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US Plans for Redrawing the Middle East
Iraq as a Case Study

A dissertation submitted to the department of letters and English language
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of Master's Degree in Language and Culture

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to

my miracle and ultimate source of inspiration, my beloved Mother, I am deeply grateful to her for her endless support and tremendous help.

whom I owe a big debt, my dear Father, words are not enough to describe your favor, I will never forget your prayers for me and your eager eyes asking me if I can finish my dissertation. May God protect you.

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Abstract

This work aims to explore the different definitions of the Middle East and to investigate the linguistic, religious and ethnic diversity in the region. The dissertation attempts to explain the influence of this diversity. The study of the subject is motivated by the significant role that the US plays in the region and how it interferes in its internal affairs. More to the point, this work provides an overview about the impact of the United States on the region through shedding light on Iraq as an important state in the Middle East. Iraq is the heart of conflicts and the started point of the project of the Greater Middle East initiative. The involvement of this research is based on the examination and understanding of the characteristics of Iraq as a country, the interests of the US there, and the motives for redrawing the whole Middle East and the main reasons behind invading Iraq and bringing "reforms" to the country.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد مفهوم مصطلح الشرق الأوسط و دراسة التباين اللغوي و الديني و العرقي في المنطقة كما توضح هذه الأطروحة مدى تأثير هذا التباين في خلق النزاعات داخل الشرق الأوسط و التي بدورها ساهمت في بناء ما يسمى بالشرق الأوسط الجديد . إن الدافع وراء اختيار هذا الموضوع هو الدور الفعال الذي تنقّمه الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية داخل حرم الشرق الأوسط وآلية تدخلها في النزاعات التي يواجهها هذا الأخير . بالإضافة إلى ذلك تقدم هذه الدراسة نظرة شاملة حول تأثير الولايات المتحدة في هيكلية الشرق الأوسط من خلال تسليط الضوء على دولة العراق التي تعتبر بؤرة للصراعات و القلب النابض لمشروع الشرق الأوسط الجديد . تهدف هذه الأطروحة كذلك إلى تقديم حوصلة حول دولة العراق و أهم مميزاتها و المصالح التي تستفيد منها أمريكا إضافة إلى الدوافع وراء هيكلية كافة الشرق الأوسط و أهم الأسباب وراء احتلال العراق و جلب " إصلاحات " إليه .

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|------|----------------------------------|
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| GCC | Gulf Cooperation Council |
| GMEI | Greater Middle East Initiative |
| G-8 | Group of Eight |
| ILS | Iraqi Intelligence Service |
| ISIL | Islamic State in Iraq and Levant |
| ISIS | Islamic State in Iraq and Syria |
| KDP | Kurdish Democratic Party |
| MENA | Middle East and North Africa |
| PUK | Patriotic Union of Kurdistan |
| UNSC | United Nation Security Council |
| US | United States |
| USA | United States of America |
| WMD | Weapons of Mass Destruction |

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Introduction

Under the name of the most known and important region in the world, “the Middle East” extends to multiple lands and territories. The latter highly differ in culture, religion, and civilizations. The question of what the Middle East exactly is has received a serious debate. It is commonly referred to as regions of cross road of Europe, Asia, and North Africa, it includes Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Iran, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, and Kuwait.

One can not overlook the importance of the strategic location of the Middle East, it is the center of the world; a point of connection between many other places. Moreover, it is worth to mention the natural resources that the region is proud of, such as oil which is considered as the richest resource ever, it makes the region the world's backbone of economy. Additionally, the Middle East is excessively rich in natural gas, it has most known reserves of natural gas, without forgetting the large agricultural lands and water sources in the region.

The geostrategic characteristics and the diversity of the region have played a very significant role in flourishing the region's economy. At the same time, it is the pressure point of conflicts. In fact, the Middle East is the center of problems and crises in the world where conflicts are frequent and demands of solutions are high. As the United States is the dominant power in the world, it has always interfered in the problems of other countries. It has strongly intervened in the Middle East economically, military, and diplomatically. The most critical or controversial solution is what America presents under the name of the “Project for the New Middle East”. The project aims at realigning the whole Middle East through drawing new borders and dividing many countries in accordance with the US interests in the region.

Iraq as an important country in the region, is a victim of the so called the New Middle East Project in which several attempts to divide it are discussed. The present study needs to be conducted due to the need to remove the ambiguity over the issues and problems that the

Middle East witnesses. The region is one of the wealthiest places in the world, it is characterized by rich civilizations, fertile lands, and natural resources. However, it is always unstable and problems are everywhere. Additionally, the US has been always interfering in the conflicts many times. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore the US Plan for redrawing the Middle East and its hidden objectives.

This study is significant in terms of analyzing and understanding the outcomes of the project on the New Middle East as a whole and Iraq as a part of the region, and exploring the US interests behind the plan. Moreover, this research provides a detailed clarification about the regions' history, development, and conflicts.

No one doubts the fundamental role that the Middle East plays in the salvation of the world economy, and the reality behind the benefits that the US gains from the region. Hence, the aim of this study is to provide a clear picture about the whole Middle East area and to explain its great importance over time as it is considered the cradle of cultures and civilizations. In addition, this research aims at exploring the reasons of conflicts in the region providing a critical analysis about the idea of remapping its boundaries by shedding light on Iraq as a case study.

The current work provides a range of questions that will help to understand the status of Middle East as a contradictory issue: What is the Middle East? What are the reasons behind frequent conflicts in the Middle East? Are there solutions that put an end to the conflicts? Is the Project of New Middle East an appropriate solution? What are its objectives? Does the US benefit from the project? To what extent the project is applicable? Does it really start working? Does the project affect Iraq? By analyzing these questions, other significant points and questions related to the topic will be investigated to pave the way towards understanding this complex issue.

The topic under discussion is one of the major phenomena that have created a variety of views among scholars and researchers; the issue of the Middle East has been highly discussed in books and articles. In his book *The New Middle East: What Every One Needs to Know*, James L. Gelvin sees that the Middle East is one of several terms that refer to the territory of southwest Asia and North Africa. Other terms for the same region include Greater Middle East, Near East, and Middle East and North Africa. He claims that the region of Middle East represents a vast area that witnesses considerable varieties in religions, languages, and ethnicities, Muslims are the major inhabitants in the region and Arabs, Turks, and Iranians are the dominant ethnicities in the region.

Numerous articles have also tackled the issue. In his article entitled “where is the Middle East? The Definition and Classification Problem of the Middle East as a Regional Subsystem in International Relations”, Osman Nuri Ozlap confirms that the Middle East is an ambiguous term to define especially by Western language since it has no clear borders. In other words, it is so difficult to limit the region to a specific geographic area with hard borders; he further discusses the developments of the Middle East through a historical and chronological order. The writer sheds light on the US interests in the region and its great ambitions to apply the project of the New Middle East.

As the research gives a detailed analysis to the issue of Redrawing the Middle East and its impacts in the region, it is helpful to examine the book entitled *The New Middle East* by Marina Ottaway *et.al*. The writers examine the changes that happened in Middle East especially after the 9/11 attacks. They provide a clear picture about the US intention to reconstruct the Middle East which started to appear during Bush Presidency. The book holds the idea that Iraq is the pressure point to declare the project since it is an unstable country. Accordingly, the New Middle East is an attempt to rebuild democratic countries.

Redrawing the Middle East is one of the most sensitive issues. Hence, the use of historical method is effective to go deeper into the issue and to explore different facts and reasons of the subject through a detailed analysis of its historical background. A qualitative method is used as well to provide more descriptions and investigations about the Middle East. Moreover, data collection will be extracted from a wide range of researches conducted by scholars, politicians, and experts in the field.

As most research projects, the use of materials related to the main topic is important. Thus, the use of primary sources such as reports and speeches by prominent figures is needed. Secondary sources are also helpful to reach the standards of objectivity and neutrality. Secondary sources will include books, magazines, e-books, and newspapers which will investigate the issue under discussion.

This work will be divided into three major chapters. The first chapter under the title “Historical Overview of the Middle East” is devoted to define the term Middle East and understanding its real origins through a deep analysis of its history including culture, language, religion, and different ethnicities. The second chapter entitled “Iraq, a Country of Diversity and Conflicts” discusses Iraq as an important Middle Eastern country, then the problems that face this country and the real reasons behind them. The last chapter of this dissertation “The Greater Middle East Project, Policies and Objectives” provides a detailed explanation of the Project of New Middle East, its definition, purposes, and its outcomes on both Iraq and America.

Chapter One

Historical Overview of the Middle East

1. Definition of the Middle East

Over time, the term Middle East was an ambiguous concept to be defined due to its complex history and unspecific borders, the region has the longest history of any region in the world, it is a historic crossroads of people, cultures, and languages, it is the original source of ancient civilization; the Egyptian and Mesopotamian province of the Ottoman Empire, and the birthplace of the three religions of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Moreover, the Middle East is diverse in the natural environment, rich resources, and the strategic location of this large area makes it one of the greatest powers over the world. As a result, the Middle East is always a target to the external interference, more precisely the United States.

In fact, different names about the region are used interchangeably; the well known names are the Near East, the Islamic East, the Greater Middle East, and the Broader Middle East. The Middle East's borders are not fixed; they had been redrawn since the end of the First World War by the powerful colorizations; Britain and France. Still, the answer to the question, where the borders of the region exactly start and end is the most important problematic issue about the Middle East since it is a flexible term and it is difficult to narrow its borders depending on one criterion, it is generally defined according to the user, and the benefits derived from it (Picula).

In order to understand what the Middle East is, it is necessary to go back to the origins of the word East itself starting from the question of what is the east and why it is depicted as Middle or Near? In fact, the term East used to describe the whole Asian countries, and from the European perspective alone, as the German political scholar Tibi Bassam has explained, the East is described according to its distance from Europe, in this case, the East will be Near, Middle, or far. Tibi adds: "the terms "Middle East" or "Near East" used in European languages

are only meaningful from the European perspective. If one is travelling from India or China to Cairo or Damascus, one is moving west-wards, and yet one speaking incorrectly in geographical terms of a journey to the Middle East” (Tibi 43).

In the nineteenth Century, the East for Europe was no longer far or Near. It starts at the borders of the Ottoman Empire. However, the Ottoman Empire as the historian professor Brown L Karl clarifies was in the last stages of collapse and its large territories were shared and occupied by the European countries mainly France and Britain (Özalp).

The term Middle East is imprecise; it is a Eurocentric term that was originally coined in the late 19th century by the British government to describe all British colonies east of India; the British first called it “Far East” because of their colonies in East Asia to refer to: China, Japan, Korea, and other East Asian entities. However, the term Near East was used in opposition to Far East to refer to Southwest Asia, but it has quickly fallen out of use (“where is the Middle East? the Near East? the Far East?”)

The use of the Middle East term originally started in the mid of the nineteenth century by the British colonization; it was used to depict the area between the Near East which includes the lands around the eastern part of the Mediterranean sea, Persia (later Iran), Mesopotamia (later Iraq), and Saudi Arabia. In fact, the Near East was separated from the Middle East until the end of the First World War when they were joined together and shaped the whole region of the Middle East, and it includes the following countries: “Libya and Egypt in North Africa, the Mediterranean coast states of Israel, Lebanon, and Syria; Jordan, Iraq, and Iran; and the Arabian peninsula countries of Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen, and Qatar, It also includes the Arab Palestinian territories of the Gaza strip and the west bank” (Downing 4,5).

However, the American historian in the Middle East studies Davison H.Roderic has linked the term Middle East to the twentieth century, claiming that the American naval officer

Alfred Thayer Mahan gave the term Middle East its meaning, he used the term in his article “the Persian Gulf and International Relations” in 1902 to describe the area around the Persian Gulf as an important region of a strategic geographical location. Moreover, the concept of Middle East became broadly used after a British reporter of the British *Times Newspaper* started publishing a collection of articles under the title of “the Middle East Question”, he included the Eastern part of India in the region. The term Near East fell out of use after the end of the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (Tibi 47).

Even though it is a well known region with a flourished civilization, and a strong historical identity, the Middle East remains an ambiguous concept with no accepted formula of its geographical borders and scholars have failed to agree about a unified definition. Yet, the question of where is the Middle East has been always answered in controversial ways, it has received different interpretations, sometimes it is linked to religion and language. But, the Middle East is actually composed of the territories of the former Ottoman Empire which includes the entire area of the Afro-Asian lands. In this case, the Middle East includes the North African countries, the European colonized states, and most of the Arabian Peninsula (Brown7, 8).

Regarding the geographical issue of the Middle East and the question of which countries included in the region, there is no clear position on the issue since the region is a broad intercontinental one which encompasses parts of Africa as well as Asia. However, It is commonly “made up of Israel with the Palestinian Authority, then of the countries of the so-called Fertile Crescent - Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, the countries in the Arab peninsula - Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Qatar, and Egypt” as the assistant professor of political science Picula has listed. The majority of the above countries are ethnically Arabs and religiously Muslims except for Israel. Hence, if we consider the ethnic criteria, the Middle East then will include the North African countries of

Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Libya, but considering the religious criterion the Middle East will extend to Turkey, Iran, Sudan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan (Picula 9).

The definitions of the Middle East vary, but it is recognized to be made up of several countries situated near or exactly on the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, which means that it encompasses: “ Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank, Iran, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula, which comprises Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait. Often also included (as is done in the rest of this article) Turkey, Afghanistan, Libya, and Sudan. Cyprus, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco are sometimes considered part of the region, too” (Emberling). In addition, the region has a strategic location and it is of great values in terms of oil richness, its important position to Muslims, Christians, and Jews, and being home for political disputes that give it an entire significance to be a subject of interest to many countries.

As complex as narrowing the Middle East borders is considered, the American scholar of Middle Eastern history Gelvin James L explains that the Middle East is one of the most recognizable regions, but it is not possible to precise its boundaries since they are arbitrary. Alternatively, he defines the Middle East as:

Middle East refers to the territory that stretches from Morocco in the west to Iran in the East. It includes Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt (but not Sudan boundaries have to be drawn somewhere) in North Africa, and Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates(UAE) Oman, and Yemen (but not Armenia again, for the same reason) in southwest Asia. It also includes Turkey, which straddles Europe and southwest Asia. (1-2)

Furthermore, the following map provided by Gelvin shows and clarifies more the included countries in the Middle East:



Fig. 1. The Map of the Middle East

Source: Gelvin, James L. *The New Middle East: What Every One Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

The modern Middle East starts after the First World War when the Ottoman Empire was divided into separated territories, and when “Israel” has been established in Palestine in 1948. In its modern definition, the Middle East includes the states of Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, the Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Egypt is considered a part of the Middle East with its Sinai Peninsula in Asia but North African nations of Libya, Tunisia and Algeria are called North African. Sometimes, depending on the topic of interest the Middle East may include other countries in the region: Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia of the Caucasus region; Cyprus, Afghanistan and the North Africa, Sudan, Djibouti, and Somalia (“Issues Transcending Regional”).

Additionally, the Bush administration determined a grand policy to form a new Middle East after September 2011, with interference in Iraq to manage the existing disputes and create a new democratic and peaceful region, the American researcher Marina Ottaway defined the new Middle East as:

The new Middle East was to be a region of mostly democratic countries allied with the United States. Regimes that did not cooperate would be subjected to a combination of sanctions and support for democratic movements, such as the so-called Cedar Revolution of 2005 in Lebanon that forced Syrian troops out of the country. In extreme cases, they might be forced from power. (Ottaway 1)

Ottaway adds “The first step toward the formulation of a new policy is to understand the realities of the new Middle East as it is now. The three clusters of countries— Iran–Iraq, Lebanon–Syria, Palestine– Israel— and three critical, cross-cutting issues— nuclear proliferation, sectarianism, the challenge of political reform— define the new Middle East”. (4).

Since there is no precise definition for the Middle East, it is sometimes referred to the Arab World. Another more broad designation is the “Middle East and North Africa” (MENA). Meanwhile, the inclusive definition of the region was introduced by the U.S. President George W. Bush’s administration which is “the Greater Middle East” in 2004, it includes: “the entire Muslim world, because to the Bush administration Middle East - Muslim -terrorist (or oil in the case of “friendly” regimes). Often called the “Greater Middle East”, this list includes the “traditional” Middle East nations in Anatolia, the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, and Mesopotamia, as well as those in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and North Africa”(Let’s Eliminate the term).

The bellow map shows a narrow definition of the Middle East in dark green, the “Greater Middle East” or the “Middle East and North Africa” in the middle shade of green, and areas of sociocultural and political association with the Middle East in light green (Central Asia, Armenia and Azerbaijan). (Scharnweber 6).



Fig. 2. The Whole Countries of the Middle East

Source: Scharnweber, Greta. “What and Where the Middle East.” *Middle East Policy Council*, 2005, https://csme.indiana.edu/documents/cirricula/MEPolicyCouncil_What-WhereMiddleEast.pdf.

The extensional range of definitions and terms used to define the Middle East and specify its boundaries does not improve that one version is more correct than the others, rather, it clarifies that the Middle East is a large region. It is linguistically, ethnically, and religiously diverse. Additionally, it is not necessarily to figure out where the region starts and stops. Instead, it is far more necessary to look at the centers of power in the region such as oil and water and demonstrate their influence on the region as well as the other countries.

2. Diversity in the Middle East

The Middle East is a home to the world’s earliest rich civilizations such as Babylon, Greek, Phoenician, and Sumer civilization; those civilizations were of great influence on

western due to their achievements in all domains of life: philosophy, mathematics, art, literature, agriculture, and medicine. Sumer for example was one of ancient and flourished civilization founded in the Mesopotamia region which was situated between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Sumerian Known for their architecture, governance, and innovations in language. Similarly, the ancient Egyptians who rose along the Nile Valey were known of buildings of pyramids and temples, architecture, literature, and irrigation system “History of the Middle East”.

The region is a land of migration; it witnessed a large number of many kinds of people with various experiences which make it a theater of conflicts and a place where the United States interfere to stabilize the region.

2.1. Ethnic Diversity

The uncounted numbers of Middle Eastern inhabitants contribute in creating a variety of ethnicities. In fact, Arabs are the overwhelming majority in the region. The second large groups are Turks, and Iranians living in their countries Turkey and Iran. The other main ethnic groups in the region are Kurds, the former centered in Iraq, Syria, Iran, and Turkey, and they represent the broadest stateless nation in the world. Berbers lived in North Africa; the term Berbers is used to refer to either the inhabitants of the region before the Arab conquest or those who speak Tamazight language (Gelvin 2).

It is noticeable that the term Middle East is defined as a geographical area with no precise borders, which means that it is too broad and it includes different countries. This unique geographical characteristic helps in creating a rich ethnic region with a various ethnic groups. Thereby, there are various ethnicities in the Middle East starting by Arabs who are the dominant ethnic group in the region; they represent about 60% of the total population in the Middle East. Arabs generally inhabit the Northern and Central portions of the Arabian Peninsula, and they speak the Arabic language. The other ethnic minorities are Turks,

Persians, Jews, Armenians, Georgians, Egyptians, Kurds, Greeks, Assyrians, Berbers, Nubians, Samaritans, and Turkmens. The above fragmented ethnicities all live in the Middle East (Hinnebusch 56).

The Middle East is a multiethnic region, it includes a large number of ethnic groups, the major ones include Arabs, Iranians (also known as Persians), Turks, Jews, Kurds, Berber or Amazigh, Armenians, Nubians, and Azeris. In fact, not all ethnic groups possess independent states, Kurds are the best example, they do not have their own state, instead, they live in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria and they are struggling to create an autonomous Kurdistan state. Simultaneously, the Berber or Amazigh are wishing to build their own identity and language (Tamazight). They mainly centered in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Mauritania (Chtatou).

2.2. Linguistic Diversity

The diversity of ethnic groups in the Middle East contributes in creating a variety of spoken languages; almost each group has a particular language. Arabic is the native language for the majority of Arabs, it contains a wide range of dialects that change even within the same country. Additionally, Turks speak the Turkish language, and the spoken language of Iranians is Farsi which is known as Persian. The remaining ethnic minorities have also their own language, for example, the native language for Kurds is the Kurdish language, and Tamazight is the native language of Berbers (Gelvin 3)

In fact, language variation is one of the key determinants that identify the Middle East and reflect the successive number of people in the region. The various spoken languages in the Middle East are summarized in these three major families, the Semitic, the Indo-European, and the Turkish. The first category includes Arabic, Hebrew (the native language in Israel), Tamazight and Aramaic, the second one includes Kurdish, Persian (the spoken language in Iran), Armenian, while the last family includes Turkish, and Azeri. These

languages influence each other in one way or another; for example, Turkish takes many vocabulary words from Persian and Arabic. Moreover, we can find an uncounted numbers of dialects which are very difficult to understand within the same language, like in the case of Arabic language (Chtatou).

Languages in the Middle East are classified into three main families; the Indo-European languages, the Afro-Asiatic, and the Altaic language. Arabic is the dominant language in the region, while the second widely spoken language is Persian. Accordingly, the region is full of other numerous languages including Armenian, Azeri and Turkmen (Turkic), Berber languages, Georgian, Gilaki language, Mazandarani, Hebrew in its numerous varieties, Kurdish languages, Turkish, Urdu, and Greek. English and French are also used among the Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait, and Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco (Hinnebusch 54).

2.3. Religious Diversity

The Middle East is a complex region where the three famous religions Islam, Christianity, and Judaism are originated there and deeply intertwined. Starting by Islam, it is the largest religion in the region; it was highly expanded after the death of the Prophet Muhammad Peace be Upon him, when Caliphs and Muslims have opened almost the countries of the region and the whole North African countries and unified them under the rule of Islam. The Islamic religion is also widely spread in the Middle East due to the Ottoman Empire which was the last and greatest Islamic Empire in the region; Ottomans spread Islam in all territories of the region. Christianity is considered as the second largest religion in the Middle East due to the crusades and later to the European colonization and its cultural and religious influence on these countries. Likewise, the coming of the Israeli people and the establishment of their state in 1948 in Palestine has contributed in increasing the Judaism (Cleveland and Bunton 2-3).

Actually, there are several other religious groups in the Middle East; Christians for example are fragmented into about eleven different minor groups including Orthodox, Armenian Gregorian, Catholics, Maronites (mainly in Lebanon), Nestorians, Copts (mainly in Egypt) and Protestants. Similarly, there still other marginal religious groups such as “Zaydis in Yemen, Alawites in Syria and Turkey, Alevis in Turkey, Yzidis in Iraq and Syria, Ibadis in Oman and north Africa, and Druze in Israel, Syria, Lebanon” (Longva and Roald 18, 19).

Equally, Islam is divided into two main branches Sunni Islam and Shi’ites Islam, the division between these two parts dates back to the Death of the prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, when Muslims disagreed about who will be the successor and the leader of the Islamic community. The basic difference between them is about who should be the political leader of the Islamic community, Sunni followed the customs of the community and Shiites followed Ali and his descendants. The two groups developed their own traditions, rituals, and beliefs and each of them try to defend their own customs (Bar 90).

The numerous ethnic and religious groups in the Middle East are living together not only in the same region but also in the same country, Syria is one of the best examples of these diversities. It is a country known for its various religious, social and ethnic groups, three quarter of its population are Sunni Muslims, the remaining ones are Alawis, Druses, Ismailis, Shiites, Yazidis, and Christians, in addition to many ethnic minorities such as Kurds and Armenians. Certainly, living in such a fragmented society, it is very difficult if not impossible to agree in most essential issues which may lead to an endless conflicts and wars, and this is the case for almost Middle Eastern countries (Caldarola 21).

3. Conflicts in the Middle East

The Middle East, this unique area that occupies a very large geographical position, and welcomes a huge numbers of ethnicities and religions, is an unstable region; it has always been the theatre of wars and the epicenter of problems and crisis, and conflicts are not only

one of its characteristics, but they have also become a part of its identity. Over time, the greediness to exploit the region's natural resources was one of the main reasons of the frequent conflicts in the region. Additionally, the existence of many religions and ethnicities contributes in raising the sense of chaos and disagreement in the region.

Conflicts are the most regional characteristic of the Middle Eastern region. Thus, it is necessary to differentiate between three types of conflicts; the first two ones are intra-state and inter-state conflicts, whereas the third one is a kind of mixture between the first two conflicts. Intra-state conflicts between the groups of the same region or country such as civil wars, and inter-state conflicts are generally characterized by the external or foreign military interference. Generally, almost Middle Eastern conflicts refer to the third type; they are intra-state conflicts accompanied by foreign intervention either political or military, Iraq, and Palestine typify this type of conflicts (Picula 12-13).

The Middle East is characterized by civil wars, destabilizing rivalries, and frequent conflicts. Regarding the conflicts in the Middle East, they date back to the end of the World War I, when the Ottoman Empire was collapsed and the centers of power were transformed to the European colonization. Moreover, the borders of the region were redrawn by a number of arrangements between Britain and France without paying attention to the religious and ethnic differences between the people there, it was done just to get influence on the region and control its resources. Even during the Cold War Era, the Middle East was a playground of conflicts between the two super powers; the Soviet Union and the United States in which the Soviets supported Shiites while Americans were interested in Sunnis (Turan 86; 96; 104).

Alternatively, the Middle East is a very rich land not only in terms of natural resources, but also in its richness of many people from different areas with multiple ethnic and religious belongings. Indeed, the presence of different sects even within each main region is one of the most reasons of conflicts in the region. In fact, there are also various sub groups within the

same religion, Islam for example is divided into Sunni and Shia, Christianity is also divided to different fragmented minorities, the region is full of ethnicities and non-Arab speaking people such as Kurds, Armenians, and Turcoman, each group has its own language, traditions, and culture. The existence of these multiple fragmented groups within the same region or country has contributed in creating ongoing religious and ethnic conflicts. This is the case for almost Middle Eastern countries.

One cannot ignore that religion is one of the core causes of conflicts in the Middle East, and Iraq is not an exception. It is a country of 95% Muslims. However, Iraqi Muslims are fragmented and deeply divided into two main groups; Sunnis and Shiites, each group wants to dominate the country and get more power. As a result, Iraq history witnessed bloody wars that still to present day between Shiites and Sunni, those conflicts have resulted in creating more divided and unstable Iraq (Caldarola).

Equally, the Kingdom of Bahrain is divided into a preferred Sunni minority which governs the kingdom; Al Khalifa, and an underprivileged Shia majority, wherefore there are always constant disagreements and conflicts between them. In fact, the so called Bahraini Arab Spring broke out in 2011 when Shia activists protested against the Sunni rule. The fourteenth February 2011 was the D-day of the Bahraini s' protest, the opposition was of massive size, called for ending sectarianism and threatening the royal family, the government responded to the protest in a very violent way via killing and injuring many people claiming that the demonstrations were just a Shia plan supported by Iran to undermine the country and weaken the Bahraini government. Moreover, Bahrain called for the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) which have insisted on the intervention of Tehran to put an end to the protest, the GCC's military branch was interfered for the first time to imprison and kill many Shias, dissents, and politicians and repressed Shias and burned their mosques (Cerioli 302).

Talking about conflicts in the Middle East, the Arab Israeli dispute is one of the most violent and protracted conflict in the region, it dates back to the First World War when Jewish people immigrated to Palestine and tried to expand their claiming that they have a religious and historical belonging to the land. As a result, there have been constant conflicts between Israel and many Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, but the most enduring and bloody conflict is the Israeli-Palestinian which last to the present time (Siniver).

Chaos and unstableness shape the identity of the Middle East, the region hosted the bloody wars, and the long term Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the most lasting one, followed by Iraq wars (1980, 2003). Moreover, wars in the Middle East did not have an end; the region is full of war zones: Suddan, Afghanistan, the Caucasus, Yemen, Syria, and Libya. There are several reasons behind those wars; some are religious, political, ethnical or historical. However, the main reason is creating chaos in the region to easy exploit its resources (Geditsch etal 141).

Chapter Two

Iraq: a Country of Diversity and Conflicts

1. Iraq

Iraq is a Middle East country that is situated between South West Asia and the Middle East, it was originally known as “Mesopotamia” or the land between the two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates. Iraq shares borders with Iran in the East; Kuwait and the Gulf in the South, and Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia in the West. It occupies an area of 434,128 square kilometers (Fattah and Caso 272).

Iraq is characterized by a geostrategic location that makes it an important passageway for international trade between East and West; that is why it was called The Heart of the Middle East. Additionally, its borders are a challenging issue between people outside and inside the country because they only reflect the interests of the great powers during the First World War. In other words, the Iraqi boundaries are an artificial formation of Britain and France after the First World War.

Within its large borders, Iraq includes several ethnic and religious minorities who live together and defend their cultural and individual traditions; they have been developed due to immigration, the existence of the Ottoman Empire, and the emergence of rich civilizations there. This diversity shaped Iraq current identity and contributed in creating a complex country to live. In reality, the modern Iraq is a fragmented society which lacks the characteristics of a homogeneous country because each religious and ethnic group adheres to its own value systems (Marr 3; 8; 9).



Fig. 3. Iraq Map

Source: Chambers, Richard. L. "Iraq". *Encyclopedia Britannica Kids*.2020.

Iraq is a wealthy region; it is the cradle of some of the world's ancient civilizations including those of Sumer, Akkad, Assyria and Babylon. Additionally, the country contains a considerable part of what is called the Fertile Crescent. Iraq became an integral part of great imperials constituting sundry Persian, Greek, and Roma; later Iraq became a major member of the Islamic world in which Baghdad was the capital of the Abbasid caliphate in the 8th century. However, the modern Iraq was shaped after the First World War after the collapse of the Ottoman Provinces (Khadduri et al).

2. People of Iraq

Historians keep reminding the nations that there was no such thing as the Iraqi people. Iraq was shaped by Great Britain and France out of the remnants of the Ottoman Empire and it is a home to a variety of ethnic groups with the majority of the population being Arabs. It is an artificial nation state that includes three major ethnic and religious groups: the Kurds in the north, the Sunnis in the centre and the Shia in the south. Actually, Iraq s' borders represent a variety of different identities; in other words, Iraqi people have not yet been incorporated or welded into a united political and cultural community (Fattah and Caso 1).

In many aspects, ethnicity or linguistic diversity considered as the first serious division of the population, Arabs comprise about 80 percent of the population and Kurds are about 15 to 20 percent. Indeed, the Iraqi Kurds are just a part of a large Kurdish population who are spread in other countries mainly Turkey, Iran, and Syria. Alternatively, the second demographic division is the religious one; Iraq witnesses two great sects of Islam, the Shiia and the Sunni. Most Kurds are Sunni, and Arabs are divided between the two above mentioning branches, there are also Christians and Jewish. As a result, religion has highly contributed to segment Iraq into three fragmented communities: the Kurds, the Sunni, and the Shi'a (Marr 12-13).

2.1 Kurds

Kurds are the fourth largest nationality in the Middle East; they comprise about 20% of Iraq's population. In fact, Kurdish people do not have an independent state, but live as small minorities mainly in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria and in smaller tribes in mountains. Kurdistan, however, is generally used to refer to the Kurdish area of the Northern Iraq, and in Iran is used to describe the area of Northwest Iran. The Iraqi Kurds shared common cultural, linguistic, and religious identity with Kurdish populations in other countries such as Turkey and Iran, and most of them are Sunni Muslims (Abbassi 24).

Those homeless peoples played a significant role in Iraq since their emergence from the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War due to the unfair division of their lands which occurred against their wishes; they were always asking for their autonomy and independence, they wanted to be excluded from Iraq also since 1926. As a result, they rebelled against the central authority and challenged the territorial framework of Iraq many times (Abbassi 25).

Through history, kurds have been recurrently oppressed by the central authorities and they were frequently prevented from practicing their traditions and rituals, they have never

enjoyed their freedom, instead, they faced discrimination, ethnic cleansing and genocide. The term Kurd itself, for example, was more or less at risk of being used by governmental policies, and the use of Kurdish names was also prohibited, even in Iraq, some policies of replacement and name suppression were repeatedly used in schools and associations. Hence, in 1999 the Iraqi minister of interior for security affairs issued directions for preventing the use of Kurdish names on identity cards. Indeed, kurds' national identity is not Iraqi, rather, their desire is to own a Kurdish state called Kurdistan (Bengio 3)

2.2 Shiia and Sunna

One can not talk about the Iraqi Sunna and Shi'a without discussing the dispute between the two religious groups. In fact, The Sunni-Shia conflict goes back to the 6th century AD, the base of this disagreement was about the rightful successor of the Prophet Mohammed. The Shiites; the majority, believe that Ali (The Prophet's son-in-law) was the first legitimate successor (Imam) of the Prophet; the Sunnis instead, follow the habits described by the Prophet, called the Surma, and the Islamic law, called the sharia. Most of the Sunni population is concentrated in the North and they dominate the cities of Iraq, unlike the shi'a that spread in the southern part of Iraq. In reality, the old dispute between Sunna and Shi'a has been playing a significant role in dividing Iraq and creating an endless conflict in the country (Marbaniang).

In addition to those three groups, there are other minor ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq including Turkmen who compise about three percent of the Iraqi population, they speak Turkish language and they are mainly Sunni people. Iraq also includes non-Muslim groups such as Christians and Jews, and many other minorities like the Assyrians, the Armenians, Jacobite, and the Yazidis...etc. This diversity was one of the important reasons behind conflicts in Iraq (Salloum 7).

Most important of all, Shiites, Sunni, and Kurds are the major religious and ethnic groups in Iraq, the Shi'a are the largest religious population in Iraq outnumbering the Arab Sunnis and constituting the majority of the total society, they have been ruled by Sunnis for decades, this is, was one of the major causes of conflicts there (Luizard 38).

3. Natural Resources in Iraq

Iraq is a very rich territory in terms of natural resources; the main natural resources in Iraq actually include natural gas, petroleum, sulfur and phosphates. However Petroleum is Iraq's most valuable mineral; the country has some of the world's largest oil reserves. The black gold found underneath the surface is the wealthiest natural resource in Iraq; gallons of petroleum that compose more than 95 percent of current Iraq's economy. Statistically, Iraq is the second largest reserves in the world; it contains more than 310 billion barrels of oil reserves in 2000 (Hunt 2).

The American Screen writer Courtney Hunt confirmed that Iraq is a very rich region due to its ancient history and natural resources, he declared: "Iraq is located on the historical trade routes connecting East and West. Being at the crux of early civilizations, Iraq has access to the wealth, culture, and splendor of the world. of course, it also made Iraq a valuable conquest" (3). In other words, Iraq's natural and cultural resources made it a target for many countries.

Iraq has the second most plentiful petroleum reserves in the world, the majority of oil fields are situated in North (Kirkuk) and South (Rumaylah) Iraq. During 2014, the entire cost of Iraq's petroleum exports is about 89.4 billion dollars. Aside from oil, the country has a considerable quantity of natural gas, sulfur, and phosphates. Furthermore, agriculture is the bone of Iraq's economy, the areas between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers are very important regions, and they have wealthier soils and fertile lands that help producing rice, wheat and dates (Owuor).

4. Iraqi Government

The political history of Iraq needs going through the Baath party as it was the most important body in Iraq. The Iraqi Baath Party emerged in 1951; it was originally founded in Syria under the name of the Arab Socialist Baath party. It came to power in Iraq through the coup of 1963, but it did not last long, it was seized within few monthes. However, the party kept struggling until seizing power in a successful coup in 1968. In many aspects, the coup of 1968 soon brought the Baath Party to full power, it was not like the one of 1963, it was rather organized and ruled by the direction of the key figures Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr and Saddam Husain (Kafala).

Establishing a mass-based, securely and controlled party helped the Baathist to gain a total control over the Iraqi society in a short period of time. Additionally, the settling of the Kurdish problem in 1975 and the rise of oil prices in 1973 brought a period of strength and stability in Iraq. The party also established weapons, enhanced the sectors of both health and education and developed a better social life that went beyond those of any previous regime. In addition to the above mentioned develepments in Iraq, the late of 1970s marked a new step in Iraq s' history, it came out from its isolation and also began to play a significant role on the Middle Eastern scene (Fattah and Caso 208-209).

Saddam Hussein; a Sunni Muslim, joined the Ba'th Party in 1957 and after the collapse of the party in 1963 he had prisoned. Again, he escaped in 1966 and he devoted his life to establish the party. Since the Baath Party coup in 1968, Saddam was in charge of the special security forces, the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS). Through the IIS Saddam was able to supervise the members of the party as well as the activities of non-Baathists in different towns and cities. In 1979, Saddam assumed the presidency and he appointed himself chairman of Iraq's highest decision apparatus (Taha 46).

5. Conflicts in Iraq

5. 1. Gulf War One

One of the most costly Middle Eastern military conflicts is the Iraq Iran War of September 22, 1980, or the Iraqi invasion of the western part of Iran along their common boundaries. In fact, the war was a continuation of the ancient Persian-Arab disputes and competitions about the borders in which there was frequent borders clash between Iran and Iraq many times. In 1969, Iran had voided its treaty with Iraq on the navigation of the Shatt al-Arab waterway which was considered as Iraq's only channel to the Persian Gulf, and after two years, Iran had also seized Islands in the Persian Gulf (Kamal 84).

Additionally, the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein viewed Khomeini, the President of Iran, as a threat to his hegemony and he feared that Khomeini would support both Iraqi Kurds and Shiites to rebel against him. Consequently, Saddam Hussein wanted to benefit from the ongoing chaos of the Iranian revolution of 1978-1979 and to regain both banks of the Shatt al-Arab as well as Khuzestan via invading Iran and starting an eight years war (*Encyclopedia of Middle East Wars* 579).

The war was a great surprise to Iran, Their defensive forces were disorganized and the Iraqi troops have greatly succeeded in defeating their borders. However, Iranians have soon got their strength back from the initial shock of the Iraqi invasion and they soon instituted solid defensive positions (580). Considering that Iraq has got a Soviet support and weapons, the United States started supplying Iran with arms in 1985. Meanwhile, the US became more interested in the Basra region; that was under Iran control containing the oil export ports of Iraq and supported it with several billion dollars worth of economic and military aids. In 1986, Iraq and Iran sank and attacked ships throughout the Persian Gulf. As a result, the United States sponsored UN Security Council Resolution 598, which called for ceasing fire and aggression between the two countries and regain the previous borders (580, 581).

Despite the fact that the war between the two Middle Eastern countries has ended, the fundamental disagreements that caused the war still exist, for example the kurds are still homeless and struggling to own a land. Finally, the eight years fighting cost both Iraq and Iran an endless list of economic, military and human toll; Iran have lost one million people during the war and Iraq suffered from low of oil prices due to the interruption of oil during the war.

5. 2. The Anfal Campaign

During the First Gulf War, the leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) Barzani Cooperated with the Iranians against Baghdad, and Iraq in the other side supported the Iranian Kurds against Tahrán, while the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), under the leadership of Jalal Talabani, offered the Iraqi Government with help against Iran and the KDP. However, the year of 1987 witnessed the cooperation between Massoud Barzani Jalal Talabani with a number of Kurdish factions to create the Kurdish front and rebell against the Iraqi regime (Malanczuk 117).

For a better understanding of Iraq s' motives for declaring the war on Kurds, it is very important to take a close look at the Iraqi kurds during the war against Iran, Kurdish parties, in fact, fought with the Iranian forces against the Iraqi troops, and they got more strength from Iran which supported them with war materials and military aids. As a result, the Iraqi regime started a genocidal campaign against the Kurds in nothern part of Iraq called the Anfal campaign (Shakhawan 10).

Accordingly, the Baathists based on pan-Arabism in which they followed systems of assimilations, Arabization, mass killing and ethnic cleansing policies against the Kurds. Moreover, Saddam Hussein s' regime carried out the systems of Arabizing and assimilations the Kurd-Arab border areas since 1968, and the genocide of Anfal is one of them (Shakhawan 8).

The Anfal massacre operation was directed Against Kurdish civilians, the most brutal attacks and horror occurred in the town of Halabja in March 1988. The Iraqi government used chemical bombardments and poison gases which resulted in the disappearance of approximately 182,000 Kurds, about 5,000 were killed and around 4000 of Kurdish villages were destructed (Shakhawan 2, 3).

5. 3. The Gulf War Two

After the end of the first Gulf War, Iraq was dramatically troubled; it suffered from a catastrophic collapse in oil prices which negatively affected its economy and it found itself obliged to pay a massive amount of debt especially to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, Hussein here turned to these countries asking for financial support but his request was refused. As a result, he invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990 claiming that Kuwait was part of Basra Province and only became an independent emirate during the British Mandate, considering Kuwait as responsible for Iraq's financial crisis. Most important of all, Kuwait had refused even to extend the period of paying the debts that would refresh Iraq's economy, Kuwait was also accused of tapping into the southern tip of the Rumaila oil ground, and of manipulating oil prices to weaken Iraq (Khadduri and Ghareeb 128-130).

On 2 August 1990, the Iraqi forces setteled in the Kuwaiti lands and quickly occupied it, and just after one day, the UN Security Council (UNSC) passed Resolution 660 calling for the withdrawl of Iraq. Simultanuously, the United States and many other countries; including various Arab nations, took immediate steps to stop Iraq s'aggression towards Kuwait. On 6 August, the US also passed Resolution 661, which prevented Iraq from all trade except for necessities of life such as food and medicine (129).

5.4 The Intifada of March 1991

Apart from the catastrophic costs of the Second Gulf war, the intifada (uprising) of March 1991 is one of the most immediate and ultimately fateful aftermathes. More precisely, the last

is a series of popular insurgency in Northern and Southern Iraq; it is often referred to as national uprising within Kurds and Sha'aban intifada among Arabs. Although the insurgents failed in overthrowing the regime, the intifada was a crucial event in Iraq's modern history and its effects have shaped Iraq's future via unveiling attitudes toward the regime and the state (Marr 23)

After the collapse of Iraq army at the end of February 1991 by the US coalition forces, Iraq witnessed an extensive rebellion against the regime of President Saddam Hussein. There were two separate main uprisings; Shia in the Southern provinces of Iraq and Kurds in the Northern provinces. Meanwhile, the Iraqi armed forces were able to break down southerners Shia and to recapture a number of towns from the Kurdish refugees (Malanczuk 117).

5. 5. Kurd's Rebellion

On the basis of an alliance called the Kurdish Front, it was formed by the two primary Kurdish organizations, Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union and Masud Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party, the Kurdish people in the North of Iraq revolted against Saddam's regime. Quickly, they advanced in the North side of Iraq and gained control over the several Kurdish cities and provinces. However, they were not strong enough to resist the government's attacks; they have faced harsh responses from the Iraqi authority. Accordingly, some Kurdish sources assumed Iraq have used chemical weapons and poison gases against the Kurdish population which obliged millions of them to flee towards Iran and Turkey (118).

5. 6. The Shiite Rebellion

According to most views, the rebellion started when a Shiite soldier shot the statue of Saddam with his gun, this was an inflammable glint to the uprising. Afterwards, the soldiers attacked the major points of the regime's government including security centers, the mayor's office, and the Ba'th Party headquarters.

5. 7. The Gulf War three

The invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was followed by a catastrophic defeat of the Iraqi government in all the domains, and by great new uprisings of both Shi'ite and Kurdish people, and it had finally crowned by the US invasion of Iraq in 2003.

By the end of 2007, the US attacks had decreased notably in Baghdad and many areas of Iraq. In early 2009, the U.S. President Barack Obama declared that U.S. forces would quiet from the country by August 2010. After one year, exactly in December 2011, the US troops left Iraq's cities and towns with stabilizing the security situation there (Emberling).

However, violence in Iraq has increased due to the tensions between religious and ethnic groups. Sunni extremists keep targeting Shi'ites and the government through regular attacks and acts of damage, they formed a rebellious group called Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL); also known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In 2014, the group took control over important Iraqi territories and established a Caliphate and appointed Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, as Caliph. Furthermore, the Iraqi army and Kurdish forces fighting also against ISIL. Gradually, the Iraqi government retook lost cities like Al Fallujah in 2016 and Mosul in 2017 (Emberling).

Chapter Three

The Greater Middle East Project: Policies and Objectives

1. What is the Greater Middle East Project?

The US “Greater Middle East Initiative” (GMEI) or the “New Middle East” is a motivated plan to transform the Middle Eastern countries into democratic ones and to improve the quality of education. The plan aims at engaging the US with the Middle East countries that occupy a large geographical area including North Africa, Afghanistan, and other adjacent territories. Thus, the declared objective of the plan is to bring the ideas of reform starting by promoting democracy and freedom of election, providing economic chances and enhancing education in the region (Mirkasymov 1).

Historically speaking, the Middle East has been always affected by the interference of the world’s superpowers in the internal matters. Thus, the reform initiative tends to stop ideological clashes, to increase peace and stability and to bring positive changes in the region. Additionally, the US projects’ main objective is to put an end dictatorial rule which is the radical cause behind literacy, the lack of economic development, and the oppression of women (Mirkasymov 1).

In fact, the “Greater Middle East Initiative” project was announced by Bush administration at the 2004 conference of the G-8 nations; Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States of America. The G-8 leaders committed to support political, social, and economic reform, to promote democracy, education and to create jobs and generate economic growth in the Middle East and North Africa. In other words, the Greater Middle East Project is based on the assumption of promotion of the human rights, empowerment of women and establishment of democracy with improving the participation of the people of the region in the achievements of the economic growth and political destiny

of their countries and reduce the opportunities for the spread of Islamic fundamentalism and international terrorism (Jalapoor *et.al* 3).

During the summer of 2004, in conjunction with the Group of Eight (G-8) Bush administration created a partnership to support reform in the region, identified as the “Broader Middle East and North Africa”. The Partnership focus mainly on three areas: political sphere (protecting human rights and guaranteeing fundamental freedoms), social and cultural sphere (includes the equality between men and women, access to global technology and enhance education), economic sphere (fight corruption, expand opportunity, creating jobs, supporting financial reform and promotion of intra-regional trade foreconomic development) (Stewart 401).

The idea of democratizing the Middle East was publically summarized in a statement by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during the war between Lebanon and Israel in of 2006 in which Lebanon would be the press point to create the new Middle East and reshaping the whole region map in accordance to the super powers objectives and accepting the cease of fire, stopping the Arab-Israeli conflict and living side by side with Israel in peace and security (Nazemroaya).

In June 2006, the American Armed Forces Journal published a map from Ralph Peters, a US retired Army. It shows the “New Middle East” boundaries and the new added countries, the map also shows the US devision of the region especially minor groups in order to guarantee their autonomy and protect their rights (Nazemroaya).



Fig. 4. “Road Map” the Map of the New Middle East

Source: Nazemroaya, Mahdi Darius. “Plans for Redrawing the Middle East: The Project of New Middle East.” *GlobalResearch*, 2006, file:///C:/Users/NT00/Desktop/Plans_for_Redrawing_the_Middle_East.pdf.

The Greater Middle East project aims at spreading democracy, eliminating the threat of terrorists and the regimes that support them, and abolishing dictatorship. As a result, occupying Iraq and ending Saddam Hussein’s regime was the preparatory ground toward creating the New Middle East (Robinowitz).

2. US invasion of Iraq: an Application of the Plan

As early as 2002, the staff of the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice organized the rationale for war in a paper entitled, “Ultimatum to Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi regime”. In her paper, Rice provided a set of justifications of main reasons for declaring the war on Iraq, she followed the CIA assessment that Saddam Hussein had WMD, the Iraqi weapons of mass

destruction, it supports terrorist groups mainly Al Qaeda; thirdly, it threatens its neighbouring countries using poison gases, and finally, its dictatorial nature (Feith 304).

The war on Iraq has been justified by the Bush administration on the base three grounds: preventing Saddam Hussein from developing weapons of mass destruction (WMD), fighting the terrorists' attacks, and bringing changes to the Middle East through transforming it from a region ruled by autocrats to one ruled by democratically elected governments. However, the US focused more on the third reason since the first two arguments turned out to have weak foundations (Mirkasymov 4).

The US administration considered that Iraq's possession and development of WMD was the core reason for deciding to go to war. More additionally, Saddam Hussein was accused for using chemical and biological weapons against the Kurdish people in northern Iraq and against the Iranian people during the Iraq-Iran War. Following these arguments and justifications, Bush pointed out that

I take the threat very seriously; I take the fact that he develops weapons of mass destruction very seriously. I remember the fact that he has invaded two countries before. I know for a fact that he has poisoned his own people. He has not believed in the worth of each individual, he does not believe in public dissent.

(“Bush Speech on Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction”)

The United States announced that the liberation and freedom of Iraqi people was one of the main principles for the war. According to American policy makers, Saddam's regime was described as one of the worst world's dictatorships. In this respect, the US administration and coalition military forces called the US invasion to Iraq as Operation Iraqi Freedom. Thus, the promotion of democracy was the main US banner during the campaign (Bassil 29).

In this regard, President Bush announced that:

I will remind them that history has called us into action, that we love freedom, that we will be deliberate, patient, strong in the values that we adhere to. But we can not let the world s' worst leaders blackmail, threaten, hold freedom loving nations hostage with the world s' worst weapons. ("US President Gives Saddam 48 Hour Ultimatum")

Sharing the same point of view, the professors of political science Cramer and Thrall argue that For the Bush administration, the invasion of Iraq was also presented as an extension of the war on terror which is seen as one of the most important factors for launching the war on Iraq. Actually, the terrorist attacks of 11 September led to a wide shift and a new phase in U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy toward Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries, and immediately after September 11th events, many U.S policy makers called for invading Iraq and overthrowing Saddam s' government (Cramer 11).

The U.S. military intervention of 2003 in Iraq and its decision to oust Saddam Hussein's regime from power is one of the most debatable actions, this military act has received controversial answers among scholars and experts regarding the explanations of the hidden motives of the invasion (Tofiq and Amin 303). Even so, it is understandable that deciding to declare the war on Iraq was motivated by a number of ideological, political, economic, and strategic reasons.

3. The Project and the Iraqi Minorities

The project of The Greater Middle East, according to Ralph Peters, insists on the creation of a free independent kurdish state "free Kusdistan" which unifies about 40 million Kurds residing from different separated territories mainly Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria and with various cultures and different languages. The project aims to protect Kurds and guarantee

their political rights. However, the unification of a fragmented Kurdish nation under one single state will clearly cause serious problems and conflicts (The White House).

In Iraq, the project of the Greater Middle East aims at protecting the rights of minor groups and supporting their autonomy through deviding Iraq into a three free states; a Kurdish enclave in the north, a Shiite Arab state in the south, and a Sunni region in the center. At present, Iraqi Kurds gained a greatest degree of autonomy in which they have their own armed forces, currency and diplomats (the end of the Greater Middle East).

The following map shows the implication of the greater Middle on Iraq:



Fig. 5. The Division of Iraq Country

Source: “The End of the Greater Middle East Project: The Case of Kurdistan.” *United World*, 2019, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/end-greater-middle-east-project-case-kurdistan/5688>.

4. The Aims of the Greater Middle East Initiative

The objective of the New Middle East Project is of two sides: the explicit one, which was supposed to spread and deepen democracy in the region through a set of reforms, and the implicit one, which aims at destabilizing the Islamic regimes and creating a controlled chaos in the region, this goal was realized in most Middle Eastern countries mainly in Iraq (Stewart 400).

In the very few months before invading Iraq, Bush administration officials insisted on the point that oil had nothing to do with the US planning for the military intervention in the country; the US only interest is to spread peace, stability and democracy in the Persian Gulf region. However, one year after the invasion of Iraq, evidences showed that Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction, and claims showed that he had no relationship with Al Qaeda or the 9/11 attacks, also the American ideals of democracy have come up empty-handed in Iraq. All of these realities expressed that Bush administration's assumed motives for fighting Iraq had without doubt turned back to the original reason which was exploiting the Iraqi oil (Cramell 129).

Many scholars hold the view that, the key driver of the invasion of Iraq was U.S. desire to protect Israel, and Iraq was not a threat to US, but a primary threat against the security of Israel in the Middle East. As such, Zelikow; a member of the Bush's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, asserted that the core reason of the war on Iraq was to assure the safety of Israel and remove the threat that may face it because Israel and the US are significant allies, and they share common interests in the Middle East due to the strategic position of Israel in the region (Mekal 304).

According to the prominent analyst of oil politics, Michael Klare, it is certainly that many motives contributed in creating the war, some are strategic, political, and others are economic. However, no doubt that the US leaders did not commit such an extreme action without any

benefits, in other words, there was stronger powerful objectives behind US military interference, it is the power of oil and the US ambitions to control Iraq's oil reserve, the latter was considered as the most imposing motive for US intervention not only in Iraq but in the whole Persian Gulf region (Hinnebusc 212).

In fact, the war on Iraq was unfair and the real justification of the war was the US interests in the country and its greediness to exploit its resources. The US key national interests include the survival of Israel and completion of the Middle East peace process, access to oil, stemming the proliferation of WMD (Arghavan 172).

Deviding Iraq into three new states: Kurdish, Shiite Arab and Sunni will allow the United States to control the fields of oil and exploit it. To clarify, the huge amount of Iraq's oil would be concentrated in the Shiite state, with lesser amounts in the Kurdish country, and very little would remain for the Sunnis. This would pave the way to the US to concentrate its occupation a on the parts of Iraq that have oil, and the other parts could be ignored (Robinowitz).

Ironically, the invasion of Iraq caused a pointed change in the perception of the US around the world, the global population believed that the US claims about the values of democracy and human rights are empty handed in its foreign policy, and its real goal is controlling total resources and markets.

The attempt to reshape the middle east, to make it more congenial to the interests of US and a belligerent Israel, under the republic of bringing democracy to the region, is sure to breed more resentment in the area. The so-called "Road Map", which Israel was determined to resist, was essentially dead and the US now had its own Palestine in Iraq under occupation. Israel and the US have become fellow occupiers of the Arabs

and control the oil in the Middle East. Indeed, Israelis have been heavily involved in the US occupation of Iraq. (Girnder 49)

5. Educational Programs as Part of the US Plan

The US Greater Middle East Initiative aims to enhance education via bringing new Educational reforms that support American control and create opportunities for the whole Region. Particularly in the aftermath of 9/11, there has been a significant raise in the presence of US colleges and universities in the Middle East, the U.S. involvement in the region has followed several paths including: the establishment of research partnerships, joint-degree programs and construction of degree-granting American-satellite campuses (Rupp).

However, the professors and administrators of intellectual capital of the Iraqi higher education sector are coming under attack. Hundreds of professors, Politicians and scientists have been killed since March 2003, thousands have been forced into exile, and the others are too scared to contribute in political life, where their proficiency and knowledge are badly needed. The US aims at providing new educational programs and scholarships that bring Iraqi students together with representatives from US universities (Rupp).

The United States Agency for International Development announced in 2003 the establishment of partnerships between American and Iraqi institutions of higher education totaling almost \$22 million. The Fulbright Scholarship Program awarded twenty-six scholarships for Iraqis to study in the United States in 2004. Another thirty-five scholarships were awarded for 2005. The United States focuses on developing new curricula via bringing new reforms in fields such as conflict resolution and reconciliation, institutions and institution building, civil society, rule of law, women's studies, and human and civil rights (Harb).

However, the aim behind establishing new educational reforms in Iraq is burnishing the US image and promoting American ideals inside the country. More to the point, enhancing the

educational sector and spreading American values inside the country will create a new generation that consecrates the American system and values.

Concerning the project of the New Middle East, it is necessary to differentiate between the announced objectives of the plan and hidden objectives of America; because in preparing this plan, the Bush administration attempts to draw a well educated and progressive objectives in order to cover the real ones. The designers of this complicated plan have other deep goals in mind. Among them, maintaining the survival of Zionist regime and confrontation with the Political Islam.

Conclusion

The Middle East has been always defined differently by politicians and experts in the field who did not agree upon a unified definition, and locating this territory is still a precarious attempt. The broadest definition often includes the Maghreb countries of North Africa mainly Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, the entire Muslim and Arab world, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

In fact, those disagreements were not to support or falsify a particular definition over the other, but to provide a variety of views from different people's cultures and locations. What analysts agree upon is that this region is one of the wealthiest areas in the world, it includes a bunch of the world's well known countries, and each country tells a special story about its own history, geography, people, land and resources. The different cultural, political and social features shape the identity of the region and diversity within each country helps to build a strong region which occupies a central position between the three continents of Europe Africa and Asia. The Middle East is also considered as the most important source of the world's energy supply, and it contains significant water ways as the Suez Canal.

The Middle East remains the most chaotic of all world regions; it is the scene of disputes since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Conflicts are a frequent feature of the region; this fact reflected the Arab Israeli conflict, the unrest caused by the revival of political Islam, the civil war in Lebanon, the revolutionary wave promoting democratic reform, and "the Arab Spring" in many Middle Eastern countries as Syria, Yemen, Egypt and Tunisia.

Moreover, The Middle East is characterized by the US involvement in its internal affairs for a variety of ideological, diplomatic, and economic reasons. The United States justifies its interference under the title of spreading democracy, free people from dictatorship and protecting human rights that is why it invaded Iraq as part of Greater Middle East Project.

Indeed, the Project of the New Middle East as Plans for Redrawing the Middle East, is a multilateral development and reforms brought by the Bush Administration at that time to Iraq in particular and to the whole Middle East in general. The objectives extend to partnership for progress and future and promote Democracy, protect human dignity, spread freedom and social justice, fostering economic and political liberalization, enhance education and offer economic opportunities, save women right and encourage the rule of law.

However, the US involvement in the Middle East has been always seen as a critical issue, the project of the New Middle East is just a pen on paper and the US ideals of Democracy are empty handed. One can not ignore the fact that America runs only on its own benefits and their interest in this wide region have been attracted by oil. The plans for redrawing the Middle East mainly in Iraq is to divide it into small states to facilitate the way of controlling the fields of oil. Moreover, the far and hidden reason for those plans is destroying the regions' civilizations, effacing its identity and weakening Islam; giving women their rights to completely destroy the Islamic principle in the region. The Project also aims to protect America's spoiled child, Israel.

In fact, this dissertation sheds light on the victim of the Project of New Middle East which is Iraq, the outcomes of the project were very cruel, Iraq is still suffering from war chaos and its people are highly divided, democracy was not achieved, and human rights were not realized. The Iraqi people are struggling to stop the American domination on their country and are rising to achieve their political and social rights they dream about.

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