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**The 21st Century U.S Democracy Promotion Policy in the Changing Middle
East: The Case of Iraq under the Obama Administration**

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of Doctorat Science in American Civilization**

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Dedication

First and foremost, the one above all of us, I boundlessly thank Allah, the Creator and the Benefactor for giving me strength to accomplish this academic research.

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Abstract

The Second Iraq War was and is still the most contentious decision in U.S foreign policy modern history. In this context, the researcher examines the consequences of Obama's political commitment towards Iraq. The work has been determined through historical and critical analysis approaches. It focuses on the sharp criticism the U.S. receives from parts of its efforts to rebuild Iraq with the challenging claim of promoting democracy, restoring security and establishing a more representative government in the country. The work seeks to analyze the Bush Administration's pre and post war planning and to show how the Iraq invasion set about trying to dismantle the state rather than to promote democracy, and the widespread looting, violence, creative chaos and disorder were among U.S policy objectives to attain in the past course of Iraq. The research aims to assess Obama's efforts in Iraq following the withdrawal and investigates the limits of change. It is concluded that the fragmentation of the Iraqi society and its potentially violent sectarianism turned Iraq from a failure story to a success for Obama's most notable achievements in the memory of his foreign policy. This policy was drawn by continuity in achieving global hegemony, controlling Iraq's oil, and securing Israel despite some modest structural changes since change is represented in the means not in the objectives, such as diplomacy and multilateralism in dealing with Iraq instead of coercive force.

Keywords: Barack Obama, Democracy, Middle East, Iraq, U.S objectives, U.S Foreign Policy

Résumé

La Deuxième Guerre d'Irak a été, et demeure, la décision la plus controversée de l'histoire moderne de la politique étrangère des États-Unis. Dans ce contexte, le chercheur examine les conséquences de l'engagement politique d'Obama envers l'Irak. Cette étude s'appuie sur l'approche historique et l'approche d'analyse critique. Elle se concentre sur les vives critiques que les États-Unis ont reçues concernant leurs efforts pour reconstruire l'Irak avec l'objectif difficile de promouvoir la démocratie, de rétablir la sécurité et d'établir un gouvernement plus représentatif dans le pays. L'étude vise à analyser la planification de l'administration Bush avant et après la guerre, en montrant comment l'invasion de l'Irak a cherché à démanteler l'État plutôt qu'à promouvoir la démocratie. Le pillage généralisé, la violence, le chaos créatif et le désordre faisaient partie des objectifs de la politique américaine dans le passé en Irak. La recherche vise également à évaluer les efforts d'Obama en Irak après le retrait des troupes et à examiner les limites du changement. La conclusion est que la fragmentation de la société irakienne et son sectarisme potentiellement violent ont transformé l'Irak, initialement perçu comme un échec, en un succès représentant l'un des accomplissements les plus notables d'Obama dans la mémoire de sa politique étrangère. Cette politique s'inscrit dans la continuité de la quête de l'hégémonie mondiale, du contrôle des ressources pétrolières de l'Irak, et de la sécurité d'Israël, malgré quelques modestes changements structurels, car les transformations concernent davantage les moyens que les objectifs, tels que l'utilisation de la diplomatie et du multilatéralisme plutôt que de la force coercitive pour traiter avec l'Irak.

Mots-clés: Barack Obama, Démocratie, Moyen-Orient, Irak, Objectifs Américains, Politique étrangère Américaine

ملخص

كانت ولا تزال حرب العراق القرار الأكثر إثارة للجدل في التاريخ الحديث للسياسة الخارجية الأمريكية. وعليه أنه من الضروري معالجة نتائج الانخراط السياسي لأوباما في العراق. تم تحديد العمل من خلال إتباع المنهجين التاريخي والتحليل النقدي. كما أن هذا العمل يركز على الانتقادات الحادة للولايات المتحدة من جانب جهودها لإعادة بناء العراق مع الادعاء الصعب المتمثل في تعزيز الديمقراطية، استعادة الأمن وإنشاء حكومة أكثر تمثيلاً في البلاد. يسعى العمل إلى تحليل تخطيط إدارة بوش قبل الحرب وبعدها وإظهار كيف بدأ غزو العراق في محاولة تفكيك الدولة بدلاً من تعزيز الديمقراطية، وكان النهب، العنف، الفوضى والاضطراب على نطاق واسع من بين أهداف السياسة الأمريكية التي وجب تحقيقها خلال المسار الماضي للعراق. ويهدف البحث إلى تقييم جهود أوباما في العراق بعد الانسحاب ودراسة حدود التغيير. يستنتج أن تفكك المجتمع العراقي والطائفية العنيفة حولت العراق من قصة فشل إلى نجاح لأبرز إنجازات أوباما في ذاكرة سياسته الخارجية. هذه السياسة اتسمت بالاستمرارية في تحقيق الهيمنة العالمية، السيطرة على نفط العراق وتأمين إسرائيل رغم بعض التغييرات الهيكلية المتواضعة بما أن التغيير تمثل في الوسائل وليس في الأهداف، مثل الدبلوماسية والتعددية في التعامل مع العراق بدلاً من القوة القسرية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: باراك أوباما، الديمقراطية، الشرق الأوسط، العراق، الأهداف الأمريكية، السياسة الخارجية للولايات

المتحدة

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ARAMCO	Arabian-American Oil Company
Barack H. Obama	Barack Hussein Obama
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
FDR	Franklin Delano Roosevelt
FFF	Foundation for the Future
George C. Marshall	George Catlett Marshall
George W. Bush	George Walker Bush
George W. H. Bush	George Herbert Walker Bush
GME	Greater Middle East
IGC	Iraqi Governing Council
IIG	Iraqi Interim Government
INC	Iraqi National Congress
ISIS	The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
John F. Kennedy	John Fitzgerald Kennedy
ME	Middle East
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
METO	Middle East Treaty Organization
MiG-21	The Mikoyan-Gurevich 21
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NSS	National Security Strategy
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

PNAC	Project for the New American Century
SAM	Surface-to-Air Missiles
SANG	Saudi National Guard
SOEs	State-Owned Enterprises
TAL	Transitional Administrative Law
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAR	United Arab Republic
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolutions
US	United States
UK	United Kingdom
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Washington, D.C	Washington, District of Columbia
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

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Introduction

In post-World War II (WWII) onwards, significant developments have influenced the course of the American entanglement in the Middle East (M.E). The Gulf War, the Iranian Revolution, the Arab-Israeli war, the Soviet collapse, 9/11 attacks, and most of all the 2003 occupation of Iraq were among the most notable developments which provided some background on the modern issues: the 2011 uprisings in the Middle Eastern Arab countries and the rise of the Islamic State. However, the ongoing turmoil in Iraq, Syria, and the rising power of Iran were priority issues that shaped Obama's policy in the M.E and that influenced the United States (U.S) security concern today.

From the U.S standpoint, the Middle Eastern region was considered as the most conflict-ridden area since the end of WWII. Toward that end, with twinning democracy and capitalism as two ideological pillars capable of defeating communism, the entire region became important for U.S national interests, due to the need for its constant flow of oil to supplement its strained capacity with the purpose of containing communism and restricting Soviet existence which rendered it part of U.S-Soviet chessboard.

Post-Cold War era represented a new stage for the U.S in defining the features of its M.E foreign strategy in Iraq. This region witnessed important developments in that period, most prominently, in the second Gulf War which gave the U.S the opportunity to interfere in Iraqi affairs regardless of its legitimacy. The U.S core interests in Iraq have been increasing since then. It worked on implementing various strategies that aimed to put the country under its permanent control especially its oil which figured prominently as the single fuel resource, together with the U.S as a firm advocate for Israel's rights in the M.E.

After two decades of strategic priorities in the former presidents George W. Bush and Barack H. Obama's policies, the region has witnessed enormous changes and serious events starting first from Iraq. In retrospect of Bush's presidency, 9/11 attacks provided the former president with the impetus to declare a global war on terrorism, starting from Afghanistan and Al Qaeda, then to accuse Iraq of harboring terrorists and acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) that were merged into an eminent danger to U.S. national security. It came out to offer an effective way for passing the project of the neo-conservative government in the whole region through Bush's doctrine of preemption.

Starting from invading Iraq in 2003, Bush's decision was the watershed mark defining his administration on countering the terrorist threat by military unilateralism intervention, regime change and finally by promoting democracy in Iraq. Bush identified democracy promotion as a core target of his freedom agenda with the goal of reforming Iraq along democratic lines which would open the way to the entire M.E and would foster peaceful and political order as one of foreign policy objectives in pursuing U.S national interests and as a long term strategy to maintain hegemony.

The first initiatives taken by the Bush's neoconservative government were the formation of Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) along with establishing an interim government in Iraq to draft its constitution under U.S supervision, where Sunnis were barred from the political involvement. Yet, the result of Bush's policy was finished by undemocratic Iraq, when the country has at times settled into a routine of violence, ethnic and sectarian divisions between Shia and Sunni, which largely contributed to anti-Americanism.

To this point, many claimed the important components admitted to the U.S failure in democratizing Iraq and in recognizing the faulty decisions and the erroneous choices that the former president Bush had made at the very beginning of the operation which led to the

failure of such strategy (O'Brien 60-63). It is conceivable that despite Bush's initiatives in building the nation, many claimed that the failure of his unilateral policy contributed to the misuse of his administration's strategy that would suit the Iraqi society after the invasion.

Other political analysts such as Anthony H. Cordesman and Sam Khazai argued that the American failure following Saddam's ouster lied in planning the war, without taking into account stability after the war as a prime target. Due to the nature of Iraqi society, it failed to overcome the ethnic and social division of the country; especially, the rising sectarian tensions between Sunnis and Shiites incited by the U.S and Saudi Arabia. Hence the U.S. failed to authorize more forces to protect civilians due to the rising counterinsurgency and violence following the post 2003 invasion and failed to replace the dismantled Iraqi military (7). Other analyst like Faleh Jabar admitted that since 2005, Iraq was mired in a civil strife that ravaged the country and in the process democracy promotion became an illusion for many Iraqis (*Iraq four Years...* 1-2). Even with forming the new government in Iraq, violence and unrest continued to threaten peace and security which largely challenged the success of installing democracy in the country.

In light of Bush's failed strategy, the U.S worked on making the withdrawal plan of its troops the most appropriate solution according to some political analysts. This strategy was from which president Obama has introduced a transformative foreign policy shift, stepping back from his predecessor's policy and making the American withdrawal from Iraq his most important priority. Some researchers went even further and concentrated on analyzing the framework of Obama's policy in Iraq, and discussing the challenges his administration met after the withdrawal, especially considering the penetration of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) into Iraq and the popular uprisings of 2011.

As his second term approached to end, Obama's Middle East policy received academic criticism while doing nothing to solve not only the Iraqi issue but the entire Middle Eastern problems. This research examines the consequences of Obama's policy and the problem of democracy promotion in Iraq focusing on the belief that U.S foreign policy direction toward a specific nation changes with the changing U.S decision-makers.

The research investigates the limits of change in the policy of president Obama towards Iraq regarding the issue of democracy; especially that, the withdrawal comes amid changes in American priorities such as U.S pivot to Asia. This latter raises the question of the U.S reengagement in Iraq under the presidency of Obama to the forefront, particularly in light of the president's commitment to pull all American troops out of Iraq and to leave the country's internal affairs to Iraqis once he assumed office. This contradiction between U.S presidents' rhetoric and practices made some researchers suspicious about the reasons behind the U.S. intervention in Iraq.

Moreover, divergent opinions in regard to president Obama's democratization efforts and peace initiatives in Iraq have been the focus of contentious discussion. Several political analysts and authors assumed that Obama brought change to Iraq by pulling the American troops out of the country and by abandoning the dilemma of democracy promotion that started during the former president W. Bush.

The study concentrates on the following main question: What are the traits of continuity and change in Obama's policy towards Iraq regarding the issue of democracy and how has he delivered these traits in Iraq?

The study also covers these research sub-questions as follow: Did the U.S intend to fail in promoting democracy in Iraq? Were the U.S objectives during the Obama administration different from the former administration? What were the motives, reasons and

consequences of the decision taken by the U.S to withdraw from Iraq? How far did Obama manage the crisis that developed in Iraq after 2011? Did the U.S attain its implicit objectives?

To provide authentic answers to the abovementioned questions, the research is backed up by a historical development for American foreign policymaking towards Iraq since the end of WWII. It also tries to scrutinize the impact, reasons and objectives of promoting democracy in Iraq in post 2003 invasion.

The study represents a theoretical and descriptive analysis that examines the U.S involvement and its interests in the M.E such as oil, hegemony and Israel's security. However, to better comprehend the complexities of the strategy towards Iraq, U.S. relation with Iraq is analyzed, including the period of Cold War, 9/11 events and the 2003 Iraq invasion and its aftermath.

The research work seeks to evaluate the impact of Obama's policy on Iraq and to assess his administration's efforts in serving the American vital interests. The aim is to expose the impressive transformation that Iraq witnessed during the Obama administration which likely affected the interests of the U.S in the M.E, and to assess the outcomes of Obama's political engagement in Iraq, and to critically analyze his commitment between rhetoric and practice following the withdrawal. It seeks to investigate how his policy was influenced by the former administration's policy and the extent to which the objectives of the two administrations are similar.

The methodology used for this research is qualitative analysis in nature within historical and critical analysis approaches to align with the aim and to answer the questions of the study. The historical analysis approach focuses on evaluating and synthesizing the U.S policy objectives in the past history of the M.E, starting from the twentieth century, setting the stage first for the Cold War era, and 9/11 Attacks until the changing Iraqi-U.S. relations after

2003 Iraq invasion. This method helps gain clear perspectives of present changes in U.S. policy directions, especially after the political change of 2011, namely the Arab Spring followed by the rise of ISIS immediately. The analytical critical approach is also used as it is important for analyzing and criticizing the U.S democratic peace promotion in Iraq under the Bush administration and for assessing the Obama's policy and its outcomes in Iraq after the withdrawal of the U.S troops. By using these two methods, the research increases our understanding to the role of president Obama in Iraq in achieving U.S goals in the entire region so that to serve its national interests.

The content of the thesis is enhanced through primary and secondary sources which are of a paramount importance to come to accurate conclusions. By analyzing the presidents' speeches such as president George W. Bush and Barrack H. Obama, other officials' statements such as of Donald Rumsfeld, Condoleezza Rice, governmental publications and reports, including the National Security Strategy (NSS), and the United Nation Security Resolutions (UNSR) 242, 598, 660, 678, 688, one gains a deep understanding of the former administrations' policies and doctrines in Iraq, with highlighting the issue of promoting democracy as a stage setter to the analysis of this literature.

This research is also built upon secondary sources including scholarly books, scientific journal articles, newspaper, web articles and dissertations which together provide an ample collection of resources. An examination of these resources offers a thorough analysis related to the former president W. Bush and his doctrine in democratizing Iraq which is then used to analyze the policy of president Obama as it shapes the outcome of his engagement in Iraq and its repercussions in the whole region.

The significance of the research stems from delving into the foreign policy of the U.S. This latter has a great influence on the international level. This fact particularly makes many

researchers undertake a research on the field of international studies based on a more accurate comprehension and a realistic understanding of diverse global concerns.

The research's scope is limited in terms of time and place with the purpose of reaching more accurate results, and with more objectivity in conducting the research than generalities. It is associated with a region that has always attracted the attention of American policy makers, namely the M.E, taking into account Iraq as a particular case study. The latter was and continues to be of a crucial importance to U.S interests, owing to its geostrategic position within the M.E region. As for time, it represents a recent study under the presidency of Barack Obama (2008-2016) that deals with Obama's policy towards Iraq after the withdrawal and its repercussions.

The importance of this literature review lies in evaluating and analyzing the foreign policy of Obama in Iraq. In classifying the reliable references and insightful quotations used in terms of the relevance of the topic it covers in this research, it demonstrates the similarity or the difference of president Obama's policy from his predecessor in regard to the experts' viewpoint.

Numerous political analysts made efforts to highlight the Obama administration's positive contribution in ending the war in Iraq and removing U.S forces once he assumed office; however, very few researchers criticized his policy and explored the hidden agenda within the border context of continuing the realization of the M.E project. Even when analyzing Obama's policy towards Iraq by some authors, that policy was not analyzed from different perspectives with the aim of fragmenting the region and dividing it into small states. Hence, this literature revealed that there is a notable lack of critical perspectives lied behind this withdrawal.

In the book of Fawaz Gerges entitled, *Obama and the Middle*, first unveils Obama's legacy that he inherited from his predecessor such as Iraq war and the problem of democracy. He argues that his policy shows more continuity than change. Gerges also believes that Obama rules by consensus within domestic issues and by interests with external issues. As time went by, and with the rise of the popular uprisings, he acknowledges only one policy failure related to the Israeli- Palestinian peace process with many other successes since Obama's diplomacy removed the U.S. from Bush's predicament, such as the success of fighting terrorism, the American-Muslim initiatives and the withdrawal from Iraq.

In an article entitled, "How Obama Abandoned", Emma Sky contends that in post U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, Obama not only kept focus on the Iraqi issue, but he also disregarded Al Maliki's sectarian rule over the Iraqi people, especially Sunni minority throughout his time as prime minister, arguing that the Iraqi issue was purely Bush's legacy through which the U.S. wanted to get out of its internal problems.

Another book entitled, *The Unraveling: High*, Emma Sky also contends that Obama showed no interest in saving Iraq from the turmoil and mess. He believed in Al Maliki as a Prime Minister instead of Ayad Allawi who won most seats in Parliament. Sky also saw the start of Al Maliki as an authoritarian leader who drove the country to sectarianism, at a time when most of the Iraqis lost trust on him. She also shows how the Obama administration helped undermine the Iraq's democratic process through imposing U.S. perception on the Iraqi government during the election time, despite Obama's rhetoric and U.S. withdrawal from Iraq.

Furthermore, Tamara Coffman Wittes, a senior fellow at Brookings institution, shows an interest in this issue, through her article "The Slipperiest Slope" She argues that the Obama administration kept its promises for the Americans to not intervene in Iraq again. That

decision, according to Tamara Wittes was a mistake in itself that led not only to the collapse of the state of Iraq, but also prompted for the rise of ISIS. Meanwhile, Wittes stated that following the withdrawal, the U.S. failed to replace its military presence with trusted allies so that to maintain its hegemony in the country.

Other articles tackled Obama's policy in Iraq. One such article of Anthony H. Cordesman; an Analyst of National Security; is entitled "America's Failed", in which he stated that the rise of ISIS organization, Iran's influence inside Iraq, the then public unrest and more political division were among the consequences of the withdrawal from Iraq earlier. Such consequences were compounded by decades of war and were interpreted as evidence that the U.S. intended and planned to fail in its attempt to reform the country.

Adding to the above mentioned literature, the previous works will be the starting point to reach the aim of the study. Therefore, it is important to provide results that help understand the outcome of Obama's policy in Iraq and the extent to which it was different or similar to Bush's policy.

This thesis starts first by a general introduction. It comprises four main chapters. The first of which is entitled "Conceptual and Theoretical Framework: U.S Democracy Promotion in Perspective." It contains definition of key terms such as democracy, democratization, democracy promotion, and national interests. The chapter also sheds light on theories of democracy promotion in U.S foreign policy. This section explains democratic peace theory and how U.S democracy promotion has developed throughout time. It gives a brief insight into the concepts that help maintain American values and security. It also scrutinizes its place in U.S. foreign policy throughout history

Chapter two is entitled "The Historical Background". It is crucial to comprehend the history of major events that took place in the M.E, America's economic and political presence

after the end of WWI and II, and the implications of such policy on the region, with more focus on Iraq after 9/11 events to understand how America's presence has developed since then. The chapter's sections examine the factors that shaped America's policy in a region such as the M.E, its priorities and its approaches which America adopted in order to trace its goals there and serve its interests, including the security of oil, support of Israel, and Soviet containment. Also this chapter sheds more light on U.S. backing to friendly regimes in the Arab states to better preserve U.S interests.

Chapter three is entitled, "Assessing the Bush's Democracy Policy." It discusses regime change in Iraq and Bush's 'Freedom Agenda' on the ground of his pre-emption doctrine. It analyzes U.S. rhetoric and declarations of the former president to democratize Iraq as a central pillar in his foreign policy objectives, also as a rationale for currying out military actions. In this section, the president stressed the need for promoting democratic values worldwide, particularly in the Islamic nations, through fostering democracy in Iraq that would later serve as domino effect for other Arab countries in their pursuit of a political transformation. Then, it analyses the Bush's strategy in Iraq after the invasion, focusing on the economic and political reforms implemented as part of the administration's efforts in democratizing Iraq. It also assesses how well the U.S. plan for the democratization was effective or not. It also aims to demonstrate Bush's mistakes in Iraq that contributed to the failure of that mission.

"The Obama Administration's Policy toward Iraq (2008-2016): An Analytical reading of U.S. Withdrawal and its Repercussions between Continuity and Change" is the last chapter through which it focuses on Obama's policy toward Iraq after the withdrawal. This section also examines and analyses Obama's early priorities, the U.S withdrawal from Iraq and its repercussions. It also critically analyses the traces of continuity of Obama's policy in Iraq, and shows his administration's commitment to install or abandon democracy in Iraq,

particularly in light of the 2011 events that shook the area during his second term. Finally, the section analyses the Obama's policy of political rapprochement with Iran and its repercussions on Iraq.

The thesis ends up by a general conclusion. Through reviewing the aforementioned works, it will be of importance to provide insights on the results that help explain the outcomes of Obama's Iraq policy.

Chapter One

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework: U.S Democracy Promotion in Perspective

Democracy promotion had first its roots in President Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points to defend democracies all over the world. He articulated a plan for a peaceful post-war settlement and emphasized that the globe be made suitable and peaceful for living in. However, in addition to Wilson's ideas of democracy, relying on the democratic peace theory is also motivated by the long term security interests of democracies. Throughout the last thirty years, each president has concluded his term by stressing the importance of democracy. President Clinton was the first to put democratic enlargement in many countries as key themes in redefining U.S security profile.

The study relies on theoretical framework by utilizing two layers of theory. For answering the research questions, it is important to assess the efforts made by the U.S to encourage democracy in Iraq and the steps forward to understand the underlying objectives behind promoting democracy. Therefore, the chapter contains definition of key terms such as democracy, democratization, democracy promotion, and national interests. The chapter also sheds light on theories of democracy promotion in U.S foreign policy. This section explains democratic peace theory and how U.S democracy promotion has developed throughout time. It gives a brief insight into the concepts that help maintain American values and security. It also scrutinizes its place in U.S. foreign policy throughout the history.

1.2.Key Concepts and Meaning

The section derives key definitions of a series of terms so that to understand the aspects of democracy being promoted in theory.

1.1.1. Democracy

Democracy is derived from the Greek language that was first established by Athena, the Greek Goddess of wisdom. The term is composed of two parts, “demos” meaning people and “Kratein” meaning to rule (Sørensen 15).

Some writers such as Schmitter and Karl claim that “democracy is a system of government in which rulers are held accountability for their actions in the public realm by citizens acting indirectly through the competition and co-operation of their elected representatives” (39). The concept entails a political process involving both participation and competitions (39).

Democracy differs from various types of government that come before democracy, such as monarchy, aristocracy, and dictatorship. In contrast to earlier political structures, democracy is centered on people who have the power to actively guide and run their governments. The U.S president Abraham Lincoln described democracy and stated its goals as follows: “The government of the people, by the people and for the people” (“The Gettysburg Address”).

Democracy and freedom have a close relationship. The two concepts are not synonymous, but they are used interchangeably. Democracy is based mostly on a set of goals and principles pertaining to freedom. People in democratic societies have rights and obligations, and one of their primary duties is to defend this freedom from abuse by the ruling class (“Democracy in Brief” 2).

1.1.1.1. Difficulties in Defining Democracy

Some challenges come up when analyzing concepts such as democracy, democracy promotion or democratization. Because democracy as a concept is subject to debate, there are “conceptual politics” for the meaning of each term. Authors like Hobson and Kurki defined conceptual politics as “the ways in which contested concepts- like democracy- are interpreted, used, and fought over by actors, and how certain meanings and definitions come to influence real world phenomena” (3).

They added that these concepts are important to “understand and to assess the structure of political life” (Hobson and Kurki 3). For the analysis of this work, it takes on to depend on a fixed definition for the term of democracy based on the review of literature. In this sense, it is recognized that the definition is developed from a western perspective, and that other regions of the world may have different perceptions and conceptions of democracy and democratization alike.

1.1.1.2. Elements of Democracy

Democracy is more than just a principle or a notion. It differs from other political systems in some crucial features. Fundamental freedom and fundamental rights are the most prominent aspects, because no other system of governance can safeguard and promote human rights as effectively as democracy. Other aspects of democracy that contribute to democracy’s strength and eventual status as a political system are free and fair elections, division of power, the rule of law, democratic pluralism, parliament, the relationship between the government and the opposition, public opinion, the freedom of media and respect of human rights (“International Consensus: Essential Elements of Democracy” 8-15).

Many authors such as Mair identifies procedural and substantive as two types of democracy. Procedural democracy lies in “how a regime is organized and the processes by

which representation, accountability, and legitimacy are assured”, whereas substantive democracy deals with “goals and effectiveness of the regime, and the extent to which the will of the people might be served in a more purposive sense” (113). Additionally, "efforts to promote equality, fairness, and inclusion" are included in those two types (113).

Schumpeter is most known for his strictly procedural definition of democracy. He defines it as a “free competition for a free vote” (qtd. in Mair 113). On the other hand, Held defines the substantive democracy to include “social and economic rights to ensure adequate resources for democratic autonomy” (Sørensen 11), because he claims that “without tough social and economic rights, rights with respect to the state could not be fully enjoyed; and without state rights new forms of inequality of power, wealth and status could systematically disrupt the implementation of social and economic liberties” (qtd. in Sørensen 11). As a result, democracy is viewed by Held as an economic and social system in addition to the political one (Sørensen 12).

According to Mair, there are two forms of procedural definitions: thin and thick (114). The first form is “mainly associated with Schumpeter” (Mair 114). The second form falls in between Schumpeter's procedural and Held's substantive definitions. It is primarily related to Dahl's definition of the concept of democracy (114). Dahl claims that “process and substance cannot really be separated” (qtd. in Mair 113). He continues to claim that “the democratic process is not only essential to one of the most important of all political goods- the right of people to govern themselves- but is itself a rich bundle of substantive goods” (qtd. in Mair 113-14). Because people in a country may not always have access to those substantive goods, he mentions the word “polyarchies” instead of democracies (qtd. in Mair 114).

Dahl emphasizes on “government's responsiveness to the preferences of its citizens as key characteristics of democracy” (qtd. in Sørensen 13). This responsiveness “requires that

citizens must have opportunities to 1) formulate their preferences, 2) signify their preferences to their fellow citizens and the government by individual and collective action and 3) have their preferences weighed equally in the conduct of the government” (Sørensen 13). Dahl asserts that these three opportunities are contingent upon the presence of seven institutional guarantees for the government to be categorized as polyarchic (Mair 114). They are as follows: elected officials, free and fair elections, Inclusive suffrage, Right to run for office, Freedom of expression, Alternative information, and Associational autonomy (114).

Meanwhile, Dahl's seven institutional guarantees constitute Sørensen's concept of political democracy (Sørensen 13). These seven institutional guarantees are grouped into three dimensions by Sørensen. He argues that “political democracy can be viewed as a system of governance that meets the following conditions” (14).

These dimensions focus on regular competition among individuals and organized groups, including political parties, for all positions of government power, without resorting to violence; political participation should be highly inclusive, with regular and fair elections that include all major social groups; ensuring the integrity of political competition and participation requires a sufficient amount of civil and political liberties, such as freedom of expression, press and also freedom to form and join organizations (14).

Sørensen notes that to be necessary “to decide on some minimum value with regard to each dimension, competition, participation and liberties, that a country must meet to qualify as democratic”; however, this study does not take it into account, since the analysis focuses merely on the U.S policies not the quality of democracy.

1.1.2. Democratization

Welzel defines democratization as the process by which the institutionalization of people power happens (22), while Sørensen defines democratization as a transition of a political system toward democratic directions (15). He claims that there are various ways in which the process of democratization can occur when democracy is characterized by competition, participation, and liberties (15). His perception of democratization is similar to Dahl's work as mentioned in Sørensen's book.

In Sørensen's work, Dahl identifies two routes to democratization: participation and competition (15). Sørensen claims that participation or inclusiveness leads to more citizens exercising their political rights and liberties (15). Competition or liberalization, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which members of the political system have access to certain rights and liberties (15). Hence liberalization leads to increased political opposition and competition for government (15).

In 1970, Rustow established the groundwork for the democratization theory in his article entitled "Transitions to democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model" (Anderson 7). His model of democratization outlined four stages. The first stage focuses on national unity as a "single background condition" (Rustow 351). The second stage is the preliminary stage, during which political struggle occurs (Rustow 352). The third stage, also called the decision stage through which political leaders make decisions, accept diversity, and institutionalize certain essential elements of the democratic process (Rustow 355). The fourth stage is called the habitual phase in which "democracy becomes consolidated" (Rustow 358). According to Rustow, this democratization process is not always constant. Therefore, the transition to democracy does not always involve similar political challenges, social classes or same methods of solutions (Rustow 345).

1.1.3. Democracy Promotion

Democracy promotion as a term has been the subject of lengthy dispute due to the different viewpoints regarding the proper and adequate definition of the term. The word promotion has put into question on many occasions since many people regard the term more as external interference than a noble mission.

For the purpose of analyzing whether the U.S has made any efforts to promote democracy, it is important to determine the type of democracy promotion and its potential forms. First, it is important to provide the theoretical definition of democracy promotion including its approaches and characteristics. Second, it is necessary to know the process of democracy and explain how it is promoted.

1.1.3.1. Democracy Promotion Theory

In the U.S, democracy promotion is defined as a foreign policy tool pursued by the nation in order to spread and promote democracy as a political system in countries that are least democratic. Democracy building or democracy assistance is the other form of democracy promotion (Epstein, Serafino and Miko 1). Meanwhile, there is a general consensus among scholars that each state requires a foreign policy, since no nation would choose to pursue an isolationist policy. Scholars such as Feliks Gross have been prompted by this reality to claim that a state's decision to forgo diplomatic ties with another is itself an act of a foreign policy (179). Hence its existence is synonymous with the existence of the sovereign nations since they deal with others internationally.

The concept of foreign policy is defined by different scholars and researchers with different connotations. However, it is acknowledged that making decisions about foreign policy requires interaction with other nations, and that policy is designed to pursue national objectives and interests (Bojang 1).

Charles Hermann, a Senior Professor and Chair in International Policy Studies, defined the concept as a deliberate and calculated move that is made in response to a political choice of an individual or individuals collectively. It represents a tangible outcome of certain political decision-making. It is not a decision in itself; rather it is an outcome of it (Neack “The New Foreign Policy:” 25). Hermann regards the concept as the actions and conduct of a nation vis-à-vis other nations.

Hermann adamantly opposed the idea that studying a policy is derived from studying a foreign policy. Other scholars, however, like Russett, Starr, and Kinsella adopted an alternative concept from Hermann’s unpopular point of view. They saw a policy as an array of rules or guidelines established by an institution to help achieve its objectives; therefore, acts that are conducted beyond the borders of the country to achieve its aims are guided by the foreign policy of that country (Neack “Studying Foreign Policy” 7).

The aforementioned scholars not only defined the concept as a program and set of goals, but also emphasized on the importance of studying the policy development and implementation as a precondition for studying the foreign policy (Neack “Studying Foreign Policy” 7).

To other professors of political science such as George Modelsky, he defined it as the set of actions that communities have come up with to change the way other countries act and to adapt their own actions to the foreign environment. The practice of foreign policy should bring light on the various means through which nations strive to affect the behavior of other states (6).

Through this definition, Modelsky focused only on the sides of this policy that are intended to alter the current conduct of nations, so as to serve foreign policy objectives

(Mahendra 179). Yet, the foreign policy involves maintaining continued or changing behavior that serves the state's interests.

Joseph Frankel, a Professor of Politics, said that the decisions and activities that make up foreign policy involve significant interactions between one state and another (1). Hence it entails state-mandated measures toward foreign powers. It implements ideas that govern nations' interactions with other states in the pursuit of national interests (Bojang 2).

For other scholars, it is the overall strategy of a particular nation that deals with the outside world. It results from the state's conversion of interests into more tactical plans of action so that to attain the nation's broad objectives (Padelford and Lincoln 195). They define it according to two criteria: the first is prominent in achieving states' objectives, and the second is preserving the national interests (Bojang 2).

From the perspective of the American diplomat Huph Gibson, it is a thorough, all-inclusive strategy backed by knowledge and experience for how the government should work internationally. Its purpose is to advance and safeguard the interests of the countries. It is preconditioned with having a clear knowledge of the stated goals and the extent to which it is intended to go with the means a specific nation has. So anything less than this cannot be qualified as foreign policy (9)

Padelford, Lincoln and Gibson alike agree on the importance of foreign policy to achieve the nations' interests.

For Deborah Gerner, the concept is regarded "as the intentions, statements, and actions of an actor-often, but not always, a state-directed towards the external world and the response of other actors to these intentions, statements and actions" (qtd. in Neack "Studying Foreign" 7).

In her book, Neack criticizes Deborah Gerner's dictum about foreign policy in which Gerner emphasizes on states only. She contends that there exist other actors worldwide including religions, businesses and international cause groups. These systems help form directions and goals so that to control their behaviors toward other international actors (7).

In Robert Dahl's book "On Democracy," he presented the many positive aspects of democracy as a form of government. To Dahl, democracy prevents authoritarianism; guarantees citizens' interests, rights and freedom; allows for self-determination and moral responsibility; promotes human development, peace and political equality; since modern democracies do not fight each other (McFall 148).

A number of political systems other than democracy, such as fascist and communist ideologies emerged new in the last century. Countries with competing communist philosophies such as Germany and Russia generated a competitive debate about democracy and its alternatives to Communism. As the economic model of the Soviet Union relied more heavily on state ownership and maintained stable prices for a longer time than capitalist countries did, it produced growth rates. Because of this, the Soviet Union emerged victorious in the ideological war pitting democracy against communism (149).

Ultimately, many nations such as Vietnam and China continued to adhere to communist ideology even after the Soviet Union ended, while other nations started to move toward democracy. Since then, much of the world adopted democratic principles and policies (149).

It is defined as:

all overt and voluntary activities adopted, supported, and (directly or indirectly) implemented by (public or private) foreign actors explicitly designed to contribute to

the political liberalization of autocratic regimes and the subsequent democratization of autocratic regimes in specific recipient countries. (qtd. in Schmitter and Brouwer 14)

Therefore, promoting democracy by the U.S in other countries is conditioned with supporting dictators and their regimes who are loyal to the U.S and who help attain U.S objectives.

In that sense and regarding the democracy promotion as a key element of foreign policy, Burnell made the difference between active and passive democracy promotion. For the active democracy promotion, it is defined as an “intentional and deliberate” (Burnell 468). The passive form takes on to “a wide range of international factors that may positively influence democratic trends” (468). Furthermore, for the active democracy promotion, Burnell categorized two types of promotion, the direct and the indirect. The direct approach “targets some defining political characteristics of democracy”, like principles, norms, values or more concrete organizational forms. The indirect approach focuses on conditions of the process of democratization (468-69). Therefore, this work focuses on the democracy promotion’s active sense with its two types.

For Nye, active democracy promotion “employs a variety of instruments that span a continuum from soft power to hard power” (qtd. in Burnell 468). This soft power is characterized by “assistance, persuasion, influence and incentives” (Burnell 468), and the hard power contains “pressure, political conditionalities, sanctions, or military intervention” (468). In practice, the democracy promotion actors may use these hard and soft powers simultaneously (468). Therefore, the democracy promotion definition is left open and broad as this research examines all available evidence on democracy promotion instruments, rather than focusing on specific types.

1.1.3.2. Supply and Recipient Democracy

Burnell provides a catalogue of actors involved in democracy promotion, referring to them as the supply side of democracy promotion (473). The entities involved in this can be governmental or non-governmental, as well as public, private, or public-private actors (473).

On the other hand, in the recipient side of democracy promotion, it is feasible to create a typology for promoting democracy by identifying specific areas of focus within the realm of democratic promotion. Huber proposes specific "indicators of substance" for democracy promotion within these specific sectors (47). The development of these indicators is based on the evidence obtained from previous programs carried out in various MENA countries by USAID, MEPI, and the Department of Justice. These indicators are divided by Huber into three distinct types of institutions: government, or state institutions, parties, or political society, and civil society. Frequently, democracy promotion aims to have multiple categories. For instance, a "decentralization program might receive technical support, along with civic education during elections" (47).

More specific indicators can be derived from these three groups of indicators to create a typology of democracy promotion. An overview of this typology, which is largely derived from Huber's 'indicators of substance' (46-48), is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Typology of Promoting Democracy

General Discourse on Democracy		
Government / State Institutions	Political Society / Party Development	Civil Society
<u>Judicial:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of judges on judicial independence, rule 	<u>Material:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up resource centers with computers and basic 	<u>Media:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening of independent media

of law, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, current European law on human rights, anti-corruption initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train public defenders, prosecutors • Introduction of ethical standards, transparency, independence and efficient dispute settlement • Improving computer systems, databases and filing of courts 	material <u>Party Support:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign and poll-watcher training for parties • Training of young party members to employ democratic practices inside the parties and to participate in domestic election monitoring • Support for parties through "fraternal parties" abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of local, decentralized media, business development of private media, advertising markets and support of media legal reforms • Independence of journalism and free media through seminars, development of codes of conduct, resource handbooks, safety kits for journalists <u>Women, Minorities and Human Rights:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening of women's
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<p><u>Legislative Sector:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposing legislation, formulating policy, monitoring executive • Training parliamentarians <p><u>Election Support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of voter education and information campaigns, equipment, domestic and international observers <p><u>Decentralization and Local Government:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of local administration through strengthening of fiscal and administrative management and leadership training • Support with standardizing procedures for municipalities, training of 	<p>NGO networks to increase their influence on regional government policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of women's leadership networks with women from business and civil society • Trainings in leadership • Advocacy training of human rights activists, distribution of materials on human rights, educational forums, lobbying <p><u>Inter-Religious Dialogue:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eg. through TV programs <p><u>Support for Grassroots programs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO resource centers for training and technical assistance
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municipal staff and officials, strengthening of administrative and financial capabilities of municipal unions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy dialogue trips between municipal officials and foreign counterparts (especially women officials) • Encouragement of citizen participation in municipalities and training for parliament to work with municipalities <u>Modernization:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police and justice sector, administration and elections <u>Human Rights Awareness:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside state institutions by eg. training of officials and monitoring through NGOs 		
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Source: Huber, Daniela. "Democracy Assistance in the Middle East and North Africa: A Comparison of US and EU Policies." *Mediterranean Politics*, 13.1: (2008). 43-62. P46-48.

The democracy promotion typology encompasses a broad classification of democracy that brings together a particular general discussion on democracy that does not fit into a particular set of indicators. The theoretical benchmark utilized in this paper's analysis assesses the U.S democracy efforts in Iraq.

1.1.4. Theories of Democracy Promotion in U.S Foreign Policy

Based on the research, three main theories of democracy promotion are important to the study out of other theories. According to Wolff and Wurm, these three theories are materialist, normative and critical (see Table 1). The selected theories work on the place of democracy promotion in foreign policy.

Table 1: Theories of Democracy Promotion

Table 1. Locating external democracy promotion (EDP) in democratic foreign policies

No.	Type	Role/Relevance of EDP	Theoretical Approach
1	Rhetoric	EDP is employed rhetorically only, without implications for foreign policy.	(No theoretical approach needed)
2	Instrument	EDP is one instrument among others that is applied to the extent that it contributes to the 'real' aims that guide foreign policy.	Materialist theory of democracy promotion (theoretical background: modified neoclassical realism; economic liberalism; utilitarian democratic peace approaches)
3	Secondary aim	EDP constitutes an aim that guides foreign policy, but loses significance when competing with other (primary) aims.	(Combination of theoretical approaches)
4	Primary aim	EDP constitutes an aim that guides foreign policy, on a par with other foreign policy preferences.	(Combination of theoretical approaches)
5	Regulative norm	EDP defines the range of appropriate behavior – that is, foreign policy has to be framed as contributing to (at least, not contradicting) EDP.	Normative theory of democracy promotion (theoretical background: sociological institutionalism; normative democratic peace approaches)
6	Constitutive norm	EDP constitutes part and parcel of the foreign policy identity, culture, or role model that shapes the very definition of preferences and strategies.	Cultural theory of democracy promotion (theoretical background: actor-centered constructivism; normative democratic peace approaches)
7	Hegemonic project	EDP constitutes part and parcel of a global hegemonic project that uses EDP instrumentally, but rests upon its normative credibility.	Critical theory of democracy promotion (theoretical background: neo-Gramscian international political economy)

Source: Wolff, Jonas and Iris Wurm. “Towards a Theory of External Democracy Promotion: A Proposal for Theoretical Classification”. Security Dialogue. 42.1 (2011). P 87

The materialist theory of democracy promotion as indicated in Type 2, it is “conceived as one foreign policy instrument among others that is applied to the extent that it contributes

to the “real” aims that guide foreign policy” (Wolff and Wurm 87). This theory explains that “democracy is promoted or not according to opportunistic cost-benefit calculations” (87).

This type concentrates on the claim that democracy promotion is a tool used “in support of either security and power interests or economic benefits” (82).

The normative theory of democracy promotion as indicated in Type 5, decision makers promotes democracy because it is “the morally right thing to do and have to make and frame their decisions as contributing to (or at least, not contradicting) the aim of democracy promotion” (88). For them, it is “norms that shape democracy promotion policies” (88). The focal point that this theory revolves about is “spreading universally conceived values” (81).

The critical theory as indicated in Type 7 is a hybrid of the previous two theories. It “starts with an instrumental approach” which is similar to the materialist theory, but “in the end democracy and DP have to be seen as a regulative norm as well”, which is similar to the normative theory (88). Consequently, “democracy promotion is used instrumentally, but rests upon its normative credibility” (87).

1.1.5. National Interests

National interest refers to what a state considers a desirable goal (Berridge and James 181). Meanwhile, achieving the goal or the interest of a specific nation promotes economic and political security for both the nation and its external relations (Blackwill 20). Taking the U.S into account, it is the role of the executive body of U.S government to achieve the interests of the country and to meet the aspirations of those living outside its borders (20).

These interests serve as the main guide to pursue a policy. Since the foreign policy has always been linked to the nations’ interests, leaders have a tendency to act according to those interests. They determine the type and the degree of attention that should be given to some

issues such as threats, challenges or opportunities. Interests also help policymakers identify critical concerns about how the policy is formulated (Stolberg 5).

Some political scientists believe that national interests are permanent features of the international system. Therefore, the nation's interests are fixed during the policy-making process. This demonstrates that the U.S core interests were shaped during its inception (5). Nonetheless, some theorists contended that these national interests may change at any given time depending on the policymakers' perspectives. They are "a diverse, pluralistic set of subjective preferences that change periodically, both in response to the domestic political process itself and in response to shifts in the international environment. The national interest; therefore, is more likely to be what the policymakers say it is at any particular time" (Evans and Newnham 345). Through the history of the U.S, its core national interests changed over time, due to the ongoing changes in the global environment and some internal political considerations.

1.1.5.1. The Relation between National Interests and Democracy Promotion

According to the preamble of the U.S constitution, the national security strategies were created during the Clinton's presidency, where three main interests were identified. They "provide for the common sense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity", hence these interests influenced the national security strategies of the country in modern days that aimed at "enhancing security at home and abroad (security), promoting prosperity (economic well-being) and promoting democracy and human rights (democratic values)" (Stolberg 5).

These main three interests are defined as follow:

Security: “Protection of the people (both at home and abroad), territory, and institutions of the United States against potential foreign dangers.” Hence the protection of the U.S has always been its tendency and the government’s primary concern (6).

Economic well-being: “Promotion of (American) international trade and investment, including protection of United States private economic interests in foreign countries” (6).

Democratic values: during the twentieth century, this basic interest restricted the U.S principles of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” to the domestic democratic process. However, this concept was expanded in the twenty first century to encompass the promotion of democracy and respect of human rights in other countries (6).

The three aforementioned fundamental interests have evolved into a fourth core interest because of the U.S experience in world wars. This core interest is called “stable and secure world order”. It focused on creating peaceful international environment and ensuring stability for the nations based on the idea that democracies do not fight each other (6).

1.1.6. Democratic Peace Theory

However in addition to democracy, the democratic peace theory is important in fostering peace. It is then the most obvious theory that explains why a state might engage in war or withdraw from it (Maoz and Russett 624).

Maoz and Russett considered “democratic peace theory” a part of international relations and politics not part of a law or any theory. This notion is explained in the sense that realist democracies and norms are exclusive, and the democratic process does not share culture, values or knowledge. It proves an interconnected community and fosters a set of foreign policies among states (624). Thereby, democratic peace theory for Kant is anti-war

because it implies that there are no wars, as the concept has numerous facets. Democracy and democratic peace are intertwined but complex vis-à-vis realism (Reiss and Nisbet 100).

1.2. Promoting Democracy in U.S Foreign Policy

Since the presidency of Woodrow Wilson, U.S. foreign policy has always placed a significant emphasis on the democratization efforts, with his powerful idealist concept. From this time, this policy has been placed by almost all presidents' administration policies especially from WWII to the twenty first century (Chomsky 102).

When WWII ended, America was a significant contributor to the formation of the political systems of nations. Historically, the interventionist foreign policy pursued by America in the M.E. and Latin America helped the establishment of authoritarian regimes. Thus, the U.S increased its hegemony in the periphery through the use of coercive dominance or repressive regimes. Such patterns took the form of regime change in Chile, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Indonesia, and Egypt (Robinson "Globalization, the World" 619).

The primary motivation of the interventionism policy in the Arab World was to expand and protect the fledging capitalism by acquiring access to the countries' natural resources and labor power through which to assure the American system in fostering and surviving as a unique power and to contain the Soviet Dominance (620). The call for U.S democracy in its foreign policy became imperative, due to the rise of democratic aspirations of other states prior to the collapse of the old colonials when WWII ended, and the world position the U.S had assumed after 1991 (621).

During the 50s and 60s, democracy promotion was placed with a great interest by presidents like Truman, Kennedy, Eisenhower and Johnson in their foreign policies ("A Report to the National Security " 252-72). Nevertheless, the repressive and authoritarian regimes were still supported by the U.S.

John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State under President Eisenhower asserted that U.S supported authoritarianism because the people who run these autocratic governments were not the kind of people the U.S wanted to back... However, it was well aware that a democratic transition would entail relinquishing power over the entire situation (Robinson “Globalization, the World System” 622).

During Jimmy Carter administration, the president reintroduced democracy as a component of Human Rights agenda. However, similar to previous administrations, he kept supporting largely existing repressive political government systems until it helped open the gate for American policy change during the 1980s (622).

Three interconnected events caused a significant shift in U.S foreign policy from backing oppressive regimes to encouraging democracy abroad in the 1980s. The first factor was the protests in the Third World against oppression and exploitation starting to confront mass demands for social change. The second was after the uprisings, the U.S policymakers changed their policy by promoting democracy instead of supporting authoritarianism. The last factor introduced in the form of globalization that had begun to redefine the international relations so as to create new actors who pushed for political changes (622).

These three factors are interwoven and helped shift U.S foreign policy from supporting authoritarian practices to democracy by representing a process through which all the capitalist countries changed their system of rule from coercive to consensual mechanisms (623). The promotion of democracy has been a core element and policy goal in U.S foreign policy since then (Cox, Ikenberry and Inoguchi 10).

The scholar Karsten Struhl challenged the view of other scholars who admitted that the export of democracy is suitable for each country’s culture. Struhl, however stated that it is up to each society to figure out how to implement democracy in a way that works for a

specific society (19). In point of fact, enforcing one kind of democracy denies the importance of democracy on a global scale, thus it is anti-democratic for America to attempt to export or impose its version of democracy on another society (20).

According to Burnell, a Professor of Politics and International Studies, five different motivations were associated with the U.S spread of democracy. The first prominent motivation was the idea that promoting democracy helped spread American values. Second, it elevated the democratic peace notion. Third, it helped proceed the U.S pursuit of hegemony and power. Fourth, it sustained foreign allies under the cover of democracy. Last, it brought stability and facilitated free market ideals in the world (45).

Burnell argued that through promoting democracy, the U.S attempted to promote a set of ideal agenda enhanced by the belief that the country was destined to lead, hence the U.S was different and unique of itself from other nations. Meanwhile, the U.S exported democracy because it believed that democracies never fought each other, but they maintained peace, stability, and security (45). An example of this concept was characterized in the Community of Democracies that was implemented by President Clinton and became the center tenets in 2000 (Whitehead 32). The U.S stated aim was to promote democracy as a means of boosting its security.

Burnell further assumed that the U.S promotion of democracy was merely an attempt to exert its influence, dominance and imperialism without any prospects of using force (46). These means could be achieved through spreading stability and peace that were not essential values shared by all cultures; however, the U.S had an interest in promoting them as a strategy to reinforce its major primacy (Schweller 44).

The U.S manipulated democracy promotion as a means to serve its own interests. It also used democracy promotion to build a support for neo-liberal principles such as the free

market economies. These strategic considerations helped explain why the U.S pursued its democracy promotion policy at different places and times (Burnell 3).

U.S Democracy promotion has gained impetus strongly during Ronald Reagan administration when the president uttered the same phrase as being an exceptional nation. He established the two biggest organizations for the stated goal of exporting democracy abroad. These organizations are sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) (Baracani 307).

During the Cold War, the two institutions were employed to promote democracy and combat communist political philosophy. NED expanded its function as a partner to countries like Poland and it channeled millions of dollars to destabilize the Soviet Union. In South Africa during the apartheid, it assisted in the training of young Black leaders and strengthening their country, opening up Africa's economy to global trade which in turn advanced democratic aims in the struggle against communism (Robinson "Promoting Polyarchy" 327-31).

President Reagan endorsed the use of propaganda to strengthen American security by promoting activities that benefit U.S interests (Nelson 232). Such promotion of activities embraced technical training supports, financial aid for governments and civil groups that would give rise for the spread of democracy worldwide. In the policy of Reagan, it necessitated the involvement of organizations that were part of civil society such as colleges, the press and the political parties as means for spreading democracy ("Management of Public Diplomacy").

In Philippines, the democracy promotion initiatives launched under the Reagan administration in 1984. Reagan supported the removal of Filipino authoritarian political system and instead favored the new democratic regime to enhance primary America's

interests in Philippines. Like the expansion of American military and the introduction of American goods and markets, when it became apparent that autocratic president Ferdinand Marcos has been a reliable ally to America and its interests for many years in fighting communism and maintaining stability (Schirmer and Shalom 35).

The Philippines received special attention by the U.S. This attention was portrayed in the aftermath transition from repressive government to promoting democracy due to the growing political turmoil in the form of popular unrest, assassinations, and demonstrations against president Marcos who became a threat to the country's stability and a threat goal for the U.S. in protecting its military bases, investments and America's dominance in the entire region of Asia (36).

The U.S finally succeeded in transitioning the Philippines into democratic state in 1986, under the new government of President Corazon Aquino who won American military and economic support. The American strategy was depicted as focusing on the funding of electoral campaigns and labor movements that were encountered by the NED against other parties to guarantee that the election's outcome would benefit America and serve its interests in the area. Also the success of the election of Fidel Ramos in 1992 came to emphasize U.S. democracy promotion in Philippines (Robinson "Promoting Polyarchy:" 128). This success was merely characterized by the U.S backing for new regimes, as long as the new presidents served American interests.

President H.W. Bush expanded democracy assistance in Chile, Nicaragua and Panama (Sanchez 51). In 1989, he invaded Panama and claimed that the intervention was needed to overthrow Manuel Noreiga's regime, which had been supported by the U.S and had become authoritarian, and he also insisted on overpowering the Panamanians and increasing America's forces in Panama to protect American military bases in the Canal Zone.

Eventually, American diplomatic pressure resulted in hindering authoritarian regime of Noreiga and hence bolstering democracy (Ropp124). This democracy was exported to Panama according to the U.S standards and interests.

It became obvious that the transition process led to a new democratic government headed by Guillermo Endara who won the support of America in Panama after it succeeded in launching “Operation Just Cause”, the largest American military success in order to dismantle the authoritarian institutions of the former president Noreiga and hence to provide military protection to Endara who replaced him and who was more supportive to U.S interests (124).

Like in Philippines, in order to stabilize Panama and to promote democratization after the transition, the U.S reinforced its control through focusing on the political parties, labor coalitions and businesses which formed the civil society by giving economic and financial aids to support the establishment of the new civilian administration led by Endara (Sanchez 175).

Following H. Bush’s presidency, when Bill Clinton became the nation’s 42nd president in 1993, he admitted that because democrats establish relationships rather than fight one another, supporting the export of democracy abroad was an effective approach to ensure America’s security, interests and long-term peace (Clinton “January 25, 1994:”).

Clinton prioritized the promotion of democracy in pursuing his foreign policy. He believed that export of democracy would maintain peace, security and stability as it would protect American interests all over the world (Brinkley115). The Clinton administration gave democracy assistance a significant boost and urged for putting its principles forward into practice in Latin America, Central Europe, Africa, and Balkans (Carothers “U.S Democracy Promotion” 17).

These attempts to expand democracy revealed the need for U.S enduring efforts to sustain its security and economy concerns such as access to oil. Thus to probe the realization of its interests, the Clinton administration maintained close ties with authoritarian leaders in China and the M.E in spite of the need for democratic transitions in the regions. This happened in Peru with President Alberto Fujimori in 1990s when Bill Clinton maintained close ties with him because of his cooperation with the U.S. despite being anti-democratic and repressive (Carothers “Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy promotion” 26-7). Similarly in Philippines and Panama, The Clinton administration pledged to uphold democracy, he invaded Haiti in 1994 with the intention of removing the administration that had been put in place by the military coup in 1991 to keep the reinstated President Jean Bertrand Aristide in the government (Collins and Cole 219).

From WWII onwards, successive U.S administrations have given their support to tyrants’ regime in Latin America and the Arab countries despite pointing out the development of democracy as a priority in the U.S policy and making their rulers who have long had friendly relations with the U.S secure and undermining those who were unfriendly to its interests (Forest 69). It supported a range of authoritarian regimes including Augusto Pinochet in Chile, Saddam Hussein in Iraq and the Saudi, Kuwaiti and Jordanian monarchies so as to assure access to their oil (Jones “America, Oil, and” 208).

For example, when Saddam Hussein run repressive government in 1979 against minority Shia, he developed chemical and biological weapons and he practiced repressive acts, cruelty and violence against Iraqi citizens. These acts made President Jimmy Carter place his government on the terrorist watch list (Gagnon “US-Iraq History: Our History with Iraq”). However, when Iran-Iraq War prolonged military conflict, it was sparked by the Iranian Revolution in 1980. Soon America turned its focus of support to Iraq before the Iran-

Iraq War destabilized the area and jeopardized American interests (Gagnon “US-Iraq History”).

During the Reagan and H.W. Bush governments, the U.S also backed and sponsored Iraq with military, financial and economic aids to help the country win its revolution against Iran. This paved the way for Reagan and H.W. Bush to establish diplomatic ties with Iraq (Gagnon “US-Iraq History”). However, the invasion of Kuwait conducted by Iraq sparked a global outrage against the regime in Iraq that later resulted in the first Gulf War and set off consequential conflict involving coalition forces led by America and then led to ousting Saddam following the invasion of 2001 by president Bush, Jr (Gagnon “US-Iraq History”).

Therefore, in the American history, the U.S supported authoritarian regimes and still supports the absolute repressive governments in the M.E where the rights of the Arab citizens are completely denied, freedom of expression is severely restricted, and women are discriminated and regarded as citizens of a lower status; by providing U.S. arms to those countries and emphasizing on the traditional American interests in the flow of oil, America will keep its robust military presence in the area (Everest “Hosni Mubarak: A Profile”).

The imperative for America to prevent the growth of Arab nationalism was a factor that influenced its support for authoritarian administrations, which was deemed to be a potential danger to its national interests in the Arab countries. Because Arab nationalist movements might accelerate the development of oil sector, this would lead to the nationalization of oil in the area which might harm America’s interests. As a result, it maintained its cooperation with autocratic regimes as an effort to keep the status quo (Jones “America, Oil, and War” 212).

1.2.1. The Motivations against Exporting Democracy

During the W. Bush administration, certain officials, including Condoleezza Rice justified why W. Bush imposed democracy in non-democratic Middle Eastern nations and in other parts of the world. He made democracy his priority. He believed that democratic nations never go to war with one another, but rather they foster open markets and reliable trading partners like the European Union, America, Mexico, and Canada, which are less inclined to go to war with each other (Epstein, Serafino, and Miko “Democracy Promotion” 8).

W. Bush also made democracy promotion a pillar in his strategy in the Middle East, as it counters terrorism and Islamic extremism (Dalacoura, 963). Also promoting democracy leads to more prosperous and open economies and hence brings stability (Epstein, Serafino, and Miko “Democracy Promotion” 8). Those reasons stated by the W. Bush administration fit in with the motivations stated by Burnell before.

However, those motivations about the promotion of democracy have been challenged by many scholars like Jog Faust and Karsten Struhl who asserted that the liberal democracy developed in the west cannot be applied to every nation; therefore, it must not be exported to other nations by the U.S. Both of them believed that each country has to adapt its own democracy that should reflect the country’s values and culture (Faust “Liberal Democracy as Universal Value”; Struhl 19).

Promoting democracy abroad may cause unpredictable effects on the regions. One study made by the Harvard University found that countries that underwent partial democratic transitions, like American withdrawal from Iraq when it was still in its formative stage of democracy, were more likely to experience internal and external instability because of the weak title of institutions such as the judiciary, army, and police (Mansfield and Snyder 4).

Corruption, kickbacks, and embezzlement are just some of the difficulties that can arise from a poorly managed transition, as is the case in Iraq right now (Cammett 2).

The democratic peace theory known with the premise that democracies do not participate in warfare emerged as a significant pillar of the Bush's efforts to democratize the Middle Eastern countries. These efforts have been criticized as being similar to the U.S-Cold War strategy to prevent other countries from embracing the Communist ideology (Gowa 113).

Other scholars claimed that the democratic peace theory cannot prove that democracies prevent wars between themselves, since several democratic countries went into different wars against each-other notably during the World Wars. Like the war between Germany and France, though both countries are democratic nations (Layne 38). According to Layne, the democratic peace theory had no empirical basis, and the U.S adopted the theory as merely a rational to intervene in other countries' affairs with the aim of preserving its security since the theory linked U.S interests to the domestic politics of other countries (46).

U.S efforts to spread democracy abroad are frequently criticized as an intrusion into sovereign countries' domestic affairs that led to backlash, such as in Panama and the Philippines, especially when a nation like America was viewed as a hegemon power but with elusive rhetoric of democracy promotion in those countries (Epstein, Serafino, and Miko 9).

The consensus of the general public in the Middle Eastern countries and others perceived the U.S democracy promotion initiative as hypocritical in itself, because there was no reason to promote democracy without previous intentions or implicit goals as controlling the oil field or expanding American hegemonic power (Dalacoura 974).

By history, U.S foreign policy has always prioritized democracy promotion worldwide, along with its enduring values and interests. Thereby, it played a strategic role for U.S efforts to reshape the global system and remake one international world order. Through

the course of American history, every president inherited a democracy promotion policy as a global power; this democracy intertwined in complex ways with American security, human rights, economic interests and fear of democratic decline abroad.

The chapter identifies different democracy promotion theories to address the role and the place of such democracy in U.S foreign policy and subsequently to assess the assumption that U.S democracy promotion in Iraq is about fulfilling U.S implicit objectives other than promoting democracy; therefore, democratic peace theory is merely rhetoric and not interpreted into a concrete action.

Chapter Two

The Historical Background of U.S.-Mid East Policy: Pre and Post 9/11 Events

The outcome of WWII shifted the power dynamics, through which two major players, the U.S. and USSR extended their influence to dominate the world's political scene. The M.E is becoming increasingly important to U.S foreign policy due mainly to the area's economic, geostrategic, and political significance.

The end of WWII marked the onset of a new era, namely the Cold War, through which the Gulf became a battlefield of contention due to the need for securing strategic access to oil supplies. Thus within the framework of the war geopolitics, the U.S engineered its Mid-East interventionist policy. It was dependent on the idea that preventing the Soviet intrusion and securing uninterrupted access to Middle Eastern facilities and resources was one of its highest priorities.

The U.S position in the region underwent a dramatic shift. The relationship that the U.S had with Israel following its birth in 1948, and the U.S protection of its sovereignty led to violent and bitter Arab antagonism against the use of the U.S to the region's oil as a strategic tool.

For pursuing its objectives, the U.S adopted different approaches as an attempt to embrace the Middle Eastern states into a Western alliance and involved more engagement in the region to help contain the Soviet threat. Democracy promotion comprised a priority assuming that supporting democratic transitions in the Arab world would promote peace and halt any Soviet progress from fostering their ideals in unstable and conflicted states.

Recruitment of American allies in the region also pushed to act toward this same end, based on the assumption that this policy can achieve long term stability of economic trade, security of Israeli integrity and can better serve the U.S. interests there.

However, not every circumstance fit into this paradigm. There was more instability and chaos in the M.E which has hampered the region's efforts to achieve reform and which necessitated U.S. military intervention. As such, the covert support that the U.S provided to Israel hindered its ability to interact with other countries in the M.E. Hence this support continued to be the major causes of instability in the area.

Towards a better comprehension of U.S policy in the M.E., it is essential to have a firm grasp of the historical setting of significant events that have occurred throughout the involvement of the U.S in the region.

For the structure of the chapter, it contains two sections. The first one covers the history of U.S policy in the M.E, its economic and political presence after the end of WWI and II, and the implications of such policy on the region, with more focus on Iraq after 9/11 events to comprehend how the presence of the U.S has evolved since then. The chapter's sections examine regional factors and influences that shaped its policy in the M.E, its priorities and its approaches which it adopted in order to trace its goals there and to serve its interests, including energy security, support of Israel, and Soviet containment. The chapter's second section sheds more light on U.S. backing to friendly regimes in the Arab states to better preserve U.S. interests.

2.1. Background of U.S. - Middle East Interaction

The relationship between the U.S and the M.E was limited prior to WWI; however, the region became a source of concern for the U.S during WWII and the years that followed, due

to the shift in global power and the rise of Soviet dominance in the region. The competition between these two powers has been challenging since then and had complex consequences for the M.E.

2.1.1. The Middle East

The M.E as a term is common among scholars and researchers. Originally, the area's geopolitical location requires each time a redefinition of its borders and the countries that belong to it. Yet it is possible to divide the M.E into three main variants. The narrower definition of it embraces areas to include only the regions bordered by Turkey from the north-west, Egypt from the west, the Arabian Peninsula and Iran from the east (Duignan and Gaan 28). In its broader sense, the M.E covers the Atlantic coast across North Africa spanning from Morocco to the Arabian Peninsula to the eastern border of Iran (Carkoglu, Eder, and Kirisci 7). The even broadest definition of the term includes the areas of the great Arab, Persian, Turkish empires of Islam (see appendix A).

However, prior to the post-Soviet era, the definition delineated states that included Central Asia and parts of the Caucasus. In the context of the study, a precise definition of the M.E as a political area includes Turkey, Iran, the Arab states from Egypt eastwards and Israel, that has been vulnerable to powerful competing interests for major powers (7).

Through analyzing the U.S strategy in the M.E¹, Donna Stewart contends that the Departments of State and Defense wrongly created political boundaries and geographical limits of the M.E (401). One common argument about regional identity of the M.E included neighboring communities with different economic, cultural and political features. From the Islamic religion perspective, the U.S integrated the greatest grouping of states to match with its strategic policy objectives it wants to pursue (402).

2.1.2. The U.S Foreign Policy in the M.E before WWI

The Initial interaction of the U.S with the countries in the M.E occurred in the 1800s. This contact was in the form of commerce and trade, laying the groundwork for peace accords with states in North African, notably with Morocco. The U.S signed a treaty in 1786 that would safeguard the passage of American ships in the Mediterranean Sea (El Mansour “U.S Foreign”). It was the first international agreement between non-western states.

The downfall of the Ottoman Empire comprised the entire M.E under the European power, stating the modern boundaries of the Arab nations. Britain’s promise of Arab’s nominal independence during WWI generated tensions among some states who exercised only some control following the end of WWII; meanwhile, the European colonialism divided the M.E into states for Europe’s economic and geo-strategic interests in the area (Baxter and Akbarzadeh 11-15). The American government, in contrast, showed no political interests in the international arena. It avoided entanglement in the M.E (Al Sarhan 456). It turned into its preferred isolationist policy.

2.1.3. The U.S Foreign Policy in the M.E after WWI

During and after WWI, the concept of self-determination articulated by President Wilson shaped the American politics. This concept marked the aspirations of American policy to support people’s rights to choose their destiny. This U.S championing of self-determination principle got the attention of the Arab nationalists’ hope to get their own independence for the Middle Eastern states (Crabb 400). As a result of Balfour declaration, and under president Wilson’s administration, the two Houses of the Congress endorsed the formation of a national homeland of the Jews in the territory of Palestine on September 21, 1922 and voted in favor of the ‘Mandate for Palestine’ that allowed the Jews to live anywhere in Palestine from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea (Hertz “The U.S. Congress”).

After WWI, the U.S enjoyed a favorable image for Arab self-rule and objected the European control in the affairs of the region under the pretext of Wilson's idealism of self-determination in justifying Arab demands for self-representation; meanwhile, the government encouraged American commercial contacts with the M.E for its oil companies which were under the British dominance (Hahn 2). These new American economic interests in the region moved to compete with the British firms for oil concessions; and in order to avoid Britain's quarrel over Iran, the U.S took over Saudi Arabia for oil concessions who in return pledged its commitments to the security and stability of oil reserves in Saudi Arabia (El Mansour "U.S Foreign").

The period of both World Wars and from the political standpoint, it marked the American political presence in the M.E. The dynamics of the World Wars compelled the U.S to have commercial contacts within the region and negotiated oil concessions in Kuwait, Iran, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Its presence in the area increased during WWII, and the American government accumulated active interests for the region's vital oil resources, yet the region did not become significantly important to American foreign policy until the war ended (T. Ismael 135-36).

As WWII drew to a close and due to the absence of Arab self-rule, the Nazi Germany eyed the M.E as a strategic advantage to control the area. This act forced the Allies power to take a collective stance against the Axis powers to intervene militarily and refrain from any possible coup attempts. The U.S saw the Axis powers' control of oil supplies as a greater danger to U.S interests than self-determination in the M.E (Hahn 3). Thus the American involvement in regional politics increased and the U.S became convinced that its security was highly dependent on unhindered access to the Middle Eastern oil based solely on interests that could help boost its oil companies in the region (Little 44).

2.1.4. The U.S Foreign Policy in the M.E after WWII

The period followed WWII was characterized by a conflict between two emerging superpowers. During Cold War, each power aimed to gain hegemony and to spread its ideologies in the M.E. Because of this, the U.S pursued regional policies that suited its objectives in the M.E including the containment of Communism, the maintenance of unfettered access to oil, and the protection of its prominent ally, Israel.

2.1.4.1. Iran and the Soviet Union

Toward the end of WWII, American strategic concerns with the M.E had intensified steadily. These strategic concerns were conditioned with considering the Persian Corridor through Iran as a route to transport American Lend-Lease assistance to USSR between 1941 and 1945. The U.S established the Arabian-American Oil Company (ARAMCO)² in Saudi Arabia in 1938, and it provided moral and ideological backing for Arab nationalism movements while exercising influence over the political affairs of the Middle Eastern nations (Jones, Jr. 184). When the U.S and USSR emerged on the world stage as competing global powers, the USSR desired more influence throughout the M.E, particularly in Iran for its vital oil resources since Britain and France were too weak to contain it in the area (El Mansour “U.S Foreign”).

In the 1940s, Roosevelt looked forward to see Britain as chief security in the Middle East; nevertheless, some American politicians were of the opinion that the goal of the USSR strategy in the area was to lessen the sphere of influence held by the British in that region and to achieve a state of power balance (Little 119-20). Then the State Department experts came out to determine that if Britain could no longer contain the Soviet presence in the area, the U.S might have to promote Middle Eastern economic development and freedom from other foreign meddling and exploitation (Little 120).

At the start of the Cold War, the provision of a munition and supply path through Iran to Soviet territory would be a crucial step for the allied troops to invade Iran. In 1945, when the routes became totally safe, Iran sought an immediate and simultaneous withdrawal of Soviet and British troops from her territory. After long negotiations, the Soviets refused to withdraw and asked Iran for a joint Soviet-Iranian oil corporation (Beaver B., Beaver J., and Wilsey “The Middle East”).

Iran’s appeal over its lengthy border with the Soviet Union was turned down to its Cold War rival, the U.S for aid. This indirect encounter was a significant factor in the beginning of the Cold War that pitted the U.S against the USSR, especially after the U.S responded with its support to Iran when the Iranian government refused the Russian request on oil concession. Hence it succeeded in forcing the Soviets out of Iran and threatened to send its forces if Stalin did not withdraw his troops, also it succeeded in having diplomatic relations with its Shah until his deposition (Beaver B., Beaver J., and Wilsey “The Middle East”).

Sweeping through the Iranian conflict, the Soviets intended to extend its influence to include Northern Tier nations such as Turkey and Greece, and the U.S pursued the Truman Doctrine in 1947 as a response. This doctrine supported nations threatened by communism with economic aids to Greece and Turkey (Samaan 24). The doctrine was a geopolitical strategic foreign policy to fill the void that was left by France and Britain in the M.E. It was for the most purposes to take an active role of military and diplomatic interventionism policy in the area according to three dimensional approaches (El Mansour “U.S Foreign”).

The first approach, according to El Mansour, is a strong support for anti-communist governments that faced mounting demands for greater social justice and political freedom by their people, yet the U.S did not care if the regimes were authoritarian or democratic as long

as they were prepared to ally with the West and fight against communism (“U.S Foreign”). Meanwhile, the second portrayed socialists, communists and nationalists as having the same monolithic ideology. None distinct and radical nationalist reformers were as bad as Marxist communists (“U.S Foreign”).

The last approach allowed any methods other than going to war with the USSR to achieve American strategic aims. Military and economic aids, bilateral and multi-lateral agreements were all used and put into action to further U.S. goals. The single principle that guided the American policy in the region was pragmatism on both the political and economic fronts (“U.S Foreign”).

Deeply worried about Soviet totalitarianism in the M.E, John Dulles, Eisenhower’s Secretary of State, sought out countries that are geographically located near the Soviet Union in an effort to replicate regional recruitment strategy in other Middle Eastern nations similar to the oil dispute that had previously occurred in Iran. As a direct result of American efforts, a military alliance has been established by Britain, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran and Turkey in 1955 under the name of Baghdad Pact Organization or the Middle East Treaty Organization (METO). Its main purpose was to prevent Communist intrusions into the region (Al Sarhan 458).

Meanwhile, the U.S localized Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran as three prominent countries in the M.E. Under the Truman administration, The U.S pledged to defend Saudi Arabia. To this end, the military base of Dahran was upgraded with facilities to become one of the U.S important bases. In Iran, the U.S strengthened its relations with the conservative forces Reza Shah. Hence Iran came back to the Western fold and the American policy resulted in transforming Iran into one of its closest allies and in providing Iran with military and economic aid (Saikal 50-51).

Despite U.S. support to Iran, it overcame the Iranian resistance in 1953 when the Truman administration sided with Britain and participated in boycotting the Iranian oil in order to overthrow the nominated Prime Minister Mossadegh regime. The newly Prime Minister expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of revenue his nation received from the Anglo-Iranian oil company, and thus he worked on nationalizing the Iranian oil after several negotiations between Britain and Iran, although he held out hope that the U.S would keep backing Iran to avoid economic collapse (Richman 4). While Mossadegh was overthrown by a coordinated action between the U.S and Britain, the authoritarian rule of Shah was restored, however, this time with the U.S oil companies (Rees 78).

The American policy towards Iran during the 1950s led to a great internal opposition of new western ideals and foreign influences in the country which ultimately plagued Iran in a civil war in 1979 and led to Shah's ouster. Subsequently, it resulted in the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran under Ayatollah Khomeini's leadership. Consequently, the foreign oil companies pulled out from Iran and the oil crisis finally ended (81).

2.1.4.2. Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Cold War confrontations have affected the policy of the U.S towards the Arab nationalist movement. This movement was considered the leading ideology towards Arab attitude, taking the role of Egypt under president Jamal Abdel Nasser since 1955 that has been affected by its conflict with the west. At that time, the U.S regarded the USSR as a potential challenge to U.S regional interests. However, the perceived threat of Soviet dominance was seen so far by the Arab nationalists (Sayegh 103-4). Unlike the West threat that was already present in their region.

The Anglo-Arab confrontations have always been a guiding sentiment of Western imperialism towards Arabs. It was characterized by the Suez crisis, renegotiated

agreement between Britain and Iraq and the threat of Western backing for Israel in the heart of their region (105-6). Due to the Suez Crisis that began when president Jamal Abdel Nasser chose to nationalize the Suez Canal, a tripartite invasion of Egypt was carried out in 1956 by Israel followed by the U.K and France. However; the attack was condemned by President Eisenhower and forced the British and French out of Egypt (Beaver B., Beaver J., and Wilsey “The Middle East”).

In response to the 1956 Suez Crisis, Eisenhower announced his doctrine in 1957. This doctrine committed the U.S with the influence exerted by the USSR in the area, and promised aid to any country endangered by world communism. Also the doctrine aimed to restrain Nasser’s Arab nationalism, but it failed. President Eisenhower was interested in demonstrating strength and turning back the threat of communism in the M.E, as the U.S promised huge amounts of economic and military aids (Williamson 1).

The intent of the U.S support for Egypt during the Suez War was to reassure Arab allies of the Eisenhower doctrine and to isolate Nasser. However, Nasser’s popularity rose across the M.E as a symbol of Pan Arab nationalism, after the United Arab Republic (UAR) was created in 1958, and instead the Arab nationalist supporters allied with Nasser. Even attempts to restrict Nasser by pro-Western conservatives in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Jordan had also failed (Williamson 1-2). Hence, the U.S relations with Egypt and other Arab nations had deteriorated.

U.S. refusal to recognize the fact that Arab Nationalism and Communism were two distinct ideologies led the government to interfere in the Middle Eastern issues for reasons not connected with the Soviet intrusion into the region (Young and Kent 195). However, the more the west sought to block Soviet communism into the core of the M.E, the more Arab nationalists resisted what they perceived as new phase of colonialism (Seale 52). Yet in 1958

the revolution of Arab Nationalism reached its peak, and the Arabs' defeat in 1967 ended that movement (Shlaim "The Rise and").

2.1.4.3. The U.S-Israeli Relationship

Relations between the U.S and the Arab world have soured after Israel's proclamation as a nation in 1948, adding more complication to the American strategy in the M.E. According to Baxter, recognizing Israel as a state for the first time affected negatively the American policymaking in the area and contributed significantly to the growth of anti-American sentiment among Arabs (47). Likewise, the Arab-Israeli conflict, according to Hahn prevented the U.S from prioritizing its anti-Soviet containment policy which aimed to create a secure and noncommunist environment in the M.E (Hahn 33). Thus American participation in the political processes of several Middle Eastern states was necessary to stop Soviet penetration (Gordon 26). However, its ability to carry it out was hindered by its support to Israel.

In fact, the U.S specific policy of backing the establishment of the nation of Israel and ensuring its stability solidified its interests in the M.E (Al Sarhan 461). These perspectives continued to shape and dominate the American policy towards the Middle Eastern states since the mid twentieth century.

Prior to this relation between Israel and the U.S. and until the Six-Day War of 1967, the U.S opposed Israel's invasion to Egypt in 1956 along with France and Britain. Ultimately, pressure from the American government condemned the attack and issued stern warnings to the tripartite to give up their campaign and called for sanctions against Israel in case it refused the withdrawal from the Egyptian soil, fearing the effects on U.S.-Arab ties and the stability of Middle Eastern states (Baxter and Akbarzadeh 47-8). The U.S repeatedly refused to provide military aid to Israel for the preemptive attack on Egypt ("The Six Day War").

Under the prospect of the USSR, the Israeli and the Anglo-French troops pulled out of the Suez Canal zone. This crisis exacerbated Cold War tensions and facilitated the rise of Soviet political dominance in the M.E (Conlin and Luce 59). Hence the Soviet influence in the area was significant in pursuing policies that were designed to undermine the dominance of western states (156).

Accordingly after the Suez Crisis, the emergence of Arab nationalism brought closer the U.S and Israel by a shared desire to counter Arab nationalism popularity. As a result, the move of Eisenhower to declare his doctrine in 1957 made the Congress approve the military force and economic aid for the Middle Eastern states who were threatened by communism. The pan Arab uprising was manifested in the Arab unity between Syria and Egypt in 1958. The attempt to overthrow the Camille Shamoun government in Lebanon and to dethrone king Hussein in Jordan, or the success of the emergence of Ba'th coups in Iraq and Syria stood firmly against the will of establishing a strategic relationship with Israel (Little "The Making of " 564-65).

The U.S built an enormous surface to air missile system extending from Saudi Arabia to Israel to be the primary of its kind along with U.S military hardware provided to Israel. This aid was also deployed to deter the Soviet power (Friedman "The Complex History of"). The outbreak war of 1967 led to an escalation of military clashes encouraged by the Arab States of Syria, Jordan and Egypt against Israel. To this end, Israel won the war and occupied the Golan Heights, Sinai and the West Bank. Israel's decisive victory served a surge of pride in the U.S. Other Arab states; meanwhile, like Egypt, Syria and Iraq cut diplomatic relations with the U.S for its ardent support to Israel; meanwhile, Moscow cut its relations with Israel (Baxter and Akbarzadeh 51-52).

Resolution 242 was presented to the public by the Security Council on November 22nd, 1967. It demanded that Israeli troops leave the lands they had occupied prior to the conflict (Baxter and Akbarzadeh 54). However, the resolution context did not clearly stipulate which territories Israel is expected to withdraw from. This provided possibility for different interpretations. The resolution related the withdrawal to other issues calling for an end to situations of hostility and belligerency. This fact acknowledged the states' sovereign rights to exist without interference from others and to live free from fear of invasion or attack inside the internationally recognized borders emphasizing the need for a decent refugee solution (Baxter and Akbarzadeh 54).

While the Arab states received the resolution as Israel's total withdrawal from the territories, Israel and its ally the U.S received the resolution as a declaration of state's right to security. The former President Lyndon Johnson stated that: the U.S was not in a position to decide where lines should be drawn by nations for maximum security; however, peace would not be achieved by going back to the way things were on June 4, 1967. Hence borders had to be acknowledged and protected and neighbors had to reach consensus on some dividing boundaries (Baxter and Akbarzadeh 54).

Egypt's relations with the Soviet consolidated and developed between 1968 and 1970 where the USSR supplied Egypt with MiG-21 fighters and surface-to-air missiles (SAM-3s) as an assistance for Egypt to attack Israel (Baxter and Akbarzadeh 57). Prior to 1973 war, Syria and Egypt organized a surprise attack on Israel on Yom Kippur. In return, Israel was supported by the U.S and was received a massive U.S. Air Force's Military Airlift as an act to force away the attacks of both countries ("Yom Kippur War").

Even though there was a strategic dependence on Israel, and even when the U.S came to support Israel; but at the forefront this relationship between the two countries was never

simple. Although, the war of 1967 marked the end of Nasserism and Pan Arabism, it also reinforced Israel's territorial ambitions which sometimes had competing strategic interests with the U.S since the victory of 1967. The common point of disagreement in the U.S- Israeli relation was on the fact that Israel's expanding policy in building new settlements on the occupied lands since 1967. The U.S has always viewed Israel as a strategic asset, but it was not its only ally. Support of the U.S to Israel then should be seeking ways of reconciling with the Arabs whom had been in some form of anti-Soviet alliance (Friedman "The Complex History").

Hence the U.S played a key role as peace broker between Israel and Middle Eastern countries. Thereby, the U.S pressured Israel to withdraw from Sinai. Following Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, Ronald Reagan opposed such invasion and was forced to intervene (Friedman "The Complex History of").

After Henry Kissinger popularized the term realpolitik, the U.S adopted shuttle diplomacy as a method of conducting negotiations between Israel and Egypt towards peace treaty. These negotiations were culminated in signing the second Sinai agreement in 1975 between Israel and Egypt. In response to the peace process, the U.S provided Egypt and Israel with economic and military aid packages. Under Anwar Al-Sadat presidency, the president adopted different approaches from that of Nasser's. On 9 November 1977, El Sadat startled the Arab states by visiting Israel and negotiating a peace agreement for the return of the occupied Sinai Peninsula. However, these efforts of achieving peace with Israel without the consent of the Arab states were condemned by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and Egypt's membership in the Arab League was revoked from 1979 till 1989 as a direct consequence of the treaty (Pace "Anwar el-Sadat").

El Sadat was assassinated on 6 October 1981 by fundamentalist army officers, evidently angered by Al-Sadat's recognition of Israel. Even though the framework for peace principally initiated in the 1970s and resulted in signing a number of peace accords, It has been crucial that there have always been a lot of disputes lied in the way of reaching a lasting peace, apart from the assassination of Al Sadat, it is worth noting that the signing of the Oslo II agreement in 1995, resulted also in the assassination of Rabin, former prime minister of Israel, for the territorial concessions he offered to the Palestinians (Powers, Mark and Katzman 37-8).

The diplomatic relation between Israel and Egypt, and the U.S support to Israel made it even more remarkable when the Cold War was finally over. The substantial U.S aid to Israel grew stronger in order to exist in security and peace. It is worthy to claim that none came close to offer the level of diplomatic assistance provided by the U.S to Israel, which often stood alone with Israel at the United Nations (Zunes "Why the"). In return, since the Cold war, Israel was considered an ally to the U.S when it committed itself to protect American security and interests against both Arab nationalism and Soviet Union in the M.E (Al Sarhan 462).

2.1.4.4. The U.S and the Middle Eastern Oil

Following WWII, the oil concessions of the Gulf States became prominent. The new oil companies of United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were added with the concessions of the already discovered oil reserves of both Iran and Iraq, since the Arab oil reserves represented potentially two-thirds of global oil reserves. The American constant need for oil began to look for other alternative sources abroad, most prominently in the Middle East to meet its demands. Hence, further American enterprises were formed to extract oil from these concessions, as oil production in the U.S decreased to its increased consumption (Rabie

2). In fact, it relied on the imported oil since the Arab oil reserves potentially far exceeded 50%. Hence among the most notable strategies of the U.S in the area was access to its oil that became a concern of American national security interests. This latter shaped its foreign policy since WWII (Rees 73).

The U.S. solidified its long standing relationship with Saudi Arabia after WWII. In 1945, Roosevelt met the King of Saudi Arabia Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud in order to make an agreement in which it included two components that were crucial to American interests. The U.S would offer protection to the M.E and Al Saud family in exchange for exploration of its vast oil reserves to American companies (Blanchard 5).

The U.S. primary political-economic objectives in the M.E during the twentieth century were centered on protecting the Persian Gulf and ensuring its access to oil (Jones 208). In the absence of the Soviet threat, the U.S devoted its attention to peace in the area to safeguard its oil interests (Beaver B., Beaver J. and Wilsey “The Middle East”).

2.1.4.4.1. Oil Nationalization and Embargo

The U.S dependence on the oil potential of the Middle Eastern states has long influenced its foreign policy. This U.S policy was largely challenged by the Arab Nationalist movements such as the Iranian nationalization of oil, and the nationalization of Suez Canal by Jamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt. Two thirds of oil supply at that time went through the canal to Europe and the largest share of the canal tolls went to the British government. Prior to the canal crisis, the British Prime Minister Anthony Eden, speaking to a visiting Russian delegation, said that they go to war over oil and they could not survive without oil (Rees 78-9).

After nationalizing the Suez Canal, Britain's response was overt through military action together with France and Israel. As a reaction, the U.S forced Britain out of Egypt for the same reason it had already opposed it in Iran, fearing that such act would encourage Pan-Arabism and raise the prospects for Soviet intrusion into the M.E. Therefore, it would threaten the authority of the U.S in the area (Rees 79).

The impact of the Suez Canal can be seen in the rise of Pan-Arab political movement, in which two years later, Nasser affected the flow of the economic trade when his backed coup opposed the British-backed Hashemite royal family³ in Iraq. The new nationalist government cancelled the concessions of all oilfield companies in 1960, mainly decreasing British stake in the Iraqi oil fields. Shortly afterwards, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Venezuela and Iraq founded the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to regulate oil prices. The rise of Pan-Arab nationalism was still felt when the Syrian government nationalized its oil industry in 1964 and imposed new transit taxes on the use of its pipelines (79).

Despite the fact that the Arabs lost the war in 1967, the OPEC was significant in the face of changing the economics of oil supply. Richard Nixon announced his doctrine in 1969, to which it granted economic and military aids to American allies in the Gulf who faced military threats or who threatened the stability of the region. The aim of this doctrine was to guarantee the oil flow to the U.S from the Persian Gulf. Hence, Saudi Arabia and Iran have been U.S. regional security cornerstones throughout the Cold War period (Beinart, "Return of the"). Hence the U.S through the Nixon doctrine maintained hegemony and controlled the region's oil.

The American commitment to Israel as it attempted to solidify their alliance prior to Yom Kippur war (1973) led the Arab members of OPEC to reduce oil production. The OPEC

imposed an embargo on oil shipments against the U.S and other countries as a response to their pro-Israel policy during the Arab-Israeli War (Rees 80; Al Sarhan 461). As a result, Nixon declared that the administration had important plans for its troops to control the oil fields in the M.E; however the embargo was lifted through the efforts of the OPEC states before the U.S plan would be implemented, until adequate steps for the West are taken to support the Arabs (Rees 81).

All these actions had long-range consequences on the policy of the U.S. The decision of Nixon's successors was influenced by oil ideology with President Carter's assertion that any foreign attempts to dominate the Gulf oil would be viewed as a potential danger to American national security and strategic interests. President Carter laid down his Doctrine in 1980 following the Soviet invasion to Afghanistan, by stating that "an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America and will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force" (qtd. in Rees 82).

The U.S dependence on the Persian Gulf region was thus significant for the oil-producing countries to protect them from revolutions or regime change and socioeconomic transformation. The U.S militarized its allies Saudi Arabia and Taliban on its fight against the Soviets, however, the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979 triggered the rising Islam radicalism (81-3).

2.1.4.5. U.S Policy during the Persian Gulf War

The Iraqi government⁴ resumed economic ties with the U.S during the 1970s. This happened after Saddam Hussein's announcement in 1973 that he was open to better relations with the U.S. Saddam's initiatives led Washington to pursue diplomatic ties with Baghdad (Kiely 47).

The Iran-Iraq military conflict stood out as the most violent of the 1980s and the longest running interstate war to happen in the 20th Century that lasted for eight years of conflict. In point of fact, both nations had an abundance of oil resources. However, the roots of the war laid its ground when Iraq wanted to expand its influence over the oil-rich territory along its border with Iran, and Iran threatened to close the Gulf in response. In 1984, the Reagan administration sent the defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld to Baghdad to convince Saddam Hussein that Washington was eager to re-establish diplomatic relations with Iraq. During that war, Iraq received military intelligence, combat planning, and other vital information from the U.S (Rezun 39).

By the early 1984, despite the apparent victory for Iraq that seemed to be inevitable, the U.S traded missiles and arms to Iran; however, the controversial deal- the Iran Contra Scandal- put Reagan's new term at risk. The two Gulf states were armed to assert dominance over the Persian Gulf, but the states' fiscal crises were wrecked by the cost of a prolonged war and hence neither state won the conflict. The increasing danger of the conflict and the world's energy oil supply was the ultimate reason that led the U.S to intervene, when it responded to Kuwaiti requests by Operation Earnest Will for the military protection of Kuwaiti-owned tankers from Iranian attacks in amid the Iran-Iraq war. Nevertheless, a turning point occurred when the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed resolution no. 598 demanding an immediate ceasefire to bring an end to hostilities between Iran and Iraq (Baxter and Akbarzadeh 119-23).

During the Iraq-Iran war, the U.S was concerned with stopping the region's Islamic fundamentalism threat, through supporting Iraq and supplied it with military technology and intelligence as a best available means to contain Iran. Yet, simultaneously the U.S strategy toward Iraq changed and as an attempt to deny its victory over Iran, the U.S increased a steady flow of military hardware against Iraq. In supporting both regional conflict states, the

U.S increased casualties and internal violence, as the two regional powers were left exhausted and ruined by the war. Through arming the two regional states, the U.S succeeded in containing the threat of the potential nationalism in Iraq and the Islamic revolution in Iran in an effort to reduce their overall power and influence. This policy is best known as the dual containment that continued through the Clinton administration. However, while the two regional powers were being undermined politically and economically, America's allies in the Gulf were becoming dependent on American political support (Rabie 3).

2.1.4.6. The Gulf War

After the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq seemed to be an armed state, however, it has been driven by its excessive debts, financial desperations and tensions with the neighboring Gulf States. Kuwait was one of these tensions based on history. The Iraqi forces poured over the Kuwaiti borders and decided to invade it on August 2, 1990, asserting that Kuwait belonged to Iraq; they accused Kuwait of taking advantage of high levels of oil production hence lowering world oil prices and hindering Iraq's economic recovery (Baxter and Akbarzadeh 123-7).

Despite tough negotiations from the Middle Eastern countries to seek a middle ground between Kuwait and Iraq over the repayment of Iraq's debts, Iraq rejected the request and claimed that it had halted the Iranian expansionist plans. Kuwait should forgive part of his regime's war debt, but it precluded Saddam's debt-forgiveness demands, unless Iraq would recognize all of the Kuwait's borders (155).

The annexation of Kuwait by Iraq was met with almost unfavorable and negative reactions from the international community. The UNSC requested that Iraq withdraw all of its forces from Kuwait; meanwhile, the Arab states condemned the invasion. When Iraq refused to withdraw its forces, the UNSC adopted Resolution 660, asking that Iraq is required to

quickly and unconditionally pull back all of its army to the positions they held on August 1, 1990 (“Resolutions adopted...”).

When Iraq disregarded the previous warnings and refused to comply with the United Nations (UN) demands, UNSCR issued resolution 678 on 29 November 1990. It ordered Saddam to leave Kuwait for the last time. In case he did not comply, the resolution gave member governments permission to employ any appropriate means that are effective in bringing peace back to the region (“Resolutions adopted ...”).

Subsequently, Operation Desert Storm against Iraq started on 17 January 1991, led by the U.S and other international military coalition. During the Operation, Jordan was neutral and Yemen supported Iraq; meanwhile, countries like Germany, South Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia and UAE fought alongside the U.S to liberate Kuwait and to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty. The Operation Desert Storm ended in March 1991 by the quick defeat of Iraq, but Saddam Hussein was still in power (Cristol 1). According to Allawi, expelling Iraqi soldiers from Kuwait and containing Iraq became the primary focus of the American strategy. This strategy was meant that the Iraqi regime was to be disarmed, isolated, and undermined in order to eliminate it as a security risk to the area, and render it politically unstable (3).

It was obvious that the chief reason for the U.S intervention in the Iraq-Kuwait conflict far exceeded the mandated mission to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty in the Iraq war. It gave the U.S legitimate pretext of power and global influence to further strengthen its military presence there as an effort to weaken both Persian Gulf countries, Iran and Iraq. Therefore, it deepened the Arab division. As the war generated some new security and legal problems in Iraq, the war was central in destroying the infrastructure of Iraqi military and breakdown of its internal order, in addition to weakening its economy so that it could no longer meet the needs for its people. In Iran, the American goal was to make its political influence insignificant.

Consequently, the war resulted in maintaining new American bases in all Gulf states like Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, predominantly focusing on incorporating the Arab oil-producing states into the sphere of American influence and hence serving the U.S national interests by those countries (Rabie 4).

The U.S real concern was what President H.W. Bush already stated an availability of oil (Aruri 37). Compared to his predecessor, the policy that Clinton pursued in relation to Iraq was just as subversive. Both presidents justified U.S policy towards Saddam's attacks against the Kurds with Human Rights violations. Yet the issue has other intentions as William Perry, the Defense Secretary during the Clinton's presidency, stated that it was not just an attack against the Kurds, but Iraq represented an imminent danger to its neighbors throughout the area and to the global oil flow (Aruri 39). Clinton declared that U.S vital interests were placed with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, Iraq's two neighbors, more than with the Kurds. He said that the U.S took action in southern Iraq which was the most important area for protecting its interests (Aruri 39).

Following the administration of George W. Bush, its policy towards Iraq in 2001 did not change and it continued in the same paradigm of the previous administration. The 9/11 events, however, prompted a change in the strategy of the U.S in Iraq as Allawi argued the attacks opened the gate for W. Bush's advocates to reinforce his policy in the M.E. Since then Iraq started to change drastically (Allawi 4).

The main ground for a bitter U.S policy toward Iraq was the likelihood that this country harbored WMD. This policy necessitated regime change. From this perspective, other legitimate themes running through the concept of introducing liberal democratic values in the Middle Eastern states against Islamic fundamentalism (4).

2.1.5. Post 9/11 U.S Policy in the M.E and the Invasion of Iraq

The policy of the U.S in the countries of the M.E and Iraq particularly changed radically under the W. Bush administration following 9/11 events. His policies were ranged between war on terror and his doctrine of preemption.

2.1.5.1. 9/11 Attacks and U.S-Iraq Relations

On September 11, 2001, under the name of Al-Qaeda and according to the U.S perspective, the Islamic terrorist organization carried out a string of four hijackings and terrorist assaults against the country. Two commercial planes hit the two towers of World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, and the last went down near Pennsylvania field. The attacks caused extensive deaths, almost 3,000 people. Soon after, American television channels broadcasted the images of the killing people and reported that the destruction was led by the terrorist network of Osama bin Laden. Osama reported that he acted in retaliation for U.S foreign policy, specifically toward Muslim states, its military engagement in the region and its unyielding support to Israel ("September 11 Attacks").

In the wake of those events, W. Bush constituted the assaults an act of war. Subsequently, he called for a new global war on terror against what he called the Islamic terrorists Al-Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan. He invited every nation to make a decision either to be with or against the U.S (Ezeibe and Ogbodo 146).

On 18 September 2001, under the W. Bush administration, Congress afforded a permission to employ armed force to defend the U.S ("Joint Resolution" 1). This declaration allowed W. Bush: To employ all appropriate means at his disposal against any nation, organization, or individual who deemed responsible for planning, authorizing, committing, or

assisting the September 11, 2001 terrorist acts or providing sanctuary to those who were responsible for the attack (“Joint Resolution” 1).

After the events, W. Bush moved to develop security measures to protect the U.S from any menace and from large scale attacks of terrorist activities. He warned the world from the consequences of not joining the U.S efforts in fighting terrorism as to be regarded as an enemy to the nation.

A friction between the U.S and NATO countries occurred over the W. Bush administration’s claims when the president attempted to link Saddam’s regime in Iraq to al-Qaeda Organization. By the end of 2002, it became clear that an inevitable war was prepared to invade Iraq despite several warnings from the U.N (Ezeibe and Ogbodo 146). 9/11 events gave W. Bush the spark to engage on a global war on terror which began first in Afghanistan and it swept to Iraq.

2.1.5.2. The Second Iraq War and WMD

The plan for the war in Iraq as an integral aspect for the struggle against terrorism dated back to the 1990s, when the U.S considered Saddam Hussein the main tension in the region. The former President W. H. Bush did not oust Saddam Hussein from power due to his invasion of Kuwait. Therefore, the American government did not drop all charges against Iraq. Yet after the attack, W. Bush asserted the cooperation found between Iraq and al Qaeda (Katzman, *Al Qaeda in Iraq: ...* 1).

Prior to 2002, the U.S claimed that Iraq was in violation with the resolutions of UNSC which intended to insure that Iraq dismantled itself of WMD, and the fact that Saddam Hussein had WMD might be deployed against the U.S. Subsequently, it declared war on terrorism. Most of its allies did not accept to take role on the decision to participate in military

action on Iraq. The W. Bush administration, thus decided to go it alone if necessary (“Iraq War: 2003-2011”). When war with Iraq abandoned its quest for U.N authorization, the American government declared that diplomatic efforts have been unsuccessful and in March 2003, Bush proceeded to attack and to invade Iraq (Ezeibe and Ogbodo 146).

It became more apparent that Saddam Hussein did not use any biological or chemical weapons in defending his country against the U.S invasion. Nevertheless, Saddam was quickly arrested and the war came to a conclusion in May. The Iraqi interim government (IIG) was established on July, 2003, yet bombing and air raid continued (146). By 2006, the American government sent combat forces to Iraq to curb sectarian strife in the M.E as an effort to restore order and establish law, which according to the American government was such a hard task for the U.S forces. It was triggered by persistent attacks against occupying troops which later developed into full-scale (“Iraq War: 2003-2011”).

With the 2008 elections, Obama pledged to change the course of the Iraq war, and he vowed to withdraw gradually American military troops from Iraq. On 1st September 2010, he declared an end to the American presence and announced a formal withdrawal from Iraq. With a national address, the Iraqi Prime Minister proclaimed his country sovereign and independent (Ezeibe and Ogbodo 146).

2.2. U.S Democracy Promotion in the M.E Pre and Post 9/11 Attacks

Promoting democracy in the M.E was not a topic of discussion before 9/11 attacks, yet it received a considerable attention and found its way in the presidents’ speeches in the 2000s, with introducing W. Bush’s Freedom Agenda.

2.2.1. Democracy Promotional Efforts in the M.E Pre 9/11

Since the 1990s, American efforts raised dramatically after the conclusion of the Cold War. These efforts were characterized on backing transitions and regime change in Europe, Eurasia and Africa. W.H. Bush and Clinton were among the presidents to view democracy promotion as paramount. Hence U.S promotional efforts increased but with considerable fluctuation between countries, focusing on engagement with regime transitions in post-communist societies. Supporting friendly regimes would be much more influential for the U.S as many authoritarian regimes lost their external Soviet support (Sedaca and Bouchet 6).

The overriding concern of the U.S strategy in the M.E for the past three decades has become preoccupied with regional states' domestic problems. Till the 1970s, the U.S pursued one of its national interest goals in the area which was primarily access to the region's oil supply, because such policy was deemed significant on guaranteeing its interests, alienating its political force, maintaining stability in the region and negotiating comprehensive peaceful settlement that would end the Arab-Israeli conflict (Dunne 3).

During the 1980s, the U.S military and strategic contributions were required to ensure the safety of oil supplies from Arab sources, and provided staging bases for its military operations in Africa and Asia. The M.E expert Michele Durocher Dunne stated that the U.S placed a growing emphasis on the importance of economic growth as essential to Arab stability (3).

Significant democratic change in the M.E and more particularly support of political reforms began to mount into the American agenda early in 1990. For many scholars, the Post-Cold War democracy promotion gained leverage interests of the U.S in the region during the 1990s (Mitchell 311).

However, in spite of the rhetorical emphasis on the support of democracy, the U.S security interests continued to be a high priority objective in the M.E ahead of representative government. During this decade, the U.S rejected continued efforts toward concerns of genuine democratic changes in the Arab world, based on the presumption that liberal democracy was incompatible with the Arab Islamic political culture that might pave the way for illiberal democracy under Islamist rule to adopt anti-American agendas. Because of this fact, the U.S refrained from pursuing similar social reforms (Hawthorne 24). The second objective was to block the rise of nationalist revolutions that might lead to conflicts of interests with the U.S (Rossi 300).

Also in the 1990s, the U.S suspended its military and economic aids to Jordan after a long period foreign assistance under a repressive regime, when the latter opened its diplomatic efforts in favor of democratic processes (Zunes “Tinderbox:” 14). This claim was highly demonstrated by the Reagan administration when the Saudi National Guard (SANG) that is managed by America played a key part in crushing the Saudi uprising of 1981. Reagan stated that he would not allow Saudi Arabia to go the route of Iran. Reagan referred to the Iranian revolution which resulted in the overthrow of its Shah (Znues “Tinderbox:” 14).

The perspective of W. H. Bush was summarized by James A. Baker, the former Secretary of State as follows:

Generally speaking, when you support democracy, you take what democracy gives youif it gives you a radical Islamic fundamentalist; you’re supposed to live with it. We didn’t live with it in Algeria because we felt that the radical fundamentalists’ views were so adverse to what we believe in and what we support, and to what we understood the national interests of the United States to be. (qtd. in Gerges “Obama and the Middle East: 76-7)

From W. H. Bush to Clinton, U.S-Mid East policy revealed that Clinton maintained Bush's rhetorical approach. The Clinton administration officials claimed that the U.S would not oppose the rise of Islamists to power if the latter did not have a worldwide goal (Jamal 242). Jamal argued that the U.S rejected Islamists not because of their probable anti-democratic practice but rather because of their anti-Americanism (242). Legitimizing Jamal's argument during the Clinton administration, Fawaz Gerges added that if Islamists focused on internal issues, they would not face any opposition from the U.S ("Obama and the Middle East: 102).

Another official in the Clinton's administration even claimed that the U.S was willing to live with Islamic regimes if they did not threaten its core interests (Jamal 242). Martin Indyk, *a senior State Department official in the Clinton administration*, on his address in 1993 characterized Islamists as potential troublemakers who could destabilize the region (Jamal 86). Clinton conveyed the same sentiments in his speech in 1994, he discussed the perspectives of American politics towards the Middle East as the following: Islamists represented tyranny, on one side, and the U.S represented freedom, on the other (Jamal 86).

Madeleine Albright, *a former Secretary of State during Clinton's second term*, further stated justifications of the rationale behind U.S unwilling efforts to foster democratization as a result of the Islamists' being seen as a potential danger, by stating that the U.S was hesitant to pursue democracy in the Middle Eastern countries. It worried about if extreme Islamists won an election, elections would be disappeared and unrest may result (Yetiv 145). Jamal ended up with the view that the American policy toward Islamists became firmly solid because the American officials feared their regime implications, radical policies and agendas (Jamal 242).

During the 1990s, the U.S officials deeply believed that promoting political and democratic changes in the M.E would raise the potential Islamic fundamentalism and hinder

the Arab-Israeli peacemaking efforts that were the primary focus of American diplomacy (Dunne 4). The U.S officials generally believed that the ongoing tension between Israel and Palestine would prevent Arab people and their regimes from focusing on domestic political reform (4).

2.2.2. Democracy Promotional Efforts in the M.E Post 9/11

Since September 11 events, W. Bush has committed democracy promotion as a guiding sentiment to bolster security, and countered the ideology of extremism as responsible for terrorism and other global problems. The outcome of this was countries which captured the attention of the American pro-democratic rhetoric. These countries had been far away from American democracy promotional efforts in the region and most prominently in Iraq, Afghanistan and the broader M.E and North Africa or other countries central to terrorism (Sedaca and Bouchet 6). This shift represented a move from supporting repression, autocracy, and the use of military force or coercion after WWII to a consensual social control and the promotion of democracy that was aimed at strengthening U.S hegemony (Robinson 623).

Thereby, the 9/11 terrorist attacks have contributed in shaping the U.S ideology that the pro American repressive government regimes particularly those of Saudi Arabia and Egypt would continue to be a barrier to terrorism and Islamism. This assumption was that W. Bush, prior to 9/11, required regime change in Iraq to ensure stability and to foster democracy, hence such transformation can lead to an age of security that serves U.S interests (Gambill "Explaining the Arab").

The first presidential initiatives launched by W. Bush were committed to complement American efforts to push for transition to democracy in the M.E. These initiatives were to provide the new democratic governments with free trade and economic facilities such as the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) to help boost socio-economic and political changes,

and the bi-lateral policies in order to help build more democratic foundations for regional initiatives such as the Foundation for the Future (FFF) (Carothers “U.S. Democracy” 5).

The U.S as part of its pro democratic initiatives also invoked military interventions in the area, like it had militarily intervened in Panama in 1989. In the M.E, the U.S invaded Iraq in 2003 and ousted Saddam’s regime. The W. Bush administration enlisted several reasons for the invasion including the democratization of Iraq, the Iraq’s production and possession of WMDs and its ties to terrorists. Nevertheless, promoting democracy remained the focus of W. Bush’s rationale for toppling Saddam’s government once it became clear that these statements about terrorism and WMDs were discredited (Hobson 40).

Even though the newly democratic governments drafted a constitution and held elections in light of the new liberal democratic changes, their rule was still considered as autocratic monarchical; consequently, their electoral processes were conducted just to legitimize their rule under the umbrella of democracy. While the truth is that the Arab governments such as UAE, Bahrain, Oman and others are still repressive countries, and the U.S chose to cooperate with these repressive governments to protect its interests in the M.E when the conditions for a real democratic exercise are favorable to American political and economic interests in oil and geo-political superiority (Ottaway and Carothers 2).

In sum, the U.S interests in the M.E were minimal before WWII, however, its policy and its deeper involvement in the area after WWII were critical to its own national interests, including security concerns on its intentions to protect Israel’s sovereignty, to maintain its military bases, to have access to Middle Eastern oil reserves and to protect its allies from the danger of communism in the area.

To contain Soviet inroads, the U.S adopted several doctrines, policies, strategies, and tactics which were based on providing aids militarily and economically to all countries that

were vulnerable to communism. For that purpose, U.S officials attempted to maintain a position as protectorate over Middle Eastern client states and favorable regimes to quickly address internal and external crises and hence to preserve its interests of oil and the security of its ally Israel, although they contradict with each other in many ways.

The U.S efforts were challenged by nationalists' attitude and Pan –Arabism in Middle Eastern states that were eventually linked to the Soviet threat to American interests. Instead, the U.S strengthened regional alliances with the friendly Arab allies in the region and supported them militarily and economically hoping that this could promote peace, maintain stability, and serve American interests by supporting its strategic foreign policy agendas, and securing its bases. However, stability and security, in turn, require that the potential genuine socio-political change must be contained. Despite this success, the U.S peace efforts with other countries ultimately failed, following the oil crisis of 1973 where the Arabs employed the commodity of oil as a political weapon against its commitment to Israel. At this point, the U.S understood that it needed more nuanced approach in the Middle East than simply supporting Israel.

While the democracy promotional efforts were systematically introduced under the former president Reagan in the 1980s. This new policy led to political transitions in many countries worldwide, yet the Arab states stayed beyond democracy reach. In post-Cold War era, the U.S had other overarching goals where the economic reform and democratization have become central question in its policy in the M.E for the sake of maintaining stability. However, through time there were more instability, chaos and wars which necessitated U.S direct engagement in the region's internal affairs.

Endnotes

¹ In his book, "The Origins of Alliances," Stephen Walt classifies Israel as a member of the Middle Eastern countries but leaves out Iran, the countries of North Africa and Turkey. While the states that emerged after the Ottoman Empire's fall are used by Carl Brown in *International Politics and the M.E.* to describe the region; this includes Israel but not Iran or Morocco. Meanwhile, Egyptian, Lebanese, Syrian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Saudi, and PLO borders were utilized by Michael Barnett to demarcate the original members of the Arab League. For further reading see: Barnett, Michael N. *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, 16. Since Matar and Hilal held that Arabs defined themselves in terms of their region in seeking nationalism, they expanded their definition to comprise the Arab states only in the region. Matar, Gamil and Ali al-Din Hilal, *The Arab Regional Order*. Beirut: Dar al-Mustaqbal al-Arabi, 1983, 57.

² Saudi Arabia and the Standard Oil Company of California (SOCAL) signed a Concession agreement in 1933, thereby launching Saudi ARAMCO 's history. SOCAL was its original name. To facilitate the management of the deal, the California Arabian Standard Oil firm (CASOC) was established. Even though exploration of the Saudi desert for oil did not start until 1935, Saudi Aramco's success was not recognized until 1938, when commercial oil production began in Dammam. Production of crude oil did not greatly grow until after WWII, and the company was renamed The Arabian Oil Company (ARAMCO) in 1944. For further reading see: Bahgat, Gawdat. "United States Oil Diplomacy in the Persian Gulf." Ed. Markus Kaim. *Great Powers and Regional Orders: The United States and the Persian Gulf*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008. 67.

³ "The Hashemite royal family took power in Iraq in 1945 with the explicit approval of the British Crown. Under the British-backed Hashemites, Iraq remained closely aligned with the United Kingdom. This was most evident in the signing of the Baghdad Pact in 1955". For further reading see: Baxter, Kylie, and Shahram Akbarzadeh. *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Roots of Anti-Americanism*. New York: Routledge, 2008. 110.

⁴ Iraq became a sovereign nation in 1921, ending British Mandate authority in October 1932. It was the first Arab state to emerge from colonial domination. Nonetheless, Iraq was not immune to outside involvement or influence despite having achieved legal independence. The Anglo-Iraqi War of 1941 was a brief conflict that erupted between Iraq and the United Kingdom due to Iraq's perceived pro-Axis leaning during World War, where the Iraqi rebellion was quickly put down by British forces. As a result of this brief conflict, Iraq remained under direct British occupation until WW ended. For further reading see: Baxter, Kylie, and Shahram Akbarzadeh. *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Roots of Anti-Americanism*. New York: Routledge, 2008. 110.

Chapter Three

Assessing the Bush's Democracy Policy Implementation in Iraq

The increasing tensions between the U.S and Iraq traced back to 2003, when 'operation Iraqi freedom' was launched. It was not until a group of presidential advisers made the choice to back the neoconservative government's decision to initiate military intervention in Iraq. This move was motivated by two immediate stated goals. The first was the terrorist attacks which precipitated a change in the direction that U.S government took in its foreign policy and claimed the entitlement to utilize preemptive force as a means of self-defense. The second ultimate goal was to overthrow Saddam's regime and eliminate his nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons programs.

After toppling Saddam from power, there had been an emphasis on promoting democracy and freedom as an antidote to terrorist threats and as a part of the neoconservative's new central objective. Rhetorically, W. Bush promised to strengthen democratic governance in Iraq and the rest of the M.E. Accordingly, the need for exporting democracy in Iraq appeared an integral part in U.S policy to help its people govern and defend themselves against any possible threat. With that shift in focus, the war has gone through nation-building efforts with the aim of engineering political and economic change in Iraq at least rhetorically. However, the nation stood on the verge of a civil conflict where violence, chaos, disorder and bloodshed seem inevitable. Instead of integrating democratic and stable system with convincing means of safety, it became a breeding ground for committing acts of terrorism, let alone the sectarian and ethnic conflict between Shiites and Sunnis.

As for the structure of the chapter, it contains two sections. The first section discusses regime change in Iraq and Bush's 'Freedom Agenda' on the ground of his pre-emption doctrine. It analyzes U.S declarations of the former president to democratize Iraq as a central pillar in his foreign policy objectives, also as a rationale for currying out military actions. In this section, the president stressed the need for promoting democratic values worldwide, particularly in the Islamic nations, and show how the spread of democracy in Iraq would serve as domino effect for other Arab countries in their pursuit of a political transformation. Then, it critically analyses the W. Bush's strategy in Iraq after the invasion, focusing on the economic and political reforms implemented as part of his efforts in democratizing Iraq. The second section assesses how well the U.S plan for the democratization was effective or not. It also aims to demonstrate Bush's mistakes in Iraq that contributed to the failure of that mission and shows the hidden intentions behind the democracy promotion in Iraq.

3.1. From Realism to Supremacy

The ideological realist interpretation of the war lied in the neoconservative's circle of influence when W. Bush abandoned his cautious realist approach with U.S defensive strategies following the events of 9/11. He replaced it by a more aggressive and transformative strategy to invade Iraq in 2003, focused first on regime change and WMD then democracy promotion by military intervention to end tyranny. Yet the Iraq war was merely the result of expanding U.S hegemonic primacy in the M.E.

3.1.1. Forced Regime Change

Following the 9/11 events, W. Bush appeared reluctant to immediate push for regime change in Iraq, and simultaneously he wanted most obvious and powerful reason for U.S military intervention to assure international and domestic support for the Iraq war and to keep an eye out for a way to topple Saddam Hussein from power. According to Wolfowitz, one of

the most outspoken advocates for the idea that helping spread liberal principles and human rights abroad is in the best interests of the U.S grand strategic objectives (Allawi 83).

After the terrorist Attacks, W. Bush's foreign policy shifted drastically and manifested in asserting W. Bush's broad-based doctrine of preemption in Iraq ("The National Security" 15). It was interpreted in the National Security Strategy of 2002 as:

The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction- and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively. (qtd. in "The National Security" 15)

The Bush doctrine has been announced on that day by President Bush. It was centered on the need to strike first against potential enemies. He replaced the previous containment strategies by commitments to preemption that was later pursued against Iraq.

Saddam's purported links to WMD and international terrorism were another primary element motivating the W. Bush administration's invasion of Iraq ("Postwar Findings about" 4). Bob Woodward claimed that since W. Bush took office, he has been plotting to overthrow Saddam's government, because of the threat caused by Iraq as Saddam obtained WMD to use against the U.S and without United Nations' inspections. Thereby, the 9/11 events gave the U.S a new direction to target Saddam's regime (Woodward 83). He noted that the U.S might not discover persuasive evidence until Saddam would use his weapons against the U.S, stressing the need for protecting the Americans first from this threat.

In W. Bush's memoirs, he mentioned that after assuming office, he prioritized increasing sanctions to keep Saddam in his box as Colin Powell called it. After 9/11, he had to

reevaluate every potential danger in the world (Bush “Decision Points” 228). W. Bush’s initial realist policy was reinforced by Donald Rumsfeld, W. Bush’s Defense Secretary who claimed that opportunities to remake the world were made possible by 9/11 in the same way that they were during World War II (“Secretary Rumsfeld Interview”). Hence the events of 9/11 followed by the war on terror were a rational means of coercive regime change by placing Iraq in a broader context and by creating domestic international environment in the pursuit of Bush’s agenda (Hassan 268-69).

The 9/11 attacks, according to most observers, paved the way for neoconservatives to convince W. Bush and Congress to invade Iraq and to move away from the soft power to a more coercive turn they had earlier failed under the Clinton administration with the end of the Cold War (Dodge 93). Taking the fears of American public opinion and Congress into consideration, W. Bush used them to pass a resolution to justify the Iraq invasion (93). Hence rhetoric and propaganda have been instrumental to bring the U.S from the 9/11 events to the eve of the Iraq war in 2003 (Covington 76). Through Bush’s new policy of preemption, the U.S permitted itself to authorize self-defense by using force even without the U.N approval (Jentleson 417). The Bush doctrine authorized the U.S to act unilaterally and gave it the authority to attack any country and overthrow any regime which deemed a threat to its security and interests (Gupta 181-82).

Robert Singh stated that 9/11 events motivated W. Bush to embrace neo-conservative rhetoric and reasoning in support of his political pronouncements, that Iraq constituted one example of the new conservative convergence in his administration (33-34). Other debate in the White House was centered in how quickly it would be necessary to invade and disarm Iraq. Dick Cheney, the Vice president of W. Bush made the execution of the new policy in Iraq necessary, stating that postponing the issue would lead to extremely hazardous and severe dangers (Kellner 1-2). The American decision-makers took on the responsibility to act

promptly so that to protect humanity from a possible catastrophe that would occur by utilizing these nuclear weapons by Saddam, however, the American intention was far from the protection of human rights in Iraq or the promotion of democracy.

Many American officials from the neoconservative government such as the Secretary of State, James Baker; the National Security Adviser, Brent Scowcroft; and Lawrence Eagleburger warned against the potential consequences of going to war alone without the UN approval or without the support of U.S friends (Kellner 2). Also W. Bush's ambassador to the Middle East, Anthony Zinni warned that the decision of invading Iraq would make unwelcome rivals in the volatile Middle East; however, such arguments were against other officials' stances such as Dick Cheney and Richard Perle who strongly supported such move (2).

Beyond the previous factors discussed above for the invasion, the focal point also concentrated on regional American interests like energy and Israel security. In efforts, W. Bush perceived the invasion as an option to remake and reshape the whole region more reflective of American values and ideals, characterized by dual containment policy to establish American hegemony in the entire region (Hammer "Digging In"). From the geostrategic perspective, the U.S foresaw the establishment of permanent American bases in Iraq as launchpads for operations in Syria and Iran that would reduce its forces in Saudi Arabia. This initiative sparked a great deal of hostility between the U.S and other Gulf allies where American troops are stationed within their borders (Hammer "Digging In").

The W. Bush administration's reasons for invading Iraq have gone through immediate and distant goals. The immediate goal included removing Saddam from the seat of power and toppling his regime of WMD, cutting links between al-Qaeda and his regime (Russett 396). The distant goal was characterized by promoting democracy in Iraq (Stradiotto 4).

The events of 9/11 gave rise to the Bush Doctrine, which has guided the foreign policy of the U.S since the turn of the century. Preemption was taken as its new strategy to enhance coordinated efforts to counter terrorism, to impede WMD proliferation and to expand democratic institutions over the entire M.E.

3.1.2. U.S Rhetoric of Democracy Promotion towards Iraq in Post 9/11

W. Bush recognized the invasion as a divine mission to invoke the enduring idea of the U.S as a beacon of hope for people and governments around the globe that is envisioned by democracy, freedom and respect for human dignity, and that had guided the American nation throughout its history (Shapiro “Vietnam, Iraq”). According to Matthew Alan Hill, the U.S proclaimed itself as beacon of freedom and has divinely righteousness to export its version of liberal democracy worldwide (1). He continued that the U.S was targeted by an attack because it is widely seen as a global leader and as a status of opportunities and freedom, and no one can ever dim that candle (Bush “Today...Our very”).

Indeed, the attacks of 9/11 changed W. Bush’s strategic thinking, and in regard to the movement of the neoconservatives, something which was inherent in his administration, its primary intent was “to push forward a foreign strategy that aimed at remaking the world more reflective of America’s image” (Halper and Clarke 110). W. Bush promised that the U.S will seize the opportunity to spread freedom around the world (Bush “The National Security”).

When the two major factors of Saddam’s perceived production of biological and chemical weapons and his links to Al-Qaeda given by the neoconservative government were discredited, promoting democracy became the sole ultimate cause for regime change in Iraq (Hobson 40). Hence the neoconservative government admitted the objective of fostering democracy as a central goal of U.S policy in post 9/11. W. Bush portrayed the struggle against

terrorism and the spread of democracy as two facets of a single coin (Dobriansky and Carothers “Democracy Promotion”).

To address this issue, W. Bush’s desire to promote democracy in Iraq was part of transforming the whole Middle Eastern region into a catalyst for a wave of democratization pivot (Robinson 441). Bush focused on the region for decades to come and admitted that he focused on the challenges that the M.E posed to his commitment to democracy (Bush “President Bush”). He has generally criticized the region's democratic deficit and called for integrating the M.E economy into global markets, establishing an elite-led civil society and preventing the consolidation of regional dominance as a means of resolving the Arab-Israeli issue which in turn helped maintain stability and defend American interests in the M.E (Robinson 441-42).

In addition to putting an end to the region’s lack of democracy, which the W. Bush government has perceived as the underlying cause for the 9/11 attacks, W. Bush also justified its lack by the dictators of Iraq and Syria who practiced oppression and torture on their people (Bush “President Bush”). Yet the liberation of Iraq in the center of the M.E will be a defining moment in the worldwide democratic uprising (Bush “President Bush”).

3.1.3. The Neoconservative Reasoning of Exporting Democracy to Iraq

By ultimately rejecting the Middle Eastern exceptionalism, the W. Bush administration set the groundwork for democratic efforts in Iraq before the invasion ever began. Richard Perle once stated that having a democratic Iraq will effectively disprove the notion that Arabs cannot establish a democratic government (Fallows “The Fifty-First”). After 9/11 events, the neoconservative government cited the successful examples of post-WWII democratic nation-buildings of Japan and Germany by the U.S to reinforce their cases for invading Iraq (Bridoux 99). However, the post invasion phase witnessed disorder and

violence which disprove the claim that democracies do not fight each other and democracy is not promoted by coercive force, therefore, what happened in Iraq disproved the democratic peace theory.

Bush commented on the theme as follow:

There was a time when many said that the cultures of Japan and Germany were incapable of sustaining democratic values. Well, they were wrong. Some say the same of Iraq today. They are mistaken. The nation of Iraq- with its proud heritage, abundant resources and skilled and educated people- is fully capable of moving toward democracy and living in freedom. (qtd. in Fallows “The Fifty-First State?”)

This transformation experienced by the former Axis powers into peaceful democracies also had a key influence on the neoconservative official thinking inside and outside the W. Bush administration. The political neoconservative Charles Krauthammer made the following allegation about the democratic peace theory by stating that spreading democracy is important for protecting U.S interests, not merely as an aim in itself. In general, democracies tend to have less violence and less likely to wage war on their neighbors, and are more receptive to American interests than autocracies (Krauthammer 11). Nevertheless, the proof of the invasion of Iraq by the U.S and its negatives consequences establishes invalid arguments to the abovementioned claim that democracy leads to less violence and more peace.

In this sense, these arguments were of a paramount importance for president W. Bush through which he has wielded his administrative presidency with great focus on democracy that distinguished his administration from its predecessors under which the democratization efforts had not been largely applied explicitly as a primary goal towards the M.E.

Implementing a universal democracy in Iraq more particularly and to a country in the M.E for

the first time generally marked a major step forward in U.S policy towards the whole region. Hence W. Bush criticized the U.S Arab allies and perceived that the authoritarian Middle East regimes were finite in the eyes of his administration (Hawthorne 4).

Consequently, the U.S adopted new tactics to reform the M.E that placed an emphasis on the necessity of regime change and measures to promote democracy. The main objective of this policy is to redesign a fundamental political order more reflective of American values in Iraq, capable of achieving domestic security and guaranteeing oil supplies and serving as a transnational Middle East economic and political infiltration (446). Hence to fulfill the objective, president Bush opted for democracy promotion of the elites in Iraq so that to foster the political and civic organizations for a new government in Iraq and to suppress social movements that oppose the American program as a part of its pursuit of hegemony over the broader region, incorporating significant reforms in the political and the economy systems (447).

3.1.4. U.S Democracy Style in Iraq

The implementation of democracy program by President W. Bush covered various tiers of policy design, funding, and operational activity for long term regional hegemony (Robinson 443). The relevant elements of reforms to be examined within the context of ‘Western style’ of liberal democracy include the Iraqi economy and its political system (Markakis 151).

For that purpose according to the W. Bush administration, the first pillar was applied through economic cooperation to reduce unemployment by carrying out economic reforms that aimed to achieve the private sector growth and to increase the impact of investment. Reforming the political system through holding free elections, reforming the courts and

promoting the rule of law to enhance domestic order was the focus of the second pillar (Waśko-Owsiejczuk 12-13).

3.1.4.1. The Economic Reform

Following the invasion, the CPA implemented both external and internal neoliberal economic reforms. The external reforms opened Iraq's markets to trade and were anticipated to benefit international investors, whereas the internal labor and welfare reforms hurt Iraq's development and had affected negatively the local recovery of Iraq. These strategies alienated Iraqis and weakened local ownership over the peacebuilding process (Fitzgerald 4).

The CPA promptly pursued neoliberal policies, which integrated Iraq's markets into the global economy of foreign investment and trade (Fitzgerald 4). Looney stated a number of reforms that were complemented by the CPA after the fall of Baghdad as follow:

First, investors would have the right to full ownership of assets in Iraq, the ability to repatriate all earnings, and equal legal standing with local enterprises, with the exception of the vital oil production and refining sectors. Second, it was highly encouraged that international financial institutions either immediately began operations in Iraq or invested in the country's existing financial institutions by purchasing equity shares. Third, tax rates for individuals and corporations would be restricted at 15%. Fourth, there would be a 5% flat rate reduction on all import taxes, with no taxes at all on necessities like food, medicine, and books. Fifth, state-owned businesses (SOEs) in Iraq would be privatized excluding the oil industry; however, neither the timing nor the mechanism of privatization were stated (Fitzgerald 5).

Basically, the aforementioned reforms were purposed to sell off Iraqis' assets in order to exclude their local businesses and to implement full privatization on almost all state-owned

companies (Fitzgerald 5). As Paul Bremer, the head of the CPA, announced that a free market and a free society are inseparable. Private property and individual rights have historically proven to be the most effective means of safeguarding political freedom. Success in this endeavor will be gauged in large part by the U.S ability to create such wealth in Iraq (Lonney 574).

Bremer's comments about Iraq's vast and widely dispersed resources were viewed as a hint to the neoconservative administration's belief that the country's oil wealth would be used to fund postwar rebuilding and to pay off its pre-war debts through its petroleum reserves (Caron 123). This conviction served as an impetus for a consistent theme in American policy that based democracy on the free market economies across the Arab world, including Iraq (Chandrasekaran "Green Zone:" 68).

The economic reform of Iraq was a kind of a report drafted by a conservative think-tank and it supported a total neo-liberalization of Iraqi domestic markets, commercial relations, and privatization of all Iraqi businesses, especially oil (Looney 570). These neoliberal views appeared in a document drafted by USAID and the Treasury Department, titled "Moving the Iraqi Economy from Recovery to Sustainable Growth" (qtd. in Lonney 570). This document laid out a plan for the next year in Iraq that the W. Bush administration hoped would make as an example for bringing neoliberalism into the M.E (Lonney 570).

Before the invasion, foreign ownership of Iraqi firms was banned by Baghdad, which instead ran most companies as state-owned entities and levied steep taxes on foreign investment. To this end, Bremer's orders eliminated Saddam's economic system and replaced it by deep economic liberalization orders. The first step instituted though was the elimination of import duties. While some imported luxuries were subject to a 200% tax under Saddam,

Bremer's Order 12 abolished customs and stripped native producers of whatever advantage they might have had over international investors (Chandrasekaran "Imperial Life" 124).

Bremer's plan for Iraq's economic rehabilitation advocated for the dismantling of virtually all trade obstacles and the privatization of state-owned businesses. The plan granted complete ownership of Iraqi companies in all industries other than oil and minerals, at least its extraction and initial processing-was excluded from these Orders. The free and unrestricted transfer of revenues produced in Iraq by international corporations to their home countries, equal treatment under Iraqi law for foreign and domestic companies, and exposing Iraq's banking system to foreign control were all also included in this plan (Juhasz "Ambitions of Empire"). This decision divided the Iraqi Governing Council because of political and security concerns which assumed that the law would allow multinational corporations invest and buy up Iraqi real estate battling back growing insurgency (Dobbins, Jones, Runkle, and Mohandas 213).

The CPA was handed over 189 publicly owned firms as part of the legacy of Iraq's economy. Many of these companies ran at low capacity and had excessive numbers of employees which necessitated downsizing the number of its equipment (Dobbins, Jones, Runkle, and Mohandas 223). Hence, 103,000 people had to be laid off or retired by 2004 as part of the transition of these SOEs (227). Economic reforms also targeted Iraqi government subsidies which accounted for roughly half of the national budget (217-223).

In Iraq, the U.S has established a mission, commonly referred to as the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), as a direct response to the deteriorating conditions on the ground. This latter reported that after five years of the occupation, almost four million Iraqis needed food and forty percent of them had no access to clean drinking water (Fitzgerald 6).

These economic reforms, however, showed up the fragile balance between implementing neoliberal economic reforms which inevitably resulted in forced retirements and layoffs, and the necessity to prevent the growth of unemployment amidst severe turbulence. In point of fact, despite the efforts of CPA to reduce unemployment, practically all governorates claimed that joblessness was a critical and a major issue (Dobbins, Jones, Runkle, and Mohandas 232).

The labor sector was also reformed as part of the domestic economic overhauls. The CPA repealed all the policies issued by Saddam Hussein and instead replaced them by the neoliberal economic reforms (Fitzgerald 7). However, Bremer left in place the prohibition of the formation of labor unions which was the sole law dating back to the Hussein era that he did not remove (Juhasz "Ambitions of Empire"). It seemed that this law was convenient with neoliberal ideology since labor unions helped raise wages and guarantee high standards of working-conditions. It could imperatively limit profits for employers; consequently, by restraining the organized labor, non-union worker could have a job, also foreign nationals from other countries who were willing to work for less highly undermined the Iraqi labor force (Fitzgerald 7-8).

The implementation of these economic reforms had a negative impact on Iraq as Edmund Andrews argued:

But the downside is also taking hold. Iraqi manufacturers, which employed more than one-tenth of all workers before the war, are almost powerless to match the new competition. Their equipment is badly outdated. Their sense of marketing has atrophied. In many cases, their image among Iraqi consumers is abysmal. The free-market shocks are even bigger for Iraq's state-owned industrial companies, which produce everything from packaged foods to

electrical equipment and employ more than 100,000 people. (“After the War: The Economy”)

Implementing the BearingPoint plan by the USAID was aimed to create Iraq’s budget through global integration, set norms for commerce and customs, bring state-owned businesses under private ownership, create a brand-new currency while simultaneously determining its exchange rate, reopen banks, write laws governing business, set up a method for the collection of taxes, and remove the Iraqi individuals from the U.N oil for food program (Cox “BearingPoint”). There were some arguments presented in regard to imposing such reforms on the Iraqi economy in a unilateral fashion. It was openly admitted that these measures stood in clear violation not only of the sovereignty and constitution of Iraq, but also of the Geneva and Hague agreements (Mate “Pillage is”).

As Klein stated that the U.S preferred an Iraqi governing transitional body with complete sovereignty so that it might make decisions that would be permanent when an elected government took control. Because of this, Paul Bremer's CPA was forging ahead with its unconstitutional free-market policies, expecting approval from the Iraqi government that it manipulated (Klein “Democracy and Robbery”).

Given the nature of the reforms, which often referred to as ‘shock therapy’², Joseph Stiglitz stated that,

The Bush administration, backed by a few handpicked Iraqis, is pushing Iraq towards an even more radical form of shock therapy than was pursued in the former Soviet world, Indeed, shock therapy’s advocates argue that its failure were due not to excessive speed- too much shock and not enough therapy- but to insufficient shock. So Iraqis better prepare for an even more brutal dose. (“Iraq’s Next Shock will be Shock Therapy”)

3.1.4.2. The Political Reform

After toppling Saddam's regime, a knotty question was raised to the fore on interim measures for forming the new Iraq's government. It seemed at least as likely that there had been a consensus on the eventual nature of Iraq's government and agreed that the system should be a democratic and highly federal, giving freedom of expression to Iraqis (Byman 47). Prior to the Iraq invasion, W. Bush declared that the particular structure of Iraq's future government will not be decided by the U.S, and Iraqis should make that decision ("President Discusses").

The Bush administration had stated its intention to get a sense of the new make-up of Iraqi society in post-Saddam era and called for a democratic administration with wide representation (Khalilzad 1). Intention in this regard from the beginning was to transfer power to an interim government comprised of exiled Iraqi elites and commanded by Ahmed Chalabi² who would run the country until elections are held as a legitimization of the transition process (Mayer "The Manipulator:").

Washington's neoconservatives such as Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle believed that Chalabi would be appointed as the new leader of Iraq and a viable alternative who promised to build a secular, stable and liberal democracy and legitimize the promoted ideology (Chandrasekaran "Green Zone:" 35). For instance, Perle viewed Chalabi as a significant find that shared U.S values who would advance U.S interests in the M.E (Bonin "Iraq's One-Man"). In this regard, Chalabi pledged that a free Iraq would work to improve diplomatic ties with Israel which is essential to the neoconservative movement and the U.S more widely in the political scene (Dizard "How Ahmed").

Within the Iraqi society, Ahmed Chalabi's role was to transmit the values of liberal democracy of the west and free market economics and to legitimize democracy with

supporting the economic and political reforms (Markakis 158). U.S planners' primary actions in Iraq were issued as CPA orders. Bremer's initial CPA instructions One and Two were among the most contentious orders as Presidential Envoy and Administrator in Iraq, concentrated on the Iraqi de-Ba'athification and the disintegration of the nation's security forces and army (Sommer-Houdeville 134).

In Order One, the CPA eliminated the Ba'ath Party of Iraq's three highest positions in all ministries and related institution, included 120,000 Iraqis lost their jobs from ministries, state-owned companies, universities and doctors (Sissons and Al-Saiedi 22). By doing so, the CPA could assure that the restoration of Baathist elements to power in Iraq was prevented and that future leaders in Iraq were popular with its people at large ("Coalition Provisional" 1).

Order Two announced the disbanding of the Iraqi army. About, 400,000 to 700,000 soldiers and officers from the armed forces, Ministry of Defense, intelligence and paramilitary personnel were dismissed. The Iraqi army was treated no differently from the Military Intelligence. The Order supposed to offer one last termination payment (Sommer-Houdeville 134).

The damage that the Iraqi society received from these two Orders was huge, as Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez argued that devastating results followed this de-Baathification order. The whole national government and civic infrastructure were wiped out. Because of the widespread loss of skilled workers, many institutions dealing with law enforcement, military, internal affairs, communications, education, and healthcare had to close down or drastically reduce their operations. Bremer managed to make sixty per cent of people unemployed and enrage tens of thousands of others all at once (Sanchez and Philips 184).

In the letter of Bremer to W. Bush, his mission was done to make it abundantly obvious that the process was a business to wipe clean the remnants of the Baath Party and

Saddam's regime (Bremer "Letter from"). Whether the fear of the Ba'ath regime's return was misplaced or the occupation's sabotage was mistaken, transition process appeared to have been a key reason to implement De-Ba'athification (Sommer-Houdeville 135).

Another argument made by Bremer to justify the break-up of the army centered in the Sunni sectarianism and its dominance over the Shi'a. Since most of the officials were Sunni but most of the army was Shi'i, this would lead to the domination of Sunnis in the Army again over Shi'a community (137). These two Orders were considered as a U.S failed strategy in Iraq as they continued to be the subject of intense controversy within the W. Bush Administration.

Prior to the occupation, these Orders appeared to have been debated with two prominent arguments as being powered by two sides. One side advocated that in order to preserve state structures and capabilities, it was mandatory to remove Saddam's inner circle, the regime's elites, and the security system, but to keep the Army temporarily, as a precautionary measure to handle the party of Ba'athists. The second side was much more adamant in its call for the Ba'athification and its ideology to be completely eradicated, along with the members and officials being removed from every conceivable position of authority inside the government of Iraq and the dismissal of its military (135). In short, the decision of De-Ba'athification was part of Germany's De-Nazification agenda that was implemented after WWII (Meierhenrich 283).

The CPA managed the transitional period and the Iraq's constitution drafting process was held by some American experts. Grand Ayatollah Sistani, the head of the Shi'i community, fiercely opposed the decision and urged Iraqis to complete the mission (Papagianni 261). Bremer appointed a 25-member Governing Council as part of a seven-step plan for the sovereignty of Iraq as the insurgency grew inside the country. He named

preparatory committee to draft the constitution putting the government in the hands of Iraqis along with the drafting and the approval of a constitution, the selection of a new administration, and the consequent dissolution of the CPA (Bremer “Iraq’s Path to Sovereignty”). Although the specific timing for this procedure was not emphasized in this plan, many observers had the impression that it would take at least two years to complete this occupation. Due to its impending dissolution, the CPA would not have much time to exert any further authority (Dobbins, Jones, Runkle, and Mohandas 267).

Given the specific challenge of choosing the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) members, the CPA’s membership was carefully selected to reflect Iraq’s diverse ethnic make-up: five Sunnis, thirteen Shias, a Christian and a Turkoman, with the secular Ahmad Chalabi and the Iraqi Communist Party’s Hamid Majid Mousa prominent among the Shia. This sectarian appointment was expanded to include 25 members. In the same way that American officials ran the occupation, the IGC selection showed that the primitivism of exiled Iraqis were willing to govern the country (Dodge “Iraqi Transitions:” 715).

The manner of appointing the IGC triggered anger and grievance among various factions of Iraqis. The contentious nature of the appointment process was a primary target of the critics, focusing on sectarianism which was previously absent from Iraqi politics. Others centered their criticism on the harm that such an appointment procedure would be detrimental to the effectiveness of the administration, and that members of the council should have been selected based on their professional expertise, not their political, sectarian or religious leanings (Dodge “Iraqi Transitions:” 715).

The IGC elected Ibrahim al-Jaafari, head of the Daawa party, to be its first president. Shias got predominant positions inside the IGC. This fact challenged many Sunnis who did not accept the domination of Shia to IGC (Pirnie and O’Connell 10). Even with creating an

Interim Government and writing a new constitution inside the IGC, this procedure was done without Sunnis' consent (Papagianni 261).

An interim constitution, under the name of the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) or the Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period was issued by the IGC and outlined by the CPA whose provisions became active on June 30, 2004. This constitution set the type of government that should be established in Iraq until Iraqis approved permanent constitution and permanent government (Pirnie and O'Connell 11). Sunnis were denied and prevented from determining Iraq's future at that time, all at the behest of the U.S.

The turnover of power to the newly appointed IIG has begun because of the mounting pressure from Washington, which determined that the CPA would no longer be in existence, as of the 30th of June, 2004 (Dodge "Iraqi Transitions:" 716). When sovereignty was shifted to the interim government, the American occupation officially ended (El- Shibiny 31). Nevertheless, the U.S has never stopped its efforts to squander enormous influence on the Iraqi politics from that time onwards.

After the IIG was formed, Iyad Allawi became the Prime Minister and head of the IIG's cabinet of 26 ministers. Diplomatic ties between the U.S and Iraq were restored once again, and the American Embassy, which opened on June 30, 2004, replaced the previous one (Katzman, *Iraq: Post Saddam* 12).

The writing phase of the Iraqi constitution made its people disunited rather than united. There was a favoritism towards some factions at the expense of others because the drafters presented two versions of the constitution. The first one was issued on August 28, 2005, and the second one on September 13, 2005 without the consent of the Sunnis. Consequently, they did not approve the constitution during the referendum of October 15, 2005. Although, they stated that the national assembly should amend the constitution before

December 2005 (Papagianni 268). Writing a national constitution based merely on sectarian and ethnic differences exacerbated only conflict between various sects. The transitional process was undertaken by some Iraqi elites under the U.S direction without integrating other Iraqis in the political life (269).

On December 15, 2005, a vote was taken to establish the Council of Representatives. Daawa leader, Nour Al Maliki was chosen as a prime minister in February 2006 after the Kurds, Sunnis, and secular Iraqis rejected the candidate al-Jaafari for the position (Pirnie and O'Connell 14). The permanent government was already in place by 2006, but it fell short of what Iraqi citizens had hoped for. Shiites dominated almost all the positions in the government, resulting in a national division among Iraqis on the basis of sectarianism (Casey, Jr. 82). Instead of bringing about the anticipated democracy, the U.S-led establishment of a new political order exacerbated conflict and widened animosity among the many Iraqi factions.

The Iraqi political transitional process came to an end with the election of December 15, 2005 (Wheatley 537). However, unrest, terrorism, and rushing out for power increased. Under Nour al Maliki's Shia led government from May 20, 2006, to September 2014, Sunnis were alienated and excluded from participating in the political life (Gerges, "ISIS: A History" 16). This undemocratic policy led to obvious split and disunity between Shia and Sunni in the Iraqi society.

Even with the new government under Haider al-Abadi, relations between Iraqi groups remained worse (Al-Qarawee 1- 4). The newly administration was not different from its precedent and the Sunnis were still marginalized (T. Ismael and J. Ismael 40). Ironically, the decisions made by the former CPA after the end of the war in 2003 added more political pressures. U.S style of democracy helped alienate many Iraqis from the CPA and helped

strengthen more insurgency. The country's violence escalated adding more turmoil, let alone the piecemeal development of Iraq's administrative and political structures that was left unfinished and abandoned (Dodge "Iraqi Transitions:"716). The nation is engulfed in civil strife and disorder since then.

3.2. Failure or Intended Failure of the U.S Democracy Strategy in Iraq?

Although for W. Bush, democratizing Iraq would be a rational model for the democratization of other Middle Eastern countries, its strategy failed. Some researchers went further to state that the W. Bush administration made some mistakes during the invasion which influenced the outcomes of such U.S failure in post war. The question that is raised is whether there were other intended objectives for this failure far from exporting democratic peace in Iraq?

3.2.1. U.S Reasoning of the Failure

Numerous American officials and researchers claimed that the U.S failed in Iraq and fell short of its goals it set out to achieve by going to war there. Michael M. O'Brien is one of these authors who claimed that W.Bush lacked the adequate forces and intelligence to confront its enemy. However, regardless of the U.S strong intelligence, it was unreasonable to disregard the reality of the enemy, yet this occurred because of the lack of accuracy brought on by careless individuals in the neoconservative government (60-61).

O'Brien continued by arguing that the U.S fought a war with inadequate forces, causing Rumsfeld to make strategic and tactical mistakes that would have far-reaching effects. He claimed that the U.S administration made mistakes by failing to adjust its tactics to take into account the new, unforeseen state and subsequent events after 2003 led invasion. Instead

of providing assistance and guidance to Iraqis after the invasion, allowing them to use their oil revenues to govern their nation, the nation is devastated by U.S bombings and strikes (62-63).

It was a mistake to start a war with insufficient forces that could not maintain law and order, and to dissolve the army, and then to ask the Iraqis to run their nation according to the American perspective. It was unreasonable to force the Iraqis to accept American style of governance and problem solving after destroying their basic infrastructure and services (66-67). Simply put, Washington made poor choices that caused chaos and instability in Iraq, which prevented it from achieving its goals.

Given the ideological slogans and lack of experience in the affairs of the M.E, W. Bush voiced his initial concerns about intervening in Iraq and neglected the complex social and political realities of the wider region. While the neoconservative government appreciated only the bright future of the U.S and the imposition of the new Iraqi government during the early stages of the war; however, the war triggered more divide between the U.S and the Islamic world (Gerges “Obama and the Middle East:” 81-82). Christoph Wilcke stated that in post war planning, lack of knowledge of the Iraqi society combined with strategic incompetence rendered U.S efforts for establishing democracy useless (“Castles Built of Sand:”).

Bush’s plan focused on the following scripts, upon the regime’s demise, time has come for a liberated Iraqi nation to form its new constitution together with the U.S to hold elections, summon new parliament, and form government with new president. It seemed at least as likely that the plan of democratizing Iraq was harder than envisaged for the U.S, giving that many of the mistakes made during the invasion have lasting consequences to this day (Waśko-Owsiejczuk 14).

The W. Bush administration's implementation of democracy via force was its first mistake. The effective way for introducing democracy to a country that has not yet undergone a democratic transition is through an evolutionary process rather than revolutionary one, and is initially installed from within the society rather than from a foreign country. Contrary to U.S promises and assurances for democracy promotion in Iraq, the Iraqis saw the Americans as aggressors rather than liberators. The U.S efforts to establish democracy through military intervention created opportunities vulnerable to the physical location of extremism and provided fertile ground for jihadist groups in Iraq which facilitated actions of terrorists to fight the imperial domination of the U.S and the West who used propaganda against Islam and the Muslim world (14).

According to Gerges, the war in Iraq had not gone the way W. Bush expected. The primary focus was on the confusing realities that W. Bush and his team presumed in Iraq through maintaining a swift and smooth transition. He did not push the road map and extensive plans for post-conflict reconstruction ("Obama and the Middle East:" 83).

Other political authors, such as, Michael Eisenstadt and Jeffery White believed that the coalition forces failed to effectively prepare for the order and security of the country after the war. They failed to employ enough troops to establish peace, particularly in the Sunni Triangle, and to guard the borders against the entry of foreign fighters who would worsen the situation. Hence the coalition forces could not succeed in controlling robberies and the spike in public property destruction that appeared after the invasion (2).

Furthermore, insurgencies increased as a result of CPA and American troops' mistakes; especially, disastrous was the De-Baathification policy's decision to dissolve the Iraqi army (3). The army could have played a crucial supplementary role in reestablishing national security and stability if it had been kept up, let alone the government's decision to

deny Ba'ath party members from participating in Iraqi politics. Such a move which effectively dissolved the Iraqi army led many Sunnis into the insurgency (Hendrickson and Tucker 2). After the invasion, the disastrous state of Iraq was caused by the U.S failed policies and the Iraqi institutions that were set up to govern the nation during the transitional period.

Alongside U.S strategic incompetence, the lack of planning for democratization and state building were challenged by religious diversity in Iraq. The ethnic fragmentation and sectarian cleavage imposed later a serious problem to democracy and democratic transition (Bapir 119). The U.S ultimately failed to set up a peaceful political transition in Iraq that was acceptable to major Iraqi constituencies. This was a major setback since it made the American invasion seem to the public's view as a quasi-imperialist, which in turn triggered further disorder. Also the U.S presumed the monopolization of power and the dominant political order through the CPA between 2003 and 2004, through which Iraqis did not recognize the legitimacy of its actions and significantly dictated the terms of Iraqi involvement in public and political life. The intricate make-up of Iraqi society has made it a flashpoint for ethnic and religious conflicts. The latter deepened Iraq's ethnic and sectarian tensions (Wilcke "Castles Built of Sand").

Former CPA administrator in Iraq, Paul Bremer, systematically dismantled the Iraqi institutions of public services, state ministries, judicial system, and the policy and security services, leaving the country without its secular and national capability institutions. The worst mistake Bremer committed was dismantling the military, leaving its armed forces unemployed, bitter, and depressed who later joined the Iraqi resistance against U.S forces (Gerges "Obama and the Middle East: 83).

The U.S intervention in Iraq without UNSC permission was another mistake. Bush's invasion of Iraq had no basis in international law, and the war had no legal basis for military

action. There was no legitimate act for the U.S to enter the Iraqi territory. Bush's baseless claims that Saddam planned to deploy WMD and to have connections with Al-Qaeda were unsubstantiated and were not a reason to invade a sovereign state (Waśko-Owsiejczuk 14).

Additionally, Cordesman and Khazai saw that the U.S did not develop any substantial plans to rebuild the nation, to maintain order and law, or to determine the desired kind of democracy. The invasion led to more insurgency and violence that swept the country since then. Hence the objectives were not accomplished (7). It is concluded that the bad plans resulted in unintended consequences.

To fill the vacuum, the U.S created a viable new Iraqi political system that was based on an organized religious sects dominated by a Shiite majority with sixty per cent to form a government. David Wurmser, one of the neoconservatives in the W. Bush administration, presumed that Iraq's Shiite majority could function as a pro-American counterweight to Iran's Islamic Republic. Such assumption was basically wrong because Iran's influence in Iraq increased in post Saddam Iraq and has served as an ally to the new regime (Gerges "Obama and the Middle East" 83).

The expert in Middle Eastern affairs, Kenneth M. Pollack, thought that the American strategies that excluded Sunnis and empowered Shiites resulted in a development that was the polar reverse image during Saddam's rule ("The Fall and Rise and Fall" 4). These tactics exhorted Sunnis in Iraq to welcome foreign fighters and to employ all means necessary to drive out Americans and curb Shia inside. The insurgency significantly increased as a result of Sunni alienation. The U.S allowed some Shiite leaders to hold power in the newly established government which worsened the situation in Iraq (4).

Appealing to religious identity in their political rhetoric rather than national identity was one of the U.S mistakes which exacerbated the politicization of sectarianism. In

retrospect, the decision made by the U.S to dissolve the Iraqi national army and being replaced by a new ill-trained and ill-equipped one led to create fragile security issues and poor maintenance which intensified the internal conflict and explored the reconditions of terrorism to flourish. As such, a higher number of Iraqi civilian deaths and combatants and American fatalities were increased (Gerges “Obama and the Middle East:” 83-84). Coverage of the war depicted the U.S abuse and torture of the Iraqi prisoners at Abu Gharib prison which dominated the news media around the world questioned the U.S mission in Iraq even more (see Appendix B) . Instead of countering terrorism, the U.S caused more terrorists than it has eliminated (Gerges “Obama and the Middle East:” 83-84).

In many Muslim countries between 2002 and 2006, numbers of people tried to integrate themselves in Al-Qaeda with the objective of participating in armed resistance against the Iraq invasion. The war considered as a crusade against Muslims and Islam. This view was enhanced when Bush referred to the fight against terrorism as a ‘crusade’ in one of his speeches, and Al-Qaeda was conceived as a symbol of global Islamic resistance. Hence the propaganda that the 2003 Iraq invasion was largely linked to the 9/11 events had not accepted by most of the Arab people who instead considered the American occupation as an excuse to occupy the Iraqi territory, to have access to their oil resources, and to humiliate their people (Gerges “Obama and the Middle East:” 83-84).

There was some evidence that the vision of W. Bush and his team went down with the growing violence in Iraq, and the American support for the war has eroded. The policies of torture established for detainees at Guantanamo Bay, the secret detention networks and the Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) rendition discredited the Bush Doctrine. These acts showed that the U.S employed a double standard in its foreign policy toward Iraq. Consequently, promoting freedom and democracy caused more harm than good. Instead of eliminating autocratic regimes in the M.E, autocrats gained more strength from W. Bush’s

‘freedom agenda’ exploiting the president’s mistakes and the normative inconsistency of the democratization. W. Bush’s style of democratization only delayed the opening of the closed political systems in the M.E (Gerges “Obama and the Middle East:” 84-85).

Another mistake that W. Bush implemented was to establish small assistance political reform programs with little funds which lacked consistency in their implementation. Since 2002 until today, the U.S invested \$600 million on grant programs like MEPI and it seemed to be considerable compared to the budget that it spent for security in the M.E, hence the budget for promoting democracy in the whole area was seen strategically less crucial and more symbolic. More particularly, U.S military programs in Iraq cost roughly \$400 million per year. Due to inconsistency in encouraging successful execution of democracy projects, this meant that funds were diverted to other political efforts than originally promised (Waśko-Owsiejczuk 18).

The other failure was characterized on the lack of a proper stabilization plan in post-Saddam Iraq. The plan included three distinct phases, the first of which focused on putting in place the necessary democratic and security frameworks to facilitate a structural economic reform and laying the groundwork for a robust economy. The second involved the constitution-drafting process which included provisions for fair elections. Having such democratic institutions would serve Iraq as a model for regional reformers who could be inspired by the successful political transformation in Iraq, in addition to its security system with fully operational services to keep order together with its economy, the country could take further steps towards achieving greater economic progress possible to achieve economic growth. The third stage was about fighting terrorism and insurgency with the U.S in the whole region. However, its strategy for Iraq did not yield any major breakthroughs, nor did it install innovative solutions. More than anything else, the project consisted of a wish list of idealistic generalities (Waśko-Owsiejczuk 15).

The administration made yet another mistake due to W. Bush's haste. The former president wanted a new government, elections, and a new constitution swiftly. It was far simpler to write a constitution than to create a political compromise between Shia, Sunni and Kurdish communities and to allocate power among them. It was faster process to declare another success through drafting the constitution and establishing democracy in Iraq than spending time on extensive negotiations. Rather than imposing U.S economic and political style on Iraqis, the former president W. Bush failed to appreciate regional dynamics and should have made an effort to learn more about them (Caryl "The Democracy Boondoggle").

Given the substantial economic and political reforms in Iraq, W. Bush's reform initiatives in Iraq can be considered an essential part of his plan to spread democracy there. This strategy had a dual purpose. Short term goals included holding elections to give legitimacy to the U.S preferred candidates, and maintaining stability while implementing more consensual form of governance. In the long-term goals, W. Bush aimed at pursuing hegemony in Iraq and in the whole region. Nevertheless, the chaos and disorder that prevailed across Iraq after U.S invasion made these aims impossible to achieve. Moreover, the rapidly intensifying insurgency in Iraq, lack of public support for ordinary Iraqis, and the substantial pressure from Iraq's Shiite Muslim majority forced the U.S to transfer sovereignty from CPA to an interim Iraqi government⁴ in 2004 (Markakis 170).

This transfer of sovereignty helped create a viable exit strategy and made it eminently feasible for the U.S to withdraw promptly, but highly unlikely, abandoning the Iraqi state prematurely. After the 2005 Iraqi Parliamentary elections, the newly elected parliament was tasked with writing the new constitution, shortly after electing the New National Assembly where the Iraqi National Congress (INC) headed by Ahmed Chalabi whom has been considered as America's favorite candidate, failed to win a seat (Markakis 170-71).

Though possessing little background in Iraqi affairs, Zalmay Khalilzad brought an accord among the Iraqi factional divisions and urged for drafting a uniting constitution which he approached as a tripartite peace treaty (Galbraith 193). However, due to the Sunni boycott and objection to everything that was proposed because the U.S so dominated the constitution drafting process, such account of constitutional legitimacy had been eroded among Iraqis along with the government that was dominated by Shiite (194).

Instead, Shiite United Iraqi Alliance coalition had been in power since then in Iraq (Dodge “The Sardinian, the Texan” 468). This was highly opposed to the U.S plan of transferring sovereignty to friendly Iraqis before the permanent constitution was passed and a democratic government was set up (Diamond 47). Bremer stated that the only way to establish Iraqi sovereignty over its own affairs was through free elections (Chandrasekaran “Green Zone:” 210). This because the imperative of drafting a new constitution was one of the most consistently argued theme running through the W. Bush administration, fearing that it was possible that democratically elected Iraqis would not be able to draft a constitution that included all of the principles prioritized by the White House (Chandrasekaran “Green Zone:” 207).

To address issues related to the civil society’s real function, its absence also undermined state power. This latter led to a rift between the Iraqi people and their government since the state’s authority did not stem from the will of its people. Consequently, this created violence and clandestine opposition dissent and conflicts which have weakened moderates in society at large and among the major political parties (Galbraith 195-96).

The failure of the U.S in Iraq was also reflected on its efforts to reform or boost the Iraqi economy. It was alleged by the former interim minister of trade in Iraq, Ali Allawi that no Iraqi spoke up in favor of the economic goals included in the CPA (Office of the Special

Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction 93). Therefore, this experience of the free market was a complete failure to the economic system in Iraq (Paul 59). Darel Paul argued that: “At the dissolution of the ... [CPA and direct US rule] in June 2004, no American firm had made a substantial capital investment in Iraq. Even transnational oils firms, thought by many to be the primary beneficiaries of Saddam’s overthrow, invested nothing in Iraq during the formal occupation” (59). Consequently, Bush fell short of achieving his strategic aims which included challenging the authoritarian rule and encouraging transitions towards élite-based democratic governance (Markakis 172).

The U.S occupation’s insularity, its serious violations of law to internationalize the occupation, its failure for the reconstruction process to build democratic state, and its inability to provide public order and safety were conceptualized as some of the factors for state failure (Wilcke “Castles Built”). Given the U.S credibility crisis, the system in Iraq along with its public funds had been depleted by the widespread corruption, bribery and theft which had basically infected the Iraqi reconstruction process, and it had left billions of dollars still unaccounted for (Global Policy Forum iii). This fact inspired no longer confidence among the Arab community. America’s hypocrisy, human rights breaches, and other atrocities in Iraq severely damaged U.S reputation as a champion of democracy, freedom and respect of law and order inside the region (Waśko-Owsiejczuk 20).

Dodge described this primacy of American interests over those of Iraqi society as the worst mistake the W. Bush administration made. Finally, the eventual transfer of sovereignty to Iraq in 2004 envisaged the defeat of American legacy in Iraq and the end of democracy promotion strategy there (“Iraqi Transitions:” 719).

Another mistake on the part of the former president was to nominate the candidate Nouri al-Maliki as a prime minister of Iraq in 2006, as an attempt to find middle ground

among Iraq's various ethnic and religious communities according to the U.S. Al Maliki was supposed to be the one who would bring Iraqis together and establish a functioning democracy. Because he took a stand in opposition to the Hussein regime, he appeared to gain the support of the Americans and the Iraqis alike in the aftermath of the announcements to bring consensus among the ethnic minorities of Sunnis, Shiites and Kurdish population and also to cut ties with Iran. Nevertheless, all of Al Maliki's promises of unity and placing the common good above other considerations turned out and had no basis in reality. As time went on, Al Maliki breached almost every pledge he made after his reelection in 2010 (Khedery "Why we Stuck").

Contrary to the above-stated claims by many political analysts who admitted that the U.S fell short of its objectives as a result of some mistakes during and after the war through seeing Iraq as a model of democracy for other nations. It is assumed that the U.S declared its war against Iraq for implicit reasons and undeclared agenda that were highly fulfilled such as hegemony, security of Israel and controlling the Iraq's oil.

The first incentive of the war was hegemony and supremacy. Through invading Iraq, America increased its influence in the M.E. Its imperialist goals were advanced by building military networks not only in the Gulf countries and Egypt, but also in the Caspian Sea, in addition to launching wars against terrorism (Bennis 2).

The PNAC focused on the need to sustain American supremacy and to prevent U.S opponents from emerging as challenging powers to its superiority. It emphasized on changing the world according to what fits its objectives (T. Ismael and S. Ismael 46). After the war, the U.S deployed military bases in Iraq. This indicated that it sought political and military domination over Iraq and the M.E. Establishing American bases in the area were the neoconservative project in late 1990s. The primary objective of the PNAC was to

internationalize the U.S as a hegemonic power in the twenty first-century (Paul and Nahory 97-98).

The second rational behind the war was the security of Israel in the M.E. The Zionist Lobby controlled the Neoconservative government of W. Bush (Hinnebusch, "The US Invasion of Iraq" 255). Thus controlling the Iraq oil would be a step forward to control the oil of the Middle East and would remove any barrier to the realization of 'Greater Israel' project. Therefore, Israel shaped U.S foreign policy in the M.E to a considerable degree.

The events witnessed in the M.E had its roots to 1980s Israeli project that aimed to expand its territory around the neighboring nations. The realization of this project would be through driving the M.E into a mess, disorder and cleavage. The ISIS and even al-Qaeda had never made a terrorist operation in Israel. The objective of ousting Saddam was to destabilize the region, so that Israel would realize its dream (O'Keefe, "9/11 Truth"). Consequently, The Iraq war was significantly influenced by the Israel Lobby, whose primary objective was to ensure Israel's protection in the area and to enlarge its territories.

This claim is confirmed by a historian from Syria, Souhil Zakar who declared that the American historian Bernard Lewis played a significant role in influencing the American decision to invade Iraq in order to pursue his own agenda of reshaping the Middle East in a way to benefit Israel. He contended that the Lewis project was established in 1983 and covertly embraced by the American Congress. The main objective of this project was to partition the Arab world into thirty three nations based on ethnic and sectarian divisions, and the first phase of this plan was carried out in Iraq ("A Palestinian Hour"). The circumstances that Iraq and the Middle East witnessed involving the Iraqi ethnic and sectarian fragmentation serve as evidence of an impending division, thus affirming the accuracy of this perspective.

Steven MacMillan, an American author, who contended that the U.S. and its allies have implemented the Western Strategy in the Middle East to deliberately create a state of instability and chaos. Their primary goal in Iraq is to divide the country into separate Sunni, Arab Shia, and free Kurdistan regions to protect Israel's interests ("Order out of Chaos:").

Oil was the third rational due to Iraq's geostrategic location in the M.E. It attracted the attention of world powers such as the U.S. Thus controlling the Middle Eastern oil has been one of key goals of the Project for the New American Century's members (PNAC) who were the primary architects of the invasion. They plotted out an imperialist American intervention strategy in the area with the aim of stopping Saddam from controlling the oil market (Jhaveri 3). This successfully happened when the U.S stepped its foot in Iraq and controlled all the oil fields.

Reaching Iraq's oil was hindered by Saddam's existence. In 1991, the U.S lust for oil increased when the imposed sanctions were broken on Iraq in one hand, and other powers like France, China and Russia have obtained oil contracts on the other hand. Because U.S reliance on imported oil grew, this would create an oil trauma to the U.S and would change the balance of power. Hence it opted for Iraqi oil as a motive for the invasion (Hinnebusch, "The American Invasion of Iraq" 12). After the invasion the U.S was eager to possess the country's oil in order to keep its continued control over the world's energy supplies and to maintain power. Therefore, dominating Iraq's oil was merely the start of controlling the entire M.E and its abundant resources (Amin 304).

Chas W. Freeman Jr. pointed out in his book *America's Misadventures in the Middle East* that the U.S. faces a contradiction in its imperative push to establish democracy in the Middle East through the presence of its military. He questioned how the U.S. plans to

reconcile its goal of ensuring stability in the Persian Gulf with the reality that its presence there actually causes instability (Mousavian and Saberi 56).

Ahmed, a political analyst from Yemen, contended that the U.S. approach to the Middle East should be viewed through a capitalist lens. The U.S. has conducted military operations in the Middle East to assert its influence in the region and to gain control over its natural resources. This competition for energy resources has played a pivotal role in escalating crises across Libya, Syria, Bahrain, and Yemen. This competition is driven by the pursuit of power, control, and the strategic significance of oil (Shakdam “Is the United States Exporting Democracy”).

The 9/11 events were regarded by the neoconservative government as an opportunity to invade Iraq, a step that they had been waiting for to be carried out with the right pretext. Consequently, bush’s strategy that was perceived by some analysts as a mistake during the post war period was an intended policy and an overall agenda of the neo-conservative government. Meanwhile, through the abovementioned literature, the democratic peace theory is not valid since the U.S and through its implicit intention was to maintain hegemony instead of democratizing Iraq. This democratization did not bring peace in Iraq. It was merely a hoax.

In summing up, the Iraq War has been portrayed as an American imperial expansion program, for the most important purposes because of oil and the security of its ally Israel. This chapter set out to assess the extent to which W. Bush’s efforts to promote a liberal democratic system in Iraq as a western style has been effective.

It is concluded that this aim, however, was undermined by military intervention which only served American interests instead of promoting democratic system in Iraq. The neoconservative government targeted primary regime change. It was on the basis that any alternative to Saddam’s regime was more desirable since it served U.S national interests.

The findings of this investigation also showed that W. Bush's attempts to foster democracy in Iraq yielded the breakdown of its public order. Regarding the economic aspect, the U.S pursued policies with creative destructive goals that contributed to unemployment, poverty and privatization of the most sectors.

The U.S efforts rendered the Iraqi society fragmented, not to mention the economic, political, and social impediments. These democratization efforts generated merely the U.S regional hegemony. The most important attained objective was to install a new Iraqi political system based on sectarianism, corruption and fragmentation of its society.

Critics of the American plan such Souhil Zakar, Ken O'Keefe and Raymond Hinnebusch claimed that coercive democracy in Iraq further triggered terrorism and violence. It is widely accepted that the democratic process in Iraq with the help of CPA helped foster conditions that contributed in facilitating terrorism and deepening ethnic and sectarian differences among Iraqis. As a senior official at the Iraqi ministry, Sabah Kadhim stated that they cannot rely on remedies from other sources; the solution must come from within Iraq. Rather of forcing American-style on the Iraqis, they should have given the Iraqis the opportunity to draft their laws on their own (Chandrasekaran "Green Zone:" 268).

Consequently, the style of democracy promotion used by the U.S in Iraq was a process for achieving hegemony in the M.E, and Iraq was the first step forward. Subsequently, little has changed since then. As one Iraqi security officer put it: "the system now is just like under Saddam: walk by the wall, don't go near politics and you can walk with your head high and not fear anything. But if you come close to the throne then the wrath of Allah will fall on you and we have eyes everywhere" (qtd. in Abdul-Ahad "Corruption in Iraq: 'Your Son is being Tortured. He Will Die if You Don't Pay'").

Endnotes

¹ Economic shock therapy involves privatizing state-owned assets and abruptly liberalizing trade, capital flows and prices. For further reading see: Stiglitz, Joseph E. "Iraq's Next Shock will be Shock Therapy." *Project Syndicate*. 12. Feb. 2004. Web. 16. Dec. 2021.

² Chalabi was best known of the opposition groups in the West. It is stated that almost immediately, the CIA came to view Chalabi as a leading opponent. He was a secular Shiite with a strong commitment to bringing down Saddam; he was fluent in English, dressed impeccably, and had an outstanding network. The CIA created the INC under Chalabi to overthrow Saddam Hussein. The intelligence provided by the INC was one of the primary sources that Bush relied on to support his argument for the war. Mayer added the Iraqi National Congress received nearly a hundred million dollars from the American government between 1992 and....[2004]. At least \$39 million was given to Chalabi's organization by the Bush administration. However, the I.N.C.'s exchange for these huge quantities of money was still unclear. For further reading see: Mayer, Jane. "The Manipulator." *The New Yorker*. 30. May. 2004. Web.

³ De-Ba'athification was a policy undertaken in Iraq to remove the influence of all the affiliates of the Baath party from the political system led by CPA under Paul Bremer after the Invasion in 2003. See Sissons, Miranda and Abdulrazzaq Al-Saiedi. "Iraq's de Baathification still Haunts this Country." *Aljazeera*. 12 Mar. 2013. Web. 23 July. 2023.

⁴ In other words, the Sunni minority, which had been prominent under Saddam, quickly lost authority as the Shia majority rose to prominence. As many analysts who once observed that, for a number of years to come, Shiite religious politics look certain to dominate Iraq (Cole et al 4). Cole, Juan, et al. "A Shia Crescent: What Fallout for the United States?" *Middle East Policy*. XII. 4 (2005): 1-27. The Interim government was formed under U.S and U.N vision, but without Iraqis approval, despite Lakhder Ibrahim's efforts, who served as a special adviser in UN, to meet consensual agreement among Iraqis. For further details see: "Process Leading to Iraq's Interim Government Completed 'on Time and in Full', Says Secretary General in Security Council Statement." *United Nates*. 07. July. 2004. Web. This is of special significance in terms of the interests America, given the presence of Shiite Iran on Iraq's borders, which has become the Gulf's preeminent military force following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein (Kam 10). For further reading see: Kam, Ephraim. "The War in Iraq: Regional Implications." *After the War in Iraq*. Ed. Shai Feldman. Sussex Academic Press, 2003.

Chapter Four

The Obama Administration's Policy toward Iraq (2008-2016): An Analytical Reading of U.S Withdrawal and its Implications on Iraq between Continuity and Change

Based on his presidential campaign, Barack Obama came into office with an active foreign policy priority: fixing the U.S Middle East issue. His administration disregarded the magnitude of the Middle Eastern legacy he inherited from Bush, namely the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and the serious challenges posed by Iran. He claimed that the U.S reduced dependence on the M.E would advance national interest. Hence his efforts concentrated on addressing domestic issues following the 2008 economic recession at home. On the global stage, he vowed to pivot U.S attention and resources towards the Asia Pacific.

To do so, he determined a timetable to get the American troops out of Iraq, and to not actively aim at promoting democracy there. He claimed to achieve peace and resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, because this initiative would enhance the U.S reputation in the minds of Muslims, and as such Obama vowed to forge new beginning with Muslims Worldwide. He tried to make political moves that would support the ambitions of the Arab people in the area and he also worked toward improving relations with Iran.

In fact, the U.S decision of getting out of Iraq seemed to be the first step in a larger plan to abandon the whole M.E. and pivot to Asia which began to take shape during Obama's presidency in his second term. However, the growing international crises that shook the M.E, partly due to the Arab Spring revolutions made president Obama redraw the U.S-Mid-East policy again.

Meanwhile, his policy afforded the opportunity to bring up the issue of his country's political ties with Iraq to the forefront and examined the aspects of continuity and change in his policy, after the rise of sectarian violence the former president left over the Iraqi state in. It was evident that Obama's policy witnessed important changes towards Iraq in his first term; namely, the withdrawal from Iraq which staged according to carefully delimited timetable. This withdrawal led to serious deteriorations, and the events that occurred during the Arab Awakening at the start of his second term were undergone profound change in the region.

The fourth chapter is composed of two main sections. Each section highlights major events that occurred in Iraq and in the whole area with a particular focus on Obama's policy. Section one focuses on his policy of U.S retreat from M.E and on his policy toward Iraq after the withdrawal. This section also examines and analyses Obama's early priorities, the U.S withdrawal from Iraq and its repercussions. It also critically analyses the traces of continuity in his policy in Iraq and shows his administration's commitment to promote or abandon democracy, particularly during his second term with the start of the wave of Mideast protests in 2011. Finally, the section analyses Obama's policy of political rapprochement with Iran and its repercussions on Iraq.

4.1. The Strategy of Barack Obama in the M.E

Turning away from Bush's legacy of the financial turmoil that hit the U.S, Obama's most notable action was to signal a new approach in the course of the foreign policy of the U.S. He set out his rhetoric and actions to distinguish his policy perspective characterized in realism and pragmatism from his predecessor, and he focused instead on repositioning the country on a world stage (Gerges "The Obama Approach" 301).

4.1.1. The Obama Doctrine

When asked to articulate his own doctrine, Obama responded indirectly. “[Mine is] an American leadership that recognizes the rise of countries like China, India and Brazil. It’s a U.S. leadership that recognizes our limits in terms of resources and capacity” (qtd. in Zakaria “The Strategist”). Unlike W. Bush’s doctrine, Obama believed that his country had to interact with other nations through multilateralism.

Upon taking office in 2009, he quickly acted on the need for a new, more multilateral approach and moved away from unilateralism that ultimately dominated the neo-conservatives. Hence the Obama team used lofty rhetoric of diplomacy and flexibility with a reason that U.S military action should only be limited to counterterrorism operations, and the U.S should instead prioritize multilateral cooperation in order to find more partners who are essential to the country’s interests and security (Krieg 103).

According to him, every nation, regardless of its strength or level of weakness had to follow the rules that limited the use of force. As was the case with all heads of state, he admitted that he retained the authority to take independent action in the event that it was required to protect his country (Obama “Nobel Lecture”). Unlike W. Bush, who refused to negotiate with countries of rogue states according to what Obama perceived, he pledged to cooperate even with foes: “I will meet not just with our friends, but with our enemies, because I remember what John F. Kennedy said, that we should never negotiate out of fear, but we should never fear to negotiate” (qtd. in “Part 3 of CNN”).

He also insisted that diplomacy and engagement are of a paramount importance for constructing alliances, repairing international relationships, and enhancing the U.S long-term security (“Part 3 of CNN Democratic”). He continued by arguing that by counting on military force with U.S adversaries, the former president’s actions had adverse effects on THE

nation's interests and its position internationally. Hence countries like Iraq in accordance with international law simply strengthened the idea that the U.S was at odds with global norms ("The CNN Democratic Presidential Debate in Texas").

More broadly, the president aimed to turn U.S policy more flexible. He relied on abstract moral values in dealing with the new regional trends, fostering soft power and decreasing hard power of intense military commitment. This strategy also required a delicate balancing act between hard power and soft power tactics (Krieg 103). With an emphasis on hard power, Obama relied on drone strikes in dealing with ISIS and sending lethal weapons to Syrian rebels indirectly during the Syrian civil war so that to destabilize the country.

Overall, Obama recognized the need for rebalancing both domestic and foreign politics, and heralding a fundamental shift on home affairs. Following the years of W. Bush's war on terror and its tremendous costs that drained the country's resources, the U.S went for normality and reduction in the level of military tension. It focused instead on the basic domestic issues rather than foreign affairs and the behavior of their authoritarians (Gerges "The Obama Approach" 302).

Across a wide spectrum of public policy concerns, including energy, banking, the environment, healthcare, education, gun control, immigration, taxation, and gay rights, Obama had pursued and encouraged a focus on liberal policy changes since his first time in office. He was determined to surge to the front through securing his place as the nation's most consequential president in history (Dueck 33), contrary to W. Bush's unilateral strategy of 'go it alone' and its legacy which tarnished U.S credibility around the world, and most Americans recognized his costly war as too high to sustain (Gerges "The Obama Approach" 302). Upon careful analysis, Obama's alternative vision, however, appeared to be more idealistic than

concrete and factual. His vision focused more on altering the tone than on making noticeable progress.

As such, he believed that security interests, multilateralism and certain plans related to establishing new mutually advantageous partnership in international relations principled pragmatism and realism¹ as new operating principles in his policy. Although President Obama has been reluctant to articulate his own doctrine, the National Security Strategy (NSS) of 2010 gave Obama the opportunity to rebalance the nation's global commitment and to refocus American efforts on the other issues of the 21st century than the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan (Quarantello 77-80).

He also recognized that the world felt cynical and discouraged about those who have been promoting democracy. He added that the U.S principles and values were best promoted at home not abroad ("National Security Strategy" 36). President Obama emphasized that the American people were united in their commitment to the country's core values that were needed for all humanity ("National Security Strategy" 10).

Obama was tactically and stylistically pragmatic, and his goals were exceptionally to 'transform this nation' and to leave behind significant liberal or progressive policy legacies. For him, his outstanding task was to prioritize the domestic policy agenda over any other considerations or international strategic entanglements that might threaten that goal or fracture his center-left domestic coalition. Hence Obama's main objective was to build his nation first (Dueck 14). His administration maintained that adhering to these tenets would allow the U.S to reorganize its focus away from the 9/11 wars, shifting the country's critical interests from the Arab world and the M.E to Asia and the Pacific (Jervis 32).

Under the course of pivoting to Asia, Obama established diplomatic relations in the region that were characterized in some modest new U.S Marine and Navy deployments to

Australia and Singapore. He determined Washington's commitment toward the Asia-Pacific. The president focused on enhanced U.S deterrence, containment, and on the rebalance of China's expanding power. Since then his policy represented a comprehensive strategy correction from 2009 (Dueck 74). It was clear that W. Bush's realist policy towards the region at the beginning of 2000s demonstrated that Obama's inauguration in 2009 did not create a clear image of how the changing policy that aimed at fostering freedom in the M.E would look like.

4.1.2. Obama's Rhetorical Reset

In the first few months of his administration, Obama advocated for a fresh start in ties between the U.S and the Muslim world. Continuously, he insisted that his country was not currently at war with Islam, nor will it ever be ("Remarks by President Obama"). His inaugural address reached out to Arabs and Muslims, when he granted Al Arabiya television his first press interview (Yacoubian 494). Then, at Cairo University, he addressed crucial issues and promised to enhance relations between his country and the Muslim world ("Obama's Egypt Speech:").

As a president, Obama sought to undo the damage wrought on the country's ties with the Arab world by W. Bush. Many former American presidents saw the region only in the geopolitical developments affecting international relations on a global scale in the same way as the Cold War, war on terror and Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He saw the legacy that left behind by W. Bush's benighted policies as another no-win dilemma, hence he sought to cut the U.S losses and he outlined a plan to withdraw U.S forces (Gerges "The Obama Approach" 303).

He aimed to take an approach that was more constructive and that classified the various guises that Islamism² might take. Instead, the president had opted for the simpler

reductionist strategy of compiling all Islamists under the umbrella of Bin Laden and viewing them through the lens of Al-Qaeda. This portrayed all Islamic extremism as equivalent to jihadism that used violence to random careless destruction (Gerges “The Far Enemy:” 277).

Against this background, Obama’s speech in Cairo proclaimed:

A new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive, and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles—principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings. (“Remarks by the President on a New Beginning”)

He outlined his commitment to Islam and his personal role in assuaging its adherents to inform Americans about the religion of Islam rather than the negative prejudices and stereotypes that are associated with it. Obama has also put into efforts to humanize Americans in the eyes of Muslims by talking about how Islam was a part of the American nation and how the seven million Muslims residing there helped build the nation. During his speech, Obama did not make any reference to the term terrorism as an effort to change the foreign policy legacy of his predecessor (Gerges “The Obama Approach” 303).

Given Obama’s growing emphasis on rapprochement and cooperation between Muslims and his country, this step was a major departure from the abrasive demeanor of the W. Bush administration. It also raised expectations that Obama would become the new guiding principle for the policy of his country in the M.E (“Obama’s Cairo”). Although, Arabs and Muslims praised Obama’s words of goodwill toward Islam; however, they took a cautious and watchful stance.

The discrepancy, that lied between Obama's rhetoric and actions following the status quo, dissatisfied Republicans and Democrats alike regarding Obama's lack of ideological consistency. This sharp criticism felt high with Liberals who were also outraged by Obama's failure to end W. Bush's wars in response to 9/11 and the continued operations at Guantánamo Bay (Gerges "The Obama Approach" 304). Zbigniew Brzezinski, a former National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter, pointed out the gap between Obama's words and actions: "I greatly admire his insights and understanding. I don't think he really has a policy that's implementing those insights and understandings" (qtd. in Lizza "The Consequentialist:"). Therefore, Obama did not employ any form of strategy. He rather delivered a sermon.

As a matter of self-defense, the Obama administration took actions against alleged terrorists. This measure might appear to safeguard peace and curb the threat the terrorists may pose. Together with the terrorism issue, Obama carried out similar policies as his predecessor did, regardless the extent to which his rhetoric was persuasive, including the continued troop withdrawal from Iraq that has already started by W. Bush at the end of his administration to authorize more troops in Afghanistan (Kreps 631). Taking these issues of continuity, it was found that the grand strategy was created by the W. Bush administration, and Obama was seen as its architect in adopting its essential components, even while he opposed the means.

Fawaz Gerges found out that the failure of Obama in pursuing his policy vis-à-vis his rhetoric did not stem from strategic divergence, instead it resulted from Obama's inability to deal with the political dysfunction that existed inside the political structure of the country and to redirect his strategy away from the status quo so that to yield concrete results. Obama also had integrated a combination of hard and soft power tools for the sake of maintaining stability, however, neither he had used the enormous power of his presidency, nor had he

dealt with the important developments in the region since 2011 (“The Obama Approach” 304).

Obama’s government sought to shift the country’s focus and resources to Asia due to the rising powers in the area. In spite of his often soaring rhetoric of a fresh start between the U.S and Muslims, the M.E was not a priority to Obama’s agenda (Gerges “Obama and the Middle East: The Lessons of Iraq?”).

Obama’s top goals were to get the U.S domestic issues in order and to grow its economy. This meant that lowering U.S commitments in the M.E, which have strayed too far from the country’s interests, were a primary objective (Jervis 32). However, before Obama’s first term ended, the pro-democracy protests and uprisings in many Arab nations challenged the Obama administration and heightened U.S involvement in the area against his own will (Gerges “Obama and the Middle East: The Lessons of Iraq?”).

It was often figured out that the process of aligning U.S national interests (ends) with the necessary resources and power to attain its objectives (means) was formulated by a strategy that prioritized the nation’s national interests and developed a plan of action to advance and defend those interests all within the bounds of U.S power. This power was typically characterized in the military and coercive force.

4.1.3. U.S Withdrawal from Iraq and its Ramifications

In point of fact, the implementation of the abovementioned approaches for American disengagement from the M.E was characterized in many developments and for many reasons, most importantly because:

First, the diversification of oil exporting countries beyond the Gulf has reduced U.S dependence on Middle Eastern oil, such as Canada, Mexico and Nigeria. Meanwhile, the

biggest innovation was so far the U.S shale oil renaissance which has been transformational in its production and extractions according to economic criteria (“The U.S. Policy toward”).

This development into current U.S energy has become increasingly a trivial input in U.S Middle Eastern policy, which has historically existed mostly due to its oil and its dependence on American markets. Thus, the U.S oil self-sufficiency and the diminishing reliance on oil from the region would less influence the American ability to promote its interests in the M.E (Kamal and Mohammed 47).

Second, public opinion in the U.S played a factor in Obama’s decision to disengage from the M.E. They believed that the U.S should not get involved in the region’s affairs due to the occupation of Iraq that drained the nation’s resources economically and humanitarianly (“The U.S. Policy toward”).

In addition to Obama, other American decision-makers were of the opinion that the American government’s ability to exert influence over the developments occurring in the M.E was constrained. Additionally, the majority of Arab political forces were opposed to increased American dominance in the area. This fact became more apparent during the events of the popular uprisings in which the U.S played a limited role in one side, and the Arab public opinion who did not welcome U.S meddling in the Arab’s own affairs on the other hand. Not least, the widespread suspicion and lack of credibility that surrounded U.S intentions. As a result, there was an American awareness of the insignificant and unwelcome role that it could play in the area. Some U.S government circles had a conviction that there was no need to play such a role (“The U.S. Policy toward”). America’s military departure from Iraq was unnecessary since it allowed social and political unrest to worsen.

Third, U.S reorientation toward Asia and the Chinese rising influence in the region cannot be separated. In such a situation, the U.S seemed to care about its security interests in

Asia. U.S. concern over China's rising power in Asia was reflected in Washington's decision to ramp up its own activities in the region. At this level, the American leadership had to be maintained according to its strategic interests rebalancing its focus from the M.E toward Asia-Pacific (Nasr 231-232). The former adviser of U.S National Security, Susan Rise added that long periods of time were set for the M.E, thus the issue called for a level of parity among all countries based on their significance to America's interests (Kamal and Mohammed 48). The president actually presented a focused and constrained strategic plan for American interests.

4.1.3.1. The American Reposition in the Middle East

Obama unveiled measures to restructure the American position in the M.E as part of the pivot to Asia-Pacific. This transition had taken place throughout the course of two stages. The first stage took place during 2008-2012, referring to Obama's first term, and the second stage during 2012-2016, referring to the second term of his presidency. The Iran nuclear deal was also considered a component of this strategy (Kamal and Mohammed 48). Although in Obama's mind, the M.E occupied an important place to America to preserve the American interests there.

4.1.3.1.1. Obama's Presidency in his First Term (2008-2012)

During this period, Obama attempted to mend U.S relations with Muslims; more particularly, in the M.E that began in 2009 with Obama's speech at Cairo University. Moreover, the American government instituted a set of measures and strategic objectives in implementing a gradual limited withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, and in shutting down Guantanamo prison which did not go very far. America no longer responded to terrorist acts through the use of direct military intervention, and relied more on the use of unmanned drone strikes, in addition to intensifying intelligence and security activities in dealing with Middle Eastern countries (Gerges "Obama and the Arab World:").

4.1.3.1.2. Obama's Presidency in his Second Term (2012-2016)

This period witnessed the beginning of Arab popular uprisings in several Middle Eastern nations which resulted in the dissolution of their national order, and the surge in terrorism in many countries. These events challenged the Obama administration and caused a prominent change in dealing with the region based on a holistic vision that intended to stay out of any potential future conflicts. It also urged the Arab nations to solve their own challenges independently of America. During this stage, America also adopted different strategic policies in dealing with Iran ("Obama and the Arab World: Continuity and Change").

4.2. Post-U.S Withdrawal Challenges for the Iraqi State

With the decision of the withdrawal from Iraq, nearly 130,000 of U.S forces remained there, but mentally the U.S withdrew (Mann 119). In the interests of America, political leaders showed little attention to the Iraqi issue, since it was a legacy issue; it was better to keep faith among American troops than to see Iraq as a strategically regional power since it had that reputation of a loser state (Hill "How the Obama Administration").

Washington focused on preserving the strategic relations with Baghdad. It aimed to maintain stability more likely than to promote political reform. As such, after the 2010 parliamentary elections³, the U.S sought to put together a coalition government, and it empowered the incumbent Shiite candidate, Nouri al-Maliki as the new ruler, over his main rival Ayad Allawi, thinking that a Shiite leader was necessary for peace and stability (Jervis 34). This decision of undermining the political process was interpreted as Iraqis would not deserve to choose their leader if it contradicted with the U.S interests.

4.2.1. Iraq during the Obama Administration: Continuity or Change?

Barack Obama's policy in Iraq can be effectively assessed according to two main criteria. Firstly, his goals and decision-making system that was characterized in the ends. Secondly, the implementation of his policies that was characterized in the means (Brzezinski 16).

For the most part, Obama's second presidency did not keep its focus on the Iraqi issue as part of the decline for American public's list of priorities over American engagement in the entire M.E. Obama chose to ignore al-Maliki's sectarian policies and the pervasive corruption that marked his administration. The President's main concern was getting America out of Iraq and on the way repudiating the Bush legacy. Within this framework, Obama raised his support to al-Maliki's second term (2010-2014) (Sky "How Obama Abandoned Democracy in Iraq").

As mentioned above, the results have yielded 91 seats for Iyad Allawi's Iraqiya coalition over 89 seats for State of Law headed by al-Maliki⁴. They claimed that Allawi's attempt to establish a government with a majority of seats was unsuccessful (Boot "Maliki's Actions, and Obama's"). In fact, Al Maliki wanted to discredit his rivals and those who claimed to represent the Sunnis.

Both administrations had no choice but backing al-Maliki as Iraq's leader, due to his dubious relations to Iran. Bush and Obama alike had their share to maintain relations with Al Maliki because of their unforgivable disasters and wrong acts during the Iraq invasion ("Al-Maliki's Government:" 4). Meanwhile, Al Maliki would have been easier option to manage by the U.S.

The Obama administration maintained its policy of remaining out of Iraq's domestic issues. However, it did not find alternatives to American troops in Iraq so that to sustain its hegemony in the face of Iran's influence. John Biden who held the position of Vice President under Obama, did not do much to curb the power of al-Maliki. He began the process of resolving the political arrangements that had been made between the Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds with the framework of a federal Iraq. For other American officials, the withdrawal from Iraq was a mistaken decision taken by Obama that later promoted the rise of ISIS and a retreat of America's diplomatic influence, which, if it was directed appropriately, would have made the impact of Iraq's collapse less destructive (Wittes "The slipperiest Slope of them all"). In fact, such mistake was intended whose aim was to leave Sunnis weak and the Iraqi forces unready and irresponsible for Iraq's security.

In addition to pulling out America's combats from Iraq, Obama sought to use the same scenario to justify its decision of removing the forces from Afghanistan as well. The administration has been criticized for conducting a rushed withdrawal from Afghanistan and Iraq. This latter created a power vacuum that Al-Qaeda, Taliban and Iran would later fill (The U.S. Government Publishing Office, "Is Al-Qaeda Winning"). However, the administration responded to the critics and claimed that the withdrawal was merely a change in the strategy of engagement. This latter was conducted through the Obama doctrine who believed in special operations of drone strike attacks without involving local army and security forces directly in the concerned country (Tierney 28). These same drones were used often again in Pakistan, Yemen, Libya and Syria (Jervis 33). Thereby, this doctrine disapproves the claim that democracies do not fight each other and the theory of democratic peace theory.

In fact, since America withdrew its military from Iraq, ISIS has been able to fill the resulting power vacuum all the while. As such, America was never intended to come up with

an active strategy to stabilize Iraq or to deal with the Syrian civil war. In order to defeat ISIS, it primarily relied on Syrian Kurds to score its victory (Cordesman 3).

The strategy of U.S. democracy agenda and the result of the Iraq war are most evidently seen in ISIS. Its expansion into Syria contributed to the breakdown of the state and the radicalization of the Syrian civil war, as it bolstered jihadist groups and marginalized the moderate opposition. This support provided ISIS with the expertise and resources required to seize territories and re-enter Iraq on a large scale (Beauchamp “Yes, Bush Helped Create ISIS”).

In 2012, leaks were received by the World Net Daily from Jordanian officials, revealing that ISIS received training from the U.S. military in Jordan before being deployed to Syria. Francis Boyle, a Law professor at the University of Illinois, vigorously described ISIS as a "covert US intelligence operation" with the aim of “destroying Iraq as a state” (MacMillan Order out of Chaos:”).

In retrospect, this orientation did not indicate neither a complete American exit from Iraq nor the neglect of its interests in the M.E. America had stated its commitment to Iraq for two prominent reasons. Oil was the primary factor. America’s need for importing oil has decreased, so it was dependent on the constant supply of Iraqi oil for its friends at low prices. Any disruption to that supply would have a negative impact on Iraqi oil production and its export would lead to a global surge in energy prices (Hinnebusch “The U.S Invasion” 212); (Bowdith 4).

The second factor had to do with the consequences of the invasion and the American moral responsibility to reform the democratic system in Iraq (Laipson and Steinbruner 2); (“Was the Invasion of Iraq Justified?”). However, the U.S never came up with any substantial

plans for handling the Iraqi political and economic crises. It instead intended to fail in making any clear efforts to rebuild the failed state of Iraq with a real power to boost its economy.

America quickly abandoned Iraq, a move that contributed to the growth of extremist organizations including ISIS. This decision posed perhaps the Obama doctrine to a serious test (Acharya “Unipolar No More: The Obama Doctrine and the Emerging Powers”), as neither training and equipping the Iraqi army were useful, nor was arming its forces to confront the advance of ISIS fighters successful (“ISIS Insurgency in Iraq and Syria”).

Obama declared that his country would not get involved again in Iraq militarily, especially, the American public opinion who opposed such intervention. This alienation did not last so long as president Obama did not allow ISIS to expand and control much of the Iraqi territory which was of a great threat not only to America’s interests in the area, but also to its allies’ security (Hennessey and Cloud “Obama Returns”). Thus there was a kind of American return to Iraq and because of ISIS, America has recovered its influence and power there since its withdrawal in late 2011, not only that, it insisted that the Iraqi government and its formation after the 2014 elections adhered to its viewpoints (149-148 “استعادة النفوذ الاميركي “). (تقدير موقف “في العراق

Meanwhile, Obama initiated a comprehensive strategy and laid out air strikes against ISIS strongholds. With coalition support, he strengthened the Iraqi security forces, as he sent American military advisers to help Iraqi army repel the Islamic State and accelerated the process of delivering equipment and weapons to Iraq that was contracted between the two countries (Carter “A Lasting Defeat.”); (“Obama on ISIS”). This U.S strategy was also centered on a global coalition among international and regional allies to move politically and militarily against ISIS, in what Obama called a “long-term campaign” (Committee on Armed Services 2). This move was also an interpretation of the administration’s fear that the unrest

that swept Iraq might spread to the neighboring countries, thus it would threaten America's interests and the security of its regional ally, Israel.

It was remarked that Obama's strategy shifted from diplomacy that focused first on a new beginning with Muslim World during his first term as stated in his Cairo speech, to a strategy of warfare, threat and intimidation prior to his campaign against ISIS (Hausam "Compare the Tough-Sounding Line in Obama's Speech on ISIS to a Famous Phrase by George W. Bush"). This strategy pushed the American media and analysts to compare and to show the similarities between Obama's rhetoric and that of his predecessor (Clyne "Obama Channeling George W. Bush in UN Speech").

Similar to his predecessor, Obama convinced the world that his declared war against ISIS was a war that had to be fought and not one of choice, the same as the one launched by Bush on Iraq in 2003, whose goal was to combat global terrorism, so it was necessary that all international efforts might come together to stand against this organization (The U.S. Government Publishing Office. Senate Hearing "The Authorizations for").

American forces were once again fighting not only in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in Syria, and carrying out military operations in Libya and Yemen. This was despite Obama's desire to shift U.S. priorities away from the Middle Eastern region (Unger 3).

4.2.2. Obama's Role in the Iraqi Political Process: Turning away from the Democracy Tradition

During his first term in office, Obama rejected his predecessor's crusading tone and style, and reversed Bush's Middle East democracy and regime change policy. He did not give priority to this issue and did not consider it a condition to mend relations with the countries of the region (Bouchet "Barack Obama's Democracy").

It has been shown how Obama condoned Maliki's survival as a Prime Minister after Iraq's 2010 elections, despite the fact that Iyad Allawi, the former Prime Minister, edged out the Shiite Prime Minister al-Maliki by a slight progress, on the grounds that Allawi was unable to reach the requisite votes to form his government (Sky 336-340). The administration's support to Al Maliki not only undermined the democratic process in Iraq, but also the formation of a legitimate government. This was Obama's second intended mistake that helped spiral back sectarian grievances into Iraq through his practices against Sunnis.

However, the political upheaval and events that began to take place in the M.E prompted a shift in the approach that Obama took on the question of democracy. He crucially backed the demonstrations calling for regime change and transitions to democracy in some of the Arab countries when he called for U.S allies to step down, as happened with Ben Ali in Tunisia, or Hosni Mubarak in Egypt (Cooper and Worth "A Measure of Change:").

Obama, who was a pragmatist when necessary, did not accept to pursue a transformative vision for the M.E (Cole "U.S. Middle East" 1-2). Given the situation in the region, he had assumed different policy approaches to the countries of major protests according to the circumstances of each case. While he demanded for immediate change in Tunisia and Egypt, he tended to maintain the status quo in the monarchies with conservative governments. From this standpoint, Obama established his position regarding the events that Iraq witnessed during the same period (Cole "Mapping the Obama Administration's" 112).

But things were different in Iraq. Securing the Gulf, countering Iran, and keeping a constant rate of oil exports to fulfill the world economy's growing needs were among Iraq's vital and critical strategic priorities for America. Meanwhile, if it prevented Iraq from being dominated by Iran, the overall U.S interests would be relatively easy to serve (Cordesman 4).

The unrest started in February 2011 when popular protests took place in Tahrir Square in central Baghdad calling for political reform after it reached a dead end (Jabar “The Iraqi Protest Movement:” 17). Some considered these anti-government demonstrations one of the protests that have taken place since the 2003 American invasion. These anti-government demonstrations were influenced by the revolutions that erupted in some of the Arab countries that sought to bring down their old elites (Jabar “The Iraqi Protest Movement:” 7).

The protests have intensified at the end of 2012 following the arrest warrant issued for Minister of Finance Rafie al-Issawi on charges of aiding terrorism (on suspicion of assisting terrorism) and the guise of de-Baathification. This incident prompted a coalition of Iraqi tribes and Sunni forces to organize demonstrations in the Sunni-majority provinces in western, northern and central Iraq, starting from Anbar province. These demonstrations persisted due to the Sunni forces’ tremendous advances in Syria, which seemed to tip the balance of power between them and the Assad regime. These protests reached their violent climax in 2013 when al-Maliki used security forces to put an end to the conflicts that led to the Fallujah incident⁵ on January 25, 2013 and the death of seven people (Stern and Berger 182-189).

Meanwhile, Al-Maliki attempted to misrepresent the movement, as he stated that he has resorted to disassociate himself from the responsibility of the brutal acts against demonstrators, and he held the House of Representatives accountable for meeting the demands of the demonstrators. He also appointed the Deputy Prime Minister Hussein al-Shahristani as a head of the ministerial committee to address the protesters’ demands (“Maliki’s Dilemma: The Crisis”). His government appeared once again to have grown more tyrannical and sectarian against the Sunni minority, driving the country toward more violence and revolt and in the process undermining Iraq’s democracy.

Obama's attitude to Iraqi protesters contrasted with his support for Arab movements during the upheavals. His administration assured its continued support to al-Maliki and turned a blind eye to the exclusionary policies he pursued as well as its refusal to comply with the demands that demonstrators made against his regime. It was possible to surmise that the refusal of Obama to aid rebels fighting al-Assad's regime made it easier for ISIS to further infiltrate into Syria and Iraq. Hence Obama had a self-interest in supporting al-Maliki to confront the protestors in Iraq for fear of a resurrection of ISIS, especially after expanding its stronghold in the Syrian territory. Obama believed that al-Maliki's willingness to defeat the organization would be the appropriate response to the criticism his government received, and it showed that the Obama doctrine was still effective, in part for supporting and arming U.S allies without the direct intervention (Beinart "Obama's Disastrous"). Consequently, the traits of continuity can be traced through America's support to Al Maliki as a prime minister by the Obama administration which sought a new beginning and distanced itself away from Bush's legacy.

Yet Al-Maliki had other goals. In order to consolidate his power for a third term, he used U.S weapons to maintain his control in the government over Sunnis, thus he continued to monopolize violence by alienating political rivals and opponents in the country ("Al-Maliki's Government:" 1). Saving Iraq appeared once again to pose great challenges than ever seemed with its existing political divisions. ISIS's remnants and the immediate threat posed by Iran contributed to its failure in many other respects than many analysts were willing to acknowledge (Cordesman 4).

It would be extremely difficult to restore American credibility in Iraq, just as it would be difficult to establish effective governance. These challenges were the center of the problem. There was more to the ongoing public unrest and upheavals in Iraq than just resentment toward recent foreign intervention, corruption, unfavorable economic conditions.

Iraq's problems were the products of long-term political issues that have been compounded by decades of war, unrest, and crises (Cordesman 5).

4.2.3. Obama's Turning Side

These developments kept playing a part in changing the administration's policies in Iraq. After deliberately ignoring Al-Maliki's acts towards the Iraqi people and his exclusionary policies, Obama found himself at a critical juncture for ISIS's advance in Iraq together with a stream new Sunni recruits that were able to pull in the organization at the beginning of 2014. After defeating the Iraqi forces and taking control of Mosul and other cities in northern and western Iraq, ISIS declared an Islamic Caliphate in Iraq and Syria (Mannina "How the U.S. Troops").

With an apparent marginalization and suppression targeting Iraqi Sunnis in particular, many of them had further challenged Al-Maliki's regime which has sidelined them and prompted some of them to accept ISIS at the expense of his system of sectarianism. Thus, al-Maliki, who at the outset did not allow the American military to stay in Iraq, found himself unable to beat back the threat of ISIS and the Sunni tribes without considerable American assistance, and granted American soldiers the legal immunity that he refused before. However, this step came late, as the issue was related to his authoritarian regime and exclusionary style of government (Rasheed "Maliki Defiant as his Special Forces Deploy in Baghdad").

Obama became convinced that it was time for Al-Maliki to relinquish power as a precondition to address the structural causes of violence and instability from within Iraq, especially that the majority of the revolutionaries were not from ISIS, but they were Sunnis fighters who have rebelled against his sectarian and exclusionary policies (Mansour "The Sunni Predicament in Iraq").

Meanwhile, the U.S support to Al-Maliki government might seem to side with Shiites over Sunnis and the American regional allies, particularly against Iran's regional rival Saudi Arabia. In this context, Obama lately announced that he would not deploy American fighter jets to support the Shiite regime in an air campaign. He also warned Iran against making any attempt to exert influence in Iraq through its Shiite ally; otherwise it would trigger unfavorable outcomes (Friedman "Exclusive full Interview: Obama on the World").

Al-Maliki has finally bowed to intense pressure from both within the country, coming from the religious authorities; and from outside the country, coming from Washington and Tehran. Such a move forced him to step aside as a result of such a decision, which prepared the way for Haider Al-Abadi as the new Prime Minister. Thus, Al-Maliki resigned his position and handed it over to Haider after U.S-Iranian talks (Friedman "Obama on the World").

4.2.4. The Obama Administration's Attitude towards Iran and its Repercussions on Iraq

At first, Obama put on the policy of engagement and diplomacy in dealing with Iran. He made it clear that diplomacy with Iran might serve the interests of America more effectively than sanctions. Because these sanctions only succeeded in bringing the Iranian dispute to a close, but they failed to make a possible deal over the Iranian nuclear program. Also, the deployment of the American military forces against Iran could have far reaching effects throughout the entire M.E (Chollet 183-185). Therefore, the U.S opted for diplomacy as the best option to deal with Iran to attain its objectives.

The political rapprochement began with sending Iran Nowruz greetings that Obama addressed to the Iranian people and their leadership, as an effort to seek new means for reaching out to Iran. This was followed by sending a private letter to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei since 2009 urging better relations, not to mention the secret negotiations that

took place between America and Iran months before the election of Hassan Rouhani in 2013 (Rubin 217).

In his second presidential term, these negotiations gradually turned into a bilateral engagement over the Iranian nuclear activities in the Summer of 2015 (Sterio 73-74).

According to Obama, the nuclear accord was part of a security plan that would not imperil the M.E. He considered this agreement as the focal point of his regional policy agenda in order to block the pathway to Iran's nuclear weapons and a difficult variable in America's approach to regional power dynamics (Spetalnick "Analysis: With historic Iran").

Given the experience of America's policy in the area, it was often evident that behind every U.S led multinational coalition or diplomatic accord with the M.E countries a hidden agenda. It was often directed against Arabs and best served America's national interests.

In this light, President Obama has focused all of his attention on Iraq in an effort to reach rapprochement with Iran and the nuclear deal. One of the Iraqi opposition claimed that the agreement was signed with entailing two secret sides between America and Iran regarding coordination inside Iraq that were neither revealed to the Americans nor the world. It was apparent that Obama has delivered Iraq to Iran on a golden platter as a means to accomplish the promised agreement (Karon "U.S. Iraq").

In fact, Iran did not cause M.E crises; however, it exploited the opportunities arising from the turmoil that hit the region and managed its foreign relations accordingly. Hence, it skillfully managed regional conflicts with its soft power tools. For example, Iran was given the opportunity to deepen its engagement in the region in light of developments such as the invasion of Lebanon by Israel in 1982, as well as the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq by America in 2001 and 2003, and also to direct the results of the events to what served its

interests (Pollack “Regional Implications of”). Therefore, Iran did not have the desire to develop any nuclear weapons of its own or use them against any state. Thereby, this Iranian nuclear program was more of a tool than of an end to wield power and to push the Western states to acknowledge the Iran’s regime as a power in the region given its geostrategic position in the M.E (Pollack “Regional Implications of”).

Since the conclusion of the nuclear accord, the Iranian regime has obtained approval from the world powers for its survival with no aim to destabilize it. There was no doubt that Iran viewed Iraq as being more crucial to its agenda than its nuclear program, and Syria the guarantor of this project. Hence the Obama administration used Iraq and Syria as a means to put pressure on Iran in its determination to sign the nuclear deal. However, these two countries would undoubtedly be affected by the Iranian-Western relations over the Iranian nuclear program in the future (“Arab Scholars Deliberate on How Best to Contextualize the Lausanne Agreement”).

The ruthless expansion of ISIS and its control over territories in Syria and Iraq also came to indicate that there was a U.S-Iranian rapprochement. That rapprochement reached the point of indirect logistical coordination in spite of excluding Tehran from the global coalition to defeat the organization. This was in light of the need for Iran’s networks of influence in Iraq to fight ISIS, because of the ineffectiveness of U.S airstrikes to defeat the organization. Meanwhile, America refused to send troops on the ground due to its main concern of any potential conflict with Iran would adversely affect its interests (Esfandiary and Tabatabai 8-14).

The American-Iranian cooperation took another dimension since 2014. Across the political spectrum in Iraq, ousting al-Maliki and assembling a new government prompted the Obama administration to resume dialogue with Iran. This latter had a capacity to influence

Iraqi political elites, which meant an American recognition that Iran was more reliable partner and a major player in Iraq and the entire region (5-11).

It became clear that the position of America as represented in the Obama administration did not hide his admiration to Iran's firmness in the face of pressure that was made by the West, constructing a strong state despite the siege imposed on it, meanwhile, Iran's willingness to work with America since both countries were intertwined with a broader issues and had common interests in the region such as in Afghanistan, Iraq, the war on terrorism. Thus, Obama was ready to let Iran rejoin the international community and to become a strong power in the region if it would welcome his long-term deal over its nuclear program ("Obama: Could Become a").

In his speech in 2015, Obama noted that "ultimately between diplomacy or some sort of war", so he chose diplomacy in dealing with Iran that was characterized in an agreement over its nuclear program (Pande "Obama to Iran Deal Critics Choose Diplomacy Over War"). This agreement was reached out to resolution after years of negotiations and attempts to contain Iran. Hence Iran became the new variable in the area according to Obama's perspective. This means America would let Iran establish influence in Iraq, play a part in the Iraqi and Syrian politics and share power with Turkey (Barnes 38).

4.3. Obama's policy in the Middle East: Perspectives on the Arab Spring

Starting with Tunisia, Obama's reaction to the events and protests took him by surprise as the Tunisian uprisings was unexpected, making it hard to predict the outcome (Drissi "Assessing the Obama Administration's Response"). It was only after the removal of Ben Ali by the Tunisians, the U.S. finally indicated its support for the Tunisian people to transition towards holding free and fair elections in the coming days.

Obama believed that overthrowing the long-standing dictators during the Arab Spring would fulfill the people's aspirations. Initially, this appeared to be the case in Tunisia. However, the administration silently supported pro-American autocratic leaders, thereby withdrawing US support for pro-democracy demonstrators and endorsing the military coup in Egypt (185).

In Bahrain and Yemen, the Obama administration continued to support the authoritarian regimes in both countries by remaining silent on the situation in Bahrain. During this time, Obama did not alter his stance on the use of violence against peaceful protestors, nor did he stop Saudi military intervention to safeguard the authoritarian Al-Khalifa rulers (Rozoff, "Bahrain: U.S. Backs Saudi Military Intervention"). In Yemen, however, the Obama administration ordered Ali Abdullah Saleh, who has been a US ally in the battle against al-Qaeda terrorism, to halt the ceasefire immediately ("U.S Urges Yemen's Saleh to Step Down").

Obama's action to condemn the crackdown on protesters by the Bahraini government revealed the U.S double standards in dealing with these protests, since Bahrain is a strong ally to the U.S in serving the American interests such as U.S bases and Bahrain's role to deter Iran in the region. Certainly, the U.S fear to see Bahrain being controlled by Iran is definitely more important for the Obama administration than the wish to see Bahrain more democratic.

The response of the Obama administration to the pro-democracy uprisings in Libya and Syria involved a revival of Bush's approach of using military intervention to promote democratic peace. This was done under the guise of rhetorical and humanitarian obligations, and with the support of an international coalition aimed at safeguarding civilians from Gaddafi's brutal actions. Meanwhile, the U.S chose to prevent Russia and Iran from becoming

involved in another military conflict in the Middle East by isolating them in Syria (Nuruzzaman 186-87).

Like the former president W. Bush, Obama did not demonstrate any progress in resolving the conflicts arising from the Arab Spring for the purpose of facilitating democratic transitions. Consequently, Obama was cautious about supporting the Arab people in their demands towards democracy for two primary reasons. To start, Obama expressed doubts about whether the new democratic regimes, like their authoritarian counterparts, would continue to have a strong relationship with the U.S and Israel. The second rationale is to hinder Iran from expanding its regional influence (Nuruzzaman 184-85).

The administration's response to the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa has been cautious and inconsistent, but Obama's foreign policy disregarded people's claims for standing with dictatorial regimes in the region at the expense of their demands (Drissi Assessing the Obama Administration's"). Obama was focused on serving long-term U.S. interests instead of meeting the Arab aspirations for democracy.

The situation in Egypt presented a greater challenge for Obama because Mubarak has been a longstanding ally of the U.S and his regime has consistently served the interests of Israel. The challenge intensified after Morsi was elected because his presidency was crucial for Egypt's peace treaty with Israel and other regional security arrangements. However, the U.S. attempted to deal with his administration, hoping that integrating the Muslim Brotherhood into the political system would be effective with any government seen as democratic. Nevertheless, after General al-Sisi led the military coup, the U.S. did not act decisively when Morsi was ousted (Jervis 41-42), and did not even recognize the military's intervention as a coup.

Even though the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt provided optimism for protesters after the removal of the oppressive governments of Ben Ali and Mubarak, the ousting of Mohamed Morsi, the first democratically elected leader of the country, mirrored the prevailing trend in the region of using coercive regimes and organized methods of authority to suppress protest movements (Mabon “Arab Spring: After”).

This appeared to dash the aspirations of the demonstrators for real change and what happened in Bahrain demonstrates the extent to which the U.S support to Arab citizens in their quest for democracy is limited. Therefore, Obama responded to the uprisings with either silence or military intervention, based on the perceived importance of these countries to U.S. national interests.

It is concluded that Obama’s policy in Iraq was characterized by more continuity and more realism with some transformations in his two terms of presidency. Due to the development of the events after 2010, he acted in a more conventional way and less productive manner as a result of his promise to restore relations with Muslims around the world. His rhetoric of reform was often contrasted with his realpolitik actions such as airstrikes, sanctions and Israel’s protection, opening him up to the criticism that his policy resembled his predecessor’s. Consequently, his rhetoric had not been translated into concrete actions. This latter ended up with a more divided Islamic world than before.

In spite of Obama’s diplomatic efforts to reverse W. Bush’s Iraq legacy, his main concern was to start the withdrawal process and to seek a retreat from the entire Middle East; however, it was the most political part he could not seem to preclude. Given the developments in Iraq and the rise of extremist organizations led by ISIS, the Arab revolutions helped achieve a kind of American return to the M.E and to Iraq without a direct intervention. The

result was that Obama pursued a policy paralyzed politically by a dysfunctional and polarized system.

With regard to Obama's attitude on the Iraqi political process, the nation's affairs were handled with realism. Instead of prioritizing Iraq's political reform and democratic change, he had given counterterrorism strategy and security cooperation a great importance. As a result, he left the country in a state of immense bloodshed, more sectarian conflict and violent instability.

Meanwhile, Iran's nuclear ambition had entered important phase when the administration began to open up diplomatic communication with the country in Obama's first term presidency and culminated in the nuclear agreement. This agreement came at the expense of Iraq. America allowed Iran to play greater roles in Iraq and to maximize its influence. Because of the direct influence Iran had over the Iraqi government and the capacity it possessed to escalate sectarian tensions between Shia and Sunni Muslims, these circumstances helped America attain its objectives inside Iraq. Not to mention the growing chaos and the Arab Spring's explosive rage in the face of Middle Eastern leaders turned the problem of democratization a success story, since it was an intended policy for serving America's national interests regardless of the means or the U.S administrations.

Endnotes

¹ In an interview with Jeffrey Goldberg, Barack Obama lays out the realist ideas that guide his approach to America's foreign policy in such a way that is both direct and comprehensive. For further reading see: Goldberg, Jeffrey. "The Obama Doctrine: U.S. President Talks through his Hardest Decisions about America's Role in the World." *The Atlantic*. April. 2016. Web.; and Pillar, Paul R. "Obama the Realist." *The National Interest*. 12. March. 2016. Web.

² Islamism as a political Islam, mobilizes masses for extreme social and political transformation. Another meaning is a political ideology that advocates for a restoration of traditional Islamic law, economics, and judicial reforms in contemporary governments. For further reading see: "Islamism." *ScienceDirect*.

³ See also Hill, Christopher R. *Outpost: Life on the Frontlines of American Diplomacy*, a Memoir. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014. P. 342-391.

⁴ Amid 2008 and after the Shia civil war in Iraq, Al Maliki emerged as a major political figure. His opponents, including his secular rival Ayad Allawi formed Iraqiya, a nationalist, non-sectarian coalition that aimed to unseat Al-Maliki during the 2010 elections. Sunnis overwhelmingly backed Allawi despite their boycott of the 2005 elections. The nomination of Sunnis for the 2008 elections came to guarantee that a legitimate and new government to be formed far of any sectarian conflict or violent practices. The Iraqiya coalition then won a plurality of parliamentary seats, thus defeating Iraqiya's rival State of Law Coalition and according to Iraq's constitution, Allawi should have formed a new government. However, Al Maliki made everything to delay the political process, and to undermine the electoral results with the allegations of fraud. Hence he called for a recount of all ballots during the elections disqualifying Sunni candidates being part of de-Baathification. Consequently, the Iraq's Supreme Court reinterpreted the constitution giving Al Maliki the chance to be the Prime Minister instead of Allawi. For further reading see: Mannina, Ryan A. "How the 2011 US Troop Withdrawal from Iraq Led to the Rise of ISIS." *Small Wars Journal*. 23. Dec. 2018. Web.

⁵ On January 25, 2013, the Iraqi troops killed more than thousand insurgents in Fallujah during a clash between Sunni minority protesters against the Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki. For further details see: Naama Kamel. "Iraq Troops Kill Four in Clashes with Sunni Protesters." *Reuters*. 25. Jan. 2013. Web.

Conclusion

The main motive that underlies the significance of this research is to examine the U.S policy in Iraq under the presidency of the former president Obama, and the extent to which his policy was similar to its precedent. The study dealt with the failure to reform Iraq under the prism of promoting democracy that started with the former president W. Bush. Hence, the traits of continuity in Obama's policy were the starting point that aimed to find accurate answers to the hidden objectives to the policy of Obama in Iraq. These were the focal points upon which this thesis focuses.

The analysis of the research was backed up by a historical background of the involvement of America in the M.E after WWII to see how U.S interests and relations have evolved, developed and formed the context which influenced its future decisions and the approaches it adopted to deal with the most important issues of the region.. This trend came as an inevitable consequence of U.S. rising dominance, which made it necessary for the nation to assume a leadership position and played a central part on the international politics.

The M.E served as chessboard for U.S conflict amid the Cold War. The U.S sought to contain and limit the Soviet intrusion into the region so as to serve its own interests, namely ensuring Israel's security and continuous flow of oil from the M.E. It sought to build a strong relationship with Iraq and other countries to curb communism. This relationship was characterized by supporting Saddam's regime and other autocrats in the region whose concern was to wield power over their people and their will. This U.S support was seen as a source of legitimacy for authoritarians, and it later widened the gap between them and their people.

In post-Cold War period, however, the U.S containment policy in the area was changed with an introduction of economic reform and democracy promotion as new means for maintaining U.S control in the region. The economic reform was first introduced during the Clinton administration and resulted in agreements with the Arab countries. On the onset of the 9/11 events, President W. Bush reacted to the attacks by pursuing a freedom agenda as a pretext to pass the decision for the 2003 Iraq invasion. That decision was based on false premises, by aggressively spreading liberal democracy in Iraq to be followed by other Middle Eastern countries in the broad.

As for the U.S policy in Iraq, it ranged between intervention and containment. It has shown an increasing interest in Iraq in particular after the dissolution of USSR when it emerged with tremendous superiority in all fields and made it unique in global hegemony and leadership. This fact made it possible for the U.S to get involved in foreign crises and exert its influence. The beginning was to declare war on Iraq in 1991 with the United Nations-backed coalition forces for the liberation of Kuwait. This was what the W. H. Bush administration has already succeeded in by ultimately going to war and repelling the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait so that to liberate it for other considerations and for U.S personal interests.

This international coalition also allowed the U.S to destroy not only the Iraqi power, but all its projects that aimed at developing any nuclear power and imposing economic sanctions within the framework of what it called Dual containment strategy with the purpose of containing both Iraq and Iran. In fact, the U.S succeeded in containing Iraq because the Gulf War ended with its collapse, while it failed to contain Iran because it had different capabilities and privileges due to the Iranian force which was unable to be destroyed unlike the Iraqi force.

Meanwhile, the U.S was not satisfied with applying an economic embargo on Iraq, but went even further as it launched attacks on Iraqi lands from time to time under the guise of humanitarian intervention and protection. The most famous intervention was the Operation Desert which was implemented under the Clinton administration. The latter was subject to great pressure from the pressure groups, the Israeli lobby, the military-industrial complex, the oil lobby, and what was known as the neo-conservative movement to authorize military strike in Iraq. This campaign was successful in convincing former president Clinton to approve the Iraq Liberation Act. The law was essential for declaring the U.S war on Iraq that was planned for in post-Cold War.

The 9/ 11 events and the neo-conservative movement's influence on the W. Bush administration represented the motivating factors for the invasion of Iraq. After many accusations such as its non-compliance and violation of international laws; those decisions related to the disarmament of WMD, upon which the invasion was based; Saddam's regime and its association to Al-Qaeda, and its threat to neighboring countries; and finally linking the goal of this war to the process of spreading democracy became the center of the invasion.

The Iraq war was declared in 2003 amid significant popular support, despite some international demonstrations condemning this war, which affected most countries of the world, even the U.S. However, his support quickly declined after the war because of the false allegations made by the U.S after it was proven that there was no link between Iraq and WMD, or connection to Al-Qaeda. It also became apparent that this war was fought for hidden interests, mainly in the pursuit of global hegemony, protecting Israel, controlling Iraqi oil, and achieving the neo-conservatives' goal through implementing the Greater Middle East (GME) project.

The events of the war provided irrefutable evidence for the claim, which indicated that the U.S intended to destroy this country from the beginning, not to reform it, and to plunder its resources. Its forces did not attempt to confront any of the sabotage and looting operations that affected all parts of Iraq, and it did not move a finger on any of these encroachments, nor did it work to establish order and security. It worked from the first day of its entry into Iraq to protect the Ministry of Oil, canals and pipelines on one hand. On the other hand, the occupation carried out a series of actions that proved the falseness of their allegations related to the U.S noble goals of supporting democracy, liberating Iraq and protecting human rights. By controlling Iraq, it dissolved the Iraqi institutions, most prominently the military.

This led to the collapse of its state, after that it rebuilt new institutions on sectarian basis. In order to prove that it wanted to reform the nation, it worked on establishing the Transitional Council and held elections based on sectarianism. Meanwhile, the bodies that were a major reason for the deterioration in Iraq, from the Transitional Council to the Interim Government, then the Permanent Government, were bodies that established sectarianism and brought destruction to Iraq.

Although most of the studies that dealt with U.S policy in Iraq since 2003 represented strategic mistakes of the former president W. Bush, but in returning to the projects presented in this framework, it is found that most of these projects were aimed at fragmenting the region and dividing it into small states. Therefore, the process of dismantling state institutions and building new ones based on sectarianism was intended strategies aimed at preserving both U.S and Israel interests through achieving the project of the GME.

The U.S has reached many of its stated goals, as it controlled the oil and its market in the area, and it succeeded in spreading chaos in the region igniting sectarian conflicts between Sunnis and Shiites and between Arabs and Kurds in Iraq.

It is also concluded that, although the U.S had achieved many of its goals in Iraq, it failed in many other aspects, especially with regard to human, financial and strategic losses. This fact made its continuing presence in Iraq almost impossible and turned its plan to expedite the process of disengaging from this country as an appropriate option to ensure that its gains did not turn into losses.

The beginning was the decision of the Transitional Council after Paul Bremer was forced to give up his position as responsible for the civil authority in Iraq and to hand over power to the Iraqi people in 2004; this was due to the difficult conditions that the American forces were experiencing at the time because of the resistance, in addition to the increasing chaos and instability in the country until the civil conflict broke out, in which the U.S was a direct cause. Meanwhile, it adopted sectarian policies, a sectarian constitution, sectarian institutions, and officials who advocated sectarianism instead of nationalism, all of which contributed in worsening the situation in Iraq and escalated in sectarian tension among the various segments of the society.

On the other hand, it worked to sow sectarian strife through the bombing of some of the holy places for Shiites and Sunnis by some of its forces wearing civilian clothes and targeting people from both sects which led to the civil war. Furthermore, the attacks which carried out by al-Qaeda against both groups ignited the situation more. The aim behind this policy was to mitigate its losses by weakening the Iraqi resistance in light of the Iraqi people facing each other and to achieve the neo-conservative and Israel's plan by dividing Iraq into

small states as a step forward to divide the rest of the Middle Eastern countries under the so-called the GME project of the century.

It is also important to note that, the repercussions of the American war on Iraq were devastating for both. For the U.S, the material, human and strategic costs were expensive. The material represented in spending billions of dollars on this war in a way that exceeded all expectations that were planned for in advance and affected the American economy which was going through a severe financial crisis. As for the human losses, the U.S lost more soldiers, which prompted the American opinion to condemn this war and advocate for a rapid evacuation of American troops from Iraq. For the strategic losses, the war gave Iran an opportunity to strengthen its influence inside Iraq and in the entire M.E.

As for Iraq, the American invasion made Iraq a failed state by all international standards, as the U.S cost Iraq heavy economic, social, political and human losses which would find it difficult to easily recover from these crises without having radical solutions to any of them. All of these repercussions put the U.S in such a challenging situation, in light of the controversy that took place inside the American administration about the necessity of ending this war and taking care of internal affairs, especially, the internal and external condemnation of what was happening in Iraq. Hence the most appropriate solution for the neoconservative government was to sign the security agreement that sought the American withdrawal from Iraq and allowed the U.S to achieve its goals and preserve its interests, after being impossible to continue its illegitimate presence in the country. Therefore, W. Bush pressured the Iraqi government to sign this agreement on terms that served the interests of his country.

According to this agreement, the U.S left Iraq, but it reserved the right to return whenever the opportunity permits, especially in light of the deteriorating and fragile security situation which made its presence in this case legitimate.

For the former president Obama, his policy in the M.E and Iraq saw a decline in interest and relied on the policy of containment instead of interfering in its internal affairs, or calling for democracy promotion as the President W. Bush did. Obama did not show any interest in the issue of democracy, even after the pro-democracy protests and uprisings that erupted in the M.E. His policy aimed to get away from all costly interventions which incur catastrophic losses on the U.S, such as 2003 Iraq war.

Obama's Smart Power strategy failed to adequately address the significant challenges faced by his administration, including the inheriting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan from the previous administration which had attempted to address these conflicts through military intervention under the guise of promoting democracy. Additionally, Iran's nuclear efforts and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, all posed significant challenges to his Smart Power approach. Meanwhile, Obama's diplomatic efforts with the Muslim world did not take hold, raising doubts about his foreign policy stance on the Middle East, which made little progress in addressing the longstanding and entrenched issues.

Obama's policy in Iraq was determined in the commitments of W. Bush. Hence he had no alternative for settling the situation in Iraq but to continue what his predecessor had already started. He pledged to end this war with the final and immediate withdrawal from Iraq, which was agreed upon previously between the Iraqi government and the W. Bush administration and not to leave Iraq facing its unknown fate alone. However, this withdrawal took place under difficult security conditions, as the country was plunged into a cycle of sectarian conflicts and instability which gave way to the control of terrorist groups over many

important areas in Iraq. This proved once again the contradiction that happened between the official speeches announced by Obama and the actual practices, as most of his speeches remained merely glamorous slogans that aimed to polish the American image and misled the internal and international public opinion.

Based on the results, the study has proved that the policy of president Obama is characterized by a continuity of his precedents, despite the slogans of change that his administration carried from the beginning. Difference and change were represented in the means and not in the principles and the objectives, though, his administration relied on international cooperation and global partnership instead of unilateral action led by the previous administration. It also relied on dialogue and diplomacy in dealing with competing countries and the enemy instead of force and intervention. As for the objectives, they remained fixed, with regard to achieving global hegemony and protecting Israel's security. Thereby, change remained only apparent and far reaching since what seemed to be a failure was in fact an achievement to the undeclared agenda of the president Obama in Iraq.

With the W. Bush administration, the U.S succeeded in fulfilling its objectives through the false allegation of democratizing Iraq and being extended beyond to redress the democratic deficit in the M.E. Yet what happened was the opposite as sectarianism, chaos, and turmoil hit the country and passed on to other countries after the Arab uprisings started during the Obama's presidency. Whatever the president's ideology and means were, the objective remained constant and was to serve U.S interests beyond any considerations.

It is also concluded that the emergence of the ISIS organization during the Obama administration was the result of the U.S occupation to Iraq and the policies that opened the way for various extremist movements to emerge and then created the appropriate environment to attract global terrorist organizations. The American withdrawal paved the way for this

organization to declare itself and to develop its activities that extended beyond the Iraqi borders. This organization became a threat in the entire region in light of American indifference to the Iraqi situation until the Islamic State controlled many Iraqi lands and moved to Syrian, Libyan and Yemeni lands. This development prompted the U.S to form a coalition with other nations whose main goal was to confront ISIS and defeat it; although this American initiative came too late. It relied instead on airstrikes, without involving the armed forces on the ground of the battlefield which was consistent with the Obama doctrine that sought to lower the human and even the financial cost and relied only on smart technology.

Also Obama in his policy towards Iraq has relied on the strategy of containing real not potential threats without involving the U.S in wars again. Thus its reliance on this policy has served its interests. It saw ISIS as an opportunity to curb Iran in the region, especially the organization's hostility towards the Shia. However, Iran's ability to adapt itself to the situation and exploit it to its advantage opened up the possibility of destroying this organization in the short term, considering that its survival was linked to the policy interests of the active countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Russia, the U.S and France.

Finally, it was concluded that Iraq has become a threat during the occupation by the U.S and even after the withdrawal. Each regional and international country like Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, or America, Russia and France tried to support a specific party in Iraq whether with weapons, money or political support at the expense of the other parties for the sake of serving its interests. All of which made the Iraqi situation deteriorated more and more.

The findings of the study reinforced the evidence that events that the M.E witnessed following the war of Iraq proved once again the American pre-war planning efforts which was a preliminary step for the implementation of the project proposed by the neoconservatives. W. Bush in the pre-war period announced his hostility to three countries represented in Iraq, Iran

and Syria, in addition to Libya in North Africa. Iraq was dealt with through the war. As for Syria, it entered into a complex civil war. Together with Libya, they gave the U.S the opportunity to intervene in their internal affairs.

What made matters more complicated was the emergence of ISIS and its desire to eliminate the near enemy, the Arab regimes rather than the distant enemy, the U.S and the countries of the West. This raised the question about the possibility to link the American projects to its pre-war plans. Even in Libya, which was seen as a country that made up the axis of evil during the escalation in Iraq according to the U.S, the American military intervention has mired the country in political instability and conflict of the Arab Spring. Although this wave of protest affected most of the countries in the region, the West intervened only in Libya. This once again proved the logical connection of the events in the region. Yet for Iran, it was the only country that was one of the American plans that the U.S failed to interfere in its domestic issues, due to the failure of all American attempts. This raised numerous concerns regarding the future of U.S strategies toward this country and other countries that threatened its interests.

Based on the above points reached during this study that is related to the policy of the U.S in Iraq under the Obama administration, it is possible to point out some points that would determine the direction that the U.S would take in Iraq and the M.E in the next years:

The disappointment of the Arab people which they experienced after all the failed attempts for change made them accept all projects and ideas that aimed at fragmenting the region. This claim was enhanced by the rapid rise of ISIS and was given the status of a state by the West. Meanwhile, the Arab countries' struggle for political change and the failure of their rulers to meet their people's demands made this organization acceptable in the eyes of youth circles that suffered from frustration due to the consequences of the Arab uprising. This

latter gave the West and even Israel under the leadership of the U.S the opportunity to manage these conditions that the Arab people went through and to put forward the idea of dividing the Middle Eastern countries into small states without the slightest opposition from these people who suffered from a state of loss of confidence in the ruling authority.

Also the outbreak of mass protests in Iraq in 2019 came to indicate that Iraq continued to face challenges in its efforts to construct a responsible and autonomous state that served and protected its population. It is also worth mentioning that the U.S has already successfully undermined the Iraqi state and its society.

After twenty years since 2003, the effort of constructing an Iraqi country, with all of the criteria and ramifications that it entailed, is still a long way from being successful and democratic. Each government pledged state institution reform with fair elections, eradication of corrupt practices and the provision of protection against instances of mistreatment and injustice. However, not a single of these promises came true. Any hope for change was stymied by entrenched interests. Iraqis lost trust in their government after it consistently let them down on the most basic of their expectations.

Violence and instability in the country facilitated and increased the possibility of the American presence there over the next decade. Its presence might last with the possible of a future confrontation between Iraq and Iraq's Kurdistan region which wanted complete separation from the country. This might lead to international interventions in Iraq and might keep this country weak in the coming years.

Iran, whose role in the region was constantly increasing, represented one of the fiercest competitors to the American strategy in the M.E and in Iraq, especially in light of the increasing international crises whose solution has become intractable for the U.S. This distorts U.S image as a sponsor for the international peace.

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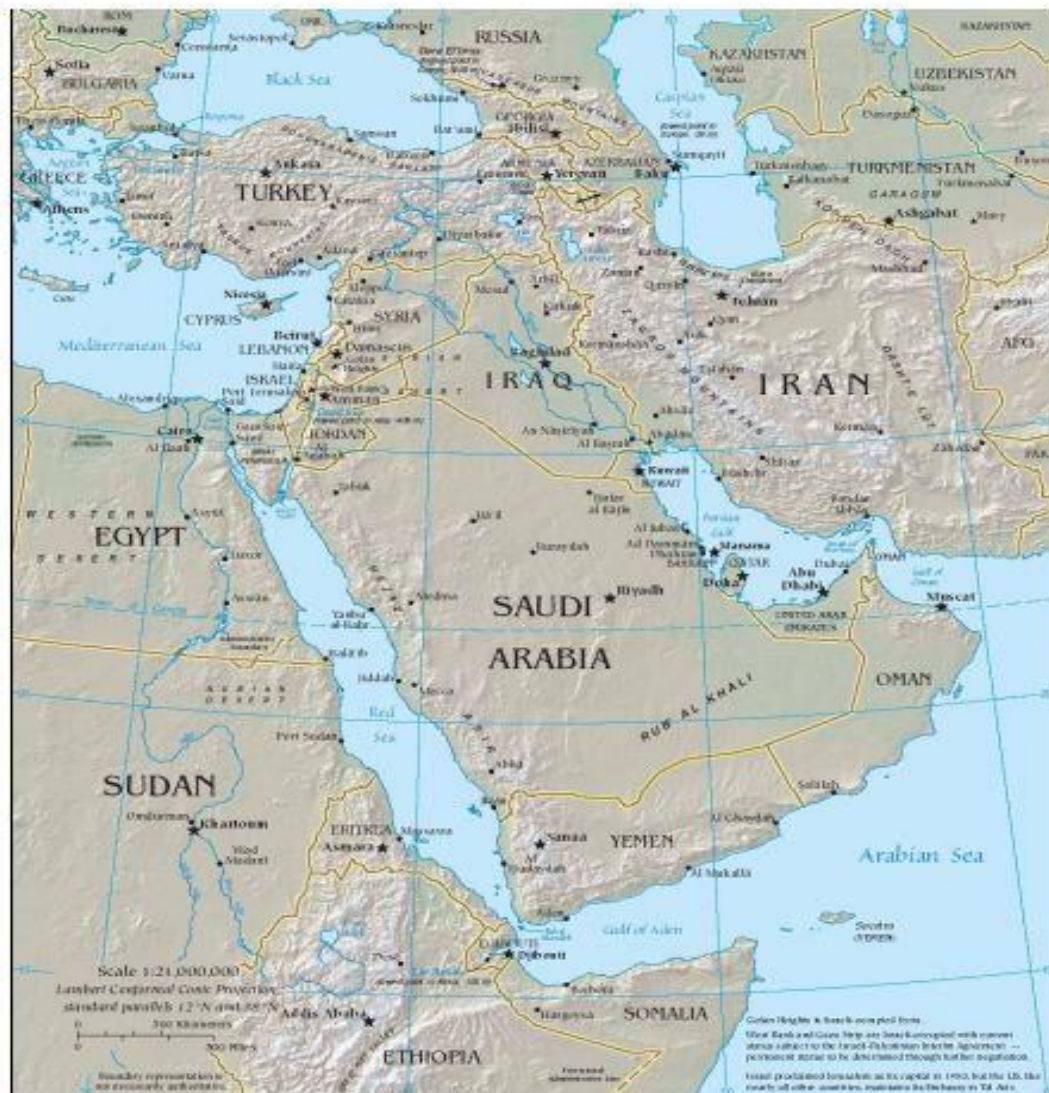
Appendices

Appendix A: Boundaries of the Middle East

Appendix B: Torture at Abu Ghraib Prison by U.S Soldiers

Appendix A

Boundaries of the Middle East



Source: Markakis, Dionysius. *U.S. Democracy Promotion in the Middle East: The Pursuit of Hegemony?* Diss. The London School of Economics and Political Science: Department of International Relations, London. 2012. P 7

Appendix B

Torture at Abou Ghraib Prison by U.S Soldiers



Source: Volle, Adam “Abu Ghraib Prison: Prison, Facility, Iraq.” *Britannica.com*. n.d. Web. 06. Augt. 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Abu-Ghraib-prison>



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