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**The Illusion of Promoting Democracy In Iraq During Obama's Presidency**

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## **Dedication**

With deep affection, I am grateful to Allah and my family.

I dedicate our modest work first to the one who gave me the courage, patience, love, and support to continue and never give up MrGaboussa Amor, then to my angels, my parents Belkolli Amor and Zerari Saida, to whom I am very grateful for their support and love, and thanking god that I could enter the joy and happiness to their hearts with this achievement.

I also dedicate this work to my gentle sisters especially Hanene, the one who encourages me to move on to achieve my dreams, and to my little brothers Raouf and Amine, wishing for them a successful life, and to my best friend BouachriaSoumaichawhishing her other successes .

Finally I dedicate this work for all the teachers that I was lucky to be under their control during my career, my supervisor Mrs. Zemitti and the jury members Mr. ZemmouriLayachi and Mrs. AmiarMounira.

## **Dedication**

With deep affection, I am grateful to Allah and my family.

I dedicate our modest piece of research to my family, precisely to my father BouachriaDjamel and my mother BouchahdaDjamila my source of happiness, courage and love. I do offer them all my success because their guidance, prayers and advice enlightened my path.

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### **Abstract**

This dissertation investigates the illusion of promoting democracy in Iraq during Barack Obama's presidency. Initially, this research explores general background about the country of Iraq; it describes Iraq's location, political system, the foundation of its governmental structure and its long history of bloody wars especially with the surrounding countries Kuwait and Iran. Furthermore, Iraq historically has experienced different American foreign policies and military engagements; this research sheds the light on Obama's era and the impact of his doctrine on the future of Iraq. It also demonstrates Obama's different kind of commitment in Iraq and to what extent this commitment succeeded. In fact Obama's foreign policy in Iraq was highly critical, because it gave the American-Iraqi relationships a different shape, which Obama promised to turn page with Iraq and to deal with its internal crises responsibly. Crucially Obama's decision to withdraw the military forces from Iraq had many unexpected results negative or positive. Hence, this research examines Obama's promises to build a democratic leadership in Iraq.

## المخلص

يتمحور موضوع هذا البحث حول وهم تطبيق الديمقراطية في العراق خلال رئاسة باراك أوباما. في البداية سيتطرق هذا البحث إلى الخلفية العامة حول بلد العراق ويصف موقع العراق ونظامه السياسي وأسس هيكله الحكومي وتاريخه الطويل من الحروب الدموية خاصة مع الدول المجاورة الكويت وإيران. علاوة على ذلك ، شهد العراق تاريخياً سياسات خارجية وتفاعلات عسكرية أمريكية مختلفة ، وقد سلط هذا البحث الضوء على عهد أوباما وتأثير عقيدته على مستقبل العراق. كما أنه يوضح نوعاً مختلفاً من التزام أوباما في العراق وإلى أي مدى نجح هذا الالتزام. سياسة أوباما الخارجية تجاه العراق كانت شديدة الانتقادات ، لأنها أعطت العلاقات الأمريكية العراقية شكلاً مختلفاً ، وهو ما عديبه أوباما بقلب الصفحة مع العراق والتعامل مع أزماته الداخلية بمسؤولية. كان لقرار أوباما بسحب القوات العسكرية من العراق نتائج كثيرة غير متوقعة. ومن هنا سيحري هذا البحث وعود أوباما ببناء قيادة ديمقراطية في العراق.

### List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>CIA</b>	<b>Central Intelligence Agency</b>
<b>DIA</b>	<b>Defense Intelligence Agency</b>
<b>IGCT</b>	<b>Interim Governing Council in Iraq</b>
<b>ISIL</b>	<b>Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant</b>
<b>ISIS</b>	<b>Islamic state in Iraq and Syria</b>
<b>KDP</b>	<b>Kurdistan Democratic Party</b>
<b>NIA</b>	<b>National Iraqi Accord</b>
<b>OPEC</b>	<b>Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries</b>
<b>PAK</b>	<b>Patriotic Alliance of Kurdistan</b>
<b>SGIRI</b>	<b>Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq</b>
<b>SOFA</b>	<b>Status Of Force Agreement</b>
<b>SOL</b>	<b>State of Law</b>
<b>UK</b>	<b>United kingdom</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>U.S.</b>	<b>The United States</b>
<b>UIA</b>	<b>United Iraqi Alliance</b>
<b>WMD</b>	<b>Weapons of Mass Distraction</b>
<b>WW II</b>	<b>World War Two</b>

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## Introduction

Iraq is among the largest countries in the Middle East, it is located in Western Asia and surrounded by Turkey, Iran and the Gulf countries. Iraq was the land of ancient civilizations and the symbol of the Arabic culture in the region. Iraq's population is distinctive; the Arabs represent the highest percentage including the Sunnis and the Shias, the rest of population includes the Turkmens and the Kurds. It is known with its richness by raw materials, natural resources especially oil, the fact which makes it a member of the Organizations of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

The American-Iraqi relations during Obama's administrations had a different shape. Since Obama tended to fulfill his electoral campaign promises towards Iraq, which were based on the principal of disengaging from the country and starting new a political era of friendship and diplomacy, Obama in 2008 started to negotiate the Iraqi file responsibly and with high optimistic views of freedom and promotion of democracy.

Many perceived Obama's foreign policy in Iraq as critical, since he took the challenge of ending the military commitment in Iraq, and bringing the American soldiers home by the end of 2011. Another challenge of Obama's foreign policy was encouraging the Iraqi leaders to hold the responsibility of their country by their own, at the same time he kept the promise of providing the American diplomatic supervision when it was needed.

The aim behind conducting this research is to assess the situation in Iraq after the American withdrawal in 2011. It is worthy to comprehend the impact of Obama's foreign policy in Iraq, especially his decision to overthrow the military forces and to give the Iraqi leaders the chance to improve the country situations. Moreover this research is conducted objectively to well understand the illusion of promoting democracy in Iraq from 2003 to 2011.

This topic has been chosen to clarify whether the Iraqi people experienced democracy after 2011 or they are still suffering from undemocratic rule. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the nature of American promises of bringing back social stability, encouraging political balance and preserving national security in Iraq .finally it is important to investigate to what extent these promises put in to action.

The promotion of democracy in Iraq raised several inquiries regarding the impact of Obama's foreign policy and promise. This research attempts to answer some of these inquires and to study them from different perspectives. First of all, the most interesting issue in this research is what were the motives behind the American disengagement from Iraq? because it is important to know the motives of President Barack Obama to take off the hand of U.S. on Iraq.

Another question was raised, to what extent Obama's administration has succeeded in promoting democracy? And finally it is necessary to raise the following questions; what were the obstacles of implementation of democracy in Iraq? What were the consequences of Obama's foreign policy? Could the Iraqi people overthrow Nouri al-Maliki? This research examines these questions and answers them objectively.

Since the promotion of democracy in Iraq is very controversial topic, it was a subject matter of many authors, politicians, analysts in foreign affairs and scholars. The researching process requires a deep examination at the previous literature review in order to construct objective results and to study the topic from different perspectives and opinions.

Pierre Guerlain in his article entitled Obama's Foreign Policy: "Smart Power, Realism and Cynicism, he discussed the new strategies used by the President Barack Obama and his team to deal with Iraq. This article focuses on the concept of "Smart Power" as an alternative strategy concerning the American foreign policy. John Davis wrote "Presidential Policies and the Road to the Second Iraq War from Forty One to Forty Three", in his book explained the

American policies in different periods. Since every American president had his own distinctive doctrine especially at the level of foreign affairs.

Through dealing deep in “Looking Back on President Barack Obama Legacy” edited by Wibur H. Rich , the book provides an interesting information about Obama’s legacy in Iraq with an assessment to his policy points of strength and weakness. In the same context David Unger wrote “The Foreign Policy Legacy of Barack Obama”, in this journal article Unger went back to discuss Obama’s promise towards Iraq from 2007 till 2011 and the extent this promise was made.

This research is conducted through the historical and qualitative methods. It aims at analyzing the illusion of promoting democracy in Iraq during Obama’s presidency. The historical method is required because this research involves several historical events in Iraq in the past regarding the chronological of wars in Iraq from 1980 till 2014. The qualitative method is used to explain Obama’s foreign policy in Iraq and the extent of success of his plan to create a democratic leadership in Iraq.

This dissertation is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter is entitled “General Background about Iraq War”; it introduces a general overview about the country of Iraq, its location, population, government formations and branches. Moreover the chapter deals deeply with Iraq wars from 1980 till 2003, with explaining the war events and consequences at different levels. In addition to the war events, it describes the American-Iraqi relationships at different periods starting with George W.H Bush and George W. Bush.

The second chapter entitled “Obama’s Foreign Policy in Iraq War”. This chapter investigates the Obama’s doctrine from the very beginning, including his political views concerning foreign policy and his faith in human rights, freedom and democracy. It explores also Obama’s foreign policy promises towards Iraq war especially the withdrawal of the military forces from Iraq, and starting new era of diplomacy between the U.S. and Iraq



The last chapter is entitled “the failure of Iraqi people to overthrow Nouri al- Maliki”. It measures the situation in Iraq after the exit of the American military forces, in which the country has witnessed a wave of Arab Spring movement. This chapter focuses on the main reasons of uprising against al-Maliki in the early of 2011 and the consequences of these protests in changing the leadership. Finally it provides overall contributions about the credibility of democracy made in Iraq 2011 and the truthfulness of Obama’s promises.

## **Chapter One**

### **General Background about the 2003 Iraq War**

Iraq was involved in three wars between 1980 and 2003: the Iraq-Iran war in the 1980-1988, the invasion of Kuwait in 1990-1991 and finally the American occupation of 2003. These wars have different characteristics, reasons and results that influence the country's government, economy, social and political positions and influenced the Iraqi infrastructure that destroyed during those wars.

This research will discuss the Iraq War of 2003, going through a general background about the country of Iraq and giving an overview about Iraqi government and its branches, and then an explanation to the American-Iraqi relationship and how it changes through time. Events that occurred before the Iraqi war will also be examined in addition to talking about the presidents that their presidency had an impact either on the Iraq as a region or on the Iraqi war.

The conflict began in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq by the United States-led coalition that succeeded to overthrow the government of Saddam Hussein. When the US claimed that Saddam Hussein pose a danger, not only on the U.S. or UN, but on the entire world because the owning of the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and his support to the terrorist groups including al-Qaeda. The invasion caused huge human loses especially in the first years.

The Iraqi War of 2003 is considered as a new and old notion in the same time, the war was first waged to liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation. This movement was launched in 1990 under the name of "The War to Liberate Kuwait" or "Punitive War". This will be a part of this chapter along with a general background about the country of Iraq with much more emphasis on the War of 2003 which is the case study of this work.

The United States relation with Iraq is not an old one since it began on January 9, 1930, with the convention of the Anglo-American-Iraqi in London by Charles. G. Dawes, the ambassador of the United Kingdom (UK). However, the U.S. foreign policy towards Iraq has not been static and it changed more and more often over the years. This change was generally linked in one hand to the change of the US and their foreign policy towards Iraq which was related with the change of its presidents, and in the other hand it was about to what extent Iraq accepted and bow to this policy (Boultz and Williams).

In August 1990, the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein ordered the occupation of Kuwait (1990-91), in order to acquire the nation large oil reserves. The fellow Arab powers such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt showed their disagreement, they called the US and other western nations to intervene. In the mid of January 1991 Hussein challenged the US Security Council demands and the Persian Gulf War began, with a huge U.S-led air offensive known as Operation Desert Storm (Tallha). That conflict led to the second Gulf War-known as the Iraq War- that began in 2003.



**Fig.1.** Iraq region map

**Source:** “Iraq region map” .the Iraqi battle field. Web.Accessed July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Iraq is the most important region in the Middle East; it is surrounded by Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Kuwait, Turkey and Jordan. Its richness of oil made it attractive country for the foreign investments. Iraq is the home of different civilizations and Muslim Culture.

## 1. General background about the country of Iraq

During the growth of the ancient civilizations, lands which now form Iraq were known as “Mesopotamia” which means Land between the Rivers, a region whose extensive alluvial plains gave rise to some of the earliest civilizations such as Sumer, Akkad, Babylon and Assyria. This wealthy region including what is called the Fertile Crescent became an important part of the larger imperial polities, including Sundry Persian, Greek and Roman dynasties and it became a central and integral part of the Islamic world after the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Johnson). This means that the land has deep history and was a center of many old civilizations.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Baghdad the capital of Iraq became the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate. After World War One (1914, 18), the region had attained a great position since it was the most important cultural center in the Islamic civilization, and also it was a meeting place for scholars for several centuries. Then, the modern nation of Iraq was created from the Ottoman province of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul and it derives its name from the Arabic term (*Iraq Arabi* “Arabian Iraq”) (Kennedy). In the next fifty years, the city would develop, expand and acquire all the characteristics of a modern civilization.

The country of Iraq is located in Western Asia, bordered by Turkey to the North, Iran to the East, Kuwait to the Southeast, Saudi Arabia to the South, Jordan to the Southeast and Syria to the West. Iraq’s topography can be divided onto four regions: the alluvial plains of the central and southeast parts of the country called the Arabic Island (Al-Azeri, El Arabia); an upland region in the north between Tigris and Euphrates rivers; deserts in the west and the south; and the highlands in the northeast (Woods). This brief geographical strategic location Iraq enjoys which would possibly lead to its international problems.

The capital and the largest city is Baghdad, it contains diverse ethnic groups including Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens, Assyrians, Yazd's, Shabakis, Mandaeans, Circassians, Sabians and Kawliya. Between 95-98% of the country citizens (38 million) are Muslims, with a minor minorities of Christians, Yarsans, Yezidis and Mandeans. The official language in Iraq is Arabic and Kurdish. Recently, English is widely used in commerce (Woods). The ethnical diversity of the country would for sure create some internal problems to the country.

In 1932 Iraq gained its formal independence, but it remained under the British influence during the next century of the monarchical rule, which ended in 1958 when it was declared a republic. The declaration of the republic led to the installation of the Arab nationalist and socialist regime the Ba'ath Party, which was founded on 07 April 1947 by Michel Aflaq, an Antiochian Christian, Salah al-Din al-Bitar, a Sunni Muslim, and the followers of Zaki al-Arsuzi, anatheist, in Damascus and Syria(Melarango and Ollunga).

The party called for Unity, Freedom and Socialism, and it was based on Arab nationalism, Arab socialism, Anti-imperialism and Anti-Zionism. In a bloodless coup 10 years later the party brought stability, the regime was able to finance several projects and development plans during 1970, and built one of the largest and best armies in the Arab world (Melarango and Ollunga). With the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, the party was officially banned.

## **2. Overview on the Iraqi Government and its Branches**

### **2.1. The Foundation of the Iraqi the Government**

After the American invasion to Iraq in 2003, the governmental system in the country had seen a notable progress. The appearance of new political figures who committed themselves to held the leadership and governed in the basis of equality and the involvement of diverse ethnic groups in Iraq. Azeri Rahima who is an Algerian researcher in the University of Biskra interested in the Iraqi political system stated that “the change in the sociological, intellectual

and cultural values led to appearance of new political faces in Iraq”. This political activism was under high pressure about its capability to come over the traces of dictatorship of ex-President Saddam Hussein (Marr).

The foundation of the Iraqi government was a gradual process related to many circumstances of the Iraqi community. The process passed through four main phases. The first government was constructed in 2003 under the name of ‘the Iraq Governing Council’ and this council was appointed by the’ Coalition Provisional Authority ‘and it companied this council with a council of ministers. This form of government took into charge the issue of representation of all ethnic groups in Iraq and what really happened. The new government brought representatives from Sunni, Shia and Kurdish backgrounds. However this government was strongly criticized because most of leaders came back from exile and belonged to the Sadden Hussein regime (Marr).

Because of the problem of continuity to Saddem Hussein’s system , this government was replace by another one in 2004 with the United Nation guidance , however it did not work as unexpected because the opponents of Saddam Hussein (Walker). After the failures of two governments, the situation in Iraq required serious and well organized national elections to find a new and permanent government and form a new constitution.

In January, 2005 the series of elections were held in the country and this led to the appearance of different political parties with different political ideologies. Among the results of these elections were the constructions of Provisional Council of Representatives as form of national assembly and new cabinet which was responsible for drafting a new constitution. However this government eliminated the participation of Sunni population in the assembly and they were promised to have a part in the next formation of the government (Walker). Finally, in the mid of 2006 another elections were made in Iraq and it resulted the appointment of prime minister at that time Nouri Al-Maliki.

## 2.2. The Political Parties in Iraq

The collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime led to the emergence of several political parties from different backgrounds but they carry the same purpose which is running for authority and power. Humid Al Kafka who is a famous Iraqi intellectual, author and the official spokesman of the IGCI (the Interim Governing Council in Iraq), discusses the emergence of political freedom after Saddam's regime and states that "the previous regime was a nightmare on everyone's head and when it fell, all groups, sects and political movements emerged, and everyone wants to have place and role" (qtd.in Marr).

Each political party has its own fixed ideas and principals, which are used to justify their decisions in practicing politics in Iraq. A report made by the department of foreign affairs in Australian University in 2007 reveals that there are dominant parties which have the majority of seats in the assembly and they do participate in legislating laws, and generally divided according to their religious beliefs (Sunni, Shia or Kurdistan). The Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) was among the important Shia parties that have notable role in the Iraqi government. The Sunni parties were represented by Taka-Q (The National Iraqi Accord), and finally the Kurdistan Democratic party (KDP) and the Patriotic Alliance of Kurdistan (PAK) represent the Kurdistan population (Marr).

Despite the efforts of these parties to draw another future for Iraq, they were facing many obstacles. First of all the ethnic division in the country created a kind of unstable relationships between these groups, and most of them were calling for independent states rather than the unity of the country. Secondly, there was distrust between the leaders of government and it became a weak government (Sumaida'ie). Most of Iraqi leaders therefore found it difficult to agree on the same political decision and this led Iraq to a political quips and created endless struggles.



## **2.3. The Actual Political System in Iraq**

### **2.3.1. The Administrative Division**

Iraq is a federal parliamentary republic. The official capital city is Baghdad. Iraq is divided into 18 administrative states or known by “muhafazat” (governorates), each one of these governorate is headed by a governor who is appointed by the president. Each governorate is divided into 91 districts or they call it “aqdiyyah” and it is headed by a district officer, and finally each district is divided into tracts or “nahiyat” headed by a director (“Regions and governorates in Iraqi” ...).

### **2.3.2. The Branches of Government**

#### **2.3.2.1. The Executive Branch**

It consists of the presidency council including the president of Iraq and the vice president and the council of ministers that is headed by the prime minister. Generally the president is the head of the state and serves for four years term, he holds the responsibility of heading national ceremonies, receiving ambassadors and representing the Iraqi sovereignty and the prime minister is the head of the government. The actual president Ibrahim Salah is from Kurdistan party, the prime minister Mustafa Al- Kazimi from Shia and the parliament is headed by the Sunni (CIA Fact book).

#### **2.3.2.2. The Legislative Branch**

Consists of an elected council of representatives, comprising 329 seats, each representative for 100,000 Iraqi citizen and the seats of the council includes the minorities in Iraq such as the Christian candidates. The council has the role of proposing laws for the government and monitoring the performance of the prime minister (CIA Fact book, 2020).

#### **2.3.2.3. The judiciary Branch**

Is an independent institution in which it is represented in the federal supreme court and the states court, that are specialized in the interpretation of law, settling legal conflicts and protecting citizens from the violators of law( Mahmud). The judiciary of Iraqi government, as all the world judiciary braches, it interprets and applies the country laws and ensures equal justice under it, and also it works on dispute resolutions in legal way.

### **3. The American-Iraqi Relationship**

#### **3.1. During 1930-1945**

According to the Anglo-Iraqi convention, which was signed by the US Ambassador in the United Kingdom Charles G. Dawes in London, the United States of America recognized Iraq as an independent country on January 9, 1930. In 1934 the U.S. negotiated with the government of the independent Iraq on diplomatic matters, such as the extradition treaty, which was the first order of business in that year, and it was the beginning of the commercial and navigation treaties between the two nations (Boultz and williams).

#### **3.2 During 1945-1979**

During the Second World War Two (WWII) the U.S.-Iraqi relationship was good. The UN invited Iraq to several conferences of the international organizations such as the San Francesco Conference in which it was invited by the U.S. and this gave Iraq an opportunity since it was the only Arab country in the conferences. In the early of 1950s the relationship between the two nations began to change, that period was remarked by the political instability in Baghdad because of the fall of the Iraqi monarchy (Paiman).The fall would befollowed by several revolutions between 1963 and 1979.

#### **3.3 During 1979-1989**

In the beginning of his presidency on 1979, Saddam Hussein built the internal stability in Baghdad and ended decades of political turmoil. When the tension between the two Gulfs Powers began on 1980, Saddam ordered his forces to invade Iran. The American President Ronald Reagan was involved the Iran-Iraq war. In the beginning Reagan was following the Jimmy Carter Policy, who served as the 39<sup>th</sup> president of the US from 1977 to 1981, which was based on neutrality, and on 1982 he began to turn his position to support Iraq and provide it with economic aids. This was known as the Initial challenge of Saddam Hussein (Paiman).

### **3.4. From 1980 to 2003**

According to Peter Hahn, the professor of history at Ohio State University in Columbus and the executive director of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, he argued that in this period Saddam Hussein main interest was to control the oil resources thus he could relieve the financial burdens incurred in the war against Iraq. In the other side, the U.S. president George .W .Bush offered political friendship and economic incentives to lure Hussein in a proper behavior, because Bush administration used the relatively stable relationship that emerged during the 1980s to break the Iraqi recklessness (Hahn).

The tension between the two regions began when Saddam moved 100,000 troops to the Kuwait border, and Bush worked on the existence of the US naval in the Gulf, also he threatened Hussein against instigating military action. Dave, who is an English writer and actor, argued that Bush continued dealing with Saddam constructively and ignoring his bad records on abusing the human rights and in the foreign policy, in order to prevent his hostile behavior, but with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 1991, clearly demonstrated Hussein's aggressiveness, and the failure of the American peaceful foreign policy with Iraq (Dave).

### **4. The American Foreign Policy toward Iraq**

#### **4.1. In George H. W. Bush Administration (1989-1993)**

The American Foreign Policy of the United State of George H.W. Bush administration was from January 1989 to January 1993, when Bush was Republican president. He was the forty-first president of the U.S. and the oldest one. Bush was very experienced in the foreign policy, and in his first period of presidency, he disagreed with many foreign policy decisions that had been made by the previous American President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) (Collinson). The presidency of Bush the father was notable in the American history, and his built his own internal and external policies in order to build his presidency.

Bush built his own policies, and his presidency was noticeable for the US history because of the major events that occurred in that period. The man helped to spread freedom and free market, the western world won the Cold War, the turning down of Berlin Wall which led to the unification of Germany, and he signed two treaties to reduce the risk of the nuclear war (Collinson). Bush experiences and interest on the foreign policies were the keys of the successes of his administration at both the external and internal level.

The American foreign policy towards Iraq from 1982 to 1990 failed to prevent the Gulf War, because it was flawed in his both its form and the concept. According to Bruce Jentleson, an associate professor of political science at the University of California, in his new book “With Friends Like These: Reagan, Bush and Saddam, 1982-1990”, Reagan and Bush administrations misplayed their power-politics strategies, and some of the American foreign policies had gone far away from the decision of supporting the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein throughout 1980 (300).

Following the principal of “the enemy of my enemy is my friend”, Reagan administration supported the country of Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war and this support continued and developed in Bush administration, until Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1991, then it recognized that “the enemy of my enemy could be my enemy too” (qtd.in Pitts). Bush

recognized the mistake made by his predecessor Regan, and he was urged to change his doctrine.

Bush administrations went to work immediately; it tried to make a coalition to oppose Iraq. The President Bush was with the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in a conference, and the Secretary of the State Baker was in Siberia with Eduard Shevardnadze, the Soviet foreign minister, this allowed the United States to take strong convictions against Iraq with Britain. The turning point that accrued and led to the end of the Cold War was the unprecedented cooperation between the Soviet Union and the United States, when they issued a statement together condemning the Iraqis actions (Haass).

By the beginning of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Arab countries joined the United States to form a coalition to convince Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait or it would take all the responsibilities and bear all the results. When the Iraqi troops began to surround the Saudi Arabia border, which made the Saudi Arabia in a tension about the invasion, the American President Bush announced the deployment of the American troops to the desert kingdom (Collins).

This pushed him to make the four principals that guided the “Operation Desert Shield”, which are: the complete withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the restoration of the legitimate Kuwait government; the stability and security of the Middle East; and finally the protection of Americans abroad (Collins). We can say that the invasion of Kuwait was the turning point in the American-Iraqi relationship.

The United Nations passed Resolution number 660, which recommended Iraq to withdraw its forces immediately and unconditionally from Kuwait. Also it imposed economic sanctions on Iraq in order to oblige it to pull its forces. All these actions allowed President Bush to ensure one of his greatest strengths: His personal diplomacy, since he had different

international relationships with many leaders. However, the administration did not allow Israel to join the Alliance because many Arab countries agreed to join and the existence of Israel would influence their involvement. In the other hand, Israel accepted to stay out of the coalition, and also it neglected any attack against it (Moran). This concession by Israel was made in order to allow the coalition to deal with Saddam.

After all the resolutions and diplomatic efforts, the situation remained the same, Saddam didn't accept the withdraw of his forces from Kuwait, and this pushed Bush administration, with the agreement of the coalition, to use all the necessary means to force the Iraqi forces to leave Kuwait. The last resort proposed by Bush administration was the war. On January, 12 the congress voted to authorize the use of military forces against Iraq (Moran). This vote was very important for the President Bush who believed in the efficiency of war to constrain the growing power of Saddam.

On January, 17, 1991, the Operation Desert Shield began, which was also known as Operation Desert Storm. Shannon Collins had defined the Operation Desert Storm as the first major foreign crisis for the U.S. after the end of the Cold War. A massive air strikes and a ground war against Iraq began, the U.S. was the leadership of this war and the coalition's forces reached Kuwait city on February, 27. In the next day they declared the ceasefire, the war ended in less than two months, and the Bush administration succeeded in committing the largest military action from the Vietnam War without high casualties since only one hundred and forty eight American soldiers were killed. On March 6, Bush declared the independence of Kuwait (Hubel). The war was a great success for the U.S. but was a big loss for Iraq that won nothing in that invasion but military and economic loss.

By the end of the Persian Gulf War, which restored the morale of the U.S. military forces after the Vietnam War, and also led to the possibility to what Bush referred to as the "New World Order", the President Bush succeeded to held the coalition together. He also

convinced many coalition countries to provide manpower including France, Britain, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and financial support of others such as Kuwait, Japan, Saudi Arabia and Germany (Greenwood). The Persian Gulf was the first war fought after the end of the Cold War and it was a real opportunity for the United States to draw a model for future wars in the absence of the Soviet Union.

Critics argued that the victory was not that success, because Saddam Hussein remained in power. However, Bush administration replayed immediately that their primary purpose from the beginning was to make the Iraqi forces leave Kuwait, and they achieved their goal, and the removal of Saddam Hussein from power had never been one of the administration's war aims (Grammas).

#### **4.2. During Bill Clinton's Presidency (1993-2001)**

The foreign policy of Bill Clinton administration was the foreign policy of the United States during the two terms Presidency of Bill Clinton from 1993 to 2001. Bill Clinton's administration foreign policy towards Iraq was more conciliatory than George H.W. Bush administration policy, and he insisted that Saddam Hussein as the responsible for the problems with Iraq Diplomatic Relations (Gill).

Firstly in 1993 the elected President Bill Clinton asserted that Saddam Hussein could have different relationship with the United States and the United Nations if he changed his behaviors, and also he claimed that the U.S. policy could be formalized by the Dual Containments Policy by the National Security Advisor Antony Lake and the National Security Council Director for the Middle East Martin Indyk (Gill).

##### **4.2.1. Clinton's First Term**

In his first term, Clinton administration put out three possible courses of actions towards Iraq: First, the new president could tighten the military forces on Saddam, and sought

to derive him from power; second, he could seek to contain Iraq through diplomacy while patching up the relationships with the U.S. allies; finally, he could play the real politic in the golf by reaching a triangular accommodation between the U.S. Iraq and Iran (Murphy).

Iraq apparently closed its radars on both north and east No-Fly Zones on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, in order to preserve the 19<sup>th</sup> January ceasefire, and this led to a period of relative calm which urged Clinton to seek to more peaceful accommodation with Iraq. However, the Clinton administration ended its review of policy toward Iraq on the mid of March 2003, in which the President kept the pressure on Saddam Hussein, but unlike Bush, he would claim for the removal of Saddam implicitly (Murphy). Regime change would be therefore the next step to be accomplished, but a convincing reason must be found to end up the long chapter of Saddam Hussein.

In the mid of 1994 the President Clinton ordered to the intensification of the Americans forces in Kuwait, because some of the Iraqi forces returned back close to the Kuwait borders. The American-Iraqi relationship in 1996 was dominated by aggressiveness, because of the UN weapons inspectors, and in March Saddam Hussein refused to allow the inspectors to verify different weapons programs (Murphy). His refusal to allow inspectors to check gave the impression that mass destruction weapons were prepared in Iraq.

Then, the UN disarmament chief Rolf Ekeus went to Baghdad for a meeting and discovered that Iraq trespassed on the 687 Resolution, which argue that Iraq have to stop the development of the weapons of mass distraction. As a reaction, Clinton administration took the decision to fight on the ground of its own choice, to protect the oil fields in the south of Iraq and to damage the most valuable military asserts as a punishment, even though Clinton's main goal was to damage what he called "the dictator capacity to threat his neighbor and America's interests" (qtd. in Murphy).



After being prevented from securing two missile test facilities on the 11 of July, the weapons inspectors left Iraq. As it was expected, Saddam dissatisfaction about the imposed restrictions was expressed in bombing accidents in the southerner No-Fly Zone, and these actions continued through the rest of 2003. Saddam finally agreed to what the US dubbed “the technical compliance” for the UN decision about his weapons program, and he was very angry because of the American resistance to the resumption of the Iraqi oil sales, since Clinton administration set other conditions for that oils sales among them the Iraqi official recognition of the independence of Kuwait (Murphy).

#### **4.2.2. Clinton’s Second Term:**

The calm spread for a small period in the No-Fly Zones until the mid of October when it became clear that Iraq rebuilt its air defense in the southerner of Iraq. By the early of November 1996, when Clinton was poised for reelection, the air strikes returned back, which made the Republican in the Congress claiming about the air strikes because they only a temporary damage. In 1998, Congress and the Conservatives kept pressing President Clinton to change the regime in Baghdad, and sometimes they claimed for formally recognition of provisional government. Since 1996, Iraq did not attack the allies’ aircraft, but the aerial bombardments against Saddam were still frequent (Murphy). This state meant again the American government resolves to change the regime in Iraq.

In the mid of 1998, the President Clinton ordered for a huge attack against Saddam’s Hussein Regime, over 70 hours the U.S. and British forces drooped over 600 bombs and 400 cruise missile on targets in Iraq and this was known as The “Operation Desert Fox”. Clintons administrations main purpose, which was getting UN weapons inspectors back in to Iraq, started to lose its importance, in one hand, because its absence from Iraq gave a justifications for the economic sanctions against Baghdad, and in the other hand, to provide an opportunity to materially damage Iraq’s antiaircraft capabilities (Collins).

Despite the aggressive military approach that was followed against Iraq, Bill Clinton's administration faced a criticism from the conservatives. They claimed that the administration had not moved correctly to implement the Iraqi liberation until October 31, 1999, when congress followed up its essential work under the Iraqi liberation. In the autumn of 2000 the international sanctions regime against Iraq started to fall down, civilian's planes from France, Russia and Yemen started to land in Baghdad international airport, and with the opening of some embassies in Baghdad, some Arab nations opened their borders to travel to and from Iraq (Murphy). The sanctions fell down, but the remaining question was whether Saddam was still possessing the weapons of the mass distraction or not.

#### **4.3. During George W. Bush's Administration ( 2001-2009)**

The American foreign policy from 2001 to 2009 was under the presidency of George Bush; his main advisors were Colin Powell and Condoleezza rice, the secretaries of the state, the national security advisor Stephen Hadley, and his vice president Dick Cheney. Bush administration included diplomatic and military incidents in the Middle East, Africa and other nations, and also several geopolitical actions occurred in his period including the 9-11 Terrorist Attacks, and the Global War on Terror (Farnsworth, Stephen et al).

Among the difficulties that faced the new president was to form a foreign policy toward the country of Iraq. In his first period, the President George Bush started focusing on Iraq, and he argued that it is among the "axis of evil" which include and supported terrorists and this imposes a big danger on the US because of the weapons of mass distraction, so that the American foreign policy toward Iraq was falling dawn. The main question that has been raised in his first period was if George W Bush foreign policy towards Iraq would be a change or continuity (Danju, Ipek et al).

In the late of 2001, the Bush administration started the military intervention in Iraq, stating this was a reaction about the use of the weapons of the mass distraction and the supporting of terrorism, also because of the abuses of the human rights and its rejection of the UN demands. Between 2001 and 2002, the UN and the U.S. insisted on the idea that Saddam Hussein was developing the weapons of mass distraction, and this was the big danger that would threaten not only his neighbor but the whole world especially after the horrible events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. To prevent that, the Bush administration worked on building the case of invasion, and it took the UN agreements on the first of February 2003 (Gill). On 20 March, 2003 the invasion began with the US, UK and several coalition allies who would join later.

The US forces defeated the Iraqi Army easily, and in a short while the results of the occupation began to appear, such as the collapse of the Ba'athist government. Saddam was captured on December of the same year and executed after three years, and the door for a civil war between the Shias and the Sunnis was soon opened. Then, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and other Intelligence agencies started denying the evidences related to the Iraqi weapons and also its relation to El-Qaeda (Murphy). Such confessions confirmed that the primary reasons used to justify the war waged against Saddam Hussein were no more than doubts or a lie.

These made the Bush and Blair administrations moving to the secondary reasons including the human rights and promoting democracy in Iraq to justify their war. Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General claimed that the Iraq war was illegal, and he argued in an interview on September 2004 that it was “not in conformity with the Security Council”. By winter of 2007-2008 the US started withdrawing its forces from the country of Iraq, and the official withdrawing was in Obama's Presidency in 2011 (Murphy).

#### **4. General Background about Iraq war**

##### **4.1. Pre-war events**

#### 4.1.1. The Iran-Iraq War

Also known as the Imposed War and the Holy Defense in Iran and by Saddam's Qadisiyyah in Iraq, but its common name is the First Persian Gulf War, which took place from September 1980 to August 1988. In the beginning of the conflict, neither Iraqi nor Iranian military troops were ready for the war, and both leaders were not aware about the difficulties and the losses that their states would confront (Woods, Kevin, et al). This means that both sides have strong reasons and incentives which pushed them to wage a war without military preparation.

For the Iraqi leader Saddam, the military effectiveness was linked to the spirit and the morale of the soldiers and it had nothing to do with training, organization or discipline, as it was in the medieval-terms. In the other hand, Khomeini, the Iranian leader, claimed that the military effectiveness in the battle-field was based on the religious fanaticism (Woods, Kevin, et al). The lack of the war strategy on both sides, however, cost them huge material and military losses.

The conflict was the result of several territorial and political problems between Iraq and Iran. Saddam wanted to control the Iranian border of Khuzestan which is rich of oil, and he also worked to extend his control on the territory because he wanted to reconfirm his country's sovereignty over the banks of the Shatt al-Arab. He also worried about the Iran's Islamic Revolutionary government to incite rebellion between the Iraq's Shia majorities (Ray). Most of the conflicts that the country of Iraq lived during Saddam presidency was based on two things: the religious problems between the Sunnis and Shia, and the desire to control, regardless of the losses that affected the infrastructure of the country on one hand, and economic and human losses on the other hand.

Iraq used the chemical and biological weapons against Iran but because of the American's interest to contain Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini, the U.S. and the Soviet

Union supplied Iraq with other weapons, especially between 1983 and 1988. Before the war, Iran bought many weapons from U.S. but it was believed that during the war, the Soviet Union was selling weapons for the both sides. The war had ended in a United Nations-brokered ceasefire in August 1988 (Chomsky). The US supported Iraq during the war to eliminate Khomeini, and this was known in that period as the Cold War.

#### **4.1.2. The invasion of 1991: The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait**

By the end of Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), Iraq was totally mortgaged since it financed the war through loans, and in 1990 it owed 37\$ billion to the gulf creditors. The Iraqi President Saddam Hussein asked the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait to cancel the debt but they refused. This refusal led to the threats of Saddam Hussein against Kuwait which was economically rich but military weak. Saddam Hussein threatened to open the conflict again about the ownership of Warbah and Bubiyan Islands because Kuwait refuses its debt-forgiveness demands (Quamar, MdMuddassir , and P.R Kumaraswamy). As the previous conflict, with no strategy and no direct reason, Saddam pushes Iraq to a second war.

The conflict over the Warbah and Bubiyan was a key point between Iraq and Kuwait through history. The United Kingdom ended its preservation over Kuwait in 1961, and then the Iraqi Prime Minister General Abd Al Karim Qasim argued that Kuwait is a part of Iraq. After that Iraq threatened to over control Kuwait, but the spread of the British forces forced the Iraqis to pull out, but Iraq kept refusing the common boundary between the two countries even after the claim of the independence of Kuwait (Qummar, MdMuddassir, and PR Kumaraswamy). This state would forcibly lead to conflicts over border and territories.

Many disputes over border would continue until 1990 when Iraq faced the economic crisis because of the war. Saddam Hussein accused Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates of breaking with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and to over produce the crude oil for export which led to the falling down of its prices; also he demanded

that Kuwait should abandon the Warbah and Bubiyan Islands to Iraq (Grammas). From the point that Warbah and Bubyuan are parts of Kuwait and Kuwait is a part of Iraq the conflict started with each side claiming about his property.

In that period, there was deterioration in the relationship between the Iraq and the US, since Iraq assumed the responsibility of encouraging Kuwait to raise the oil price to the US and Israel. In the early of July 1990, Iraq started to threaten Kuwait, and as a reaction the US warned Iraq about taking any military action against United Arabs Emirates and Kuwait. Despite all these disagreements President H.W. Bush adopted a conciliatory policy towards Iraq in order to improve the relationship between them (Gause).

The US was aware about the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait, but it did not anticipate the Iraqi invasion. The Iraqi Special Forces secured the key sites including Bubiyan and Warbah, Kuwaiti air fields and the places of Emir and the Prince, and the Iraq Republican Guard moved toward Kuwait city. Some members of the royal family succeeded and escaped to Saudi Arabia where they asked for international support (Gause). The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was a surprise not only to the US, but also to the UN and other Arab countries.

Iraq declared that Kuwait had become one of its provinces on August 28, and in few days the U.S. organized an international coalition through the United Nation Council. They made resolution 660 which argued that Iraq should withdraw from Kuwait, and the Resolution of 661 imposing economic sanctions, and Resolution 663 declaring that Kuwait is not a part of Iraq. The United States and Saudi Arabia claimed for keeping the U.S. forces to protect the Peninsula, and in the same time they insisted on the end of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, but Iraq refused, and claimed that it would not leave Kuwait until it would destroy its infrastructure (Grammas).

Bush administration proposed to the United Nations the decision of overthrowing the Iraqi forces from Kuwait by force, and they agreed. The Resolution 678 gave the US the

ability to use force, but it should give Iraq forty-five days as a grace period to end the invasion, however, Iraq did not agree. After the deadline, the U.S. attacked Iraq by air, and in twenty-four hours, it bombarded strategic sites such as Saddam Hussein places, power stations, and oil refineries, military and industrial complexes...etc; then the forces targeted Iraqi troops in Kuwait (Johns). These attacks succeeded to harm Iraq heavily but failed to force Iraq to surrender immediately.

As a reaction, Saddam Hussein bombarded Israel and the coalition forces in Saudi Arabia. The coalition forces, which were thirty-four countries including a number of Arab countries retaliated the attack. On 2<sup>nd</sup> March a new Resolution was issued, it was the Resolution 686 which set the conditions of the cease-fire. Iraq was obliged to accept all of them, including the reparations of the war damages and returning back all the proprieties stolen from Kuwait...etc. (Grammas). Bush administration ignored the aggressiveness of Saddam until he attacked Kuwait, after that Bush and later on Clinton administrations would work hard to isolate the Iraqi regime.

#### **4.1.3: The 09-11 attack**

It refers to The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. The deadliest in the annals of terrorism since it caused the greatest bloodshed in America since the Civil War. Retaliation to the attacks led to the invasion of Afghanistan, which has become the longest war in America. The attacks also were the reason behind the American global campaign against terrorists and terrorism, which spread later on to include the invasion of Iraq in 2003. This campaign worked on the reorganization of the intelligence community and on the national preoccupation with domestic security, which is known as the creation of the new national apparatus (Grammas).

This attack caused huge human and economic losses; 2977 fatalities and over 25000 injuries, and long-term health issues, in addition to ten billion dollar (\$10 billion), in the

infrastructure and property damage. When the situation calmed down, all the charges fell on Al-Qaeda, and the United States formally responded to the movement by launching the War on Terror and invading Afghanistan to depose Taliban. This organization referred to themselves as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, who had not accepted the US demands which included the overthrowing of Al-Qaeda from Afghanistan and extraditing their leader Osama Bin Laden (Green). Although Bin Laden denied any involvement in the beginning, but in 2004, he claimed about his responsibility for the attack.

## **5. Summary of the war**

### **5.1. General background and a war time line**

The Iraq invasion in Kuwait ended in 1990 with the defeat of Iraq by the US, and to restrain the Iraqi future aggression the United Nations (UN) applied economic sanctions in order to hinder the progress in different fields, among them the development of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. During the mid of 1990s, the UN inspections founded some of proscribed weapons and prohibited technology in Iraq, which had been banned by the UN. Bill Clinton in 1998 ordered to bomb several Iraqi military installations and he called this Operation Desert Fox. After this bombing, Iraq refused to allow the inspectors to enter the country again, and in the next few years the economic sanctions started to light (Copson).

The new President of U.S. George W. Bush (2002), claimed that the situation of U.S. after the 09/11 attacks of 2001, and the Iraq possessing and producing weapons of mass distraction and its supporting of the terrorist groups (which including al-Qaeda according to Bush administration) had to change, and the U.S. priority must be renewed. The Resolution of the UN Security Council 1441 ordered Iraq to comply all the previous Resolution, Iraq agreed and started to comply. In the beginning of 2003, President George W Bush and the British Prime Minister Tony Blair (served as a British Prime Minister of UK from 1997 to 2007 and



the leader of the Labor Party from 1994 to 2007) declared that Iraq was continuing blocking the work of UN inspections and it still manufacturing the nuclear weapons (Heinrich).

The U.S. and the UK started the war against Iraq on 20 March 2003, and directly after the bombarding Iraq's capital Baghdad on 9 April. The American President George W. Bush declared in a televised address that the American attack on Iraq was to free its people and to defend the world from a total distraction. The war started in Iraq with no declaration, and the invasion was controlled by the U.S. Army general Tommy Franks, Tommy Ray Franks, who was the chief of Central Command of U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Army from July 2000 through July 2003, under the name of Operation Iraqi Freedom (Heinrich). The American invasion stated publicly its claimed objectives to overthrow the authoritarian regime of Saddam Hussein and liberate Iraqi people.

Approximately forty other governments participated and supported the US invasion on Iraq by sending troops, military and weapons services, security and forces, among them Australia by sending 2000 soldiers, 194 Polish special forces...etc. According to the General Franks, there were eight objectives of the invasion:

First, the new president could tighten the military forces on Saddam, and sought to derive him from power; second, he could seek to contain Iraq through diplomacy while patching up the relationships with the U.S. allies; finally, he could play the real politics in the Gulf by reaching a triangular accommodation between the U.S., Iraq and Iran. After the falling of Baghdad and the end of Saddam's 24 years of rule, the Ba'ath Party ministries were under the control of the US, and it brought down the huge iron statue of Saddam, that was not the end, but later on and according to the Pentagon, which is the headquarters building of the United States Department of Defense, other losses occurred in the nation which led to the collapse of its infrastructure. (qtd. in Hahn)

## 5.2. The War Began March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003

The American President Bush declared that the U.S. forces began the military operation against Iraq; they started the attack through the air, which was not successful, clearing the way for a ground invasion. After three weeks of the invasion some Iraqi civilians and US soldiers pull down the statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, this was known by the Crumbles of the Regime. By the beginning of May 2003 Bush declared the end of the major combat operations in Iraq, and he disbanded the Iraqi Army in the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the same month (Hinnebush).

In June 22, the two sons of Saddam Hussein Uday and Qusay were killed by the US troops during the chasing of Saddam and his top aides. As a reaction, a suicide bomber destroyed the UN headquarters, which caused the death of the representative of the UN in Iraq and twenty two members of his staff. Then, the US troops intensified the searches operations for Saddam Hussein, and finally he was captured on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2003 in one-man hole near to his childhood home (CNN 2003-2011).

David Kay, the former top U.S. weapons inspector, on 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2004 claimed that all the pre-war arguments about the existence of the chemical, biological and even the nuclear weapons in Saddam Hussein Iraq was mistaken he said: “ we were almost all wrong”. On April of the same year, several prisoners were abused in Abu Gharib prison, which was under the rule of US, and after the collection of items such as photographs in addition to the complaining of other prisoners some officers and officials were spared (Crichton, Kyle, et al).

Once more, the reaction of the Iraqis was similar to what happened in the Abu Gharib prison, kidnappers took the American businessman Nicholas Berg and they videotaped his beheading and posted it. Later on the US government claimed that he was killed by the founder of al-Qaeda in Iraq Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was killed in U.S.-led air strike near

to Baquba on June 8, 2006. The Iraqi regime continued in the same way, even after the fall of the Iraqi leaders Saddam (Davis).

The 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2006 was Saddam's day in the court, which ended by his death by hanging; the Shiites were satisfied in the south, however, the Sunnis in the north threatened to take the revenge, and after a quarter-century of authoritarian rule, Saddam Hussein presidency ended on 30<sup>th</sup> of December of 2006 (Goldstone). The era after Saddam Hussein rule was a turning point in Iraq's history and the start of the American political and military domination.

President Bush declared "new way forward" in Iraq, he also talked about sending twenty thousands of troops in order to keep the stability in Iraq, but what happened was not accounted. Hundreds of civilians were killed by suicide truck bombings on August 19, 2007 and it was the deadliest strike for the Iraqi people since the beginning of the war. In the other side, for the American soldiers the deadliest reached the number of nine hundred in the same year (Rayburn and Sobchak). The continuous increase in the number of killed civilians meant that peace was not reached yet due to the constant struggle between the Sunnis who lost power and the Shiite who held it.

Shiite domination allowed for the first visit of the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Baghdad after the Iran-Iraq war in March 03, 2008. By the end of the same month, the Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki made a crackdown on the Sadrist because of violence made on Baghdad and Basra city, when the loyalists of the cleric Muqtada al-Sadr attacked the Iraqi and the US forces (Timeline: Iraq War).

On September 1<sup>th</sup>, 2008 the US military forces gave the security responsibility of Anbar, which was the most troubled region, to the Iraqis. This was considered as the first step of the withdrawal of the US forces from Iraq and by the same month the Iraqi parliament declared provincial election law, clearing the way of voting in most Iraq's provinces by the end of

January 2009 (Timeline: Iraq War). The US started to withdraw with keeping noticeable military forces under the purpose of the internal security.

Barack Obama, in his campaign, promised that he would withdraw the US military forces from Iraq if he would win the elections. On November 4, 2008 Obama won the White House and he was elected as the forty-fourth President of the United States. After three weeks, the parliament agreed about the inventions between the US and Iraq, which showed the military and civilians relationship between Washington and Baghdad and claimed that the U.S military forces would leave the country of Iraq by 2011 (Senate Floor Speech...).

The elected President Barack Obama insisted on the Defense Secretary Robert Gates to stay on his work, since he served as the 22<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Secretary of Defense from 2006 to 2011, and he was originally appointed by the President George W. Bush. Gates kept claiming that his disagreement about the invention of leaving the country of Iraq in 2011 had nothing to do with security agreement approved by the Congress (Pavgi). Although it was hard for the new President of the US to end the conflict that took place in the previous presidency and cover the region losses, Obama kept on his words and worked on the withdrawing of the US forces from Iraq.

President Barack Obama started to announce the removal of the U.S military forces from Iraq as he promised in his campaign by August 2010, and he claimed that his plan would leave from 35000 to 50000 soldiers to train the Iraqi security forces until the end of 2011. The US forces started to leave the country of Iraq; the Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki considered this withdrawal as a “Great Victory”, declaring a national holiday (“Iraq War 2003-2011”)

Some exceptions to the withdrawal from the troubled northern cities and certain areas of Baghdad had been negotiated, but the SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement) set the June 30 as the deadline for the US military forces to leave the country of Iraq. The full withdrawal from the country was in 2011 (Iraq War 2003-2011). It was really a great success for the Iraqi

people that the US forces almost left the country after the years of tension, aggression and peacefulness.

By October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011, President Obama announced that the rest of the soldiers remaining in Iraq would return from by the end of 2011 to conclude approximately nine year of the war and to declare a new phase of relationship between the United State and the country of Iraq. However, the Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki argued that Iraq would open again other dialogue about that issue, mentioning the number the US training force, their duration of staying in Iraq, their limitation and the nature of their mission. For the US the point was about the legal immunity for their trainers (Senate Floor Speech...).

### **5.3. Reasons of the Iraq War**

#### **5.3.1. The Direct Reasons**

##### **5.3.1.1. The Military Reasons**

Bush Administration adopted its strategy on linking the invasion of the country of Iraq with Saddam Hussein's properties of Weapons of Mass Destruction, especially biochemical weapons, mentioning the events 09/11 attacks which show danger that result from the Weapons of Mass Distraction (WMD), on the international level generally and on the country of Iraq specially. However, Iraq suffered from several attacks that should affect it, such as the Iran attack on the nuclear project on September 30<sup>th</sup> 1980, which did not succeed in destroying the nuclear facilities (Bassil).

When Iraq was occupied with Iran, Israel succeeded in striking the nuclear reactor in Iraq on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1981, and this raised the worries of the International Community about the use of forces to strip states from their nuclear power. Although Iraq destroyed its WMD equipment, the UN inspections, were consistently hampered (Bassil).

In addition to that, years of siege and distraction that Iraq experienced because of the sanctions imposed by the United Nations after the WW2, in which the United States had a big

role on them. Those sanctions included the decision of April 1991, which claimed to destroy all its chemical and biological weapons and made a research inspections to insure that destruction of the WMD, those inspections stopped on 1998 (Danju, Ipek et al).

However, with all the indications and reports that deny the existence and the development of the Iraqi nuclear weapons, which was insured by the International Inspection Engines, Bush administration still insisted that it was sufficient reason for the invasion of Iraq (Chomsky). The claim was based on the belief that weapons pose a real threat and danger on the whole world.

#### **5.3.1.2. The Political Reasons (September 2001 Events)**

The events of September 2001 were represented by a series of explosions that affect both the International Trade Centre in New York and the U.S. Defense Department in Washington, and another passenger plane crashed in Pennsylvania, and the collision of two planes with the two towers of the world trade to the falling of the towers. These crashes were followed by a third explosion that controlled a plane, the third plane was over Pentagon, and the forth was crashed over the city of Pittsburg in Pennsylvania (Heinrich). These many explosions and plane crashes in the same day were considered as the biggest and the barest attack the land of the United States in its history which caused a huge material and human losses

The new conservatives succeeded in the good exploitation for events of the 9-11 attacks which fitted their favor, because of its great impact on the American domestic and foreign policy. It was also the principal way for the American administration to put in practice its pre-prepared agenda. For that the American administration decided to share the trauma with the world, because the pressure after all what happened was confined inside, and there must be an external enemy to put all the blame and responsibility on him. The influence of the

new conservatives on the President Bush the son, and on the bases of the military reasons, the president announced the invasion of Iraq instead of Afghanistan (Chomsky).

### **5.3.1.3. The Ideological Reasons: the War on Terror as a Strategic Game:**

The US considered the 9-11 attacks as a big deal for achieving its imperial designs, and linking the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein with terrorists was among the essential plans. All Bush speeches claimed and focused on the fact that there was a relationship between Saddam Hussein and the organization of Al-Qaeda (Bassil) ; To convince the congress about the invasion Bush said: “we know that race and rule maintain high-level communications going back a decade and that and some of Al-Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan fled to Iraq, and that obstinacy is close to Al-Qaeda members in making bombs and preparing toxins and lethal gas, and Iraq can decide on any day he wants to provide chemical and biological weapons to terrorist group and terrorists” (qtd. in Bassil). The U.S. government was constantly searching for any information, even not true, to allegedly link Saddam Hussein to Al-Qaeda.

### **5.3.2. The Hidden Reasons**

#### **5.3.2.1 Economic Reasons: (oil)**

The strategic location of Iraq and its lands, which most of them are deserts, make it the focus of attention and dispute of the major countries specially the US, because it is full of natural resources and wealth such as oil, which is considered as the most important. The fact that Iraqi oil fields are among the wealthiest in the world, since it is the second largest oil reserve in world (about 112 barrels at least), and the closest to the surface of the earth in which it saves a huge expenditures in exploration and extraction operations. Some views, among them Naomi Chomsky, argued that the existence of the US forces in the Middle East is about those resources of energy which are located in Iraq (Chomsky).

This was also expressed by the analyst Anthony Cordseman when he said in the Washington Times in its first issue on 2002: “America will not invade Iraq because of the weapons of mass destruction or about his participation on terrorist operations, but because Iraq owns 73% of the oil surplus”. This interference in Iraq was not only for the sake of the local consumption, but also they are the components of the long American plan to dominate the oil and gas supplies to Europe, Japan and Asia, and after that to control the future of the global economy. After the Second Gulf War, the American oil targets become clear, through the use of the oil program for food to ensure the control of the oil market for the longest possible time (Cordsman).

#### **5.3.2.2. The Strategic Reasons: Security of Israel**

The reality that most of the Arab world ignores is that the American invasion of the country of Iraq was directly linked with the security of Israel. Since the scientific and military powers of the state should be an obstacle for the Israeli superiority, for that reason the American Ambassador Gregg Fulfer said “Arab oil is not as important as Israel gives us”, and he considered that the Israel supremacy is one of the American Administration goals (qtd. in. Bassil).

In addition to that, Iraq is among the Middle East countries that refused the existence of Israel in the region, and this conflict between Iraq and Israel is among the reasons that ensure the supporting of the American invasion of Iraq (Chomsky). American protection to Israel can also be noticed in its position towards the Palestinian cause, and its refusal to interfere to stop the humanitarian violations committed by Israel against the Palestinians.

#### **5.3.2.3. Religious Reasons**

It considered as the major controlling side of the new conservatives, since US new administration with the president Bush the sun was built on the basis of strict religious



thoughts. The Priest Jerry Falwel Rev, the leader of the majority moral organization, stated: “ God blessed this nation, because in its early days it tried to loyal to God and the Gospel, and any diligent student of the American history will find that our great nation was raised by men to be a Christian nation”(qtd.in Chomsky). This appeared in the ideas of Christian Zionist movement, which recruited itself to serve the Zionism plans through the change of religion in a way which willbenefit the Israeli goals in Iraq and Arab world (Chomsky).

Iraq is historically known as an important country in the region of Middle East due to its geographical and political influence. Its strategic location was used as tool to expand and to invade other neighbors’ countries such as Kuwait, and there were political discordances with many countries such as Iran.

The American-Iraqi relationship had been changed through time, and this change was generally linked with the change of presidencies, which conditionally led to the change of the US foreign policy towards the country of Iraq. For some presidents it was just a continuation of their predecessor, such as George H W Bush when he followed the policy of Regan in his first presidency. For others, a total change was noticed in their strategies especially in the foreign policy such as George W Bush.

The American invasion of Iraq on 2003 was a result of a series of military operations. Started by the Iran-Iraq War which followed by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, then the 9-11 attacks, which led to the military engagement in Iraq. Moreover, the American invasion of Iraq was also linked to different economic, political and military direct and indirect reasons, and those reasons were used to justify the American invasion of the country of Iraq on 2003.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Obama's Foreign Policy in Iraq**

President Barack Obama appeared as the man of challengeable issues. At the level of United States internal affairs and sensitive geopolitical issues in the world such as the American commitment in Iraq and Afghanistan, Obama's administration in two terms, took in charge many regional issues that were inherited from his predecessor George .W. Bush.

Since this chapter examines the foreign policy of the president Barack Obama in Iraq, it is worth to mention his political position about Iraq war. In fact his position was quite different from that of president George Bush and he described the American invasion of Iraq as "the dumb war or the wrong war" (qtd.in Fuller).Obama's view about the war showed noticeable ambitions for radical future actions toward the war, and gave hope for better political and military era in relations in the region of Middle East.

Initially, the first condition of the democratic transition in Iraq was to ensure the complete political and military freedom in the country. After many negotiations at the level of congress in 2010, and in the end year 2011, President Obama declared the end of the American military operations in Iraq believing that it was time for Iraqi leaders to hold the responsibility of creating a democratic regime (Dharpack).

This chapter investigates the degree of democracybrought by Obama's administration after 2011, in which the democracy in Iraq was struggling because of many internal and external reasons. In additions to the obstacles of democracy, this chapter measures the achievements of President Barack Obama at different levels, and his legacy left in Iraq.

#### **1. Barack Obama before and after the United States Presidency**

##### **1.1. Obama as a Democratic Official**

Barack Obama was the 44th president of the United States who was known with his mature political career even before reaching the White House. “The official biography of Barack Obama” is a survey made by the New Yorker magazine, it shows that Obama firstly practiced politics as a community activist and he was a lecturer in the University of Chicago (Overbey). Obama also was active in the branch of civil rights and law. He was elected as senator for the first time in the year 1996 and it was his opportunity to express his ideologies that called for freedom and human rights especially for colored people.

In 2006 Obama served on the Committee of Foreign Affairs where he focused on developing his foreign policy expertise in Washington. These political positions permitted him to gain more statesmanship in dealing with foreign affairs. In addition to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Obama also served on the environment and public works committee (Rich). In 2007 the political activism of Obama has progressed gradually when he decided to participate in the race to the White House. In January, 10th he announced his participation in the presidential elections of the U.S. as a Democratic candidate where he won as the first colored president to govern the United States (Bose).

### **1.1.1 Obama’s Political Views**

Roger M. Smith in his article “The Constitutional Philosophy of Barack Obama”, assumes that Obama was highly influenced by ideas of modern democratic pragmatist philosophies and he had a strong belief in deliberative Democracy (1251). Obama’s views were not limited to politics only but bypassed to concepts of philosophy such as democracy and pragmatism. Most of Obama’s writing based on concepts such as hope, audacity, American Dream...

Obama believes that the promotion of democracy and the emphasis on pragmatic processes will drive America to more success and power. Bart Schultz, a philosopher, along with the intellectual historian James T. Kloppenberg argued that “Obama is a democratic

pragmatist in a philosophy not merely in political sense” (qtd. in Smith 1251). It is very important to note that Obama’s speeches and writings insisted on the importance of being not just a politician but thinker as well. Obama always makes sure to transfer his ideas of change, human rights and pragmatism and integrate these ideas in different sectors not merely politics (Kloppenbergl).

During his two terms of presidency, Barack Obama showed serious efforts to put his pragmatic ideas into practice both at the national and international levels. At the level of homeland issues he took into charge to avoid the possible threat of the U.S. interests. At the international level, the man is known as an anti-war politician who publicly opposed the United States’ involvement in Iraq and considered it as a big mistake. Obama wished that American presence in Iraq was limited to stabilizing and rebuilding the country as well as preventing racial division (Barack Obama on Iraq, opposition from the start, 00:00 -00:18).

Obama’s administration in fact clearly planned for implanting some of his beliefs in solving conflicts such as spreading the concept of democracy to the whole world. In a speech in Ghana’s parliament that was broadcast across Africa, Barack Obama committed to support what he calls “Sustainable Democracy”:

We must support a strong and sustainable democratic government... history offers a clear verdict: governments that respect the will of their own people, that govern by consent and not coercion, are more prosperous, they are more stable and more successful than governments that do not ... (qtd.in Patterson)

Obama believed in the responsibility of the United States to help those countries to form governments that would respect democracy and would ensure more political and social freedom. In most of his declarations insisted to encourage to spread democracy and represented the United States as role model of the ideal, free and democratic leadership (Patterson).

### 1.1.2 Obama's Future Promises for Foreign Affairs

The foreign policy of Barack Obama has focused on achieving strategic aims. As a candidate, Obama believed that the American foreign policy would be based on the concept of "Smart Power" (Guerlain). Susan Nossel who had been a deputy and UN delegate defined the smart power as "knowing that the United States' own hand is not always its best tool" and she added that "U.S . Interests are furthered by enlisting others on behalf of U.S goals. Through alliances,international institutions, careful diplomacy and the power of ideas" (482).

Yet the concept of "Smart Power" become associated with Obama administration, later on Hillary Clinton used this concept in her senate confirmation hearings in January 2009 and declared "we must use what has been called "Smart Power to full range of tools at our disposal ... with Smart Power, diplomacy will be the vanguard of our foreign policy" (qtd.in Guerlain).

In 2007, Barack Obama wrote in his twitter official account that "thinking we're only one signature away from ending war in Iraq" (@BarackObama).This gives the impression that he would change the American foreign policy and correct the mistakes that happened in making decisions about wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He promised to give great priority to the role of United States in international relations and to improve the American foreign wellbeing. In Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington where he delivered a speech about his future foreign policy plans, he stated that:

When I am a president, we will wage the war that has to be won, with comprehensive strategy of five elements: getting out of Iraq and on the right Battlefield in Afghanistan and Pakistan; developing the capabilities and Partnerships we need to take out the terrorists and the world most deadly weapons; engaging the world to dry up support for

terror and extremism; restoring our values; and securing a more resilient homeland. (qtd.in Aaronson)

President Obama believed that the U.S. policy in the region would be different. Charly Saloni Pasternak who is a researcher in the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, he assumed that Obama aimed to minimize the role of the United States in treating global crises. This plan conditionally started by giving both leaders and people opportunity to hold more responsibilities towards their countries, as the best solution to the region's problems. Eventually he had opposed the Iraq from the outset and he said that "I don't oppose all wars ... what I am opposed to is dumb war" (qtd.in Bose). Through his presidential campaign he promised to fight terrorism and deal responsibly with any security threat in the region.

Additionally, recent writings about president Obama's foreign policy vision by Doctor Kim Holmes who is an American diplomat and author , he assumed that Obama made it clear that he will rely more on the international system and treaties to deal with the critical problems in the globe , and based his approach on the engagement with other nations as equals and with restraint .The president's strategy states that" ultimate victory against our enemies will come only by rebuilding our alliances and exporting those ideas that bring hope and opportunity to millions around the globe" (qtd.in Holmes).

Another characteristic in Obama's foreign policy is the use of soft power in foreign affairs. He emphasized on the point that the American military strength would not be a solution anymore, and went to criticize the pervious doctrines that encouraged the military interventions for treating international crises (Holmes). These ideas meant that the United States would face a shift at the level of foreign policy and would witness a new era which would differ from the previous government.

## **1.2. Obama as President of the U.S. (2008)**

After a wide electoral campaign, Barack Obama won the democratic presidential nomination. He reached the white house in 4<sup>th</sup>, November, 2008 to start a new era in the history of the United States after Bush administration. The Executive Dean for Public Policy and Public Service Programs in Pennsylvania university Meena Bose, saw that The new democratic president had the strong will to make revolution at the level of decision making and would give the U.S. new role in the globe.

President Barack Obama took into charge both domestic and foreign policies and started the era of renewing. In two terms from 2008 to 2016, he was considered as pivotal figure in the American history because of the challenges that faced his office. Unstable economy, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and social unrest, all these circumstances pushed the president to use another doctrine of change (Bose).

In a speech at Al- Azhar University in Cairo, Obama acknowledged the need of development at the level of economic and social opportunities, democracy, human rights and he also tackled many foreign issues as enhancing diplomacy and limiting the unnecessary American military assistance. In this speech Obama pledged the responsibility of the United States to transfer democracy in the same time encouraged the Islamic countries to rely on their own leaders to (Aaronson).

However Obama's administration was judged and many raised questions about his exceptional doctrine and the accomplishment of his programs and its impact on the United States and the world. Many experts in the American policy put line around the smart use of power in which Obama always stresses on in his speeches. Secretary of the State John Kerry believed that it is high time for America to act smartly with its national issues and to limit its idealistic ideologies abroad, he stated that "we reject as false the choice between our Safety and our ideals"(qtd.in Muasher).

Moreover it can be said that Obama in office put the light on the issues that have relation with the national security and he kept on supporting the peace process all over the world, because the most of his decisions had the potential of achieving stability and secure life for everyone (Muasher). His strategies generally took into account both the American homeland challenges and the international challenges as ones.

### **1.2.1 What did Obama Inherit in Foreign Affairs?**

Although Obama's presidential campaign had been sharply critical of George .W. Bush approach. The new president inherited foreign policy headaches that were considered as negative legacy of Bush administration. Obama would face the implications of American involvements at the global war on terror as well as the bloody war in Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition to the issue of wars, there were also the problem of unstable political relations with some nations such as Russia, China and Cuba (Unger). The president emphasized on the efforts of the United States to deal with these issues responsibly.

Almost two years in his term, President Obama hoped to improve America's standing in the world by crafting foreign policy vastly different from his predecessor. With great realism he held up those issues without ignoring the American interests as a priority (Nelson).He aimed to strength the American foreign policy position in the world using different strategies in treating foreign issues.

Obama justified his doctrine by saying that "there is no military solution for every conflict in the world" (qtd.in Jackson). This means that it is time for the United States to get rid of the military operations to solve problems, and it is preferable to encourage the use of diplomacy in creating more democratic leadership and economic prosperity in those countries.

Michael Mandelbaum, a professor of the American foreign policy, discussed Obama's foreign legacy with saying that the Obama legacy is a working progress because there are historical events from the previous administration needed to be changed and take



another political shape. He also discussed the effectiveness of Obama's foreign policy, especially the point of achieving unsatisfying consequences in Iraq and Afghanistan.

According to Mandelbaum Despite the weaknesses of Obama's foreign policy, to some extent he could fulfill what the American people expected from his administration (The Foreign Policy Legacy of the Obama Administration, 5:44-15:15).

According to David Unger, the foreign policy of Barack Obama was a unique doctrine because of the audacity to change the mindset of policing. He stressed on refreshing international relations by taking reasonable decisions which correspond with the American values, in the same time maintaining security and peace and ensuring the promotion of democracy in all over the world (1-6).

### **1.2.2. The Agenda of Barack Obama in Iraq (2009-2011)**

To fulfill the electoral promise, Obama faced the challenge of how could he address the long and bloody war in Iraq. In many occasions President Obama described the American invasion of Iraq as the dumb war, which means that it was not necessary to happen and costed the United States that much spend of military and financial power. Obama viewed that it was necessary to take care about national issues rather than treating wars abroad (Cordsman).

President Obama talked willingly to stop fighting in Iraq because of many reasons. Firstly, his views about the causes of invasion were totally different from the views of Bush's administration. Obama's realistic beliefs tended to put limits to the American military power rather than the overuse of power. Doctor James J. Carafano a leading expert in foreign policy challenges, he assumed that Obama's foreign policy would be limited in a diplomatic rather than the military commitment.

Secondly the war received the United States treasure and blood. The last study made by Reuter's magazine revealed that the budget of the Iraq war was more than 2 trillion.

Human loss from both sides American soldiers and the Iraqi people, was approximately 801,000 people had been also added to the financial loss, these losses urged Obama to take action and end the commitment in Iraq as soon as possible (Trotta).

Another important reason that urged Barack Obama to end the war in Iraq is his continuous support to the human rights and the free will of any people to decide their destiny by their own (Roth). This principal recommended Obama to take off the hand of the United States from Iraq and to give the opportunity to Iraqi people to build a new Iraq that is governed by the principal of democracy (Shear).

Moreover, the president's agenda was clear enough for its efforts both ending definitively the combat in Iraq and to bringing back the soldiers home. This step was important to help Iraq to stand by its own without the assistance of the United States. He announced that "So today, I can report that as promised the rest of our troops in Iraq will come home by the end of the year .after nearly nine years America's war in Iraq will be over ...but even as we mark this important milestone we are moving to new phase in the relationship between the United States and Iraq....."(qtd.in MacAskill).

## **2. Obama's Policy towards Iraq War**

### **2.1. Political Negotiations to End the U.S. Intervention in Iraq**

After nine years of fighting in Iraq, ending the war became a strong necessity for both the United States and Iraq. Launching a series of political negotiations between the two parts to put a definitive end to the war in Iraq and open new page of political cooperation and exchange of the common interests. Obama has stressed the role of the United States that will keep on progress in the region but differently. U.S. commitment in Iraq changes from a military effort led by forces into civilian effort under the guide of diplomacy (Jaffe).

As promised, the president showed great willingness to cooperate with Mr. Nouri Al - Maliki to end the military involvement in the country, and to start new political era. among the priorities of this agreement was to support the Iraqi leaders who will hold their nation with great enthusiasm and optimism because according to Obama” the future of Iraq belongs to the people of Iraq” (president Obama speaks on Iraqi elections, 00:35-00:40).Emphasizing on diplomatic relation and strategic assistance they will lead the country to stability and national prosperity.

Another important issue discussed with the Prime Minister Mr. Al-Maliki was the racial division in the country since Iraq is populated by the Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims and the Kurds. Though the leaderships were in the hands of Shia, other groups are considered as minorities and their participation is limited. Obama, therefore, insisted on the fact that the future of Iraq would be in the hands of all parts of the Iraqi community (president Obama bilateral meeting with prime minister Maliki of Iraq, 4:18- 4:34). This was an attempt from Obama to limit discrimination against minorities.

As noted above the racial inequality took considerable discussion in the political negotiation with Mr. Al-Maliki. They found that it would be better for Iraq's interest to involve all these groups in the governing process whether in the parliament or in other political activities especially elections that would decide the future of the country (Holland).

The Vice President at that time Joe Biden has discussed the Iraqi issue with Mr. Al-Maliki, they emphasized on the importance of constructing a united leadership in Iraq to ensure the collective efforts of Iraqi leaders and population to fight terrorism and extremism in the country (Osno). Biden and al- Maliki also discussed the file Al Qaeda organization that threatened the Iraqi national security for decades, and committed violence against innocent Iraqi people (Osno).

After a serious political negotiation with the Iraqi government, President Obama asked for the final approval from the American congress to start the operation of throwing back the military forces and ending the invasion of Iraq immediately. Throwing back military forces was gradually was the final step to end the American commitment in Iraq (Arango).

## **2.2. Obama's Political Support to Iraqi Government**

When President Barack Obama came to office, the nature of American -Iraqi relations has been changing .Unlike Bush's administration that preferred the military solution to overthrow the dictatorship in Iraq, the new president expressed his ambitions to stop that doctrine, and replace it with the political assistance to improve the governing status in the country.

He always stressed on the readiness of his administration to act responsibly and carefully whenever it is needed and to encourage working side by side to achieve better results, at the level of economic projects and the development of both educational and cultural sectors (Paylasin).President Obama reported that "America stands ready to help the Iraqi government build...together we can expand our economic trade and together we can broaden educational, cultural and scientific engagement to make a positive difference in the lives of our people" (qtd.in " Obama pushes Iraq ...").

In July, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, President Barack Obama welcomed Mr. Nouri Al-Maliki in the White House to discuss the future of political reforms at the level the government and the agreement on the principal of united and inclusive Iraq. In this meeting both parts have insisted on the importance of renewing the political partnership and the strategic cooperation between the two nations, Obama and Al-Maliki agreed to build a broader basis for cooperation between the two nations (Kurtsch).

Moreover Al-Maliki had agreed with President Obama about the aims of his visit to the White House. Obama has explained the intended objectives of the meeting and agreed with Al – Maliki to activate the strategic relationship and the economic front, culture front, educational front, commercial front and in every possible area where the United States can play a role in supporting the Iraqi government (Kurtsch).

More importantly, the bilateral meeting between the United States president and the Iraqi prime minister can be interpreted positively, because of the agreement of both sides to turn the page and start a new political transition in the country. Both insisted to deal with any possible threat to the Iraqi national security with great common effort.

The Prime Minister Al-Maliki evaluated the meeting in a positive way, he added that the meeting with the President Obama was positive and constructive meeting reflected the deep conviction on the part of both sides to establish strategic friendship. They also discussed many regional issues, including Syria and Iran (“Obama pushes Iraq...”).

### **2.3 Who is Nouri al- Maliki?**

Nouri al-Maliki is an Iraqi Shiite political figure and among the most influential personalities in the country. According to a report made by the BBC New institution, the full name is Nouri Mohamed Hassan Maliki, he was born in July 1950 in small city in Iraq called Hila, and he grew up in a family that believes in nationalism. Nouri Al- Maliki was inspired by the Shia nationalist and idealistic beliefs. When he was a student the University of Baghdad where he belonged to the “Shia Islamic Dawa Party” and started his political activism in 1970s (“Profile: Nouri...”).

After returning from exile in 2003, he served in many political positions, starting with being the most active spokesman of Shia parties, especially the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA). In 2006 Al- Maliki gained popularity when he was nominated for the post of prime minister and he won the elections. The position of prime minister at that time was a very hard task

because of the harsh political situations in Iraq, since it was under the American invasions from a side and the spread of violence and instability in the most of sectors from the other side (Berslow and Wexler).

Despite all these difficulties that tear the country apart, Al-Maliki promised his people to maintain unity in the Iraqi community and he played a crucial role in the American -Iraqi negotiation with the President George Bush. Al -Maliki also was ready to cooperate with the American administration, when he permitted the American military forces in Iraq to target the Sunni militant groups in 2007 (Parker).

In the end of 2010 the social and political situation in Iraq started to take another shape. The pressure on his administration came from different sects in the country. The Iraqi people protested against Al- Maliki and demanded him to abandon his position, because Al-Maliki's administration could not fulfill their needs of democratic and fair rule. These protests of regime change led the country to more complex era of "Arab spring" and opened the door to a new conflict with the intervention of terrorist groups (Berslow and Wexler).

#### **2.4. The U.S. Administrative Procedures at Military and Political Levels in Iraq (2008 - 2011)**

During Obama's Presidency the plan of ending the combat mission in Iraq had a great intention from his administration. This decision was a promise from Obama to end the nine years war. He promised to give the possible political support to Iraqi leaders and to keep very limited American military forces to provide help whenever is needed (The End of Combat Mission in Iraq 3:35-4:02).

In November, 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008 the American - Iraqi cooperation took place and both sides agreed to end the American military intervention. The Iraqi parliament ratified a status of agreement with the United States that set the end of the military involvement in the country and started a new era of diplomatic relations between the two nations (Rasheed and Al-

Ansary). In September, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 President Obama from his office declared the end of the combat mission in Iraq, “So tonight I am announcing that the American combat mission in Iraq has ended” (The End of Combat Mission in Iraq 2:45-2:50).

The president stressed on the role of the United States would continue but differently, “our combat mission is ending, but our commitment to Iraq’s future is not” (qtd. in Holland and Chaudhry). In the political sector he confirmed the readiness of the United States to support Iraqi leaders to resolve political conflicts and to make a collective government. At the military level Obama stated that “going forward, a transitional force of U.S. troops will remain in Iraq with different mission: advising and assisting Iraq’s security forces, supporting Iraq’s troops in targeted counterterrorism missions and protecting our civilians” (The End of Combat Mission in Iraq 4:44-4:59).

President Barack Obama minimized the role of the United States and it can be summarized in two main points. The first point is to encourage the Iraqi leaders to hold the responsibility of the future of their country and people, and reinforcing the role of the Iraqi government in ensuring democratic leadership, with an emphasis on preventing the racial division that heightened the tension between the Sunnis, the Shia and the Kurds (The End of Combat Mission in Iraq 4:59-5:45).

The second point is that American military assistance will be limited, and the American forces will still cooperate in the country and will help the Iraqi army to fight terrorists of Al Qaeda and protect civilians from violence (The end of Combat Mission in Iraq 6:00-6:45). This plan means that the American withdrawal from Iraq would be relative since it would continue the role of supervision and guidance in the country.

## **2.5. Obama’s Plan into Practice (2011)**

The announcement of ending the war in Iraq was followed immediately by starting the procedures to put the president’s decision into action. The president in his last speech

promised that all the military troops will come home by the end of the year 2011. In September, 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011 the defense secretary of the United States Leon Panetta was responsible for throwing back the American forces home and he was supporting the decision of the president Obama to keep a group of soldiers from 4000 to 5000 soldiers there to work hand by hand with the Iraqi military forces to stop violence in the country (“Obama to Troops in Iraq...”).

These events were remarkable in the history of Iraq, the American invasion costs a lot of blood and souls of both American soldiers and innocent Iraqi civilians. Though the war was ended but its traces in the country are there until today. The violence, the ethnic division and terrorist groups are still tearing the country apart, and threatening the Iraqi ambitions to stand for their own social and political prosperity (Haass). The chance of building a democratic system in Iraq was therefore very difficult.

### **3. The Political Aims behind the Foreign Policy of Obama in Iraq**

#### **3.1 The Promotion of Democracy in Iraq**

Democratization is transitional process which changes the political dynamics within a society, and ensures more openness and freedom for citizens to participate in governing (Dahinden). Boutros Boutros- Ghali who made a report for the United Nations named “Agenda for Democratization”, stated that the aims of democratizing any given society is to lead it to more political openness, more participatory and less authoritarian regimes (Ghali).

The experience of promoting democracy in Iraq is an old and new experience mostly described as a very complex process. The promotion of democracy in Iraq is not new because it was among the claimed objectives of the American invasion in 2003 since President George W .Bush was against the “Authoritarian Regime” of Saddam Hussein (Brunel). Bush aimed to change the regime in Iraq and to replace it with a western- democratic style regime.



However the process of democratizing Iraq during the Bush administration was not enough to lead the country to political harmony, since the political situation could not be evaluated as positive. Firstly, non-agreement of the Sunni and Shiite parties on unified political status in Iraq made the democracy struggling. Secondly the ruling system after the American invasion could not implement the principle of democracy as expected and, to some extent it failed to enable the Iraqi people to exercise their political freedom (Burnett). This apparent failure required the intervention of a new government to achieve the awaited success.

During Obama's term in 2009 new prospects were expected from the public opinion to refresh the democracy promotion process and build a strong and democratic leadership in Iraq. Thomas Carothers, an expert in International Democracy, argued that president Obama and his team further sought to reposition the United States on democracy policy by repairing America's own standing as symbol of democracy. Obama emphasized on the role of the United States to spread democracy all over the world and to reform necessary policies to democratize non-democratic countries mainly Iraq.

### **3.1.1. What Does Democracy Mean?**

Most of scholars argue the fact that defining the concept of democracy is not an easy task since there are many interpretations of scholars and thinkers. Dating back to the Greeks they defined democracy as the rule by people. However modern thinkers did not agree on one fixed definition. Amartya Sen who is an Indian philosopher has defined democracy as “universal value” (Sen). Noam Chomsky, American linguist and author, conceptualizes democracy in many forms but the main conception is “democratic society is one in which the public has the means to participate in some meaningful way in management of their own affairs and their means of information that are in fact open and free” (Noam Chomsky: Two Kinds of Democracy 00:00-00:24 ).

Other theoretical definitions of democracy stressed on the essentiality of this concept in the process of governing, maintaining human rights and freedom, and the participation of all parts of a given society in decision making. David Collier, an American political scientist and Steven Levitsky, an American professor in Harvard university stated that “the most widely employed definition of democracy focus on the procedures of governance” (Collier and Levitsky)

the writings of Robert A. Dahl, an American theorist and professor in Political Sciences at Yale University, include identifications of eight criteria in defining democracy: the right to vote, the right to be elected, the right of political leaders to compete for support and votes, elections that are fair and free; freedom of association; freedom of expression; alternative source of information; and institutions that depend on votes and other expressions of preference ( qtd. in Coppedge, Alvarez, et al). Dahl related democracy with the institutions and processes of democratic government.

To sum up from the perspectives mentioned before, democracy can be defined as a form of government in which power and civic responsibilities are exercised by all adults citizens , directly or indirectly through their freely elected representatives (Democracy in brief....). Defining democracy was a difficult task, which means that putting it in practice will be much more difficult.

### **3.1.2. What is a Democratic System?**

The establishment of a democratic system in any given nation is a long term process because it requires both social and political integrated efforts to be achieved. According to doctor Abdul khaleq Hussein, who is an Iraqi intellectual, writer and searcher in the political sciences, the democratic system can be defined as the following:

It is a system of government from the people to the people, and a constitution

that people vote on in a general referendum, which represents the social contract between the people and the authority. It means ruling the political majority while respecting the rights of the minority, i.e. a government elected by the people of the people through the ballot box periodically, and then they choose their representatives, i.e. the representatives (members of parliament), and these in turn choose the Executive authority, and they are the ones who enact laws according to the Constitution. Among the features of a democratic state is the separation of the three powers: legislative executive and judicial, the existence of political parties, civil society organizations, respect for humanrights, a free media, freedom of expression and thought, protest and strikefreedom of belief and religion.

### **3.1.3. Democracy in Iraq**

The majority of Iraqi thinkers have optimistic view that Iraq could be a democratic state, they argue on the fact that Iraq had the needed resources to create one of the most vibrant democracies in the Arab world .This led many others to raise a very important question: if the country has the conditions to be managed in a democratic way, so where is the defect? It is possible to say that because of the exercising of democracy during Saddam Hussein era was not among the rights of Iraqi people, they did not test who live their freedom, their political participation in governing. It can be a reasonable justification of the absence of democracy (Azimi).

The American invasion in 2003 stated its objectives of bringing the democracy to Iraq, and abolishing the totalitarian regime of Saddam Hussein. The aims of Bush's administration were helping political actors in Iraq to follow a democratic governmental structure based on the fair decision of power (Cotney). Bush's and Obama's foreign policies in Iraq were harshly criticized, because they could yet succeed in building democratic Iraq, defeating all the obstacle of the democratic change. In the same time those policies had proved the

insufficiency of their strategies to pick up Iraq from its political and sectarian conflicts (Cottey).

Abbas Jabber , an official in the Iraqi government put red lines under the strategies of President Barack Obama in creating democracy in Iraq , he said that “ American brought to us corrupted government that does not reflect what the people want, they are leaving however they left a mess behind them and the Iraqi people still suffering ” .The current democracy in Iraq is described as fragile, and many assumptions were made to identify the reasons for the incapability of Iraqi leaders to establish a democratic system.

Doctor Hamid Kifai is an author and member in the supreme judiciary authority in Iraq. He assumed that the experience of democracy is new for the Iraqi people and it needs time to be implemented, he said that “The Iraqi people want to implement democracy and thirst for freedom, but they are new to practicing them”. Meanwhile in countries where democracy has never been put in practice, political actors might be unfamiliar with democratic norms and principle ( qtd in Machiavelli218-28; Stephan: 64-68; Schneider).

Other political scientists went to put the blame on the policy of President Obama. After 2011 the majority of Iraqi people felt the betrayal of ending the American intervention to bring them democracy. Mohamed Maddi who is an Iraqi intellectual, he discussed the post-Obama era in Iraq. He assumed that Obama's policy left a several obstacles that slow down the progress of the democratic leadership, he reported that the Americans left behind them a country that suffers from religious and ethnic divisions and still work hardly to contain the political rebellion and confusion.

Muhammad HassaninHeikal who is an Egyptian journalist, author and critic went far in his criticism and assumed that the United States will use the democracy as tool to control on the Arabs especially Iraqi leaders, and he stressed on the responsibility of the Arabs themselves to create their own democracy .In interview in the Al -Jazeera Channel he said

that “I do not see the American calls for the implementation of democracy, but it is a tool of blackmail for the Arabs. Arabs must do something so that the west and the American s pay attention to them with respect” (qtd.in Heikal: Obama white.....).

The assessment of the democracy in Iraq from 2009 until now gives a very disappointing view. The continuous struggle between Shia, Sunni and Kurds dominant parties discouraged the implementation of democracy since they are considered as the worst threat of democracy in Iraq. Those parties hamper the process of elections rather than build political trust between the government and the people (Abdurrahman). These are some among other reasons that led to failure of democracy in Iraq.

### **3.1.4. The Reasons of the Failure of Democracy in Iraq**

After the end of the so called dictatorship in Iraq, the expectations were to make a democratic system and involve all the parts of Iraqi community in governing .However there are many social and political circumstances that prevented the construction of democracy in Iraq. Internal as well as external reasons affected the democratic transition in Iraq.

#### **3.1.4.1. Internal Reasons**

##### **3.1.4.1.1. Ethnic and Religious Division**

The application of democracy in Iraq is highly related to the willing of the Iraqi people. The country is divided into ethnic groups. According to last studies made by Abu Awis al-Baghdadi, The Sunni Arabs represent 53 percent; the Shia represent 43 percent and 4 percent represent the rest of population including the Kurds and Christians. It is obvious that the Shia and the Sunnis are the controlling sects in Iraq.

Ali al-Khalidi, an Algerian researcher in the field of political sciences, assumed that the implementation of democracy requires firstly an agreement of all the Iraqi ethnic groups

about the legitimacy of any political decision, which this agreement will ensure the participation of the minorities in the democratic rule. In the case of Iraq, there is an ancient conflict between Shia and Sunni who they could not agree on one political decision.

Secondly the absence of the political agreement between the Sunni and Shia would slow down the decision making process in Iraqi government. Most of time the legitimate political decision needs the accordance of the majority of all parts and otherwise it could not work .This state led Iraq to suffer from a continuous struggle between the political parties that carry different political aims (Al-Khalidi).

The absence of popular integrity in Iraq and the ethno-religious conflicts between the Shia and the Sunni prevented the progress of democracy. In fact their wrong exercise of democracy is related to their belonging to different ethnic groups since both parts tended to give a great priority to their ethnic groups without taking the consideration of national interests in every election (Mudaffar). This reality caused these groups to be classified as forms of corruption in Iraq.

#### **3.1.4.1.2. Political Parties**

The political parties in Iraq are among the reasons of the failure of democracy in the country. BasharHatem, who is an Iraqi author, believes that these parties work for strengthening their political power at the count of democratic awareness, so far from the interests of the state and the Iraqi people. These parties used division in the country to gain more power and neglect their responsibility to improve the political system (Hatem).

The functions of political parties deviated from its principal role. Their belief about democracy is still limited to elections and gathering the possible number of voters, without understanding that democracy needs elections merely to give legitimacy to the governmental system (Hatem).

According to Albert Bhart is an professor in New York University, viewed that political parties in Iraq failed to create a consensual democracy which needs the cooperation of the leaders of sects, and necessitates the leaders to feel a kind of commitment to preserve the nation's unity .At least practicing democracy in the scope of engaging in collaborative efforts with leaderships in the spirit of moderation and compromise.

#### **3.1.4.1.3.Terrorist Groups**

For decades democracy in Iraq was influenced by terrorism. The country suffered from the existence of terrorist groups who fought for years against democracy and civil rights. Al Qaeda organization and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant are among the known terrorist groups which have acquired large cities such as Al Mosul. Hence democracy could not grow in violent environment

The terrorist groups went to belief that democracy is not a legitimate ruling system and they classified countries that have democratic systems as nonbeliever states. Al Qaeda organization aimed to establish a pan-Islamic stated ruled by Islamist leaders, and they justified the use of violence against civilians as a duty of resistance against the concept of democracy (Al-Khalidi)

The armed actions of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant were not limited to targeting the American occupation. It used many strategies to spread its ideologies using social media, to distort the meaning of democracy and intimidate the Iraqi people from supporting democratic systems (Al-Khalidi).According to Dabiq which is the electronic magazine of ISIL, it expressed its view about democracy “That will cause the world to hear and understand the meaning of terrorism, and boots that will trample the idol of nationalism, destroy the idol of democracy, and uncover its deviant nature” (qtd.in Al-Khalidi).

#### **3.1.4.1.4. Corruption**

Abdul Allah Ahmed Nahi an Iraqi researcher in political sciences and author, believes that there is a close relationship between the existence and non- existence of democracy and corruption. Democracy cannot grow and be consolidated under the spread of the corruption and the failure to combat it, in the same time it is not possible to fight corruption and contain its effects without activating and adopting the mechanisms of democracy itself. Corruption prevails merely in an environment that rejects the public liberties and lacks administrative and parliamentary oversight and counting, and it can be defined simply as “abuse of using a public office for private gain” (qtd.in Kribech).

In the case of Iraq corruption is one of the most important features that characterizes both the occupation phase and pre- occupation phase. Fadel Al- Rabiei is an Iraqi intellectual and writer; he evaluated the situation in Iraq as still suffering from chaos and looting which affected the development of military and political institutions. Assar Fakhri Abdu Latif who is a Statistical researcher at the General Directorate of Statistics and Research, Central Bank of Iraq, he suggested that reducing the amount of corruption in Iraq can be achieved only through ensuring the sovereignty of law, social integrity, equality and human rights.

Moreover corruption in Iraq could be treated only on the basis of the following reforms: the existence of an anti-corruption legislation and the obligation to apply it; ensuring the independence and the effectiveness of the judiciary branch; developing the administrative apparatus and ensuring central oversight and adopting radical democratic reforms.

#### **3.1.4.2. External Reasons**

##### **3.1.4.2.1. Regional Reasons**

According to Salah Jawed Al-Kadhim who is an Iraqi writer, researcher and poet, the construction of a democratic system is influenced by the surrounding environment. Any political system in a given country that is not in harmony with its environment becomes



affected by it. In the case of Iraq, it is targeted by some countries such as Iran that uses military strategies to impose its control over the region. The .Ali Al -Saadi who is an Iraqi writer and intellectual, evaluated the situation in Iraq after 2003 as not different, because the experience of democratic leadership was new for the country that does not support democratic regimes. The lack of experience discouraged the process of democratic transition.

What makes the matters more complex is the intervention of the United States. It claimed that the success of promoting democracy in Iraq would help transfer this experience to neighbor's countries in the Middle East. American frankness towards democracy in the region has generated a feeling among the countries surrounding Iraq, which is necessary to obstruct the American experience and to abort it before it becomes ready for export (Berger and Hadley).

Countries surrounding Iraq used different political and military methods to put down the Iraqi experience. The military support to some militant groups in Iraq is among the most dangerous actions. Others used soft methods especially the mass media that broadcast various intellectual materials, which is not favorable for Iraq (Berger and Hadley). All these means were used to distorting democracy in Iraq and led to more political instability.

#### **3.1.4.2.2. International Reasons**

Paul Bremer, an American administrator of Coalition Provisional authority in Iraq, put the blame on the United States in the failure of democracy in Iraq. The United States managed to remove Saddam Hussein regime, but failed to help the Iraqi leaders to find a democratic system especially in decisions related to dissolving the Iraqi army and opening the borders. It also turned a blind eye to activities of extremist groups.

In addition, the United States pulled out before it provided enough for Iraq in terms of military, logistical or economic support, this lack of support led to destabilizing the political

situation (Al Saadi). On this basis it can be said that external environment also contributed to lead Iraq to confusion about how to build real democracy.

#### **4. To What Extent has Obama's Foreign Policy in Iraq Succeeded?**

The United States has been actually involved with the political situation in Iraq for three decades. Throughout these periods, the United States was headed by several presidents; all carried different outlooks about the future of Iraq. Courtney Kayser is a researcher in Hall University, in her article "Social Constructivism and Obama's Foreign policy in Iraq", she discussed that When Obama came to office in 2008, he promised to deal with Bush's legacy in Iraq with more constructive policies. However his foreign policy in Iraq and its results was vastly judged from different perspectives.

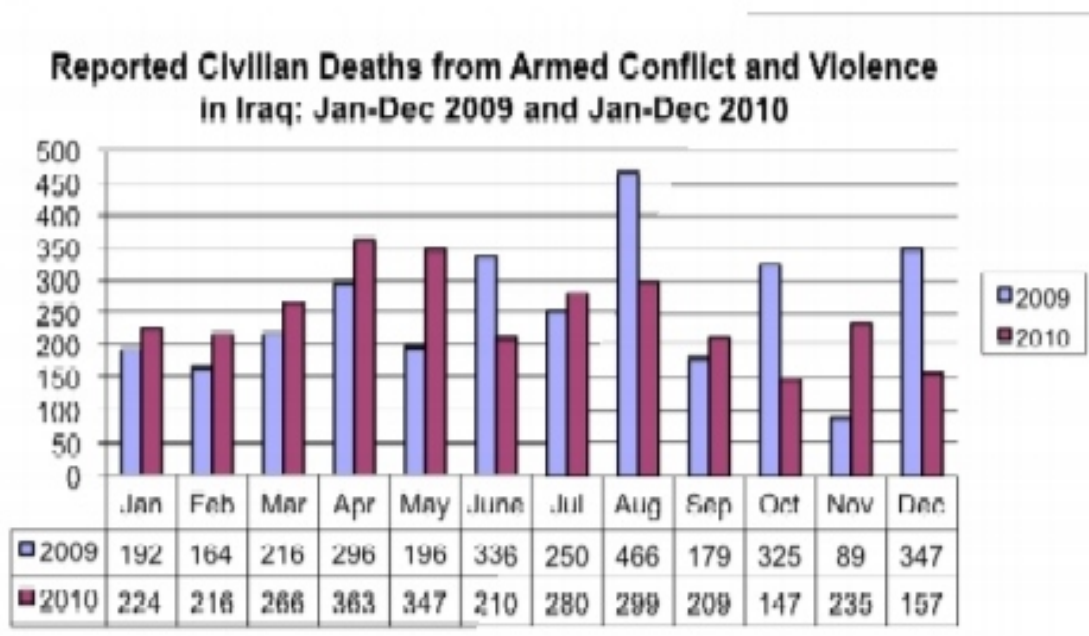
The Iraqi political development is affected by the conflict between the coalitions and parties, since there is no agreement on the legitimacy of the three presidencies (the prime minister, the presidency of the republic and the presidency of the parliament). That was not the only obstacle in the forming of government differences among the same coalition also pledged the political development in Iraq (Hussein). This would lead to fragmentation in these coalitions and would enter the country into new crises.

Since Iraq is multi-ethnic country, the disengagement of U.S. from Iraq led to the raise of racism, sectarianism and regional issues. The country was suffering from the absence of national development and intuitional concepts of democracy, liberty and the respect of human rights (Hussein). Melani Cammett, a professor in political sciences in Brown University, described the democratic governance in Iraq in post -American era as poor quality of governing. This is due to the design of the Iraqi constitution which is still marginalizing the Sunni politicians from the governmental representation.

Furthermore the most complex file left in Iraq after the exit of the American s occupation is terrorism or better to say the ghost of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. An

American officer Joseph Votel admitted that the American exit from Iraq led to the expansion of ISIL. Despite The war on terror in Iraq was qualified by capturing and killing Osama bin Laden the head of Al-Qaeda. However this achievement was not enough to bring security to the country. The violence against innocent Iraqi people increased and large cities such as Al-Mosel fell in hands of ISIL (Votel).

Iran is also considered as a huge threat to Iraq after the American disengagement. Iranian administration wanted to control the region of Middle East through implementing the containment policy in Iraq. The Iranian militias used the unstable political situation after 2011 as justification to bring its army to support some political resistant in Iraq and caused the murder of many Iraqis people (al-Jabburi).



**Fig.2.** Reported Civilians Deaths from Armed Conflicts and Violence in Iraq: Jan-Dec 2009 and Jan-Dec 2010

**Source:**“Reported Civilians Deaths from Armed Conflicts and Violence in Iraq: Jan-Dec 2009 and Jan-Dec 2010”. Report Human Rights In Iraq. Web.Accessed July 12, 2021.

The violence against the Iraqi people rose because of terrorist attacks and internal struggles. Since there were many militias fighting against each other and using the Iraqi people as human shields.

The consequences of the withdrawal of the U.S. forces from Iraq can be summarized in two main points. Firstly, Iraqi security forces operational capabilities maybe hampered and their ongoing training programs significantly slow down. Secondly U.S. troops currently played a role in containing the possibility of renewed tensions among different ethnic and political groups, for instance performing crucial peacemaking function along the disputed internal border between the Kurdish region and the rest of Iraq (Tardelli).

President Obama’s foreign policy in Iraq could not be simply a matter of fulfilling or not fulfilling his campaign promises. His policy in Iraq was based on limiting the American engagement through many steps. The first strategy was military which he promised to withdraw the military forces and to bring American soldiers by the end of 2011. The second strategy was political in which Obama insisted to provide the diplomatic assistance to Iraqi leaders to act responsibly towards their country.

However the consequences of Obama’s agenda in Iraq were not as expected. The withdrawal of the military forces led the country to chaotic situation. Firstly because of the ethnic struggle in which political parties and coalitions in Iraq fought only for powerful positions. Secondly the increase of sectarianism, corruption, terrorism and absence of equality among the problems that Iraq faced after 2011.

Obama’s policy in Iraq has raised many questions about the extent of fulfillment of his promises towards Iraq. Theoretically Obama ended the war in Iraq however his policy

resulted in the outbreak of a new war known as “Arab Spring” and opened the door to external countries to interfere in Iraqi national concernment.

## Chapter Three

### **The Arab Spring and the Failure of al-Maliki's System:**

Iraq experienced decades of tragedies and chaos. It is among the countries in the Arab region which suffered from external interference in its internal affairs. The land of Iraq was used for extensive struggles for political, economic, and ideological influence because of its location, it is also the goal of organizations armed ideology for all the kinds its sources it has been a target to different military organization. Since decades, Iraq's body has been bleeding whether under the name of religion or under the name of democracy, due to religious issues or to spread democracy.

Among the reasons behind internal instability was the miss conducting and miss controlling of the leaders, and the local skirmishes which most of the time are the result of the religious differences. Those factors and others gave the foreign regions the opportunity to intervene in its internal affairs. As it is mentioned before, Nouri Al-Maliki the Iraqi prime minister from 2006 to 2014 and the vice president of the republic from September 9, 2005 to August 11, 2014, had his own and specific policy which was marked by several internal and external events. Some of these policies were accepted by the Iraqi citizens, whereas others were not, the state which led to the uprising of citizens against him.

The Arab Spring was among the national events that coincided with Al Maliki's government. This movement took a place in the late of 2010 and the early 2011 to 2012; it refers to pro-democracy wave, which took a place in the Middle East and North Africa. Iraq also was a part of the Arab Spring and along with other Arab nations claimed for democracy to have peaceful and secure lives.

The Iraqi protest against the American military existence in the country had different reasons. The corrupted government, which claimed to end the American military existence in the country, totally ignored solving that issue. More violence, corruption, and external

interfering in the internal issues and problems in the country pushed the Iraqi people to upraise against the government, and this movement was followed by international reactions.

### **1. Nouri al-Maliki's Premiership**

Over the years from its occupation, the Iraqi authority failed to produce a foreign policy strategy. Not only the foreign policy, but also it failed to produce any other strategy related to the concept of the modern state. Among the politicians that had marked their periods in the country of Iraq Nouri Al-Maliki, who was the prime minister of the country from 2006 to 2014, and the vice president from 2014 to 2015 then 2016 to 2018.

Al-Maliki' era has been a troubled period for the country of Iraq. It started with a big hope, and ended with insurgency spreading in the north, air strikes by US planes on the Islamic State militants, and led to the fall of more than the third of the Iraq's area under the occupation of ISIS or what known as ISIL, which refers to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (Nawab).

In his election campaign, Nouri al-Maliki gave many false promises. He promised that the national reconciliation would be in the beginning of his duties, and ensured the elimination of terrorism. Ending the administrative corruption, respecting democracy, and dealing with the Iraqi people equally were all his promises (Bahry). These promises were seized by the Iraqi people with a big hope and optimism.

Maliki's Premiership was first approved by the National Assembly on 20 May 2006. His second cabinet was approved on 21st December 2010, when he held positions of Interior Minister, Defense Minister, and a National Security Minister. Some US officials said that he should give up his premiership, because of the spring of defeats in Northern Iraq Offensive, when (Bahry). He announced his resignation as a Prime Minister on 14 August 2014 but on September of the same year he was elected as a one of the three vice presidents.

### **2. Formation Al-Maliki's Government**

## **2.1. June-December 2006**

The Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki first came to power in 2006, in that time the sectarian violence was threatening to tear the country apart. Nouri Al-Maliki resisted the big pressure from Washington request for keeping the U.S. troops in the country, but he presided to end officially the military presence in Iraq. The Iraqi people looked to the Al-Maliki not only as a leader, but also as the hope of getting rid of years and years of wars, crimes, killing, insecurity ... etc., so the beginning was really hopeful.

Among the decision that Al-Maliki signed in the early days of his term was the death warrant of Saddam Hussein. He declined the stay of execution, and said that there would be no review or delay in the event, and Hussein's execution was carried out on 30 December 2006 (Salman). By declaring that he would temporarily act as a Defense Minister, Al-Maliki promised that he would end all the problems that face the country and its citizens.

## **2.2. From the early of 2007 to the end of 2009**

In the early of 2007, al-Maliki faced challenges of how he could address the internal security problems, especially at that time targeting the Sunni militias. Since al Maliki was supported by the United States, his government gave the U.S. the green light to increase its armed forces and to fight the Sunni groups, which followed the 2008 campaign against the Shia militias ("Profile: Nouri Maliki"). Though al-Maliki promised to reduce violence, his decisions led to the aggravation of the security crises between the Shiite and Sunni sects.

The rise of the tension between the Sunni and the Shiite armed groups, which led to the rise of human losses, urged al-Maliki to sign peace agreement with Muqtada al- Sader, the militia leader, the leader of the Sadrist movement and the leader of the Peace Companies. Although the Peace deal didn't totally end the religious tensions in the country, it reduced the number of the dead and the wounded in the country (Solomon and Jay). Later on, and



according to Wall Street Journal, Nouri Al-Maliki claimed that he wished that he could end his term before it expires in 2009 ( “U.S. Signals Iraq’s Maliki...”).

### **2.3. From 2010 to 2014**

Nouri al-Maliki’s second government, with all main blocs in the new parliament had been approved by the parliament in December, 22th, 2010. Later on, a spokesperson for Al-Maliki said that he would not work on a third term on 2014 on the ground that was limiting himself in the name of democracy (Naumann and Fraczsk). Although al-Maliki’s both terms were “evolutionary stages” for the country of Iraq and the Iraqi people, he lost in the parliamentary elections of 2010 by some percentage points to the al-Iraqiyya list, which is an alliance established by Ayad Allawi the interim Prime Minister from 2004 to 2005.

In the late of 2011, the Sunni Muslims and the Kurdish rose up against al-Maliki when the Sunni politician and the Vice President of the country Tariq al-Hashemi ordered bombs attacks, and killed some Shiite politicians. This led to the boycotting the parliament from the Sunni-Shia Iraqiyya party, which lasted until the late of 2012. Later on, al-Hashemi fled to Turkey, and he was sentenced to death in absentia ((Naumann and Fraczsk).

The Iraqi President Fuad Masum, the 8th president of Iraq from 2014 to 2018, nominated Haider Al-Abidi, the Iraqi Prime Minister in Fuad Masum presidency, to replace Al-Maliki in the election of 2014. Although Al-Maliki claimed before that he would not have a third term, he was still holding power tenaciously till August 14th 2014, when he announced that he was stepping down (Al-Ali). Despite al-Maliki promised to pick up Iraq from violence and sectarianism his promises were not accomplished for both the Iraqi people and the country itself.

### 3. Nouri al-Maliki's Policy and its Limitations

The fact that the country of Iraq had no president, no minister of defense and interior affairs, no national and intelligence ministers which all were headed by Al-Maliki, gave him the authority to control the country. Al Maliki was also known by decisiveness towards ministers, commanders and even the vice president Tariq Al-Hashemi (Sullivan) .Al Maliki's powers allowed him to neglect other partners in government and to impose his policy freely in that period.

Al-Maliki policy (2006-2014) can be summarized in the two goals that he worked on: first, to stay in power indefinitely or in an authoritarian manner and to strengthen the Shiite rule and the nominal presence of the other religious parties. To achieve his goals, al-Maliki exploited all the financial resources from oil and other wealth, and he totally ignored the country, and left it in the worst conditions at all the levels (Ali).

The country suffered from corruption, insecurity, poor living conditions, unemployment, as well as the spread of terrorism and sectarianism. Between the failures to provide good conditions, basic service, the reduction in the revenues and the increase in the level of expenses, the Iraqi people recognized that the social and economic reform of the country is highly linked to the political reform. They also recognized that the reform of the political system is the key of rebuilding the country and avoiding the imminent collapse (Ali).

After decades of the economic suffering and the absence of freedom, the Iraqi people started to protest claiming for ending the political system that did not work on serving the citizens and the country needs. The protests which were a part from the Arab Spring demanded to overthrow of the corrupted government, abolishment of the constitution and they asked for legislative elections (Ali). From the invasion of Iraq to the Arab Spring, the country

suffered from the wrong decisions and corrupt leaders and the Iraqi citizens were the only victims.

#### **4. Nouri al-Maliki and the U.S.**

Although the American presence in the country of Iraq cost it a huge number of economic, military and human losses, a debate was raised about the optimistic or the positive view that the US overthrew the authoritarian rule of Saddam Hussein. In a Washington post on 2011, President Obama spoke about a normal relationship with a sovereign, self-reliant and democratic Iraq (“The U.S. has a Foreign Policy ...”). In the same journal, al-Maliki insisted that the US had a foreign policy partner in Iraq. He also claimed that Iraq is building an inclusive political system with free multiparty elections, a multiethnic government.

On October 2011, the American President Barack Obama and his national security committee sat for a video call conference with Nouri al-Maliki, the man that the US had backed for second-term leader of years earlier, set only with the translator in Baghdad. al-Maliki refused to tackle the issue of the American existence in the country, and this was welcomed by many in the room, because they viewed Iraq as a politically consuming misadventure (Chulov).

The US supported Al-Maliki until the late of 2013. Obama was claiming that al-Maliki is “The right man for Iraq”, and after the Iraqi protests to overthrow him, and their refusal of the third term, al-Maliki asked for the US help for air strikes against ISIL. In this regard Obama refused and claimed that “there is no military solution for the crisis in Iraq, and it requires a political solution”, and also said that “al-Maliki is not the right man for Iraq” because he could not end the internal conflict between the Iraqis (qtd. in Sfinson).

## **5. The Arab Spring**

### **5.1. Definition**

It is also known as the “The Arab Awakening” or the “The Arab Uprising”; it refers to the series of anti-government protests, uprising, and army rebellions that touch the Arab world on the early of 2010s. It started with the protests in Tunisia, in response to the oppressive regime and the low standard of living moving to the other countries such as Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain where either the ruler was deposed such as Zine El Abidine, the Tunisian president, and Muammar Gaddafi, the president of Libya, or major uprisings or social violence occurred as riots or the civil wars (Skinner).

The first protests occurred in Tunisia, exactly in SidiBouzeid December, 18th, 2010; When the Tunisian guy Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in a protest against police corruption and ill treatment. After that the wave spread in other countries such as Algeria, Jordan, Egypt and Yemen, and it was considered as the largest and the most organized demonstrations, which usually occurred on Friday after afternoon prayers (Skinner). It was really a push for the Arabs to wake up and upraise against the corrupted rules and rulers, and also to claim their rights, which are mostly violated.

The Arab Spring was the biggest transformation in the Middle East since the decolonization. In the early of 2012, leaders were forced from power in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen and big protests had broken out in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, and Sudan and some minor protests had occurred in Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Djibouti, Western Sahara and Palestine (Plakoudas). The protests in all the regions had the same complaints: government corruption, lack of jobs and opportunities, and the increasing in disparity of resources.

On January, 14th, 2011, the Tunisian President Zine Al- Abdin Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia because of the Tunisian revolution protests. The Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak

resigned on February, 11th, 2011, ending his 30 years of presidency from 1981 to 2011. Then, the Libyan people overthrew their President Muammar Gaddafi in the end of August of the same year. Finally, the Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh formally replaced by Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi in February, 27th, 2012, and in exchange for the immunity from prosecution (Skinner).

## **5.2. What were the Motives of the Arab Spring?**

Many experts argue that the Arab Spring is similar to the popular revolutions that the communist states faced in the early of the nineties. After more than five decades of independence from colonialism, the rulers failed to fulfill their citizen's needs, which include political freedom, economic prosperity and human dignity. These decrease led to the Arabs' uprising and protests against the leaders in order to claim for democracy.

These protests were different from one region to another, but they all had the same reasons to fulfill. Those reasons can be divided to three categories: social, economic and political reasons. First, the social purposes which can be touched in unemployment and the low standard of living. Citizens were claiming for better live, and asking for good live conditions, which they were promised in the election campaigns before electing the presidents (Manfreda).

Although most of the Arab countries were rich with the natural resources such as oil, most of them were suffering from the poverty and economic crisis. In some regions, as the case of Tunisia, people were living a miserable life and they were unable to fulfill their simple needs as buying foods or clothes. For that they were claiming for being the poor citizens for the rich country (Manfreda).

The last point was the uprising against the corrupt governments. While choosing their leaders, people were thinking about independent, democratic and truthful government, and then they found themselves facing a new internal corruption. Taking Iraq as an example,

Nouri al-Maliki was working to serve his own interests and he was ignoring his citizen's needs (Manfreda).

## **6. Uprising against Al-Maliki**

Iraq's February uprising was a wake-up call for desperate generations caught in an endless cycle of political chaos, sectarianism, terrorism, marginalization and low life conditions. The Iraqi people hoped for building true democratic leadership, rehabilitating the sectors of government and achieving transitional justice. However the situation in Iraq after 2011 proved the inaccuracy of this perception, where the political process witnessed successive crises between the government of Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki on the one hand, and the various political parties and popular coalitions on the other hand (al-Anni).

The anti-government protests against Al-Maliki were not a sudden event. It began in the end of 2010 to challenge the leadership that was unable to fulfill the citizens' needs. In February, 5th, 2011, a series of civil protest started in the majority of Iraqi provinces such as Al-Mosul, Al-Basra, Karbala, Baghdad and many cities in the south of the country where tens of thousands of Iraqis from all sects went to streets peacefully to protest against the policy of Nouri Al-Maliki. The Iraqi people protested to express their dissatisfaction with the government and their disappointment with the corrupt political system in Iraq (Al-Rawi).

For its part, the Supreme Shiite Authority in Iraq, led by Ayat Allah Ali al-Sistani, affirmed its sympathy with legitimate demands of citizens and their right to express their opinions peacefully, but it expressed concern that the demonstrations might get out of control and be exploited by those with special aims and agendas. Al-Sistani also warned against using forces to crack down the Iraqi protesters, and avoiding violence in all cases (Baraket).

The root causes of and triggers of the protests in all over the country were the absence of governmental cohesion and transparency, corruption, poor basic services, high unemployment, violence, terrorism and the American military existence. Firstly, the Iraqi

parliamentary elections in March, 2010 was full of uncertainties, where it resulted the won of Iraqi National movement (Iraqiyya) over Nouri Al –Maliki’s party Shia dominant State of Law Coalition (SOL) (Cordesman and Derby).

Iraqiyya was headed by AyadAllawi won the majority of seats with 91 seats and Maliki’s coalition came in second with 89 seats, the national Iraqi alliance won 70 seats and the Kurdistan Alliance won 43 seats. Although the Iraqiyya came out the winner in the parliamentary seat numbers, the party lacked the sufficient support to choose a new prime minister and to make new ministerial positions. According to Iraqi constitution the winning coalition needed to obtain at least 163 seats to form a government and give the chance to the second largest coalition of Nouri Al-Maliki to form a new government (Cordesman and Derby).

Nouri Al-Maliki has challenged the results of the parliamentary elections and refused to surrender, in which he was leading a campaign to disqualify the winning candidates of Iraqiyya on the ground that they had relations to Ba’ath party, and that he could build a government that he was head of. According to Daniel Barnes Al-Maliki’s audacity to keep power was a reason of aggravating the sectarian based maneuvering, polarization and political stalling which all negatively affected the governing system in Iraq (Cordesman and Derby).

Jack Healy, an analyst in New York Times went to believe that the protests in Iraq in 2011 were because of economic circumstances. He reported that the Iraqi protesters expressed their capability to live with Al-Maliki’s current government, as saying al-Maliki was politically accepted from his people, but simply they wanted better life conditions, reliable electricity, clean streets and secure life. Jack Healy in his report about Iraqi protests has involved some slogans of Iraqi demonstrators such as “we don’t want to change the regime; we want to change the services” (qtd.in Healy). Al –Maliki was blamed because of the problem of unemployment that was threatening Iraqis, in which there was one of five Iraqis

was unemployed and most of Iraq's youth were jobless and the shortage of food rations, water and electricity (Healy).

Corruption also was among the reasons of public anger in Iraq. Anthony Cordesman who an analyst at the Center of Strategic and International Studies , he has made a "scorecard" for the prime minister Al-Maliki in after eight years in position . According to Cordesman Iraq has the lowest capita income in comparison with Gulf States and it has been classified by the World Bank as the most corrupt country in the Middle East (10).Iraqi people expressed their will to improve the situation of the country and to develop the educational and medical sectors, and to fight corruption made by the most of political leaders.

Another threat that urged Iraqis to protest is the security issue. The country suffered for decades from the violence and terrorism. Many Iraqi analysts impeached Al-Maliki for using the security file of terrorism as tool to justify his failure to bring stability and safety to the country (Al-Ali). Many of armed gangs had terrorized the local population and they were operating secretly, they reemerged after 2007 and used horrible trikes against civilians and either against leaders in government. Those gangs developed their power to become powerful militias, the best examples of this are the militias that were related to Al-Qaeda in which they reappeared in a form of ISIL (Al-Ali).

The Iraqi protests were based on social demands, such as providing job opportunities, achieving social justice and fighting corruption. In this regard the Shiite leader Ammar Al-Hakim, head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq said "It is not acceptable for a simple citizen to be demanded for waiting for more several years and does not find sufficient changes in terms of services, his legitimate demands and daily needs, and he does not know whether those promises that are being made today are true promises or not. It is like its predecessors, he does not fulfill it, waits two and three years, and finds no shelter electricity, or services" (qtd.in Al-Ali).



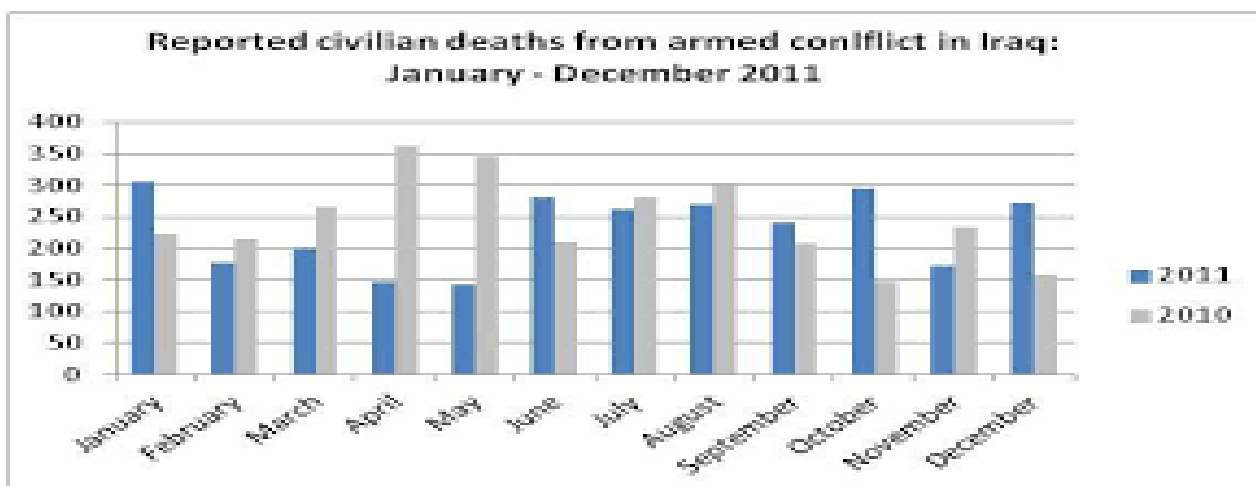
To sum, the needs of the Iraqi people could be summarized in main points which are; ending the American occupation and giving Iraq its complete national sovereignty, improving the social services such as providing enough electricity and water , fighting corruption that is rooted in the majority of the Iraqi institutions and leaders , rebuilding the infrastructure of the Iraqi cities since they have been damaged because of the war , providing jobs especially for the youth Iraqis, achieving political unity and reduce sectarianism and finally preventing the emerge of the terrorist groups that committed horrible crimes in the country.

### **7. International Reactions about Popular Protests in Iraq 2011**

The uprising of February, 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in Iraq was another marked event in the history of Iraq. The protests have gathered all parts of the Iraq from different sects and attracted the attention of Arabic and international opinions towards the legitimacy of these protests that called of the citizens' rights to express their needs freely. Indeed al Maliki has shown an increasing impatience and lack of respect for the protesters. While he stressed the protesters' rights under the democratic system, his security forces continued to crack down on protest organizers, arresting hundreds of activists and preventing the international media to cover the event (Kaysi).

The United States expressed in 28<sup>th</sup>, February, 2011, through the National Security Council spokesman Tommy Vietor, its annoyance with the Iraqi security forces' handling of the protests, and their exposure to journalists who were covering the events (Sooden). According to the U.N. reports, government and militia killed at least 490 peaceful protestors, during the first seven months of protest at Tahrir, Nasiriya and other public squares. This grim figure , which Iraqi government statement confirm , does not account for related killings that occurred away from protest sites, nor does not it include the dozens of assassination and abductions that targeted leading activists and critics throughout 2011(Fleet and al Hassan).

The Human Rights Watch called on the Iraqi authorities to open an immediate investigation into the deaths of dozens of victims by security bullets in several areas of the country during the demonstrations that took place on Friday 25<sup>th</sup>, February, 2011. The organization said that “the excessive use of force especially that which leads to deaths requires the prosecution of those responsible, including those who gave the orders” (qtd.in Sooden).



**Fig.3.** Reported Civilians Deaths from Armed Conflicts in Iraq: January-December 2011.

**Source:**“Reported civilians Deaths from Armed Conflicts in Iraq: January-December 2011”. Report Human Rights In Iraq. Web.Accessed July 12, 2021.

The spread of the Arab Spring in Iraq caused the death of civilians. The protestors were targeted from the police forces in order to crack down the demonstrations. The aggressive reactions of the Iraqi government towards the protestors permitted the terrorist groups to intervene and other armed groups to use violence against the Iraqi.

Malcolm Smart who is the director of the Middle East and North Africa program at Amnesty International, he expressed that the Iraqi authorities must end the use of intimidation and violence against Iraqis who are peacefully calling for political and economic reforms (“Independent Investigations Urged into Police....”). He added that Baghdad and Kurdistan regional governments “ must control the security forces, investigate the incidents of excessive

use of force , the killings and injuries that caused, as well as the torture and ill-treatment of protestors , and hold those responsible to account”(qtd.in “Independent Investigations Urged into Police...”).

### **8. Why Did America Leave Al-Maliki?**

The American violent policy against Al-Maliki was a subject matter among the Iraqi politicians and those interested in the Iraqi affairs. According to Awni Al-Qalameji, who wrote “why did America Bring down Al-Maliki?” The American administration forced Al-Maliki to surrender and replaced him with Haider Al-Abadi as head of government. This act was considered as political betrayal, since Al-Maliki was known as loyal and trustworthy man of America.

The United States used to impose its will on the Iraqi government. During 2005 elections, for example, it had dropped Ibrahim Al-Jaafari the candidate of the winning bloc in the elections, and in 2010 it had backed Al-Maliki to prevent Iyad Allawi the winner in the parliamentary elections to from forming a government (Burns and Filkins). The Obama administration found many justifications for excluding Al-Maliki.

In October 2011, Barack Obama and his National Security Committee sat down to discuss the Iraqi political file. In this conference the President Obama urged the Iraqi people to form a new government by their own without the American support, he said that “it is not our job to choose Iraq’s leaders, but I don’t think there is any secret that, right now at least there are deep divisions between Sunni, Shia and Kurdish leaders” (qtd.in Ackerman).

The former U.S. ambassador to Baghdad, Christopher Hill, revealed that he had received direct instructions to overthrow the head of the State of Law Coalition, Nouri Al-Maliki during his prime minister ship. In this conference he added that he received instructions from Washington to help the so-called the Iraqi opposition to overthrow Al-Maliki, and that US administration told him that his mission is to help the opposition overthrow Al-

Maliki. Noting that the American officials were very enthusiastic in the meeting rooms in Washington, without giving him any reason to believe that they wanted to get rid of him while he was in Washington (Hill).

## **9. Contributions**

Indeed, the political crisis in Iraq is but a natural extension of the stifling crises that prevailed after 2011. However what is noticeable that time is that the unprecedented demonstrations started in the Sunni areas and then spread throughout the country as the situation deteriorated. Following the Iraqi government's decision to arrest officers and agents who were working with the Sunni Finance Minister Rafa al-Issawi, and to publish what was described as part of the confessions of these members, that they carried out acts of violence and killing with the participation of the officers of vice president Tariq Al-Hashemi, who they were arrested at the end of 2011 (Markey and Salman).

The protests were considered as the most serious test for Al-Maliki and his fragile government. In an effort to prevent potential protests, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki announced that he would not run for a third term in 2014 (Jakes). He warned against going out on Friday's demonstrations, noting that they were suspicious, and accusing those he described as Saddamists and terrorists of being behind them (Schmidt and Healy). The prime minister also called the governors of many Iraqi cities for a working day for government departments, even though Friday is a weekly holiday, in an attempt to discourage government employees from engaging in demonstrations.

Throughout the years of Nouri Al-Maliki's rule, the Obama administration was silent about his sectarian practices and policies and the corruption that characterized his rule. Obama's main concern was confined to withdrawing from Iraq and getting rid of the heavy legacy of the administration of President George W. Bush (Beinart). In this context, the Obama administration supported Al-Maliki's remaining prime minister after the March 2010

elections, despite the fact that the results could be a slight progress for the Iraqi List headed by former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi over the State of Law coalition headed by Al-Maliki, on the pretext that he was not in Allawi expanded to form a majority government. As the Sunni Arabs of Anbar province rose up against Maliki in late 2012, Washington continued to support him and turned a blind eye to his exclusionary policies (Bandow).

It became clear that years of marginalization, suppression and targeting of Arab Sunnis in particular, created a favorable environment in their ranks for the acceptance of ISIL at the expense of the sectarian system established by Al-Maliki and the sectarian army that sponsors it (Chaudhry). Thus, Al-Maliki, who blocked the means to maintain any American force on Iraqi soil in late 2011, found himself this time begging for American military support to confront the advance of ISIL and the Sunni tribes. He followed this up by granting U.S. forces judicial immunity, which he refused years ago. However, Al-Maliki's move came too late. The issue seemed to be more than just providing U.S. military support, air or ground, as it was related to his authoritarian, exclusionary style of rule.

For the United States, Al-Maliki's exit enhances the chances of defeating ISIL before it would become a greater regional threat in Iraq. The formation of an Iraqi consensus government will reduce the possibility of a new U.S. military ground involvement in Iraq. Obama did not want this ground involvement, as he believes that his presidential legacy is closely linked to the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. It was remarkable that the American fighters began expanding their targeting of ISIL sites to include areas near Mosul and Erbil since August 16<sup>th</sup> that is only one day after Al-Maliki announced his abdication to form a new government (Beauchamp).

It is important to say the American existence in Iraq could not lead the country to stability and did not achieve any kind of democratic rule since 2003 till 2011. the political environment in Iraq was not suitable for building a democratic institutions because of many

reasons, the civil war between the Sunnis and Shia, the military intervention of the United State' forces and Iran's militias, the corrupt political leaders who aggravated the struggle between the political parties and coalitions, the absence of transparency in elections and the obstruction of the democratic progress (Rayburn).

In addition to the Iraqi unfavorable political environment, the United States had a responsibility in misleading the country after the collapse of Saddam Hussein, in which its choice of Nouri al-Maliki as prime minister and the given support to him could not save the country from terrorism, political chaos and high sectarian struggle between Sunnis, Shia and Kurds (Rayburn).

Ryan N. Mannina who is an infantry officer in the U.S. army, he pledged that Obama's policy in Iraq left a negative legacy at the level of the national security. The emergence of ISIL and the Iranian militias fighting on the land of Iraq and consumed more bloods of innocent civilians, in which the security deterioration reached its climax in 2014 after the organization, took control of the province of Mosul and other Iraqi cities. The excessive violence committed by ISIL led to the formation of the "Popular Mobilization" or "Hachd al-Chaabi" Militia which is the most famous armed militia in Iraq, that was founded after the Fatwa from the religious authority in Baghdad headed by Ali Al-Sistani in order to fight ISIL (Bandow).

Iraq after 2011 is not as George Bush and Barack Obama had envisioned. The Iraqi freedom operation began in 2003 with claimed optimistic assumptions to liberate Iraq and its people from the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. However the objectives of Bush's administrations were not achievable since the military solution was not the appropriate solution to pick up the country from its political and security crises (Thompson).

In 2008 when Obama came to office he gave the world optimistic views about ending the war in Iraq and providing the necessary diplomatic support to bring real democracy. Unfortunately after the withdrawal of American forces in 2011, the situation in Iraq got worse at level of politics and security, in which he supported implicitly the Al-Maliki's corrupt policy and kept silent on the disruption of democracy (Thompson).

Indeed Obama's foreign policy in Iraq could be described historically as a failure. Since he proved again that United States worked in Iraq on its strategic plans to control politically by spreading the illusion of democracy, economically by imposing its dominance on oil production in the Gulf countries and militarily by completing its war on terror and preventing any mass distraction weapons ownership in the Middle East countries (Ross).

Nouri al-Maliki came to office in 2006, when the country was suffering from sectarian violence and he continued in office until 2014. In his campaign, al-Maliki promised to bring stability and security to the country with high ambitions to end the American existence and intervention in the country. Later on, when he came in power, he was working on his own interests and ignored national ones which drove the country from the bad to the worst.

The failure of al-Maliki's policy pushed the Iraqi citizens to uprising against him. By the spread of the Arab Spring movement, the Iraqi rose up against their leader because he did not fulfill his campaign promises, including bringing security and stability, improve social services and reduce sectarianism. This uprising was the beginning of the change in the U.S. relations with al-Maliki who was pulled out from the favor of U.S.

The uprising against al-Maliki proved again the inability of the United States to bring political and social stability. Therefore, Obama's foreign policy in Iraq could be described among the reasons of failure of democratic leadership. Obama's presidential term marked by the failure of promoting democracy and left a heavy negative legacy in Iraq.

## Conclusion

Iraq experienced several American foreign policies , starting with Bush's the father administration , Clinton's administration , George Walker Bush's administration and Obama's administration. Each president carried different strategy to stabilize Iraq, however the results led the country to political, economic and security crises.

Politically the American administrations failed to be good guider for the Iraqi leader to form a government of inclusivity and transparency, especially the failure of Barack Obama to implement his claimed views of democracy in Iraq. He also supported the government of exclusion headed by al-Maliki, and he continuously ignored the Iraqi people's will to choose their own democracy.

The American decisions also affected Iraq's economy. For example, the oil production factories were affected by the political changes in the country, especially in the time of civil wars or the military attacks. Despite its richness with raw materials which could transform it into a developed country, Iraq is still suffering from poverty and low life conditions.

The United States has left very heavy security file. Al Qaeda was not the last threat in Iraq, in the end of 2013 a new terrorist organization started to emerge under the name of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The organization was targeting both innocent Iraqi people and politicians and was committing horrible crimes. In addition to ISIL, the country became a Battle field of struggle between the Militias of Popular Mobilization and Iranian militias.

Another failure of the Obama's administration was finalizing its commitment in very sensitive period, and permitting Iran to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs and impose its control in the region. The American exit was a bigger mistake since it left Iraq combating both at internal and external levels.



For more than 19 years since its invasion of Iraq, the United States has failed to present itself as a partner interested in supporting Iraqi efforts for democratic and economic development. It has continued to pursue its military and geopolitical interests at the expense of the Iraqi people, their security and wellbeing.

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