of quantification(١٦). Also this study employed semi-structured interview, because this method is non-standardized and is commonly used in qualitative analysis(١٧)

This means that a qualitative research in mainly expected to involve numerous questions from the participant under study in order to assist the process of obtaining knowledge during discussions. Finally, the qualitative method is commonly used to explain or describe as well as to build a hypothesis, in which the causes of the process can be meticulously understood. This study also used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, which helps to get the views and experiences about the nature of the Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations and evaluated it in post-Saddam's rule(١٨).

The present study aims at achieving many objectives with the general purpose of describing, explaining and examining, the

phenomenon under study, the role of U.S in Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations after 2003. The reason behind why the researcher utilizes the analytical descriptive method in analyzing the data is to provide a systematic and scientific explanation, definition and examination of such data in addition to providing conclusions from the problems, research questions, current situations and reasonable solutions.

Section One: Growing the U.S. Interest in Iraq and Kuwait in Post-Saddam Rule 2003

The U.S. strategy in Iraq after 2003 was based on strengthening American hegemony over the world, sustaining it as long as possible and maintaining the position of the U.S. as the only superpower in the international arena. At the same time, the U.S. occupation of Iraq and the retention of large military bases help to achieve an integrated political, economic and military targets, in addition to helping it to play a pivotal role in the Gulf region[١٩].

The U.S. has concluded a number of security agreements with Iraq including the U.S.-Iraqi Security Agreement whereby Iraq was promised that its name will be removed from Chapter VII of the UN sanctions and supervision and it will regain its full sovereignty and international stature. This agreement, from the point of view of many is a detailed framework with a roadmap for relations' improvement and future cooperation between the two countries in all fields[٢٠].

The Iraqi -American security agreement achieved strategic gains for the U.S. and of particular importance is it uses Iraq as a security base to counter potential threats against the U.S. national security, whether from armed groups like the "Al-Qaeda" Organization or hostile nations. The agreement also ensured that Israel's security was enhanced through the reduction or elimination of threats from some Arab countries. In addition to that the agreement was also to create a new Iraq that is in compliance with the objectives of the U.S. invasion. This in turn was to ensure that Iraq will not deviate from the regional and international game rules as per the U.S. invasion. The ultimate goal of this agreement was to

dispel fears of an extension of possible influence from China, Russia and Japan as well as the European Union in the Gulf region, particularly in Iraq. Therefore, such an agreement was considered to be a guarantee and a protection for the U. S. interests from international competition in Iraq and the Middle East(٢١).

The U.S. presence in Iraq, after 2003, has helped to expand the U.S. military bases in the affiliated countries, e.g., Kuwait, in the Arab Gulf. Control of the Arab Gulf is the main interest of the U.S. military strategy and this is because the region is an important linking point between the U.S. bases in Europe and those in the Pacific Ocean. The U.S. has set up military bases in Kuwait which later became the key factor of its military strategy in the Gulf, supporting any military campaign in Kuwait or abroad(٢٢).

The U.S. attaches great importance to its interests in Kuwait. In addition, Kuwait is an important and strategic military base for the U.S. interests. Therefore, because of the interests of U.S., Kuwait enjoys security and stability. The U.S. strategic interests are based on multiple locations, in addition to Kuwait it also has military bases in Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, which are not necessarily directed against Iraq(٢٣).

However, the main interest of the U.S. military reinforcement in Kuwait was to prevent the political regime in Iraq from threatening the neighboring countries, especially the Gulf States and Israel, and to maintain security and stability in the region. The instability caused by Saddam's offensive actions in Kuwait could have led to negative consequences in the region, which would have provided major countries, e.g. Iran with a reason to threaten the smaller countries in the Gulf(٢٤).

The U.S. military bases in Kuwait and the Gulf region play several important roles including:

First, military role: they represent a starting point for wars and interventions, where the U.S. can strike groups or regimes that threaten its interests anywhere in the world. Second, economic role: they support the American economy through the companies that provide the bases with weaponry and other supplies such as food, clothes,-etc. Halliburton Company in Iraq, for instance, has monopolized all kinds of services provided to the U.S. Army. Most of the shares of the company are owned by leading members of the U.S. Administration and among them is the former U.S. Vice-President, Dick Cheney (٢٥) .

The U.S. sought to make its military bases in the Gulf especially in Kuwait as a place to implement its polices and pursue its interests in other countries, e.g., it can be used to confront Iran and reduce its influence in the region or to confront terrorist organizations which endanger its interests. The deteriorating security situation in the Arab Gulf in general and Iraq's inability to protect its border in particular contributes to the retention of the maximum number of U.S. military units in Kuwait, which is estimated at fifteen thousand U.S. troops. The military forces are deployed according to the security agreement signed between the U.S. and Kuwait after the Second Gulf War and the agreement is renewed every ten years(٢٦).

On the other hand, there was a significant correlation between the decision- makers and giant petroleum companies in the U.S. regarding the interests of the U.S. in the Gulf region, specifically in conflict areas, e.g. Iraq and Kuwait which have huge oil reserves in comparison to other areas in the region. The U.S. economic interests depended on controlling the oil wells in Iraq and Kuwait and it also represent the bases for developing security and military strategies that suit America's interests and its presence in the region(٢٧).

The U.S. interests in Kuwait and Iraq have gained strategic importance and this is attributed to two important factors. Firstly, the growing importance and the U.S. desire to maintain the region's

security and stability to ensure the flow of oil to the U.S. and other industrial powers. Secondly, it is the growing role of oil in world politics as it is the most important source of energy which has granted the Gulf region additional political weight and an indispensable strategic advantage. The U.S. seeks to achieve three objectives in the region: (a) to maintain the ability to secure oil imports (b) at reasonable prices and (c) ensure sufficient quantities to meet the growing demands of the U.S. and its friends and allies in the world[٢٨]

Section Two: Role of the U.S. Interests in the Outstanding Problems between Iraq and Kuwait

During that period, the U.S. has shown a great deal of interest in the contentious issues between Iraq and Kuwait because of their implications on the interests of the U.S. in the region, particularly the energy supply. Nevertheless, Iraq-Kuwait relations worsened from 2003 until the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq in 2011 because of the outstanding problems between the two countries which have not been resolved. The most important problems include:

1- Border Dispute between Iraq and Kuwait:

The biggest challenge facing Iraq- Kuwait relations is the border problem, which contributed to the tension and the unstable relations between the two countries for a long periodof time [٢٩].

Since its invasion of Iraq, the U.S. has played a key role in the pressure applied on Kuwait to restore its diplomatic relations with Iraq which engendered convincing feelings to Kuwait of the need for partnership and close cooperation with Iraq at all political, security and economic levels[٣٠]. *The U.S. objective of achieving stability between Iraq and Kuwait was to ensure its vital and strategic interests in the region. Under the auspices of the U.S., Kuwait hosted the first conference with its neighboring countries in October, 2004. At the conference, the participants stressed on the support for Iraq's unity, security and integrity, and called for the promotion of relations between the two countries. They also signed an agreement in*

December 2004 whereby Kuwait committed itself to supply Iraq with gasoline and diesel in exchange for Iraqi gas and the whole agreement was valued at approximately $ 870 million. Later, the two sides also signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen scientific and cultural cooperation between the two countries(٣١).

In the same context, Abed (Interviewee, 2015), greed that the U.S. as a superpower and key player in the Gulf region has affected the nature of Iraq-Kuwait relations positively. From 2003 to 2011, the U.S. went all-out to redevelop relations between Kuwait and Iraq in order to maintain its military and political achievements in Iraq, all the while assuming that it is the savior of the region from the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein. Besides that, the U.S. exerted pressures on Kuwaiti decision- makers to resolve the outstanding border issues, which can be understood through mutual visits by politicians from Kuwait and Iraq with American support and encouragement. Also the U.S. has military bases in both Kuwait and Iraq and therefore it seeks to preserve its presence in the region for as long as possible and to also simultaneously promote rapprochement between Iraq and Kuwait as dictated by the U.S. interests in the Gulf region, for fear of an extension of Iran's influence in Iraq(٣٢)

However, the new relations between Iraq and Kuwait encountered a crisis during the reign of Iraq's Prime Minister Ibrahim Al-Ja'afari, in 2005, when a team of Kuwaiti military force intruded into Iraq's border under the pretext of constructing an iron barrier to protect its territories from attacks due to events that was sweeping through Iraq then as a result of the failure of the U.S. forces to control the security situation in Iraq. This incident, therefore, had adverse influence on Kuwait-Iraq relations. It also instigated both official and popular reactions in Iraq represented by some Iraqi representatives' condemnation of the Kuwaiti incursion into Iraq's territories and waters anddemanded for the review of the border demarcation agreementswhich were approved by the UN and supported by the U.S. after the Second Gulf War(٣٣).

These incidents prompted Iraq and Kuwait to hold bilateral talks on the border issues. The U.S. played a major role in these talks which eventually led Iraq and Kuwait to sign an agreement in November, 2006 which allowed Kuwait to complete the construction of an iron fence along the border between the two countries and Kuwait made a commitment to compensate the affected Iraqi farmers. The two sides also agreed to finalize all the practical requirements of border demarcation between the two countries on the basis of the UN Security Council Resolution No. 833 of 1993.

The agreement, signed by the two sides, further stipulated the setting up of a buffer zone on both sides of the border where a curfew is imposed and all kinds of activities were prohibited. Furthermore, the two sides discussed the signing of an agreement on the issue of the demarcation of maritime boundaries[٣٤].

The U.S. role in the stability and development of relations between Iraq and Kuwait. He states "Yes, the U.S. interests positively affected Iraq-Kuwait relations during that period; there were no Iraqi attacks against Kuwait, but there were cooperation, rapprochement and stability along the Iraq-Kuwait border". The U.S. goal was to prove and show the world that what the Americans have achieved in Iraq was a result of the policies they had put in place much earlier[٣٥]

Additionally, the U.S. encouraged security cooperation between the two countries through an agreement (protocol) signed in Kuwait in January 2011 and the objective of the agreement was to conduct joint military patrols to protect the waterways between Iraq and Kuwait. The two sides were also bound by the agreement to exchange information and to report any criminal activity in the ports, coasts, or regional waters of the two countries. This security cooperation came as a result of Kuwait's fear of the security vacuum in southern Iraq after the withdrawal of British troops from Basra in 2009, which effectively placed the Iraqis closer to Kuwait's border, making it prone to smuggling and terrorism activities[٣٦].

2- Problem of Constructing Kuwait's "Port Mubarak"

Port Mubarak, which Kuwait commenced construction on the waterway side of the Iraqi port of "Faw", is the second biggest challenge facing Iraq-Kuwait relations due to the adverse effects of this project on the Iraqi economy. Kuwait has a long coasts on the Arab Gulf that extends approximately for 500 km, while the Iraqi coast is not more than 50 km away. Kuwait has five ports on the Arab Gulf however it chose "Boubyan Island", which is only 1950 meters from the Iraqi border to build its sixth port (Mubarak Al-Kabeer) due to economic and strategic reasons. It is noteworthy to mention here that the Iraqi Ministry of Transport laid the cornerstone of the Grand "Faw Port" in Basra in April 2010. One year later, in April 2011, the Kuwaiti government laid the foundation stone of port Mubarak and commenced construction work, while Iraq has not yet started construction work on its port(٣٧).

Port Mubarak has become a major dispute between Iraq and Kuwait and it has inflicted major damages to Iraq and has threatened its sole maritime outlet and status. Soon, Kuwait is likely to close the navigation routes in the waterway by building the largest concrete block reinforced with stones and surrounded by steel pillars. This step is considered to be a threat to Iraq as Iraq views it as preparation by Kuwait to cut or block off all navigational routes leading to the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr and thus deprive Iraq from exercising its legitimate rights(٣٨).On the other hand, Kuwait views that Iraqi opposition of the port Mubarak project is a way of pressuring Kuwait to provide facilities and concessions regarding the outstanding issues between the two countries, especially the issues regarding reparations and debts(٣٩).

The port Mubarak crisis have given rise to negative consequences and cast a long shadow over relations between the two countries. Iraq has objected to the construction of Port Mubarak as it violates the International Security Council Resolution No. 833 of 1991 concerning border demarcations between the two countries. Three Grad rockets were launched from the Iraqi province of Basra and they landed at the site of the port Mubarak project on Boubyan

Island(٤٠). Kuwait also regarded these security threats as a serious danger to diplomatic relations with Iraq(٤١). In a different context, the U.S. has played a major role in the construction of Port Mubarak next to Iraq's regional waters in the Gulf region as it is an essential step for the control of the Iraq- Kuwait conflict after the demise of Saddam's regime. The U.S. agreed with the project and provided Kuwait with the facilities in order to confront Iranian influence that competes with the U.S. interests in Iraq. As expected the construction of this port led to tension in Kuwait-Iraq relations and have adversely affected their stability and development(٤٢).

On the contrary, some researchers believed that the U.S. has no impact on Iraq-Kuwait relations. As a superpower, the U.S. aspires to see Kuwait and the other Gulf States pursue a more sympathetic policy with the new system in Iraq after 2003. But, the Iraqi - Iranian rapprochement and the growing Iranian influence in Iraq have served to heighten Kuwait's and the Gulf States' fears of the new system in Iraq. Therefore, the U.S. let the Gulf States, including Kuwait; adopt their own policies towards Iraq according to their interests and perception of the situation in Iraq(٤٣).

3- Problem of Iraq's Debts and Reparations to Kuwait

The issue of Iraq's debts and reparations to Kuwait represents another challenge to the development of Iraq -Kuwait relations after the demise of Saddam's regime in 2003. Iraq was suffering from accumulated debts estimated at billions of dollars, damaged infrastructure, economic collapse as a result of previous wars (e.g. war with Iran and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait) and economic sanctions imposed by the UN on Iraq for more than 12 years because of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.Iraq was in dire need for money to rebuild its institutions and infrastructure, to revitalize its economy and to restart it again. But Kuwait insisted on Iraq paying its debts and reparations because the members of Parliament of Kuwait refused to compromise and considered this issue as non-negotiable.

Undoubtedly, Kuwait's position towards the issue of reparations adversely affected Iraq- Kuwait relations(٤٤).

These debts and reparations constituted a heavy burden on the Iraqi economy and consequently fell on the shoulders of the Iraqi people. The new Iraqi government regards the debts and reparations as remnants of Saddam's regime and should not be borne by the people and the current Iraqi government. The new Iraqi government has called for relations based on the exclusion of the policies of Saddam's regime together with its mistakes and events and to give it a fresh start by building a new relationship between the two countries(٤٥).

The value of the damages caused by the Iraqi invasion in 1990 was estimated at $ 177.6 billion. The share of the private sector (individuals - private sector) was about $ 17.2 billion while that of the public sector amounted to about $ 142.8 billion and in addition to that $17.6 billion was for the environment(٤٦).

The UN has approved $ 37.2 billion as compensation to Kuwait due to of the Iraqi invasion of its territory, of which Kuwait received $ 9.3 billion and allotted it as follows: $ 6.5 billion to the civil sector, about $ 3.7 billion to individuals, about $ 2.8 billion to private sector companies, and about $ 2.8 billion for the public sector. The balance of the huge reparations is still due. As for debts, Iraq's total external debts are estimated at about $ 450 billion. This number was stated by the Iraqi Minister of Planning during a lecture in Dubai in September 2003 and in a meeting with the IMF and the World Bank. These debts are distributed as follows: $ 320 billion (reparations as a result of the first and second Gulf War), $130 billion (external debt which includes interests amounting to $ 47 billion) and the debt to Kuwaiti which is estimated at $ 13.2 billion without the interests due on this debt as from the date of borrowing(٤٧).

On its part, the U.S. administration exerted mounting pressure on Kuwait to write-off the debts owed by Iraq, to stop the reparations paid by Iraq to Kuwait to reduce the quantum of reparations to reflect on the nature of the relations between Iraq and Kuwait. Kuwait is linked to the strategic and historical interests of the U.S.

and therefore it is not in Kuwait's interest to be in conflict with the U.S. demands in any shape or form[٤٨].

In supporting this view, the U.S. interests that are linked to the Arab Gulf region have had positive impact in strengthening relations between Iraq and Kuwait". The U.S. has contributed to resolving the outstanding disagreements between Iraq and Kuwait, strengthening bonds of cooperation between them by means of easing the heavy financial burdens of Iraq resulting from its previous debts. It also helped to strengthen political cooperation, diplomati representation, trade and investments to overcome the disputes of the past. The U.S. contribution to the fact that both Kuwait and Iraq, represent an important part of the U.S. strategy[٤٩].

Additionally, the U.S. had the biggest role in the organizing of the Madrid Conference in 2003 which called for the easing of the huge financial burdens owed by Iraq as a result of its previous debts. It aimed to provide the financial resources necessary to the reconstruction process in Iraq and to achieve economic stability by providing financial grants and soft loans. This conference collected $ 33 billion in support for Iraq and the contributors were as follows: $ 20 billion from U.S., $ 5 billion from Japan; $ 5 billion from the World Bank, $ 1.5 billion from Kuwait; $ 1 billion from Saudi Arabia, $ 835 million from Britain; $ 300 million from Spain and $ 231 million from the European Union. The U.S. also contributed to the support of a resolution by the UN Security Council to create an "International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq" administered by Britain and the U.S. The draft stipulated that the deduction rate of Iraq's oil proceeds for the benefit of Reparations Fund is to be reduced from 25% to 5% [٥٠].

Though the U.S. has played an influential role in pressuring Kuwait to lighten the financial dues to Kuwait as a result of the Iraqi invasion in 1990, this role was not very influential as evidenced by the debt owed by Iraq to Kuwait has not been written off yet. It is not in the U.S. interests, in light of the circumstances and changes between 2003-2011, to see a stable and strong political system whether in Iraq or Kuwait, since this will lead to improvement in

Iraq-Kuwait relations on the one hand and stabilize Iraq's relations with the Gulf States on the other. Such conditions contradicted with the U.S. interests and orientations in the region which entailed the spreading of chaos in the region(٥١)

4- Problem of Iraq Remaining under Chapter VII of the UN Charter:

The resolutions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter was another challenge facing the Iraq-Kuwait relations. As a consequence of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the UN adopted several resolutions and imposed international sanctions under Chapter VII, the first of which was Resolution No. 660 in 1990 and other resolutions followed in quick succession and the final total number was seventy- two(٥٢).

The nineteen chapters of the UN Charter contain one hundred and eleven articles and Chapter VII is the only one that has coercive powers to implement resolutions against member countries. The most serious is Article No. 42 which allows the Security Council to take actions and measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. The actions and measures include the use of air, sea and land forces, economic blockade, and other air and sea operations, and the aforesaid actions and measures have actually been exercised against Iraq since 1991. These resolutions remained in force even after the liberation of Kuwait and the restoration of its sovereignty(٥٣).

However, Kuwait's position on Iraq is that Iraq must still remain under the sanctions imposed by Chapter VII despite the demise of Saddam's regime after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003.Kuwait even demanded more than once that the UN Security Council should not remove Iraq from the Chapter VII's list before it fulfills all its international obligations, especially the issues of reparations and all matters under Resolution No. 833 about border demarcations between Iraq and Kuwait. Kuwait's position, therefore, created an adverse impact on the development of relations between the two countries(٥٤).

Being an ally and a protector of Kuwait's security, the U.S. advised Kuwait to hold on to Chapter VII of the UN Charter and insisted that Iraq must be fully committed to the resolutions of the Security Council regarding the effects of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.The U.S. could have made Kuwait waive the debts owed by Iraq and help to remove Iraq from Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The U.S. has not been confident so far that Iraq would become a strategic ally like the GCC States. Thus, the U.S. is trying to make the biggest gains through its relations with Kuwait and the rest of the GCC States[٥٥].

The U.S. failed to free Iraq from Chapter VII of the UN Charter in spite of some positive facts that could have contributed to the lifting of international sanctions on Iraq including:

1. *The security agreement signed between the U.S. and Iraq pointed to the lifting of international sanctions on Iraq and that by December 13, 2008 Iraq would have regained its international and legitimate status that it enjoyed before the invasion of Kuwait*[٥٦].
2. *The U.S. status as a permanent member in the UN Security Council is influential in the resolutions issued by the Council in relations to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.*
3. *The U.S. is capable of carrying out successful mediation to persuade Kuwait to end its outstanding problems with Iraq (e.g., debts, reparations and border problems) or to find a way to resolve them which can then make the UN Security Council adopt a resolution to remove Iraq from Chapter VII*[٥٧].

Conclusion

The nature of Iraq- Kuwait relations enjoy considerable importance in the political agendas and decision-making circles in the U.S. because of its implications for the latter's interests in the region, particularly energy supply. Though the U.S. view these relations from different angles, they still attach strategic importance to the two countries. The U.S. is seeking to strengthen Kuwait-Iraq relations, but it is in pursuance of its political and economic interests. It sometimes seek to restore and develop the relations between Iraq and Kuwait in order to preserve its military and political achievements in Iraq and win the cooperation of these two countries to keep them away from the influence of Iran and the Gulf states, while on other occasions it seeks to destabilize relations between Iraq and Kuwait by following a double-standard policy in order to destabilize the security of the Gulf region. Thus, the U.S. can ensure its presence in the Gulf region and work to fuel fears of Iraqi threats among the Gulf countries, especially Kuwait.

Despite the efforts the U.S. has made to foster better between Iraq and Kuwait after deposing Saddam's regime, these efforts have been modest and ineffective in resolving the outstanding disputes between the two countries e.g., border demarcations, reparations and the removal of Iraq from Chapter VII of the UN Charter. In other words, the U.S. role as a key player in the Gulf region was reflected negatively in the search for a common ground for rapprochement between Iraq and Kuwait. Finally, the U.S.is not the sole influential player on the nature of Iraq-Kuwait relations.

In the end, it can be concluded that the U.S. has had several effects on the Iraq-Kuwait relations. Firstly, the U.S. has influenced in a positive way, the fostering of diplomatic relations between Iraq and Kuwait in order to preserve its military and political achievements in Iraq. Secondly, on the contrary, the U.S. has an adverse impact on the strengthening of Iraq-Kuwait relations. The U.S. interests requires that Iraq remains unstable and militarily weak and consequently this adversely affects Kuwait as it will always be obsessed with the security threats from Iraq. Thirdly, the U.S. has

had a limited influential role, yet ineffective in general, on the Iraq-Kuwait relations. The proof of this is the continuation of some unresolved issues between Iraq and Kuwait until today.

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الدور الأمريكي في العلاقات العراقية الكويتية بعد عام ٢٠٠٣

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ملخص البحث

العلاقات العراقية – الكويتية هي واحدة من أكثر العلاقات المثيرة للجدل في منطقة الخليج العربي، حيث واجهت هذه العلاقات التوتر وعدم الاستقرار خلال فترة الاحتلال الأمريكي للعراق ٢٠٠٣–٢٠١١، نتيجة مجموعة من المشاكل السياسية والاقتصادية بين البلدين. كانت الولايات المتحدة خلال تلك الفترة اللاعب الأساسي والمؤثر سلباً وإيجاباً على طبيعة العلاقات ما بين العراق والكويت بما يتناسب مع طبيعة وتوجهات الولايات المتحدة في المنطقة خصوصاً وأن هذه الفترة قد شهدت تزايداً في نمو المصالح الأمريكية في منطقة الخليج بشكل عام وفي العراق والكويت بشكل خاص بعد سقوط نظام صدام.

بعد الاحتلال الأمريكي للعراق وزوال نظام صدام عام ٢٠٠٣ كان هناك مجموعة من المشاكل العالقة بين العراق والكويت أهمها مشكلة الحدود والديون الكويتية على العراق فضلاً عن مشكلة ميناء مبارك وبقاء العراق تحت الفصل السابع من ميثاق الأمم المتحدة. ورغم الجهود الأمريكية في دعوة كلا البلدين إلى إنهاء تلك المشاكل العالقة إلا أن الولايات المتحدة لم تنجح في منع ظهور توتر وأزمات جديدة بين البلدين خصوصاً بعد تردي الوضع الأمني في العراق وازدياد التهريب والتوتر عبر الحدود مما انعكس سلباً على أمن دول الجوار الإقليمي للعراق وخصوصاً الكويت. هذه الدراسة تسلط الضوء بالتحديد على دور المصالح الأمريكية المتناقضة وأثرها على طبيعة العلاقات العراقية الأمريكية بعد فترة حكم نظام صدام ٢٠٠٣.