

**ATILIM UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**  
**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS MASTER'S PROGRAM**

**RUSSIA'S POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ DURING THE YEARS OF THE  
SANCTIONS, AND THE RUSSIAN POSITION ON THE US WAR ON IRAQ IN  
2003**

**Master's Thesis**

**Prepared by**  
**Milad Saeed Hasan Astey**

**Ankara- 2021**



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**Ankara- 2021**

## ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis titled “Russia’s Policy Towards Iraq During the Years of the Sanctions, and the Russian Position on the Us War on Iraq in 2003” and prepared by Milad Saeed Hasan meets with the committee’s approval unanimously as Master’s Thesis in the field of School of Social Sciences /Department of International Relations, following the successful defense of the thesis conducted in 26, 1, 2021.



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[26/1/2021]

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**[Milad Saeed Hasan Astey]**



## ÖZ

Bu tez, Rusya'nın 1990'lardaki duruşunu ve Irak'a yönelik yaptırımları ve 2003'de Irak'a yönelik Amerikan savaşını analiz ediyor. Bu çalışma, Rusya'nın diğer ülkelerle olan küresel düzeydeki ilişkilerinin şekline ve bunu tanımlayan uluslararası politikalarına özel önem vermektedir. Bu çalışma, niteliksel ve analitik yöntemlere dayanarak, modern çağda ortaya çıkan büyük değişikliklere ve salınımlara tanıklık eden Rusya'nın dış politika stratejilerinin özelliklerini incelemektedir. Bu değişiklik ve salınımlar özellikle İkinci Dünya Savaşı sırasında ve Amerikan-Sovyet ittifakının kurulmasından sonra, ve daha çok 2003 yılındaki Irak-Amerikan Savaşı'na kadar olan dönemde meydana gelmiş ve Rusya'nın stratejilerini etkilemiştir. Rusya/Sovyet dış politikasının söz konusu dönemdeki ayırt edici özelliği, dış politik yönelimindeki büyük değişikliklerdir: Rusya/Sovyet dış politikası katı bir şekilde siyasi temelli olmaktan çok ekonomik temelli bir stratejiye dönüşerek, doğasında ideolojik olan yapısından, çıkar odaklı ve pragmatik bir yapıya evrilmiştir. Bu yapının arka planında, siyasi ve ekonomik seviyelerde daha fazla üstünlük ve güç elde etmek için ABD hükümetiyle sürekli bir rekabet var olmuştur (ve hala vardır). Orta Doğu'nun en güçlü ve zengin ülkelerinden biri olan Irak, ABD ve SSCB/Rusya'nın ikili ilişkilerinden etkilenmiş ve bu vesileyle iki ülke ilişkilerinin denkleminde önemli bir faktör haline gelmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Amerikan-Rus ilişkileri, Gerçekçilik, Soğuk Savaş, Amerikan Savaşı 2003





## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores and analyses Russia's policy towards Iraq during the sanctions period that was imposed on Iraq during the 1990s, and the Russian position on the U.S. war on Iraq in 2003, which was an extension of Russia's policy towards Iraq during the 1990s. By relying on qualitative and analytical methods, the thesis explores the impact of the shift in Russian policy from ideology to a more pragmatic policy on its relations with countries in general and Iraq in particular. This transformation took place after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the Russian Federation with an exhausted economy that led it to pursue a policy based on self-interests in order to advance its economy. In the background, there had always been the constant rivalry with the U.S. government to attain more supremacy and power at the political and economic levels. Iraq, one of the most powerful and rich countries in the Middle East, represented an important factor in the equation as it had influenced and was influenced by the bilateral relation of USSR/Russia and USA.

**Keywords:** American-Russian relations, Realism, The Cold War, American War 2003



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## INTRODUCTION

This study mainly investigates Russian position towards Iraq during the 1990s and the subsequent events that led to the US-led coalition war in 2003. The reason for stressing the importance of the two periods (i.e. the 1990s and the 2003 war) is because the Russian position on the war was an extension and complementary to its policies in 1990s which were pragmatic in essence. The study also attaches importance to the multifaceted aspects of the Iraqi-Russian relations during different periods of history, with the role of United States operating in the background in proportion to this relation. It had first started as Soviet-Iraqi relations in the mid-60s up, passing through the Iraq-Iran war during the 1980s, to the United Nations sanctions on Saddam Hussein during the 1990s, until the decisive point of the Iraq-American war of 2003 and the ousting of Saddam's regime and the subsequent events in the country.

While highlighting important historical moments that defined the nature of the cooperation, this study stresses the fact that dynamics of these relations oscillated and shifted in shape and form according to the givens of that particular era and the way interests of the two nations were dictated. In addition to this, this study also provides an in-depth analysis of certain events, decisions and political moments in order to observe and assess the nature of the Russian-Iraqi relations. By looking at the historical elements, the real shift took place after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and that there was an evident alteration in Russian policies: it had become more interest-oriented rather than ideological-oriented.

The urge to advance and lead economically had become the chief motivator in modern politics. This is not to suggest that such endeavor did not exist before and that it was always about dominating the realm of politics; interests had moved much more conspicuously into the foreground in recent times. For instance, most analysts agree that the main and actual reason for the military intervention in Iraq in 2003 was not to topple an oppressive regime nor to hinder imminent terrorist threats: it was all about securing and controlling Iraqi oil. Furthermore, Russia's sudden change of heart by siding with the

Americans and Europeans as allies was done by Russians for political and, mainly, for economic incentives that are associated with improving a dilapidating Russian economy and securing future trade deals in Afghanistan and Iraq and other parts of the world. Hence, the main argument of this study states that the economical factor plays a much bigger and more essential role in defining and deciding the Russian attitude towards both Iraq and U.S.A. The chapters of this thesis investigate the connotation and denotations of these elements in detail.

In Chapter 2, the theoretical foundations are put forward in order to systematically understand how The Soviet Union and Russia had operated in the sphere of international relations. Realism offers the theoretical paradigm needed to elucidate and explain these policies. The different branches and sub-branches of Realism set proper foundation to a better understanding of Russia' international policies and the discourse it had adopted after WW2. The realist elements of power rhetoric, self-interest and, self-help, opportunist and expansionist predispositions were the main driving forces behind its political activism with allies, neighboring countries and state enemies at different stages of its political history. The chapter follows three patterns: the history behind the theory, the modern outlook, and a brief introduction to Russian policies as realist in nature.

Chapter 3 provides a historical background on the origins of the Soviet relations with the Arab World in general and Iraq in particular. The major step took place right after WW2 and advent of a new era and alliance with many countries including the long-term adversary, The United States. Despite the initial tabulation and Iraq being part of Baghdad Pact, the monarchy in Iraq was able to maintain a reasonably diplomatic connection with the Soviet in spite of the ideological clashes. The *status quo* remained so until the Qasim's coup of 1958 that signaled the end of the monarchy in Iraq and the establishment of the Republic of Iraq. This newly formed administration revived the relations with the Soviets, while at the same time minimizing the reliance on Britain and U.S.A. This was a perfect scenario for Moscow because it meant that Iraq would be willing to invest and collaborate with USSR, a scenario perfected even further when Iraq



and Qasim refused to join the United Arab Republic in 1958. USSR, on its part, did not pursue the Kurdish issue to the extent of severing the relation with Baghdad, which was the main orientation, despite showing sympathy towards the Kurdish cause of demanding independence. Later on, the relations witnessed another detour with toppling Qasim's administration in 1963 by the pro-nationalist Abd al-Salam Arif and the Ba'ath Party. The new government heightened the tension with Moscow as the former persecuted the Communist Party and chased them out. Yet Arif's government wanted to maintain relatively healthy relationships with Moscow, stemming from its policy of *natural neutrality*, something that the Soviets were forcibly accepted. Still, things went south again regarding the use of military force against the Kurds in north Iraq, and the Soviets and the Iraqis were once again in conflict at the political level despite the proximity of socialist ideas of the Ba'athist Party to that of communist USSR. The consolation was the fact that neutrality policy excluded The Soviet Union from other Euro-American alliance. This also coincided with Soviets overlooking similar actions by the Iranian forces against members of the Communist party inside and outside Tehran for a sole reason of keeping Iran at bay from any U.S. attempts to have Iran as a base in the territory, especially in relation to the strategic location of the Persian Gulf. Beside Iran, during the mid-60s up to 1979, The Russians preferred another ally: Egypt. Iraq remained at bay for the time being. A pivotal moment came in the Arab-Israeli war in which America took sides with Israel against Arabs, the decision that benefited the Soviets Union as Arab nations looked up at Moscow for alliance. When Ahmed Hasan Al-Bakir took office after a military coup in 1968, the Iraqi-Soviet relations were revived again as the Baghdad needed a strong ally to aid the country on the internal level—as the Kurdish issue resurfaced—and on external level — finding immediate deals with foreign oil companies and Iran being increasingly belligerent towards Iraq on a number of issues including the Kurdish one. In 1972, the mutual agreement was further reinforced as Baghdad and Moscow signed a 15-year treaty that is associated with defense capabilities and oil exploration. Within the same year, Iraq declared the nationalization of its oil fields, a decision that implies more alienation from the West, yet better proximity to USSR. The proximity manifested itself in the economic revival

that Iraq had lived throughout the 1970s. This financial independence had its own repercussions on the relations, as Iraq wanted have more contact with Western markets and other Arab neighbors such as Saudi Arabia, yet the relations with Moscow remained well. Up to the 1979, the political atmosphere concerning the signing of Camp David Accords, the prosecution of members of the communist party, and the ousting of the shah in Iran, and complications related to the war with Israel bought forth a number of elements that ultimately influenced the Iraqi-Soviet relations. These events were followed by another sequence of events throughout the 1980s the Iraqi-Iranian War broke out. The Soviet stance on the war was ambivalent and essentially underwent three important stages as Mesbahi (1993) suggests. Further, the occupation of Kuwait in 1990 by the Iraq forces represented another test to the relations, as the international community including the USSR itself condemned the war. This war, also known as the First Gulf War, had a great significance since it marked another historical event: the first active collaboration between the United States government and the Soviet Union, which was considered a turning point in the relations between the two superpowers during the 1990s.

In Chapter 4, the focus shifts towards the relations in the post-Gulf War era and the United Nations sanctions on Saddam Hussein's regime. To start with, the year 1991 witnessed a far-reaching and drastic change in world politics: the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The study traces the influence of this new outlook on the domestic and global stages for both Russia and the other countries such as Iraq and America. The first thing that comes to mind is that the world is no longer bipolarity; the United States is operating alone as a supreme power in the decision-making process at the international stage. The second implication that comes along with this historic event is the evident transformation of Russian policies from being ideologically oriented into a more pragmatic route. Hence, The Russians now wanted to secure profitable oil and trade deals with the neighboring countries and of course with allies in the Middle East such as Egypt, Iran and Iraq among others. This period also witnessed Boris Yeltsin's controversial decision in supporting the sanctions on Iraq—the long-term ally of

Russia—despite the 7-billion Dollar debt. Such decision was taken in the hope that being in the camp, as the U.S. government would eventually reap a number of concessions promised by Clinton's administration to Yeltsin. Following a huge pressure from the Duma, the policies changed once again between 1993 and 1994 as the hope for European-American financial support waned, so the Russian policymakers directed their attention again towards their old allies in the region such Iraq and Libya. The old ties with Iraq were reactivated as the two countries signed an agreement in 1993, which dictates the perpetuation of off-put agreements and contracts from the time of the Soviet Union. During that time, Russia worked hard to ease or even lift the sanctions because they were the main hindrance for resuming economic interaction with Baghdad. Still, Russia was gaining the confidence of other allies in the region and a number of official visits were arranged to Iraq, Kuwait and even United States. Russia's role was also evident in arranging and facilitating the work of UN inspection teams searching for weapons of mass destructions in Iraq. Similarly, Russia, embodied in the advent of the new Prime Minister Primakov, was an active asset in fulfilling and completing the for oil-for-food Accord suggested by the UN Security Council, as Russia would be the preferred nation to operate on the export-import process of goods beside the oil profits of 30% the highest among all countries involved in the program.

Chapter 5 analyses the Russian position on the sanctions of the 1990s and subsequent war in 2003. To understand the two periods the study highlights, the chapter starts by presenting the reader with the political history of the American and Soviet/Russian relations and the variety of defining moments they had since the end of WW2, and their mutual alliance against Nazi Germany, up the beginning of the new millennia, and the subsequent military action in the Middle East in Iraq. It is safe to say that the dynamics of this bilateral relation is characterized by constant vicissitudes; and to-and-fro nature seems to be the only constant in the ever-changing cooperation of the two powers. It is better described by one analyst as “a rollercoaster ride—reaching great heights in one moment, only to come crashing down in the next” (Petykowski, 2004, p.2). This thesis proposes that the history of their relationship is divided into six main

eras: (1) post-WW2, (2) post-Stalin, (3) post-Helsinki, (4) post-Cold War, (5) post-Zyuganov, and finally (6) Post - 9/11. With each period, a new factor controlled and dictated the course of their connection. In regard to the first era, World War 2 presented the USSR and United States as the major superpowers in the world now. Both wanted to consolidate their grip over policies around Europe, a continent that had just emerged from a 6-year war, which exhausted the human and economic resources of the continent. That eventually paved the way to this rise. Another element in the equation was the nuclear element; both nations had a formidable nuclear armament, so power rhetoric was prevalent during these times. What prompted the dispute between the American and Soviets allies were the issues of East Germany and the expansionist policy of the Soviet Union in Europe. Such act by the USSR called for more drastic action against it in what was called “containment strategies” (Gaddis, 2005). As for the second era, Stalin’s death changed the elements of this equation: the capitalist-socialist discourse that persisted for almost 8 years had transformed itself into a conflict of interests, which is the main thesis of this study. Economic and industrial interests are the new arena in which America and USSR are grappling. This was evident in the discourse of Stalin’s successor, Khrushchev, who asserted that he wished for a pragmatic approach in external politics. However, things went south again with Cuban Missiles Crisis 1962 in which the tension between the powers reached its boiling point. Despite that, they were able to reach a resolution to the crisis through diplomacy, which implies that the two administrations have the political capacity to talk, negotiate and listen to the other effectively in order to reach important decisions. During the third era, The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) in Helsinki in 1969 was underway, and eventually resulted in regulating the nuclear armament of the USSR and USA. Both were caught in a complicated network of creating and recreating alliances for more supremacy at the international level. The periodic change in U.S. presidency played a role in the surge and fall in the trajectory of the relations: Richard Nixon was more tolerant and open, while the next president, Ronald Reagan had a stricter approach towards the Soviets (at least at the beginning). Within these critical times, the question was this: who would come victorious out of the Cold War? And the answer to this question is America. As far as the last era is

concerned, a more mutual understanding and productive cooperation interestingly characterized it. The Yeltsin-Clinton collaboration had in fact revived and even nurtured the relation. What is also interesting to observe in this era is that Russian did not present itself at a dominating power, but as a moderate ally, a policy entirely new to it. That is why European nations alongside the U.S. government were allured into having a more fecund dialogue. For the new Russia, securing concessions and economic foothold with the countries with which Russia wanted to collaborate was the driving force behind its policies. Nevertheless, Russian politicians came to realize that the closeness allowed by its new American and European allies was almost done to keep an eye on Russia, and that the latter was never meant to be actively involved in the political and economic life it was initially promised. The post- Zyuganov was short yet no less important in the development of the bilateral relations; Russia created the Shanghai Five Group (SCO), which included powerful allies, such as China in order challenge the growing American dominance; NATO signed a treaty pledging to stop expanding in former-USSR territories; Putin coming to power. Finally, the post- 9/11 era witnessed an unprecedented nearness between the rivals—a state of affairs that still persisting until this moment (more or less). After the attacks, surprisingly enough, Putin declared his support for the US government and citizens, commenting, “Russia knows directly what terrorism means;” After some serious and in-depth discussions, both Putin and George W. Bush “resolved to advance cooperation in combating new terrorist threats” (Joint Statement, 2001). This step had revitalized the relations especially when the American-led coalition troops decided to fight Taliban in Afghanistan. However, the relations cooled down with the American decision to declare war on Iraq in 2003.

In the next part of the chapter, we analyze the multi-layered matter of the U.S.-led coalition and its war decision against Iraq. The chapter looks into the legitimacy of the war according to international laws, and arrives at the conclusion that the foundation upon which the war was based was in fact fragile and insubstantial; in other words, it was an assault. Additionally, the war had its own repercussions on all constituents of the equation: Iraq, Russia, and America. After the “honeymoon phase” Moscow and

Washington had during the war on Afghanistan and the active and productive collaboration, the decision to initiate a military action on Iraqi soil disrupted the relations yet again. This is mainly attributed the conflicting positions: Russia was the long-term ally of Saddam Hussein with many economic agreements (mostly related to oil) to be fulfilled as the sanctions were eased; While at the same time Russia was having best of times with the new American ally. The Iraqi war was a difficult test to the Post-Cold-war Russia because there was a clash between the new realist tendency of Putin's administration in opposition to the deep-rooted ideological and power rhetoric that has been always a distinctive feature of Moscow. On the one hand, Russia had been trying to secure the much-needed concessions and prerogatives out of the war whether the ally was Iraq or USA. On the other hand, the Russians were thinking about Iraq, the regional ally with which they had productive and steady relations for over 35 years.

This thesis adheres to the qualitative and analytical method in which the Russian foreign policies towards Iraq are examined and analyzed in detail in order to demonstrate the interest-oriented and the pragmatism that characterized these policies in the modern era, mainly starting in the 1990s, and the American War on Iraq in 2003. This thesis attempts to answer a number of questions: what was the Russian position on the US war on Iraq in 2003? How did the Russian rhetoric transform itself from ideology-focused into a more pragmatic, interest-oriented? What are the major shifts that occurred after WW2? What is the nature of the Soviet-European and Soviet-American collaborations after WW2? What are the motives behind the Russian international relations in the modern era? What is the role Iraq plays in defining the shape and form of Russia-American relations? How can the Russian policies be projected as realist? What are the historical development of the Russian strategies in the Middle East and Eurasia? How did Vladimir Putin influence the Russian international relations? Why had Russia seen Iraq as a strategic ally in the region? What was the Russian role during the sanctions on Iraq during the 1990s? How can we analyze and assess the military intervention of U.S-led coalition against Iraq in 2003 in light of international laws?

## Literature Review

The notion of the Iraqi-Russian relations (and The Soviet Union before that) has been subject to extensive debate and analysis by many researchers and observers in the field of political studies in general. This is mainly attributed to the long-lasting bond and the common ground that connects both nations. Some of the studies that have been conducted touch upon the relations during the 1960s and the birth of the Ba'ath Party, and subsequently the focus is shifted towards the Cold War era and how that particular event had influenced the dynamics between Iraq and USSR. The corpus of academic studies extends further into the 1970s and 1980s, when Saddam Hussein took office and the following Eight-Year war with Iran. Further, the scholarly work try the trace down the Soviet role during this long conflict until it reached its pinnacle in 1990s as the American-Iraq relationships were deeply severed which ultimately resulted in the air strike of 1990, which was followed by the Sanctions and the embargo that lasted for 13 years on Iraq. All these events led to American War in 2003, the military clash that toppled down Saddam Hussein's regime. With this brief overview, providing another overview on the scholarly work done regarding these various stages is noteworthy.

In his extensive and all-inclusive work, Haim Shemesh provides an insightful study entitled *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968-1988 In the Shadow of the Iraqi-Iran Conflict* (1992). Shemesh presents the much-needed chronology that enables the reader to understand the political and historical interplay since the first cooperation between The Soviets and the Kingdom of Iraq, and later the Republic of Iraq. It is needless to say that the Soviets and the Ba'ath Party were close-knitted allies for ideological and strategic reasons. Shemesh stresses upon the role the Soviet Union played in the Middle East after strengthening the ties with Iraq, which was a reckoning force in the region. In the first three chapters of his book ("Moscow and the Ba'th Regime, July 1968-May 1971;" "The Intensified Conflict with Iran and the Peak of the Soviet-Iraqi Relationship, May 1971-July 1973;" "The Beginning of Decline: Iraq Moves Toward Solving the Dispute with Iran, July 1973-May 1975"), Shemesh follows the trajectory of the relations and objectively demonstrates the pattern that characterized its dynamics. For instance, at

certain points in the late 60s and further into the 70s, the relationship witnessed a certain kind of fluctuation due to the respective governments in Iraq that, at one point, tilted towards the Communist Soviet Union, and, at another, turned against it. Additionally, Shemesh sees Iran as the shadowy figure that operated in the background, and that the long war had a significant effect on the underlying forces, aims and agreements with its ally, Iraq.

R. O. Freedman's study, *Soviet policy toward the Middle East since 1970* (1982) sheds light on the extent and miscellany of Soviet activities in the Middle East in three chapters dealing principally with Moscow's policy toward Egypt in the 1970s, yet with a special interest also given to Iraq, Syria, the Sudan, and Jordan. The book also contains a very short introduction, a chapter on the 1945-1970 era, and a concluding chapter. The enormous range of issues Freedman deals with leads to a number of uncertainties, excessively dramatic contrasts, and sweeping generalizations sometimes. While most of his arguments concentrates on Egypt and the Nationalist leader Jamal Abdul Nasser, a sizeable number of comments are made about Iraq in relation to other key players in the region such as Syria, Sudan, Iran and of course the Kurds. Still some of his notions on Egypt in relation to the Soviet Union are debatable to say the least, and one might even say that they are slightly exaggerated. For example, he states that Nasser gave up "a considerable amount of Egyptian sovereignty in an effort to get revenge for his humiliation [of the Israeli victory in 1976]" (1982, p. 43). Another example is when Freedman informs the reader "the presence at Nasser's funeral of a senior American official, Elliott Richardson [whom the Egyptians actually considered a minor Cabinet official] was a matter of concern for the Soviet leadership" (1982, p. 43), or that the murdering of a number of Israeli sportsmen had a strangely positive influence on the Soviet-Egypt relations (1982, p. 89).

In addition to the previous study, Freedman presents a more in-depth analysis of the nature of Soviet-Iraq relations in his study *Soviet Policy Toward Ba'athist Iraq, 1968-1979* (1980). First, he examines the goals of the USSR in the Middle East in general and Iraq in particular; two elements come to the surface regarding these aims: it



might be “defensive” or “offensive” depending on what school of thought you adhere (1980, p. 2). It could have been defensive in the sense that the USSR wanted to make sure that no adversary could harm it or damage their interests in any way possible e.g. securing an oil-rich ally such as Iraq and ensure smooth political status in the region. As for the offensive, the hypothesis suggests that the USSR was mainly aiming at neutralizing any other Western influence in the Middle East and replace it solely by a Soviet one. Similarly, Freedman carries out his observation by noting that the rise of the Ba’ath Party to power in 1968 created a “mixed feelings” in Soviet capital: on the one hand, the Ba’athists had killed a huge number of communists five years before, which inevitably disrupted the course of the relationships. On the other, the reader should not forget, Freedman states, that Ba’ath Party was essentially a socialist ideology and a moderate one as well under Al- Bakr administration. Thus, this new administration was willing to turn a new leaf, and the Soviets were willing to do so as well. The catalyst in this process, that later culminated into almost a complete collaboration between the Iraq and USSR, is the stance of both towards Iran and the ongoing conflict in the Persian Gulf (1980, p. 6).

Within a similar context, the pressing issue of Iraq and USSR in relation to the Gulf War is further explored by an insightful article written by Alvin Z. Rubenstein entitled “Moscow and the Gulf War: Decisions and Consequences” (1994). The author follows the different administrations that took power in the Soviet Union, which are mainly Gorbachev and Yeltsin and both approaches towards foreign policy whether it is the Soviet existence in Afghanistan or its subtle involvement in the Gulf Crisis, 1990-1, or even the Iraq’s Eight-Year war with Iran. For example, Moscow signed a cooperation treaty with Iraq in 1972, and this historical event took the relation to a whole new level that was promising for both: the Ba’athists in Baghdad were seeking a global super power to be on its side, while the Soviets were seeking to expand ideological, politically and of course strategically in the Middle East through the gate of Iraq. Rubenstein comments further on the new alliance: “Moscow was hoping to expand Soviet-Iraqi co-operation, to gain access to the Gulf port of Umm Qasr for the Soviet navy, and to

enhance the Ba'ath's confidence in Moscow's readiness to shield it from possible Iranian attack and to support its campaigns to settle the knotty Kurdish problem and to nationalize Western oil holdings" (1994, p. 302). These events abroad were taking place simultaneously with transformation within USSR itself in which different voices and factions had other opinions about the Soviet involvement abroad and how these actions were having a direct or indirect consequences at home (1994, p. 319-321).

J.C. Moltz and D.B. Ross (2015) further explore the Soviet role in the region during the Iran-Iraq war. They maintain that the Soviets, probably for the first time, were caught in the middle: they wanted to get involved because ultimately they held well-developed relations with both conflicting countries. However, they could not get much into action as both Iraq and Iran were considered superpowers in their own way in the Middle East. One would venture to say that were independent of any foreign superpower to a certain extent. Realizing that the situation is dissimilar to that of Iran, in which they had steady shipments of arms to Lebanon and other regional allies. Hence, the article maintains that the role of USSR was like an ebb-and-flow fashion.

In *The Soviet Union and the Arabian Peninsula* (1983), Aryeh Y. Yodfat follows the origin of the Soviet part in the Arabian Peninsula. When we talk about the Arabian Peninsula, we are mainly referring to Saudi Arabia. Although the USSR was one of the first countries to recognize the new country in 1926, the relationship between the two did not take off as expected especially in recent times. Yodfat states that reason behind this: Saudi Arabia was simply tilting towards the side of the United States, and establishing strong connections with Moscow might weaken their ties with Washington. USSR, Yodfat continues, had to wait patiently until 1980, when the Iraq-Iran war broke out, to try and be a key player and the region despite the not-so-promising history of both countries with local communists. Yodfat also follows the Soviet writings regarding the same matter in the following chapters in order to expand the discussion on this complicated relationship. Despite the fact that Yodfat's narrative is straightforward and based on facts, he downplays the role of Mohammed Mussadak, the Iranian Prime Minister, in his narrative (1983, p. 22). Despite the short period he took office, his

historical role is significant to the story of USSR in the Middle East in later years. In another study (1977), Yodfat believes that the motivating force the USSR involvement in the war is the Persian Gulf (or as Iraqis would call it the Arabian Gulf), which was the strategic outlet the Soviets had been waiting for to have a better grip and influence down the peninsula.

Widad Jabir Ghazi (2006) provides a modern perspective on the Russian-Iraqi relations in the post Iranian-Iraqi war. She puts forward a number of arguments concerning the development and the ultimate surge in the relations. When USA heightened the pressures on Iraq after the conquest of Kuwait and the accusation of having weapons of mass destructions, Iraq was in need of powerful ally that it could depend on at both the local and international levels. On the one hand, Ghazi explains, Iraq had the oil, finance and its own friends in the region that could benefit Russia on the long run. On the other, Russian was the main provider of arms military support to the Iraqi army, and at the same time granting Saddam Hussein the international recognition he needed before the international community. Additionally, what encouraged Russia to be part of this ally is the predominant power the USA was having in the Middle East. The Americans, on their part, were trying to put pressure on Russia in the United Nations so as not support the Iraqis. It was like the Cold War all over again. The Middle East, Ghazi concludes, had been always a scene where superpowers, specifically USA and Russia, had been always involved; powers were equally and unequally balanced, and with political and strategic interests shifting all the time.

When it comes to the issue of the Cold War and the American War on Iraq in 2003, a great numbers of studies had been done in order to explore the underlying significance and moments that defined the nature of the American-Soviet relations during that highly tensioned period. The well-known historian and analyst Olav Njølstad (2004) edited a number of articles that explores the multilayered and complicated fibers of this relation. Bessonova (2010) explores the deep-seated ideological discrepancy that shaped the route of this heated competition to gain the upper hand at the international stages. She argues that it was not a normal conflict between two disputed nations, but a

rather a large-scale, covert war between American ‘imperialism’ and Soviet socialism (2010, p. 49). John Lewis Gaddis (2005) discusses the details of this historical events and gives telling details regarding the different policies and approaches proposed by the United States to circumscribe the ‘Russian threat.’ William G. Hyland (1981) tells the story from the American perspective as he displays how successive American presidents and high officials saw and analyzed the international policies of the USSR, and by also evaluating how these policies, whether directly or indirectly, might have an impact on Washington and its interests in different parts of the world. Melvyn Leffler (2018) follows the trajectory of the last years of the Cold War as he evaluates the role of President Ronald Reagan and his (ambiguous) policies that was characterized by relative proximity he had to the Moscow, which eventually led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In their master theses, Jennifer L. Petykowski (1998) and Aslihan Anlar (2006) provide a holistic perspective on the American-Russian relations during the Cold War era and the implications of later events such as 9/11 attacks and the American war on Iraq in 2003. Vinod Anand (2004) provides a detailed account on the first actual and productive cooperation that took place after the Cold War and prior to 9/11: the American War on Taliban in 2001. Russia played an active role giving their American allies intelligence and strategic recommendations on military deployment in the territory. Mark N. Kanz (2003) analyzes the nature of the Russian-American relations before and after the military intervention of 2003. He further explores the economic factor and the to-and-fro fashion of relations due to a number of issues such as the Russian investments in Iraq, embodied in the oil contracts, debts, and concessions with Europe and the UN Security Council. Regarding the legality of the U.S.-led War in 2003, the majority of experts and commentators in the field of international laws (Reisman & Armstrong, 2006; MacAskill & Borger, 2004; Simpson, 2005; Monbiot, 2005; Zandstra, 2013) argue that the legality of the intervention is dubious and lacks the fully legitimate basis—associated with the International Law dictated by the United Nations—that allows a nation to attack another nation.

## CHAPTER I. THE THEORETICAL BASIS

### 1.1 Theoretical Background

This study argues that in order to understand Russia's political attitudes and stances, Realism offers the theoretical paradigm needed to elucidate and explain these policies. The different branches and sub-branches of Realism set proper foundation to a better understanding of Russia's international policies and the discourse it had adopted after WW2. The realist elements of power rhetoric, self-interest and, self-help, opportunist and expansionist predispositions were the main driving forces behind its political activism with allies, neighboring countries and state enemies at different stages of its political history. The thesis also makes use of the theory of *preemptive self-defense* in international law to draw a better picture on the American War on Iraq in 2003. The term is often used conservatively to describe an anticipatory militant action by a certain country against another. It was a key argument made the United States government in order to legitimize the war which is ultimately view the many analysts as illegal (Reisman & Armstrong, 2006; MacAskill & Borger, 2004; Simpson, 2005; Monbiot, 2005).

### 1.2 The Origins of Classical Realism

The word *Realism* triggers a number of associations and implications, especially when applied to international relations. The paradigm that this theory provides fits the definition of the modern political atmosphere, and by modern, we are referring to the beginning of the Twentieth Century, up to the current time. Yet, the origin of Realism is as ancient as human history itself. It can be traced back to Thucydides in his account of the *History of the Peloponnesian War* (1972) in which he states that war is but a power struggle that stems from hunger of human nature for more power over the other. In the dialogue between the Melians and Athenians (also known as "Melian Dialogue"), we observe the nature of struggle among nations. In light of the realist model, the Melians are the idealists who believe in justice, fairness and lofty principles, while the Athenians are seen as realists, opportunists, hegemonic and even immoral in the cause of war and

attaining victory no matter what the means are. Having overpowered the neutral Melians, plundered their lands, and used excessive violence against them, The Athenians condescendingly justify that “since you know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must” (Chapter XVII, 1972). In his elaboration on the distinctive features of Realism in the realm of international relations, Korab-Karpowicz stresses the fact that the constant conflict between the different elements is what gives Realism its liability in the modern political scene:

*"International relations realists emphasize the constraints imposed on politics by the nature of human beings, whom they consider egoistic, and by the absence of international government. Together these factors contribute to a conflict-based paradigm of international relations, in which the key actors are states, in which power and security become the main issues, and in which there is little place for morality. The set of premises concerning state actors, egoism, anarchy, power, security, and morality that define the realist tradition are all present in Thucydides". (Korab-Karpowicz, 2008)*

Another classical source in which the preliminary concepts of classical realism can be identified is Machiavelli's *The Prince* (2008). This collection of recommendations, policies and parables on how to stay in power is considered a guide for a better clear-cut realist concept. The word *Machiavellian* had even entered the English dictionary to describe principles of conducts “marked by cunning, duplicity, or bad faith” (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 2020). Among the myriad of lessons Niccollo Machiavelli instructs the Prince of Florence is how to use any strategy to exercise power and preserve the throne; lying, cunningness, immorality, political maneuvers and manipulations are all allowed as long as the state and its people are under control. With a closer look, it seems that Machiavelli is covertly responding to Thucydides' concerns by supplementing a pragmatic justification to the actions of those who are in power. E. H. Carr, the father of modern Realism, includes Machiavelli as the earliest figures who initiated the theory (Carr, 1940, p.63). Machiavelli, like most Realist advocates subverts from the idea of political ‘utopianism’ and that there is a huge gap between political theory and its political practice in reality. In that sense, Machiavelli's

notions of using whatever at disposal to secure the interests of the state and ruler finds in an echo in the modern application in international relations:

*"I depart from the precepts given by others. But the intention of my writing is to be of use to whoever understands it; thus it has seemed to be more profitable to go straight to the actual truth of matters rather than to a conception about it. Many writers have conceived of republics and principedoms which have never in fact been seen or known to exist. Since there is so great a discrepancy between how one lives and how one ought to live, whoever forsakes what is done for what ought to be done is learning self-destruction, not self-preservation. For a man who wants to practice goodness in all situations is inevitably destroyed, among so many men who are not good. Hence a prince who wishes to retain his power must learn not to be good, and to use, or not to use, that ability according to necessity".* (Machiavelli, 2008, Chapter 15: lines 6-22, p. 255-257).

### 1.3 Modern Realism

By moving to the modern era and the Twentieth -century political conditions, Realism remains a valid theory along with its intricate network of sub-categories. The modern layout of the theory is put forward by noticeable figures in the socio-political field such E.H. Carr (1892-1982), Hans Joachim Morgenthau (1904-1980) and Kenneth Waltz (1924-2013). These three are considered the leading figures that developed classical realism into an actual practice in modern international politics (Elman, 2007, p. 12). Carr's *The 20 Year's Crisis*, Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* and Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* are the three essential works that laid the foundation for standard understanding of theory in the contemporary sense. Colin Elman provides a demarcation of the theory as he states that "the desire for more power is rooted in the flawed nature of humanity" and that "states are continuously engaged in a struggle to increase their capabilities. The absence of the international equivalent of a state's government is a permissive condition that gives human appetites free reign." (Griffiths, 2007, p.12). Along with this definition, Waltz—who founded the basis for *neorealism*—adds another dimension to the theory by differentiating a set of two unchanging features: (1) the absence of a central authority implies that chaos is its ordering principle and (2) the principle of self-help means that all units remain functionally similar. The only structural component therefore is the capacity for distribution, with the key difference oscillating between multipolar and bipolar systems

(Waltz, 1979, p.88). At the first glance, realism seems to give a negative impression on human nature, but time and again the theory has proved valid to the sanguine attitude of humanity especially in Europe as the continent went through two world wars that brought destruction, famine and poverty to the population on most European countries. In the following era that did not witness a major military clash (yet clashes at a smaller scale did occur), realism (and *neorealism*) was validated once again since political actions were incentivized by predominantly pragmatic and self-interest policies, with the likes the USSR and the United States operating accordingly at the global level. Additionally, neorealism had created new controversies and giving current ones fresh momentum. Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1970), for instance, started a debate on whether the expectations of states about relative gains impeded cooperation and added intensity to the issue of whether international bipolar or multipolar systems were liable to wage wars and create direct clashes with each other. The notion of relative gains poses a serious question to nation on how to manipulate concurrent policies, create and re-create alliances, and find the best interests that serves the state (Waltz, 1970).

Another facet of this theory is the '*rise and fall*' *Realism*, a paradigm suggested and developed by Robert Gilpin and his work in *War and Change in World Politics* (1981). He proposes that "the fundamental nature of IR [i.e. International Relations] has not changed over the millennia. International relations continue to be a recurring struggle for wealth and power among independent actors in a state of anarchy" (Gilpin, 1981, p.7). He further adds that local and global tendencies lead to states rising at distinct rates, and conflict ensues as states rise and fall relative to each other. States tend to participate in confrontation because the advantages of doing so are calculated to outweigh their costs (Gilpin, 1981, p. 8). It all goes down to one simple question: who is the leader within the system? This is also attributed to the fact that the international system is generated by (and for) the leading power in the system. These undercurrents have been a pivotal factor in defining the relationship between superpowers attempting to gain the upper hand as historically observed in the American-Russian relation.



*Neoclassical Realism* argues that it is all about the *balance of interests*, a theory advocated by Randall Schweller in *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (2006). According to Schweller, the observer must first understand the intentions and motives of the states because these motivations define its policies. The flaw in nature, as the classical realism maintains, it not the main factor in the process of state's decision-making: one must regard ideology, objectives, local politics and self-interests (Schweller, 2006). In addition, the notion of 'balance of interests' establishes a model based on the assumption of whether states are mainly driven by their selfishness, self-help and vigilance to any threat and it is the magnitude of these elements in the process. Thus, based on a mixture of power and desires, states rationally determine foreign policies (Schweller, 2006, p.5).

Now we will be looking at the application of these theoretical paradigms in the case of Russia in relation to USA and Iraq. The study will also assess the theory in relation to Russia's political history in Twentieth Century up to the new millennia.

#### **1.4 Realism in Russia's International Policies**

During both phases of Soviet Union and Russian Federation, analyzing the international relations of these two entities is a complex process. It is safe to say that the policies are quite entwined. Modern Russia had inherited the long history of hegemonic and expansionist strategies of the Soviet Union while it was attempting to lock horns with the growing American at the world stage. Many direct and indirect elements had influenced its policies: the Cold War, the economical shifts after its disintegration, the nuclear programs, the oil factor, and proximity to nations in the Middle East, and of course the rise of America as the other strong polar power and the transition of the latter into a unipolar order in the beginning of the 1990s.

Based on classical notion of anarchy in realism, Russian policy-makers had always aspired to put common interests forward. Since the world is a multipolar system, the layout of the Russian international strategies had stressed the fact that national interests must be attained and maintained, and in the case of the Russian Federation,

these interests were given absolute priority. As we will see in this subtleties of this thesis, the Soviet Union (and the Russian Federation after that) concentrated its intensity on the political, financial or strategic gains in their dealings and collaboration the Europe, such as in the case of Germany and France, or with the United States and the subsequent administrations since Roosevelt until George W. Bush. However, the post-Cold war transition propelled Russia to take an action. Russia found itself between two opposing forces: the need to maintain its stance in the world as a powerful and authoritative entity, and the fact that Russian economy was almost falling apart—an urgent necessity to get enough alliance support to fix problems at home.

Another distinctive feature of Russian international relation presents itself clearly: there was (and still is) an air of distrust and threat rhetoric among the players at the global stages, especially amongst states attempting to flex muscles to intimidate any rivalry. Russians see that they are being unjustly denied certain rights and concessions by other active political forces such as denying the expansion of NATO to include other members, or when Russia objection to the deployment of a missile defense system over Poland and Czech Republic (Bigg, 2007). This quality in the relation associated with another important dimension: Russia constant plans to fortify and support its military capabilities to the maximum in order to have a say in the international politics. It is a well-established hypothesis that nuclear power is equal to political power in the modern-day politics. One might say that dropping the nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had played an essential role in the rise of The United States in world politics. Moscow and Washington had ‘nuclear moment’ themselves during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Similarly, both nations have induced a much more improved technicality and technology into their nuclear programs. Therefore, the sum of the recent and historical policies among the powerful nations is the underlying assumption that there a constant struggle, tugging and pulling in order to acquire the state power, while political environment is conflict-prone. One of the examples on the Russian attitudes towards American is seen the policies of the Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov towards Iraq and the Middle East. He “propelled Russian energy contracts with Iran... [and]

accelerate[d] the lifting of the UN embargo, much to the anxiety of States. Yet even on this last issue strong points of continuity ... Russia worked with a sympathetic Britain and France in opposing the US on lifting the arms embargo Bosnia in mid-1993” (Lynch, 2001, p.23). Indeed, Iraq remained a difficult number in the way Russian-American relations progressed since the outbreak of the Iranian-Iraqi War in 1980 and later on in U.S-led military intervention in 2003. The competition took another turn Russia had a better stance in the oil deals in the region, as this thesis will examine in detail.

In summary, the political route that Russia took in the way it conducted its policies at the global stage was heavily influenced by the historical shifts that occurred within and beyond borders. In the midst of pressing conflicts with other powers in the region and beyond, Russia was always a realist and a realistic nation. The former implies that Russia’s origins of ideological and economic-political struggle with Europe, USA, neighboring countries (like Afghanistan) and political entities from within (like Chechnya) had given different shapes and forms to the Russian attitudes in international relations. The latter implies that Russia have to have a pragmatic approach in dealing with enemies and allies alike in order to arrive at the wanted results: the ultimate benefit to Moscow at the political and economic levels. This attitude partly stems from the sense of alienation Russia had felt throughout the Twentieth Century in the sense that self-reliance and self-help could have been a matter-of-fact approach. In his analysis of the realist Russian policies in the transitional period of the 1990s, Allen Lynch maintains that “a Russia that would not (could not?) be integrated into a wealthier, more powerful international community was a Russia that would (as in the 1920s) be forced to rely mainly on its own resources, such as they were, in crafting its external policy and relationships” (Lynch, 2001, 23). Henceforth, the apparent disappointment with powerful European allies and the half-hearted, on-off collaboration with the U.S. government had led Russia (and the USSR before that) towards Eurasia, Far East and Middle East to secure profitable and rewarding enterprises in a region historically well known for being replete with resources, oil and raw material. These factors were

decisive in the manner Russia blueprinted its roadmap for more efficiency. Iraq—a country rich in all senses—played an essential role in the fluctuating trajectory of the Russia-American relations.



## **CHAPTER II.**

### **IRAQI-SOVIET RELATIONS: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In the period of the Second World War and beyond, there was a soviet trend towards the Arab countries, as the Soviet Union wanted to establish diplomatic relations with several Arab countries, including Egypt in 1943, Syria in 1944, Lebanon in 1944 and Iraq in September 1944 despite the reluctance of the monarchical regime in Iraq. The Iraqi-soviet relations went through several stages, including interruptions in diplomatic relations.

#### **2.1 Iraqi–Soviet Relations (1944-1963)**

In 1944, diplomatic relations began between Iraq and the Soviet Union during the monarchy in Iraq, and despite the opposition of the monarchy in Iraq to communism, but it maintained diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union because of Iraq's strong relationship with Britain, the Soviet ally in World War II. In February 1955 Iraq joined the Baghdad Pact a military alliance which includes (Turkey, Britain, Pakistan, Iran). Both, the United States and Britain being creators and initiators of the Baghdad Pact had the only main aim in confronting the Soviet expansion in the Middle East. As a result, the accession of Iraq into the Baghdad pact led to severe the diplomatic relations of Baghdad with the Soviet Union (Shemesh, 1992).

On July 14, 1958, in a military coup headed by Abd-al-Karim Qasim, the monarchical regime in Iraq was toppled. Qasim's foreign policy, known as "positive neutrality" was intended to reduce Iraq's strong dependence on Britain and the West. Moreover, in the year of 1958 July, Qasim had immediately reinstated diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union. As well as in the same year, he started to purchase Soviet arms. Under Qasim's rule, Iraq withdrew officially from the Baghdad pact in March 1959. The Soviet Union welcomed the revolution in Iraq and considered it as the end of Western interests in the Middle East. Both Qasim's internal and external policies were convenient to Soviet interests. Furthermore, Qasim opposed Nasser's attempts for Iraq's integration

into the United Arab Republic (UAR)- a unification formed between Egypt and Syria in February 1958. Soviet Union supported Iraq in this action because they feared from a strong unification between the Arab countries, as it would be a hurdle to Soviet influence in the Arabic region (Shemesh, 1992).

Going on further, after Qasim had refused to allow the Kurds independence, the Kurds then rebelled and all of Qasim's military efforts to repress the Kurdish uprising failed. From 1962 onwards, the Soviet Union had been consoling towards the Kurdish rebellion, although it strived to conserve the genuineness by hoping that the Kurds and the Iraqi authorities would reach an agreement in time. Although the Soviet Union was sympathetic towards the Kurds, Moscow had not extended military aid to the Kurds and kept both military and economic linkages with the Iraqi government. (Shemesh, 1992).

Qasim's regime was toppled on February 8, 1963 by a group of officers led by Abd-Al-Salam Arif, which consisted of army officers who are pro-Nasserite tendencies, with members of the Ba'ath. Members of the party gained important positions in the new government. The new regime launched a campaign of arrests and liquidations against the Communist Party. The communists had to flee to the rural and Kurdish areas where they were granted asylum. Despite the campaign launched by the Ba'ath regime against the communists, it distinguished between its battle against the communists and its desire to preserve good relations with the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union condemned the campaign against communists in Iraq describing it as 'bloody terror.' the Iraqi government responded with restraint, and stated that this propaganda campaign would not change the Iraqi government's policy of positive neutrality (Shemesh, 1992).

In 1963, the Iraqi army launched a military campaign against the Kurds after the failure of negotiations between the Iraqi government and the Kurds on the autonomy of the Kurds, this led to the deterioration of relations between Iraq and Soviet Union. The Soviet Union described the military campaign as "genocide" and tried to start a debate at the United Nations on Iraq's policy. At the same time, Soviet foreign minister submitted a complaint with the Iraqi ambassador in Moscow about the existence of military

cooperation between Iraq and the CENTO countries against the Kurds. Moscow considered that providing military bases for the CENTO countries in Iraq constituted a threat to its borders. Moscow also expressed concern that the presence of military cooperation between Iraq and CENTO countries might motivate Iraq to return to CENTO. In addition, the Soviet Union reduced its military and economic aid to Iraq, as well as stopped supplying weapons to the Kurds (Shemesh, 1992).

## **2.2 Duration between 1963 and 1979**

The Soviet Union determined its relationship with Iraq under the Ba'ath rule in 1963 based on the Iraqi government's policy in its internal affairs. The negative soviet position toward Iraq did not take in the consideration that despite the war launched by the regime against the Kurds and the arrest campaigns against the communists, Iraq did not want to join a western alliance, obliged to its policy of neutrality, and expressed several times its desire to maintain strong relations with the Soviet Union. The repeated condemnation of Iraqi policy by the Soviet Union was due to several reasons including the unwillingness of the Soviet Union to give priority to relations with Iraq (Shemesh, 1992).

The Soviet Union's reaction to internal events in Iraq is more severe if we compare it to its reaction in other countries. For example, Moscow's response to the repression launched by the Iranian regime against the Iranian Communist party was muted. The reason for the difference in Moscow's policy towards Iran from its policy towards Iraq is Moscow's desire to prevent Iran from becoming a U.S base, also due to the desire of the Soviet Union to maintain good relations with Iran, which shares borders with it. Another reason for Moscow's tough policy toward Iraq is the strained relations between Baghdad and Cairo that had strong ties with the Soviet Union, and the Egyptian and soviet regime met in a goal, which was to topple the Ba'ath regime in Iraq (Shemesh, 1992).

Another reason for the strict soviet policy toward Iraq during the Ba'ath rule is mostly related to the soviet's belief that the Iraqi regime that came to power through a

small party divided into rival factions and involved into a war of attrition against the Kurds will soon collapse. Likewise, the crackdowns against the Iraqi communist party, which is of great importance to Moscow, caused a harsh reaction from Moscow. Iraq for its part maintained a moderate response in an attempt to prevent the soviet from interfering in its internal affairs. In addition, Iraq continued its policy of neutrality while adhering to independence and avoiding strong ties with the west. In 1964, the relationship between Iraq and the Soviet Union improved, and Khrushchev congratulated Iraqi president Arif for ending the war with the Kurds. Soviet media described the reforms under Arif as 'advanced.' Moscow resumed providing arms to Iraq. In the same year, Khrushchev was expelled and Leonid Brezhnev took over after him as first secretary and prime minister. The new policy of the Soviet Union was similar to its previous policy in the Middle East, giving priority to Egypt for its vital role on the Arab and African arenas (Shemesh, 1992).

The Iraqi soviet relations remained stable and strong even after the death of Iraqi President Abd Al-Salam Arif in a helicopter crash in 1966, and the accession of his brother Abd Al-Rahman Arif of power. Soviet influence increased in Iraq and Arab region after the Arab-Israeli war in 1967. On the other hand, American influence declined after the Arab anger toward America's policy in support of Israel, which led to Iraq severing its diplomatic relations with the United States. The Soviet Union welcomed this anti-western policy. In 1968, the Arif regime was toppled by a group of officers led by General Ahmed Hasan Al-Baker, who was a participant in power during the Ba'ath regime in 1963. The Soviets were worried about the new regime in Iraq, but after they knew that the new government's policy was the same as its predecessor, they knew there was no need to worry. The Soviet administration became less interested in the internal affairs of Iraq (Yodfat, 1983).

While the Egyptian–Soviet relations were steady and firm during the era of Egyptian president Sadat, the Iraqi–Soviet relations became as strong as they were in 1958-1959 and that was during the era of Iraqi president Ahmed Hassan al-Baker in 1971 and 1972. Internally, Iraq suffered from some difficulties, including the Kurdish



issue, as the armistice between the Iraqi government and the Kurds collapsed, as the Kurdish Leader Mullah Mustafa Barzani accused the Iraqi government of not abiding by the agreement that occurred in 1970. After which the Iraqi government began campaign of arrests against the Kurds. Matters became more complicated after the Iranian foreign minister stated in 1971 that Iran would provide support to the Kurds if a Kurdish civil war occurred with the government. At the same time, Iraq has had difficulties negotiating with the foreign oil companies. These factors were the reason for directing Iraq to the Soviet Union (Freedman, 1982, p. 69).

A delegation from the Iraqi government went to visit the Soviet Union, and the delegation explicitly demanded in its visit to ally with Soviet Union. The soviets were also interested in establishing a treaty with Iraq for several reasons, including that signing a treaty with Iraq would give Russia an important position in the Arab region, especially since this oil-rich region is witnessing major political transformations. At the same time, there was a fear on the part of the Soviets that Iraq would use this treaty as a cover to attack Iran, just like India benefited from the alliance it signed with the Soviet Union and used it as a diplomatic base in its attack on Pakistan. In 1972, the treaty was signed between Iraq and the Soviet Union; the treaty lasted for fifteen years and stipulated that both Iraq and the Soviet Union would contact each other in the event of problems threatening the peace of either side. It also stipulated on the two countries cooperation in enhancing their defense capabilities (Freedman, 1982, p. 70)

The positive impact of the Iraqi-Soviet treaty on the soviets was the announcement by the Iraqi government on July 1, 1972 of the nationalization of the oil field in Kirkuk, one of the most important major oil fields in the country and owned by the western consortium. This was done shortly after the visit of Kosygin to Iraq, and after a long dispute between the Iraqi government and the oil company that reduced production in the Kirkuk field by 44% due to lower oil prices in the Mediterranean. It is clear that the Soviets encouraged Iraq to take the decision to nationalize oil, just as the Soviets persistently urged Arab countries to nationalize their oil fields and thereby strike western interests. Although the soviets encouraged the decision of the Iraqi government

to nationalize oil, they had to provide more support to the Iraqi government to face the expected difficulties in the post nationalization stage (Freedman, 1982, p. 71-72).

The most important penetration of the Soviets in the oil-rich regions was in Iraq, where the goal of the Soviets was to decrease the western control over the oil fields in the region until its existence was finally terminated. The agreement between Iraq and Soviet Union in 1967 enabled the soviet to access the Iraqi oil market. Under this treaty, the soviets pledged to provide adequate support and equipment to the Iraqi oil companies, as well as assistance in developing the Iraqi oil industry. The Soviet Union also committed to help Iraq explore oil sources in the north of the country. On June 21, 1969, Iraq signed a technical and economic agreement with the Soviet Union to develop the oil industry in southern Iraq valued at \$72 million. Another agreement was signed in the same year in Moscow, provided for Soviet loan to help Iraq in many fields, including the development of river navigation, the exploitation of natural gas, as well as the development of oil fields, including the Ratawi field and the northern Rumaila field, with a loan worth \$ 70 million, to be paid by Iraq with crude oil (Yodfat, A., & Abir, M., 1977. p. 1)

In the early 1970s, Iraq needed more support from the Soviet Union to confront its problems with neighboring countries such as the conflict with Iran, as Iraq supported Khuzestan's independence from Iran, and in return, Iran supported the Kurdish uprising in Iraq. The Kurds in Iraq enjoyed support from the Soviet Union during the first Ba'ath period in 1963, but the situation changed under Ba'ath rule in 1968 and the Iraqi- Soviet relations became strong. The Soviets saw that the Kurdish uprising might bring down the regime, so they stopped any support for the Kurds, and they also persuaded the Kurds to accept the solutions offered by the Iraqi government. The foreign relations of the Kurds were taking place through Iran, but the agreement that was concluded between Iraq and Iran in 1975 cut the way for the Kurds to obtain new support from Iran. The Soviet Union welcomed the Iraqi – Iranian agreement, as the soviets did not want to be drawn into Iraq's conflict with Iran (Yodfat, 1983).

After the Iraq -Iran agreement and the end of the conflict that was on the borders between the two countries, the Soviet position became more advanced in the Arabian Gulf, where the Soviet fear of being drawn into the Iraqi – Iranian conflict ended. This enabled the Soviet Union to maintain good relations with both, Iraq and Iran. The Soviet Union also guaranteed the continued flow of natural gas from Iran and oil from Iraq. The agreement between Iraq and Iran had another effect on the Soviet Union, as Iraq became less dependent on the Soviet military aid after removing the two most important threats to the Iraqi government (the conflict with the Kurds and the border dispute with Iran) also the rise of the oil prices in 1973 made Iraq more independent economically. Iraq developed a large economic plan and began increasing demands for factories and goods from western countries instead of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union maintained good economic relations with Iraq and contributed to training workers, building factories, and several other fields. However, the economic direction of Iraq toward the west was evident, especially between 1975 and 1978 (Freedman, 1980, p. 15).

In the period between 1975 and 1978 after the signing of the Iraqi- Iranian agreement, Iraq went towards improving its relations with its Arab neighbors, especially with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Iraq maintained its strong economic ties with the west during this time. What worried the Soviet Union during that period was Iraq's rejection of the peace initiatives presented by the Soviets in the Middle East, and internally, Iraq's repression of the Iraqi communist party, which was opposed to many of the policies of the Iraqi government. One of the efforts made by Iraq to improve its relations with its Arab neighbors is that Iraq signed an agreement with Saudi Arabia in 1975 to divide the neutral zone between the two countries. On the Soviet's side, Iraq's policy to improve relations with its neighbors carried both advantages and disadvantages: in Iraq's approach to Saudi Arabia, the Soviets hope that this can affect the Saudi Arabia's policy by making it less supportive to the west. On the other hand, Iraq's approach to Saudi Arabia may make it fall into Saudi influence and move away from the Soviet Union (Freedman, 1980, p. 16).

The conflict between the communist party and the Ba'ath government was increasing. In 1976, the Iraqi communist party was not satisfied with its weak role in the Iraqi government, as well as began to support real autonomy for the Kurds, and the communist party criticized Iraq's policy for what it considered dependence on the international capitalist market (Freedman, 1980, p. 18). In addition to the public criticism of the communist party of the Iraqi government, the party was supporting the Shiites and Kurds against the government. The Ba'athist government suspected the existence of a role for the communist party in the Shi'a demonstrations in 1977. In the same year, the government suppression of the communist party increased. In 1978, the government executed a number of communist party members. Perhaps this measurement by the Iraqi government occurred in response to the pro-Soviet coup that occurred in Afghanistan. Iraq has prioritized its internal position over its relationship with the Soviet Union, and Iraqi-soviet relations have been affected by the execution of the communists. Despite the Iraqi leaders' desire to maintain good relations with the soviets, Naim Haddad one of the leaders of the Iraqi revolutionary command council stated that "the Soviet Union is a friend that we can cooperate with unless there is interference in our internal affairs" (Freedman, 1980, p. 19).

In light of the soviet concern regarding the Iraqi government's policy internally and externally, the Soviet Union had a new opportunity to restore its position in the Middle East, after the Camp David agreements. In the period between 1978-1979 after the Camp David accords took place, the Soviet Union was not satisfied with the results of the agreements but at the same time and as a result of the agreements there have been several developments in the Arab countries that were positive developments on the part of the Soviet Union, including the rapprochement between Iraq and Syria and between PLO and Iraq, and PLO and Jordan. This led to the holding of the Baghdad conference in 1978. It seems that these agreements have united the Arabs against the Egyptian president Sadat. Another positive development of the Soviet Union took place in Iran in 1979 with the coming of the Islamic revolution to power, the expulsion of the shah, the withdrawal of Iran from the CENTO and declaration of the revolution its full support for

the Palestinian cause. (Freedman, 1980, p. 19) The Soviet Union was also concerned about the possibility of America obtaining military bases in Egypt or Israel because of the agreements, although it did not stipulate any military bases. Likewise, the Soviet Union was concerned about the development of the agreements and their expansion to include other Arab countries such as Jordan, Syria and perhaps even PLO. Therefore, the Soviet response to the agreements was hostile. (Freedman, 1980, p. 20)

The Soviet Union strengthened its relationship with Arab countries opposed to the Camp David agreements including Syria, where the Syrian president Assad visited the Soviet Union as a representative of the countries opposed to the Camp David agreements. The Soviet Union welcomed the visit and considered it a success of the Soviet Union in acquiring the Arab states in its side and trying to prevent the expansion of the agreements to other Arab countries. One of the results of the visit was the denunciation by both parties of Syria and the Soviet Union of the Camp David agreements, and the soviets' announcement of strengthen the Syrian defense capabilities. Another positive development of the Soviet Union was the Syrian president's desire to reconcile with Iraq. The Soviet Union has always been troubled by the Syria-Iraqi conflict, as the Soviet Union has always sought to establish a united Arab front against imperialism (Freedman, 1980, p. 21)

Another convergence that occurred as a result of the Camp David agreements is the rapprochement between Jordan and PLO, which Moscow welcomed, as it considered that this rapprochement excludes the opportunity for Jordan to join the Camp David accords and facilitates Jordan's joining the united Arab front opposing president Sadat. The Jordanian rapprochement with PLO and the Iraqi-Syrian rapprochement contributed to the holding of the Baghdad conference in 1978. This conference united the Arab countries opposing Sadat, the Camp David agreements were condemned at the conference, and Moscow warmly welcomed the holding of the conference. Several measures were taken against Egypt in Baghdad, and accordingly the headquarters of the Arab league were moved from Egypt. (Freedman, 1980, p. 21)

After the Baghdad conference, Iraqi-soviet relations improved significantly, and Saddam Hussein was invited to Moscow. The purpose of the visit was to coordinate Iraqi-Soviet relations in the face of the Camp David agreements, in addition to discussing trade relations between the two countries. Problems relating to the Iraqi communist party were discussed. The arming of Iraq was also discussed. In addition, on this side, there were several western reports showing Iraq and Syria's increasing demand for weapons as compensation for Egypt's absence from the Arab camp. However, the Soviet Union informed Iraq and Syria that since they are together they can assemblage their weapons. It seems that the Soviet rejection of more armament for Iraq and Syria might be a fear of the soviets from Iraq and Syria lunching a war against Israel at an inappropriate time for the Soviet Union. Although the Iraqi-soviet talks progressed in the economic sphere, in 1979 the soviet press criticized new repression of the communist party by the Iraqi government (Freedman, 1980, p. 23).

### **2.3. An Evaluation of the Iraqi-Soviet Relations at this Stage**

We mentioned previously that the Iraqi-soviet relations began in 1944 after the Soviet Union headed towards the Arab east. The ties between the Iraqi monarchy and the Soviet Union were not strong due to the opposition of the monarchy to the communist party, and then the diplomatic relations between the two countries were broken with Iraq's joining to Baghdad pact in 1955. With Khrushchev coming to power in the Soviet Union since the mid of 1950s, the Soviet Union improved its relationship with several countries, including, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, following a policy of interests. The relationship of the soviet toward the Middle East during Khrushchev era improved significantly in contrast to Stalin's policy (Shemesh, 1992). During the ten years since Abd Al-Karim Qasim came to power with a military coup in 1958 until 1968, Iraq maintained good working relations with the Soviet Union in several areas, including economic, military, and political. With a difference in the relationship of the Soviet Union with Iraq from its relationship with the rest of the countries of the region,

including Syria and Egypt, the Soviet Union had a great interest in the internal affairs of Iraq and considered issues such as the issue of the Kurds and the Iraqi communist party a criterion for developing the relations with Iraq. This was clear when the relationship with Iraq deteriorated in 1963. The Soviet Union was giving secondary priority to its relations with Iraq, and on the contrary, it was paying more attention to strengthening relations with Syria and Egypt except for the Qasim era, when relations with Iraq were strong during 1959- 1961. despite the soviets concern about issues such as the Kurds and the Iraqi communist party the policy of the Soviet Union aimed to promote the relationship with the Iraqi republics with the exception of the Ba'ath regime of 1963 (Shemesh, 1992).

We can note that the influence of the Soviet Union on the policy of the Iraqi government was limited. The Soviet Union, for example, was unable to prevent the suppression of the Iraqi communist party. We can say that the most period of soviet influence was between 1972 and 1975, when the Iraq was in that period in dire need of soviet support, so Iraq allowed for two members of the communist party to participate in the government, however, the Ba'athist government held power tightly. In any case, the government crackdown on the communist party in 1977 left no hope for the soviets in any participation of the communist party in the Iraqi regime. In the field of oil, Soviet Union achieved great success in helping Iraq to develop oil fields and strengthening the Iraqi position opposing the ownership of foreign oil companies, and this was an important factor in the nationalization of oil companies by Iraq in 1972. (Freedman, 1980, p. 27)

In the military sphere, Soviet Union helped Iraq defeat the Kurds and contributed to deterring Iran's attack and strengthening the Iraqi army, which made Iraq compete with Egypt in leading the Arab world. In fact, the soviet aid to Iraq was coinciding with the interests of the Soviet Union, as in the area of nationalizing Iraqi oil, as well as in opposing the Egyptian president Sadat's initiative for peace. In its policy toward Iraq, the Soviet Union sought to make Iraq an important force to oppose imperialism in the Middle East by expelling any western influence from the region. But this

synchronization of Iraqi-soviet interests became weaker, especially after the Iraqi-Iranian agreement in 1975, when Iraq became less dependent on the Soviet Union and began to go to close military relations with France, as well as more towards the west in the economic aspect (Freedman, 1980, p. 27).

The crackdown of the Iraqi government against the communist party also caused tension in Iraqi-soviet relations in addition to the Iraqi dispute with government of the south Yemen, a strong soviet ally in the Arab region. Iraq dispute with PLO also caused weakness in Iraqi – soviet relations as the soviet hoped that Iraq with PLO would have strong opposition unit in the region against the west in the post-Camp David accords. It seems that the successes achieved by the Soviet Union were in the economic and military field, not the political one, as the soviet could not influence much more in Iraq policy and that was between 1968 and 1979, when Iraq seemed more independent after the agreement with Iran in 1975. Iraq also headed for stronger relations with the west in the economic field, and it had strong ties on the military side with France. The Iraqi communist party also appeared to be an obstacle to the development of Iraqi- soviet relations, as Iraq saw that the Soviet Union was the supporter of the party's activities in Iraq (Freedman, 1980, p. 27).

## **2.4 The Iraq-Soviet Relations during the Iranian-Iraqi War**

The soviet influence increased significantly in the gulf region during the Iraq-Iran war and with the beginning of the war in 1980, the Soviet Union enjoyed close relations with Iraq, but at the same time, it had fragile relations with the United States. Although the Iraqi-Soviet bonds were very strong, the Soviet Union did not have predominant influence over Iraq, as we noted in the crackdowns on the Iraqi communist party and several other foreign policies of the Iraqi government, including launching war with Iran, which the Soviet Union never wanted to happen. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union maintained good relations with Iraq. Although the soviet welcomed Khomeini's anti-American policy, the soviets did not succeed in forming close relations with Iran, as



Khomeini repeatedly denounced the superpowers (the United States and the Soviet Union) and described them as Satan (Katz, 1990, p. 139).

Although Iraq relied heavily on Soviet military aid, this did not prevent Iraq from establishing improved relations with the United States and the west during the war, and although the west had little influence in Iraq, these relations with the west helped reduce the exclusivity of relations with the Soviet Union. During the war, the Soviet Union sought to improve its relationship with Iran. Although some improvement in relations occurred, the soviets did not succeed in converting Iran's hostility to the United States into an alliance with the Soviet Union. The only thing that reassured the Soviet Union was that the United States was less successful than the USSR attempts regarding the improvement of relations with Iran. The Soviet Union improved its relations with the Gulf States during the war and opened diplomatic relations with several of them. Kuwait's request for the Soviet Union to protect its oil shipments contributed to more soviet influence in the region (Katz, 1990, p. 140)

According to Mesbahi (1993), the Soviet policy towards the Iran-Iraq war went through three phases: the first stage between 1980 and 1982 was marked by "strict neutrality" and the second stage between 1982 and 1986 which was characterized by "active neutrality" as for third phase, which coincided with the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev to power, it witnessed a major shift in relations in terms of great support for Iraq and active containment of Iran and this period lasted from 1986 until Iran's acceptance of the cease-fire in 1988. The features and implications of the war will be better understood by going through each period.

The first period that is between 1980 and 1982 "the stage of strict neutrality" is a bewildering period for the Soviets, as they did not have several options to take, the neutrality of the soviets was not easy, as both Iraq and Iran presented opportunities for the Soviet Union that could not be ignored. As for Iraq, the soviets enjoyed strong relations with this country and had a friendship and cooperation treaty with it. It is also considered the emerging ally in the Arab gulf region. Iraq's importance has increased

after the Camp David agreements and Egypt's decision to join the American project in the region. In addition, Iraq was a major importer of soviet weapons and an approved oil exporter to the Soviet Union and its allies from eastern European countries. The soviets also thought about what would happen in the absence of soviet support for Iraq, as the Soviet Union would lose its credibility as the permanent supporter of Arab countries (Mesbahi, 1993, p. 74). On the other hand, Iran provided the Soviet Union with a great opportunity through the Khomeini revolution in 1979 as the revolution removed the most important pro-American regime in the region. Doubts surrounding the final orientation of the Iranian regime were one of the reasons the soviets did not support Iraq's efforts in the war against Iran in the first two years of the war. Within Iran, the policy of the Soviet Union was reflected in the strategy of the Tudeh Party toward the government, as the Soviet Union hoped to have influence in Iran's domestic policy. The most important thing for the soviet was to prevent the return of any pro-western policy in Iran. The soviet took into account the western response in case the soviets support either Iran or Iraq. Likewise, the soviets feared Iran's response if they supported Iraq, especially with the unexpected policy of the new Iranian regime. This may push the Iranian regime to cooperate again with west and pave the way for the restore of western influence to Iran (Mesbahi, 1993, p. 75).

The period between 1982 and 1986 is considered a period of “active neutrality” in the policy of the Soviet Union towards the Iraq-Iran war, and although the Soviet Union has maintained its neutrality and maintained diplomatic relations with each of the two countries, it began to lean towards Iraq after the Iranian military transformation in the war as Iran tried to transfer the war to Iraq through several successive offensive operations. Russia therefore returned military aid to Iraq for fear of the collapse of the Iraqi regime (Mesbahi, 1993, p. 78).

The shifting of the war into Iraqi territory was of great importance to Moscow, as Khomeini announced that he would not stop at the Iraqi borders and that he intended to export the revolution and topple Saddam Hussein's regime. The soviets felt the danger of the spread of the fundamentalist Islamic regime on its southwest borders, so the soviets

moved towards resuming arms exports to Iraq and ending their ban on Iraq handing over the tanks and aircraft that the Iraqis had bought, but had been prohibited from receiving. The alteration in the war was not the only reason for the resumption of arms supplies to Iraq, but there were several other reasons, including events inside Iran, such as the repression that occurred against the Tudeh party. And at the beginning of 1983 more than a thousand members of the Tudeh party were arrested among them the General Secretary of the Tudeh party and Iranian navy commander Bahram Afzali (Moltz & Ross, 2015).

Moscow's tilt toward Iraq had some extra justification. Soviet credibility in not permitting a signatory of a Treaty of Friendship to be ruined was additionally tested. Moreover, in the bigger Middle East picture, the new change in the Iran-Iraq war coincided with the Israeli attack of Lebanon, the rout of Syria with its army equipped with soviet armaments and the failure of soviet armaments in Lebanon, and the diminishing soviet influence in the Middle East all helped to intensify soviet efforts to support Iraq. In light of the hostility between the United States and Iran, the soviet inclination toward Iraq reduced the possibility of a confrontation between the great powers in the Gulf region. Moscow has become more reassuring in light of this hostility between Iran and the United States, especially amid the prevailing belief in Iran that this war backed by the United States, the soviet reassurance that no American support will return to Iran has made the soviets more maneuverable (Mesbahi, 1993, p. 80)

Despite the Iraqi-soviet rapprochement during the war, Iraq also developed its relationship with the United States to full diplomatic relations in 1984. The united states became an important ally of Iraq by the mid of 1980s, but the continued supply of soviet arms to Iraq and the assertion of the soviet's desire to end the conflict reflected the determination of the Soviet Union to remain effectively and competently in Iraq. The soviet did not want this Iraqi- American rapprochement, and the soviets were determined not to repeat the loss of their ally Iraq, as happened in Egypt at the time of Sadat (Mesbahi, 1993, p. 81).

During the second stage of the war, the soviets considered that the military support directed at Iraq was sufficient to repel Iranian inconclusive attacks, as Iraq's mobile defense policy, which represented by absorbing human attacks and then destroying them, seemed successful. Therefore, by the end of 1985 and the beginning of 1986, the soviets and the rest of the external parties involved in the conflict concluded that the war had reached a stage of stalemate that would continue until the destruction of the Iranian economic and human structure and that would force it to accept a diplomatic solution. The soviet policy witnessed another important shift during the war between 1986 and 1988 known as "the policy of active containment" this shift is due to the new understanding of the Soviet Union of the threat and danger resulting from the war outcome. This, along with several other reasons, led to a greater participation of Soviet Union in the war in favor of Iraq (Mesbahi, 1993, p. 82).

The shift in soviet policy in favor of Iraq belongs to several factors, including Iranian victories, especially the occupation of the Faw peninsula, the growing soviet-Islamic problem in Asia and the new Gorbachev foreign policy "new thinking." Iran's occupation of the Faw peninsula was a major military development; unlike previous Iranian aggressions, it was carefully planned. This occupation presented a foothold in Iraqi lands, as well as created a wave of fear in the region. Although this military development was not followed by a direct victory, it reinforced perceptions about the possibility of the collapse of the Iraqi regime. Several meetings arranged between Iraqi foreign minister Tariq Aziz and the soviet foreign minister Edward Shevemadze reflected the perceived threat of war developments and the return of the old anxiety of the collapse of the Iraqi regime. The soviet press covered the war extensively in 1986. (Mesbahi, 1993, p. 82- 83)

The United States decided to isolate Iran internationally in 1987 as punishment for the continuation of the war. The Reagan administration succeeded in obtaining a Security Council resolution calling on both sides (Iraq and Iran) to end the war and accept a ceasefire. The Security Council resolution was passed with the consent of the Soviet Union. Iraq accepted the ceasefire resolution, but refused. The United States

suggested a Security Council resolution to impose an arms embargo against Iran to force it to accept a cease- fire, but the Soviet Union refused to vote in favor of the resolution. By refusing to vote for the arms embargo against Iran the Soviet Union sought to calm Iran's discontent over their support for Iraq, as well as the soviets sought to persuade all parties that the continuation of the war served America's interests in the gulf and distracted Arabs from the Arab- Israeli conflict (Katz, 1990, p. 144).

The Soviet Union found that its active neutrality policy towards Iraq between (1982-1986) and the preservation of Iraq's defensive ability were insufficient to change the balance of the war, especially after Iran's occupation of the Faw peninsula and the Iraqi army's inability to restore it, which raised Moscow's and the west concern about the possibility of the collapse of the Iraqi regime, although there was no breakdown in the Iraqi army after the occupation of Faw. It seemed clear to the Soviets that there could be no end to the war by political and diplomatic means, instead a change in the balance of military power should be made by changing Iraq's strategy from defensive to offensive, so the Soviet Union decided in the third period of the war between 1986-1988 to provide greater support to Iraqi regime to force Iran to accept a political settlement to end the war (Mesbahi, 1993, p. 88)

## **2.5 The Soviet Position on the Occupation of Kuwait**

On 2 August 1990, Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait, and on the same day the Soviet government was condemning the occupation and calling for the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces and the restoration of Kuwaiti sovereignty issued a statement. Again, Moscow found itself between the political visage and economic urge. This response from Gorbachev endangered the profitable relationship with Iraq, but this response was consistent with Gorbachev's obligations to limit the use of force in the international community and the commitment to a peaceful settlement in regional conflicts. Gorbachev joined the United States and the United Nations in supporting an adverse response to Iraqi military action despite the existence of the Treaty of Friendship with Iraq, in addition to the presence of Iraqi debts to the Soviet Union estimated between \$ 5

and \$ 6 billion and a possible loss of trade estimated at \$ 800 million a year, as well as the presence of more than 5,000 Soviet military and civilian technicians. The Soviet position had a great effect on the outcome of the war (Rubinstein, 1994, p. 309-310).

The policy of the Soviet Union in its last period and during the Gulf War affected a lot in the international arena, in the Gulf region, and in the results of the war, as the Soviet policy made the war possible. It also strengthened the role of the Security Council. It also helped President Bush in his campaign to win the opinion of the American people and convince them that this war was directed against aggression these results would not have occurred in a period before Gorbachev. Gorbachev helped make the war legitimate in the eyes of the American people, and the cooperation of two superpowers after 45 years of the Cold War was considered something that made international peace.

## **CHAPTER III.**

### **THE RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ DURING THE YEARS OF THE SANCTIONS**

Changes in Soviet foreign policies were happening side by side with shifts in internal politics within the union. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, its main heir state, Russia, faced many challenges than did the Soviet Union. Among them, several challenges in the Middle East led to a change in its priorities that were followed during the time of the Soviet Union. Whereas the Middle East followed an ideological approach until the middle of the Gorbachev period, Yeltsin followed a different policy, where he pursued a more pragmatic policy. Russia's policy in the Middle East has been greatly affected by internal affairs in Russia, as president Yeltsin has avoided criticism from the right wing in parliament. Military and economic weaknesses also affected Russia's foreign policymaking process. In this chapter, I will discuss Russia's policy toward Iraq in the Yeltsin era, the Russian role in trying to lift sanctions on Iraq, Russia's role as a mediator between Iraq and the United States, and the organization of inspector's work. I will also address Russia's position on the operation of desert fox.

#### **3.1 Yeltsin Policy in the Early Years of his Term**

Immediately after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, President Yeltsin pursued an anti-Iraq policy. He not only supported sanctions against Iraq, but also sent two warships to the Gulf to ensure the implementation of the embargo against Iraq. Yeltsin's policy witnessed in the first years a trend towards the oil-rich Gulf Cooperation Council states, and Russian Foreign Minister Andre Kozyrev visited the Gulf Cooperation Council states in 1992 in an attempt to obtain their financial support and he succeeded in obtaining a promise of 500 million dollars from Oman to develop the oil and gas industry and 100 million dollars to develop Russian oil fields. Despite Yeltsin's pro-GCC policy and anti-Iraq policy during 1992, he came under heavy criticism from the Russian right. Russian politician Vladimir Zhirinovsky attacked Yeltsin's policy of abandoning Iraq the Russian ally and called for a unilateral lifting of sanctions on Iraq.

The more moderate Russians questioned the extent of wisdom from the close cooperation between Russia and the United States in imposing the embargo, given Iraq's \$ 7 billion debts to Russia that Russia needs to operate its market (Freedman, 2001).

From the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 to 2001, Russia witnessed major shifts in foreign policy, including its relationship with Iraq. (Orhan, 2018, p.1-4) What characterizes post-Soviet Russia as compared to the Soviet Union is its weakness. This weakness promoted it towards more interest-based relations with other countries in order to fix the local economy. Current Russia has no basis to support its ambition and international standing. Its population is 50% less than its population in the time of the Soviet Union and its national product at the beginning of 1995, ten times less than that of the United States. Its military capacity was also weaker due to 80% less spending than it was in the Soviet Union. The people surrounding President Yeltsin between 1992 and 1995 were neo-liberal and Western-oriented liberals who rejected the Soviet heritage and the relations of the Soviet Union, including Iraq. The Iraqi ambassador to Moscow complained to a group of Russian parliament members about the Russian government's refusal to open talks on the Iraqi debt to Russia, and because of Russia's participation in the sanctions against Iraq, Russian economic relations with Iraq have declined significantly. In addition, because of the failure to pay the Iraqi obligations due to the sanctions, Russia lost 9 billion dollars in interest (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001).

Russia's policy toward Iraq began to change with the end of 1993 and the beginning of 1994 for several reasons, the first of which was the Russian political elite feeling disappointed due to the lack of expected American aid to Russia and a sense of Western rejection, especially after the failure of efforts to counter NATO expansion in eastern Europe, so the Russians began to change the policy supporting the United States and research for alternatives to their foreign relations. Likewise, Russia's failure to obtain financial support from oil-producing countries loyal to the West, in particular Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, made Russian leaders consider returning to their relations with Iraq and Libya as an economic necessity. Another important reason is the important location of Iraq in the Persian Gulf and its proximity to the Soviet Union, which makes it



the focus of attention for any Russian government. Among the internal reasons that helped change the foreign policy towards Iraq is the increase in opposition in Parliament to pro-Western policy by the Eurasians, nationalists and Communists and their victory in the December 1992 elections (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001).

By January 1993, Russian political pressure from the right and center in Parliament increased on Yeltsin and this appeared to have affected Yeltsin, as Yeltsin condemned the renewed American bombing of Baghdad despite the fact that the Russian Foreign Ministry led by the pro-Western Andrei Kozyrev supported the bombing. In addition, President Yeltsin allowed visits of Russian ministers to Baghdad and receive Iraqi ministers. When the crisis escalated between the deputies of the Russian parliament and Yeltsin in late September 1993, rumors prevailed that there was support from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein for Yeltsin's opponents (Freedman, 2001)

The Russian press reacted to the US air strikes on Iraq on June 27, 1993, despite the official stance approved of the strikes. Communist Pravda has written, "The most deplorable thing is that American piracy was justified by Russian leaders." The Liberal Izvestia commented on the strikes, describing them as a show of strength and writing that our multi-polar and interdependent world should not give any country the right to be the ultimate arbiter. In the same context, Komsomolskaya Pravda stated that the white house is always trying to create an enemy and that even if Saddam Hussein was killed, America would search for a new enemy. Also in June 1993, the first official meeting between the Iraqi and Russian deputy foreign ministers was held in Prague. As a result of the meeting, an agreement was reached between the two countries in August 1993 stipulating the continuation of all contracts signed at the time of the Soviet Union and further economic cooperation between Iraq and Russia (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001).

At the end of November 1993, Kuwaiti Defense Minister Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah visited Moscow and a defense cooperation agreement was negotiated and signed during the visit. The agreement called for Russia's assistance to Kuwait in protecting its borders and sovereignty and repelling any aggression on its territory. It is

believed that the escalation of the crisis between Yeltsin and members of parliament and doubts about the existence of support from the Iraqi President to Yeltsin's opponents helped in concluding this agreement with Kuwait. The agreement was a clear rejection to Iraq, which still refuses to recognize the independence of Kuwait and the newly defined Iraqi-Kuwaiti borders, and to Iraq supporters in Moscow. After the naval maneuvers conducted by Russia with Kuwait in the Persian Gulf, which aim to appease the Gulf States, Yeltsin moved toward Iraq. In 1994, Moscow invited Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz to visit Moscow (Freedman, 2001).

The year 1994 witnessed high-level contacts between Iraq and Russia, Riyadh al-Qaisi, Iraq's Deputy Foreign Minister visited Moscow on 21 February 1994 and made two further visits in August of the same year. Between August and December, Tariq Aziz, Iraq's deputy Prime Minister visited Moscow three times. Tariq Aziz, is considered the man close to the Iraqi president, and has been in charge of Iraq's foreign affairs for years. These visits coincided with the decline in Russian relations with the west. As a Russian journalist commented, the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister's visits were not coincidental at a time when there was calm after the Russian-American relations took the form of open clashes in the Budapest conference (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001)

### **3.2 Russia's Position on the Sanctions against Iraq**

The Security Council passed Resolution 661 on August 6, 1990 imposing economic sanctions on Iraq. The aim of this ban was to constrict Iraq and to compel it to withdraw its forces from Kuwait. However, before things got to this point, America led the coalition forces, and drove Iraqi forces out. The sanctions remained in effect under the pretext of ensuring that Iraq was free of weapons of mass destruction, and that it applied Security Council resolutions and these sanctions included a complete trade embargo, with the exception of medical, food and humanitarian items. Iraqis have suffered from the destruction of their country's infrastructure: from communications stations, electricity, factories, oil installations, grain stores, food supplies, central markets, water pumping stations, homes, and even shelters where citizens sheltered were

not a safe haven for them in front of the bombing. The land, air and sea missile concentrate over a period of 42 days.

The original provisions of the ban prohibited all kinds of commercial transactions with Iraq and freezing its funds abroad. In theory, it excluded food and medical supplies, but without export revenue and Iraq was unable to pay the import bill, so this exception became meaningless. Before the blockade, economic and social indicators were generally higher than regional rates and developing countries. GDP reached \$ 75.5 billion in 1989, but fell to two-thirds in 1991. In 1988, per capita GDP was \$ 3510, but fell to \$ 1,500 in 1991, then decreased to \$ 1036 in 1998. Other sources indicate that the decline in per capita income of gross domestic product amounted to 450 dollars in 1995. Iraqi oil represented 60% of GDP and 95% of foreign exchange earnings, as its economy was heavily dependent on the external sector and affected by fluctuations in global oil prices. In the early 1980s, Iraqi oil production reached 3.5 million barrels per day, but this amount decreased to 2.8 million barrels in 1989.

The international and domestic situation that the Soviet Union was going through in 1990 helped determine the position of the Soviet Union regarding Iraq's entry into Kuwait on August 2, 1990, as the Soviet Union had to choose between its traditional ally (Iraq) and the West's loyalty to obtain financial aid from America and the West. To confront the economic catastrophe that the Soviet Union was going through, the Soviet Union condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, as it endorsed Security Council Resolution No. 660 issued on the second of August 1990, which condemns the entry of Iraq to Kuwait and demands the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, as the Soviet Union supported the decision 661 it followed the path of imposing economic sanctions on Iraq decided by the United Nations and walking with the United States of America in its pursuit of the embargo on Iraq (Ghazi, 2006).

Russia's foreign policy toward the Middle East and the world has been affected by internal pressure from the Duma. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and because of Yeltsin's pro-American policies in the first year of his rule, opposition to his policy in

the Duma increased. In December 1993 and December 1995, as successive elections to the Duma created increasingly hardline, nationalist and anti-Yeltsin majorities, Yeltsin, who had forcefully disbanded the Duma in October 1993, has gradually preferred to adapt his policies to suit opponents of the Duma. At the beginning of 1994, Yeltsin began heading toward Iraq and by spring 1994, Russian diplomats began to discuss that since Saddam Hussein had begun to comply with US demands to control his nuclear weapons capabilities, a gesture that showed and stressed his readiness to comply with United Nations decisions (Freedman, 2001).

As a Russian initiative to improve relations with Iraq, the Iraqi deputy prime minister, was invited to visit Moscow. In an interview with *Izvestia*, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Boris Kolokov reported that Moscow had told Aziz that Russia was opposed to lifting sanctions before Baghdad acknowledged Kuwait's independence, agreed to demarcate their shared border. If Iraq did so, Kolokov pointed out, Moscow should vote to lift the sanctions. If the sanctions are lifted, Russia will resume selling arms to Iraq, thereby removing the Western countries from benefiting from this step at Russia's expense. At the same time, any Russian arms supply to Iraq will, of course, harm Russia's improved relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries that see Iraq as its enemy, and will also harm relations with the United States that began to deteriorate in the fall of 1994 (Freedman, 2001)

The official Russian position began to lean more towards Iraq on the issue of sanctions against Iraq. In June and July 1994, the representative of Russia at the Security Council S. Lavrov stated that the positive steps taken by Iraq should be taken into consideration, so sanctions should be eased if not abolished. In response to the opposition of some Western representatives to his step, the Russian ambassador expressed his view that the United Nations Resolutions should be complied with not only by the countries that were initially addressed, but also by the members of the Security Council, including the United States and the United Kingdom. During July 1994 session of the Security Council, Russia stressed the need for equal and balanced

accomplishment of the legal obligations of all parties to the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001).

Russia also included Iraq's acceptance of independence and of Kuwait's current borders which official Iraqi position called the 19 governorate of the Iraq. In order to get the Iraqis to accept these requests and to get back at least some influence in the region, A. Kozyrev, Russian Foreign Minister visited Iraq twice in 1994 (October-November). As a result of his talks with the Iraqi officials in October 1994, Iraq officially recognized Kuwait's international status as a sovereign state for the first time. The diplomatic success of Kozyrev was still not well received by the Americans, who saw it as detrimental to their regional interest. They were particularly dissatisfied both because of the potential damage to their propaganda war against Iraq and because of the success of Russian policy in the area, which was dominated by them (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001).

A delegation from Iraqi parliament visited Russia at the end of January 1995, and was welcomed by Prime Minister Chernomyrdin. In February, Deputy Foreign Minister Posuvaliuk warned that the situation in the area would deteriorate further unless the UN Security Council responded to the positive steps taken by Iraq. In 1995, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, who is considered one of the most prominent specialists in the Middle East affairs in the country, stated that Russia is doing a lot to normalize relations between Iraq and Kuwait. On the anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Kozyrev visited Kuwait and indicated that the Iraqi disarmament issue is about to be closed and that work is also underway on the biological weapons file (Freedman, 2001).

The Russian Parliament-Duma adopted a resolution in May 1995 calling for the lifting of the oil embargo on Iraq. However, for the Russian authorities, the resolution was not obligatory, and had rather emblematic significance. In general, the Russian leaders decided to maintain a sort of balance in their relations with Iraq and Kuwait and the West, and while demanding compliance from Baghdad with the U.N. concerned Resolutions, including release of all Kuwaiti prisoners of war and reparation for property lost or stolen, nevertheless retained and further strengthened cooperation with Iraq.

Cooperation in the oil sector became especially promising for the Russian side. An intergovernmental agreement was signed in April 1995 allowing for Russian drilling in the West Qurna and North Rumaili oilfields for a total of USD 15 billion. In spite of his efforts during the period 1994-95, Minister Kozyrev was still widely accused of neglecting the country's goals and interests in the Middle East. According to many Russian academics and journalists, his policy had produced an obvious decrease in Russia's stature and political influence and a damage of the very significant economic gains (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001).

However, much to Russia's annoyance, the short-term defection of Saddam Husain's son-in-law, Husain Kamil, to Jordan led to the release of information regarding concealed weapons by Iraq. Maybe trying to make the best of the position, a spokesperson for the Russian foreign ministry said, "It is unimportant what considerations Iraq took into consideration in deciding to lift the previous veil of secrecy on military programs. In the end, not motives but the result plays a more important role" (Freedman, 2001, p.22). The spokesperson went on to say that Russia wished that the UN Security Council's reaction from Washington and other Russian partners would be sufficient to the new demonstration of willingness by Iraq to accomplish the UN resolutions. Nevertheless, the Russian Logic persuaded neither the United States nor the GCC and the sanctions stayed in effect. Meanwhile, on 21 April 1995, the Russian Duma, controlled by right-wing forces, voted crushingly to lift sanctions on Iraq and put three objectives for Russia's policy: (1) to force the UN Security Council to abolish the embargo; 2) to assemble Iraq's debt if the block were to be partly lifted; and 3) to back-up Russian business investment in Iraq and significant cooperation with that state (Freedman, 2001).

### **3.3 The Primakov Period**

According Ismael and Kreutz (2001), as Foreign Minister from January 1996 to September 1998 and Prime Minister from then until May 1999, Primakov is recognized by Russian specialists and journalists with evidently formulating and introducing new

ideas and directions in Russian foreign policy. Expressing a large consensus among the Russian political class and following tendencies which were previously manifest during the last two years before he came to authority, Primakov sought to stress both the importance and international interest of Russia. As he indicated throughout his first press conference as Russian Foreign Minister “Russian foreign policy should correspond to its great power status and be active in all azimuths” (Aleksandrova, 1996, p. 249). Iraq had to become one of Primakov’s priorities for a number of geopolitical and economic reasons and he had long established personal ties with that state. He worked in Baghdad as a Soviet press communicator between 1968 and 1970, and has had kindly relations with the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein since then. He even mediated between him and the Kurdish separatists, as he acknowledged (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001).

The role of Primakov as Gorbachev's representative during the Second Gulf War was also well remembered in Baghdad and this was welcomed with great contentment when he assumed the post of Russian Foreign Minister there. The first main challenge of his relations with Iraq came in the 1996 when on 4 September American cruise missiles were hurled against Iraqi land. The U.S. administration claimed that the cause for that was an Iraqi military inroad into the especially protected region in its northern area, which is mainly inhabited by Kurds who want to detach from Baghdad. However, according to Russian sources, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Victor Posuvaliuk had already received pledges from Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz on September 2 that the Iraqi forces that had infiltrated the Kurdish region were ordered to pull out on 3 and 4 September. When the Americans pointed to the Russians on 2 September that “a U.S. strike was inevitable,” Russia rejected this, claiming that the situation was essentially heading towards a completion because of their efforts (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001). The United States and the U.K. Attack that has predictably triggered a strong reaction in Russia, however, accompanied this. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs not only objected but the government as a whole released a special statement calling the move “inadequate and unreasonable.” Russia's political and economic cooperation with Iraq continued to develop and, in order to stay in contact with Primakov, Tariq Aziz visited

Russia between 4-6 March 1997 and 9 May 1997 on 11 November 1996. Since then Russia, together with some other countries, notably China and France, has also formed a sort of “pro-Iraqi lobby” in the United Nations Security Council to weaken the sanctions and to restrain U.S. action against that state. Nevertheless, the Americans effectively foiled all their efforts (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001).

The diplomatic struggle in the U.N. Security Council on the statement by the U.N. Special Commission and the resolution on Iraq focused on the demand by France, Russia and some other states to contain in it an obvious statement on the many positive stages taken by Baghdad and its collaboration with the disarmament program, and on their resistance to the further sanctions against Iraq. The ultimate text of Resolution 1134, adopted by a majority of the members of the U.N Security Council in October 1997, did not immediately introduce extra sanctions, nor did it mention positive Iraqi collaboration. Russia thus found that it was both “unbalanced and not rational,” and refrained on the motion along with China, France, Kenya and Egypt (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001).

While Primakov declared that Russia would continue to monitor the sanctions imposed against Iraq and would not abolish them unilaterally, Primakov’s arrival to power seems to have persuaded the Iraqi president to start oil for food agreement with the United Nations, a move that took place one week after Primakov’s appointment. In order to gain Russian help into even more powerfully backing the Iraqi stance during the Security Council discussions, Iraq signed a multibillion-dollar oil development and training agreement with Russia at the middle of February 1996. When Primakov became Russia's foreign minister, it was obvious that Yeltsin had three main interests in expanding Russia's relationship with Iraq. Firstly, by means of foreign diplomacy, to prove to the world as well as to the aggressive Duma that Russia, given its diminished state, was still an important force in the world and was both ready and able to face the US, Yeltsin's Russia's second goal in Iraq was to recover the \$7 billion dollars that Iraq owes to Russia, something that could not be done unless sanctions on Iraq were lifted. The third interest in Iraq was to secure deals for Russian factories and oil and gas firms,



although those companies' real operations cannot start before sanctions are lifted (Freedman, 2001)

In 1996, Iraq signed the accord of oil for food, the accord that will allow Bagdad to sell \$2 billion value of oil over six months to buy humanitarian needs, which is renewable. Iraq's chief mediator, Abd Al-Amir Al-Anbari, was optimistic that oil sales could resume within a month, but the effect of Iraq's return on the international markets may take many months. According to the new agreement, Iraq will be eligible to export around 700,000 barrels per day (bpd). Iraq produced more than 3 million bpd before the sanctions were enforced in 1990. 30% of the oil revenues agreed to be exported as compensation for the gulf war and a smaller percentage will be allocated to Iraqi disarmament operations. The agreement also provides for between \$130 and \$150 million of every \$1 billion earned in income to be set aside for the Kurdish regions in northern Iraq that are no longer under central administration control in Baghdad. UN organizations will assume responsibility for the delivery of northern relief assistance (Feuilherade, 1996).

According to the oil-for-food program, Russian companies have contracted approximately 19.3 billion dollars' worth of Iraqi oil, which represents 30% of the oil sales, which is the largest share among the participating countries. During the program, Iraq and Russia exchanged official visits, and these visits were widely reported in the media. According to Russian officials, Russia did not sign any trade or cooperation agreement with Iraq during the sanctions period, but according to Iraqi officials, Russia was given priority during the oil-for-food program as a commercial partner for political reasons (Volcker et al, 2005). The Russian administration has taken a dynamic role in coordinating the activities of Russian companies contributing in the oil-for-food program as well as organizing the export of goods by Russian companies in accordance with this program. There was also an important role for Russian government agencies. According to Russian officials, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is one of numerous government agencies participating in the program that arranges the activities of the participants and promotes the benefits of Russian companies with the Iraqi

government. Russian diplomats in Iraq have discussed economic matters with Iraq several times. According to the records of the Iraqi Ministry of Oil, while most of the oil delivered to Russia was intended for major oil companies, the other part was designated with the names of Russian political figures, including the Russian Liberal Party and the Russian Communist Party (Volcker et al, 2005).

Russian interests with Iraq had a great impact in Russia's failure to submit to America in the idea of changing the Iraqi regime. Russia and Iraq signed several contracts to develop oil fields by major Russian companies such as LUKoil. These contracts are estimated at more than 30 billion dollars over twenty years. Russia also obtained a great benefit from Iraq within the oil-for-food program, estimated at \$ 530 million to one billion, in addition to the volume of illegal trade with Iraq unknown. In this case, America should attract Russia with significant economic compensation if it wanted Russia to stand with it in the field of regime change in Iraq. According to an adviser to President Yeltsin, the Iraqi president secured the support of Russian politicians and the Russian liberal party during the sanctions period in Iraq. Iraq wanted to obtain the concession from its economic relationship with Russia and benefit from the desire of the Russian industrial complex to increase the sale of weapons to the Middle East. Saddam Hussein put forward the idea of buying 4,000 Russian tanks if the sanctions were lifted according to Congress House Committee on International Relations Staff (2003).

### **3.4 The Russian Role in the Work of the Inspection Committees and Operation Desert Fox**

The stretched crisis over Iraq's actual and supposed weapons of mass destruction capabilities has produced not only worrying dilemmas for the international community but also different ways of attempting to deal with the problem. In specific, it has led to the establishment by the United Nations Security Council of two bodies charged with observing, verifying and helping in Iraq's disarmament. Both were given authorities of inspection and information-gathering regarding a sovereign member country that are

unique in the history of the UN. These bodies are (UNSCOM) the United Nations Special Commission and (UNMOVIC) the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission. (UNSCOM) was established in 1991 to end the clash between Iraq and the coalition of states that, with Security Council endorsement, had driven Iraqi troops out of Kuwait. UN security council resolution 687 called on Iraq to destroy or remove all weapons of mass destruction unconditionally under international supervision (Findlay, T, 2004).

Oppositions over access to suspected WMD sites commenced nearly as soon as UNSCOM Procedures began in April 1991, prompting resolution 707 to be adopted (15 August 1991) requiring unconstrained access to all locations and revelation by Iraq of all its WMD suppliers. During March 1996 - October 1997, Iraq obstructed inspectors from accessing Iraqi military and security sites, and it obstructed some UNSCOM flights. These actions, which were not determined by a March 1996 side agreement between Iraq and UNSCOM where Iraq requires prior notification to inspect security sites. This led to the Security Council demanding Iraq to cooperate and to the issuance of resolution 1134 in 1997, which threatened restriction on the travel of Iraqi officials. In the same year, Iraq expelled American inspection personnel from Iraq, and in response, resolution 1137 was issued to prevent the travel of Iraqi officials. Russia and Kofi Annan, UN secretary General brokered the return of the inspectors (Katzman, 2003).

Russia has stated that any action towards Iraq should be under the authority of the United Nations only. It has also stated that the embargo on oil should be lifted as a result of Iraq's cooperation in the field of inspecting its weapons and the need to reintegrate Iraq into the international community. Primakov also stated with Iraqi Vice President Tariq Aziz in a statement issued in November 1997 that Russia will work diligently to lift the sanctions as soon as possible by focusing on point 22 of Resolution 687 by increasing the work of the Special Committee for Inspection while respecting the sovereignty and security of Iraq. With this statement, Primakov invited the five member states of the Security Council to the Geneva conference and concluded the talks with a

statement in which he mentioned the success of Russian diplomacy. (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001).

In January 1998, another conflict occurred between Iraq and UNSCON, as Iraq prevented the commission led by American Scott Ritter, who later admitted spying on Iraq, from entering presidential sites. Iraq argued that the commission includes many American members and that it does not respect Iraq's sovereignty. Russia insisted on its position on the crisis on the necessity to find a diplomatic solution, and this was in agreement with the opinion of France, China and the Arab world, as well as the opinion of the majority of the United Nations members. In February 1998, the Russian Defense Minister indicated to his US counterpart during his visit to Russia that the Iraqi crisis threatens Russia's vital interests. Russia had an important role in mediating between Iraq and the United Nations. Confirming Russia's position in finding a diplomatic solution, the Russian Foreign Minister Primakov stated that the UN Secretary-General should visit Baghdad. At the request of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Primakov was able to persuade Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to backtrack on his insistence on setting a specific period for inspecting presidential sites. Kofi Annan signed a cooperation agreement with the Iraqi government on 23 February 1998 concerning the work of the inspectors, and the UN Security Council approved it on 2 March 1998. (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001).

On December 17, 1998, the United States and its ally Britain launched an attack on Iraqi soil, known as the Desert Fox. This attack occurred after the abrupt withdrawal of Committee Chairman Robert Butler after submitting a biased report to the Security Council on December 15, 1998, and 24 hours after his departure from Iraq, Iraq was bombed. Russia strongly criticized the attack, and President Yeltsin stated that this attack was a violation of the United Nations Charter and that the Security Council resolution on Iraq did not authorize the use of force, and Yeltsin called for an immediate end to the attack. Primakov also stated that Iraq had not taken any provocative act that required the attack and held the United States alone responsible for this act. He also

criticized Butler's withdrawal and stated that Russia would request an urgent meeting of the Security Council. (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001).

In 1999, and in an attempt by Russia to secure the work of its companies in Iraq, it called for a new agreement in the Security Council regarding Iraq, which suggested suspending sanctions on Iraq in exchange for forming a new inspection committee, and called for lifting the ban on selling Russia's oil and equipment to Iraq. However, Russia later faced an escalation in its war in Chechnya, therefore, it decided to take a more flexible attitude towards the United States regarding sanctions, in order to avoid the United States raising the issue of Chechnya to the Security Council. Russia continued its work in demanding the issuance of a new resolution establishing a new inspection committee, but Iraq was reluctant to do so, and on a visit to Moscow, the Iraqi Vice President called on Russia to use its veto power regarding the issuance of a new resolution in the Security Council. Resolution 1284 was passed, and Russia decided not to use its veto, but it abstained from voting alongside China, Malaysia and France. The resolution established a new inspection committee, the UNMOVIC, and it stipulated the necessity to enable the commission to enter any area without any conditions (Freedman, 2001).



## **CHAPTER IV.**

### **THE RUSSIAN POSITION ON THE US WAR ON WAR IN 2003**

#### **4.1 Historical Background**

The Soviets and the Americans have a long history as seen in the historical background of this study (See Chapter III). The relations are characterized by constant shifts depending on the given circumstances of a certain moment in history. It is a well-established fact that both superpowers have controlled and dictated the course of political history for the best part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Henceforth, when two powers such as USA and the Soviet Union have such an influential role at the international stage, conflicts are imminent. This active interaction had a significant influence on not only the domestic policies, but also on the world as a whole; decisions made in Washington or Moscow used to have echo in France, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Cuba, China and indeed Iraq. That is why it is crucial to understand the history of relations between the two countries at different stages starting with the period after 1945. An analysis on the implications of each era is going to be provided as well.

##### **4.1.1 Post-WW2 Era**

The key players on the international stage had switched after World War 2. Among the myriad of results and consequences that followed the war, the most significant was introducing USA and USSR as major powers. After winning the war alongside Britain, the two powers consolidated their grip over policies around Europe, a continent that had just emerged from a 6-year war, which exhausted the human and economic resources of the continent. That eventually paved the way to this rise. Countries such as Germany and Japan had completely collapsed, while former superpowers like Britain itself and France had become a secondary in the decision-making process of the post-war period. The aforementioned elements had paved the way to their quick rise to power and eventually monopolizing the decision-making process of the destiny of the entire world. After all, The Soviets and USA had the

biggest nuclear arsenal; therefore, politics after WW2 were heavily attached to the nuclear factor that was unprecedented game-changer at any warfare prior this war (Njølstad, 2004).

When the dust settled and the war was over, the relations between the USA and the Soviet Union started to take a new direction. Although the Americans and the Soviets were allies during the war, having fought together and toppled down Hitler, the two powers could not have similar unity of attitudes, visions and decisions after WW2. Any observer to the relations could feel that a real tension was brewing; and this tension was finally materialized with the Berlin Blockade in 1948. This event signaled out the beginning of a long and unannounced (and sometimes announced) war that had lasted until the 1990s—the Cold War. There are two main reasons behind the total land blockade the USSR had over East Germany: first, the Soviets were not happy with the economic support to Germany; second, the Allies and some European nations wanted to take the initiative and unify the currency of Germany in a similar endeavor. The Soviets took drastic measures to stop these activities: they blocked all roads, railroads and water outlets within its authority. This decision meant that German people had no access to any necessary items such as food and medication. This historical crisis marked the start of the Cold War. The pressing question in Europe and The United States was about how to curb the spreading ideology and influence of the Soviets; Soviets were portraying the Americans in similar terms within the regions of their control (Njølstad, 2004).

The two former allies are no longer allies, and a growing animosity took the place of cooperation. What an observer would immediately notice is that both superpowers were trying to market themselves; it almost feels like two salespersons at work to win over more customers, and in our case, those customers were countries in Europe and Asia. We also notice the philological aspect of it. For example, the word *democratic* was used in two different contexts as it fits the dialectics of each; Bessonova curiously highlights the viewpoint of the Soviets in this regard:

*"The Democratic was the system of socialist countries, which had very close economic, cultural, political ties with the USSR as the leader. Within this system,*



*all nations tried to help each other in all spheres of life and developments with no competition: only fruitful cooperation existed. The Imperialistic was the system of capitalist countries: they had a lot of contradictions in their 'camp' where each wanted to solve their problems and to defend their own interests by using the others" (Bessonova, 2010, p. 49).*

As a result, the USA and its allies quickly realized that the Soviet existence must be put under control somehow although this proved harder than expected. Several factions proposed "containment strategies" (Gaddis, 2005). Having in mind the power on the ground and the expansionist schemes of the Soviets, George Kennan, the American ambassador in the USSR, stated that the Soviets have a conviction that it is almost impossible to have a peaceful coexistence with the USA. They simply want to demolish the American way of life and the global influence it has so that the Soviet Union can be safe (Gaddis, 2005, p. 53). Clark Clifford, who was special advisor the President Truman, mimicked Kennan's concerns on the Soviet policy in a correspondence with the president. In it, he foresaw the Soviet intentions and warned against it:

*"Our best chances of influencing the Soviet leaders consist in making it unmistakably clear that action contrary to our conception of a decent world will rebound to the disadvantage of the Soviet regime. Whereas friendly and cooperative action will pay dividends. If this position can be maintained firmly enough and long enough, the logic of it must penetrate eventually into the Soviet system" (Quoted in Hyland, 1981, p. 4).*

This comment and many similar ones propelled President Truman to take a firm and decisive action in his letter to the Congress, urging to support the governments in Greece and Turkey against the Soviet expansion in the region. This decision was the ultimatum in the declaration of the Cold War, which led to other drastic decisions to be taken by the United States and its European allies. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, was founded in 1949. It was a turning point in the polarization of powers. Michael Cox also recognizes of the seriousness of the rivalry: Americans and its European allies realized the fact that the USSR is turning into a superpower, both military and ideological, unrivalled in all Europe, and that it might launch an expansionist attack at any Europe country at any given moment (Njølstad, 2004, p.13).

We can discern that the Americans had two strategic objectives in mind: first, bring the Soviet expansion scheme in Europe and the North Atlantic region to a halt;

second, remain in Europe and have its military presence consolidated without the interference of any other rival power. Therefore, it is safe to say that the dynamics of Soviet-American relations were mostly associated with the equilibrium of powers; each party was afraid that its counterpart would gain more political stronghold on the world, and Europe specifically. So it was only a natural course of action when the Soviets made sure that they their own pact with other countries, especially those that adopted Communism in Central and Eastern Europe, as a direct response to the NATO, and The Warsaw Pact was created in 1955. Another catalyst in the Soviet-American escalation was the Chinese-Russian evident proximity after Mao Zedong rise to power in China in 1949, as both Stalin and Zedong had similar ideological basis. Fearing that the balance of power was going to be compromised, the USA, ironically enough, moved towards Japan—a dire enemy not long ago. The idea is that if Japan received the technical and logistic support, it could turn into a technological force to be reckoned with and eventually be able to lock horns with China (Kortunov, 1997, p.3)

With all that being said and done, a closer look at the nature of the Soviet-American relations can see that it witnessed several fluctuation within post-war period. There were different speculations on the kind of relationship that might take shape with the power vacuum WW2 had created. In addition, with the United States and the Soviet Union presenting themselves as the new leaders on the international stage, it was inevitable that conflicts were to occur at one point. No one is better than Hans Morgenthau could best define the distinctive features of this period. He categorized his notes into three axes: first, there was not any real cause for dispute between the two, and that peace can exist if propaganda and suspicious narratives were eliminated. The second view is related to world revolution, and that “evil” must be radically uprooted and disposed of. As for the third axis, Morgenthau sees that the United States government was apprehensive of the “Russian Imperialism.” If this was the course of actions to be taken, Morgenthau continues, then “military preparations must join hand with an accommodating diplomacy, and preparing for the worst while working for a peaceful; settlement becomes the order of the day” (Morgenthau, 1980, p. 59-60).

#### 4.1.2 Post-Stalin Era

The death of the Soviet head leader (and symbol) Joseph Stalin in 1953 heralded the start of a new era and leap in the mechanism of the Russian-American relations. As we have seen in the previous section of our discussion, military and ideological conflicts were occupying the foreground, with each party forcing ideas and attempting to overpower the other within the European continent. However, Stalin's death changed the elements of this equation: the capitalist-socialist discourse that persisted for almost 8 years had transformed itself into a conflict of interests, which is the major thesis of this study. Economic and industrial interests are the new arena in which America and USSR are fighting for now. Stalin's successor, Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev, had a different approach in mind; he was more determined to alter the revolutionary discourse prevalent in Stalin's time into a more pragmatic one. Another commentator detects this change of heart in the Soviet Union: "Formerly struggle with capitalism and imperialism was aimed on its complete destruction, but since new approach was declared in 1950s Soviet policy was targeted on the 'fight to be first' and to build new socialist world as proof of the advantages of the Soviet system" (Bessonova, 2010, p.43). In his most renowned speech in 1957, Khrushchev's famous phrase, "overtake and surpass America," significantly shows the Soviets' intention of a more economy-oriented policy in this new period. On the flip side, a conservative optimism in Washington was formulating with the new Soviet leadership. The notion of coexistence was even an option on the table. President Eisenhower explained the nature of such overlapping of interests in his book with clarity:

*"The new leadership in Russia, no matter how strong its links with Stalin era, was not completely bound to blind obedience to the ways of a dead man. The future was theirs to make. Consequently, a major preoccupation of my mind through most of 1953 was the development of approaches to the Soviet leaders that might be at least a start toward the birth of mutual trust founded in cooperative effort—an essential relationship between the two great powers, if they and other nations were to find the way to universal peace" (Eisenhower, 1963, p. 189).*

The American president comments might have been slightly overexcited. In fact, it would be an overstatement to say that the Soviet-American relations were running as smooth as it might seem at first glance. The former tensions were so deep-seated that it took much time to soften relatively. After the relative peace, the tension rose up again in 1956. When the Egyptian leader Jamal Abdul Nasir declared the nationalization of the Suez Canal, Britain and France were naturally infuriated by the decision and the prospect of war was looming in the distance. However, the two allies did not consult Eisenhower on the military interference that they have launched into the Sinai Peninsula, aided by Israeli forces. The USSR threatened that if the Allies forces were not to withdraw, extreme measurements were to be taken by Moscow. Finally, and under tremendous pressure from USA, USSR and voices around the world siding with Egypt's declaration, France and Britain withdrew. The Berlin Crisis of 1958, the Congo Crisis of 1960 and building Berlin Wall in 1961, a wall that physically and metaphorically deepened the divide between the USA and the Soviet Union, followed this; it was a manifestation of the Cold War itself (Bessonova, 2010, p. 47). The height of tension though took place during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. It was a grim reminder of dark times: there was the prospect of nuclear war between the two. Prompted by the cooperation of the socialist Fidel Castro the Soviets, the installation of nuclear missile base in Cuba was understood as a direct threat to the very existence of the United States. The apprehension of the imminent nuclear clash put the world on a standstill. At the last moment, and after long thirteen days of heated negotiations, President J.F. Kennedy and Khrushchev reached as agreement that ended the conflict—at least for the time being.

It is noteworthy to look at the implication of the Russian-American relations during the Cuban Missile Crisis. There was an optimistic side to it: reason was prevalent at last, not belligerence. Both powers subsided their ideological rhetoric towards a more reasonable and pragmatic one. This kind of rhetoric was observed even after the crisis: leaders of both parties created a 'hot line' in order to discuss matters that might arise in the future directly and without intermediaries. In his speech in 1963, Kennedy stressed upon the idea of finding common grounds, and founding a healthy foundation for a more

productive collaboration; he also expressed his country's intention to halt all nuclear experiments (Bessonova, 2010, p.49). On a different note, this crisis had its setbacks in Moscow and Washington and their allies. The extent of Moscow support of its allies was questioned. After all, the world was at the brink of a nuclear war. The communist-socialist allies criticized the USSR for not being consult on such a serious matter that involves locking horns with the United States. The repercussions were observed in both camps: Romania led the protests within the Warsaw Pact, while France reacted similarly within the NATO against the USA. Another dimension to the Cuban crisis was American's change of foreign policy in South America. Simply, the Americans did not want to have the Cuban scenario again. As a consequence of this shift in policy, the USA waged a military campaign on the Dominican Republic in 1965, in order to neutralize any threat of a new communist country adjacent to American soil. The to-and-fro in international relations prompted both countries to try to establish policies of mutual interest in China, Middle East and even Europe. It was a time when they realized that the Cold War rhetoric was not going to lead to any fruitful outcome. However, at this stage, this proved to be wishful thinking especially after the American invasion of Vietnam in 1965, and the Soviet annexation of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

#### **4.1.3 Post-Helsinki Era**

The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) in Helsinki in 1969 marked the beginning of a new page in the history of Soviet-American relations. It was another attempt to regulate the armaments of the two powers in order to prevent any military clashes in the future. The talks were considered secretive and complicated. It was so important that President Nixon himself made an official visit to China and the Soviet Union. Visiting China was essential because the United States wanted to assess the split between China and USSR that has been brewing for a number of years now. Additionally, the USA government was in fact desperate due the escalating international, and local, pressure on it after the Vietnam War. China was now a key player, and evaluating its stance on these issues was important. Once he concluded his visit to China, Nixon visited Moscow. This historic visit had a number of implications

for the Soviets. To start with, the USSR massive budgets on armaments and military supplies began to exhaust the state treasury; they were actually open to any suggestions to lessen the military funding, even if it was the United States itself. What's more, the Soviets wanted to take advantage of American dilemma in Vietnam, as they were actually aiding the Vietnamese resistant group—the National Liberation Front. Still, the USSR wanted to end the American existence in Vietnam to ease the financial burden of aiding the resistance. A third implication: witnessing the sudden proximity of USA and China—the Soviets' 'best friend'—, the Soviets tried to nib this relation in the bud since such development can pose a threat to the USSR strategic and economic interests. Another dimension this visit had was the fact that the Russian wanted to re-kindle the relationships with America and Western Europe since this closeness would eventually provide economic benefits to both Moscow and its allies in East Europe (Hyland, 1981, p. 4).

These advanced steps in the evolution of relations were unprecedented. Ironically, Richard Nixon was known for disliking Communisms, and his far-right tendencies that in a way advocated the Cold War policies. Yet, his realistic and pragmatic way of dealing with these conflicts made his presidency the period in which an actual *détente* was reached. Nixon had simply recognized the USSR as counterpart in power and influence. That is why the 1970s were relatively considered the most peaceful period the Russians and the Americans had had. But not for long. When the next president, Ronald Regan, took office in 1981, things quickly changed. When we read closely through Regan's relationship with the Soviets and his attitude towards the Cold War, we notice conflicting notions, and that his policy was hard to tell (Leffler, 2018). On the one hand, Reagan saw the USSR as the "evil empire," and that it must be destroyed at any cost. He devised the National Security Decision Directives (NSDD) which entailed build strength, constrain and contract Soviet expansion, nurture change within the Soviet empire (to the extent possible), and negotiate (Leffler, 2018, p. 79). His main strategy was to win the Cold War. On the other hand, he showed signs of congeniality with Moscow and the new leader Gorbachev, trying to resolve the conflict

and arrive at a mutual understanding of interest between the two nations. Leffler questions these contradicting attitudes:

*One approach has been interpreted to connote a desire to achieve overwhelming military strength, cripple the Soviet economy, undermine the Soviet empire, and destroy the communist way of life.<sup>17</sup> The other suggested a desire to achieve military parity, negotiate arms reductions, modulate competition in the Third World, avoid Armageddon, and achieve [improvement]... So what, then, to make of this? Was there a strategy to win the Cold War? Or was there a strategy to end the Cold War? (Leffler, 2018, p. 80).*

Reagan reign coincided with the Gorbachev. The new Russian upon taking office proposed and activated *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*, ‘reconstructing’ the very political and economic foundation of the communist party within the Soviet Union and suggesting a myriad of reforms at the domestic and international levels. This new policy entailed essentially reconstructing the USSR relations with USA and the Western World. The culmination of Gorbachev’s initiative was the final dissolution of the USSR in 1991 into fifteen different republics around Europe, after persistent calls for independence. This historic event changed the course of modern history: the Cold War was over and there was only one superpower now—the USA.

#### **4.1.4 Post-Cold War Era**

The to-and-fro between Russia and USA was like “a rollercoaster ride—reaching great heights in one moment, only to come crashing down in the next” (Petykowski, 2004, p. 2). After a struggle that lasted for over forty-five years, the Cold War had finally ended, and new chapter was about to start. As mentioned before, the USA took the absolute lead at the international stage, with influence concentrated at its hands without any real opponent that might challenge it. The race to global leadership now had a different quality: it was strictly about economic and technological capabilities, not military. On the positive side of things, the new Russian-American bonds were based on productive partnership although many observers predicted otherwise: “On numerous occasions since late 1993, the prospect of the end of the Russian-American fragile post-Cold War ‘honeymoon’ has loomed large. Perceptions at least on the Russian side would become so somber that on occasion Moscow would start talking about the inevitability

of a period of Cold Peace between the two nations” (Kortunov, 1997, p. 1). This *honeymoon* though was perpetuated by the both President Bill Clinton and the new Russian president Boris Yeltsin. Despite opposing voices in Russia by new pro-nationalistic factions, the connection was kept healthy. Yeltsin’s government was extremely careful with its foreign policy with, for example, Iraq or Iran or other Middle Eastern nations in order not to inflict any damage on Washington interests, due to the increasing association of USA with “imperialism.” Henceforth, the new Russian policies were two-fold: the first was directed towards Europe and the Atlantic countries, and the other orientation was towards Asia. In both cases, Russian did not present itself at a dominating power, but as a moderate ally, a policy entirely new to it. For instance, Russian joined the NATO in order to activate the merging process, and of course, to get the economic support it badly needed. The Russian-U.S. bilateral understanding from early till mid-90s, Kurtunov argues, were smooth and “shock-resistant” which could be attributed to “diminishing importance” of each side against the other, with each party having political activities on separate directions: America is mostly in the Middle East, the Russians in CIS countries (Kurtunov, 1997, p.7). These steps were coupled with a very important notion in mind: Russia is to enter into agreements of common interests, with no ideological intention. This would bring to mind former times that the new Yeltsin government does want to conjure up. (Petykowski, 2004, p. 5)

Again, the Russian government under Yeltsin’s leadership was characterized by openness and a global vision towards mutual interests, while moderately keeping its national objectives in mind. They sought to have relationships on equal footing with other European nations. The Russian constitution was adhered, yet some parts undermined in favor of aspects of self-interest with other nations. Under the new government of George Bush, the extent of harmony was crystalized in the Treaty of Cooperation and Friendship in February 1992, an agreement that opened up new horizons—economic and political—for both nations, especially for Russia (Petykowski, 2004).



However, by the end of the same year, Yeltsin and Russia came to realize a number of things. A serious tension was brewing back in Russia by the neo-socialist and nationalistic factions towards the semi-lenient approach of Yeltsin when dealing with Europe, and Eastern Europe in particular (Monkoff, 2007, p. 124). The idea was that these countries are ‘former colonies’ and they must be submitted by the new Russian Federation. In addition, Russia noticed that its involvement in the Western scene was circumscribed and limited by its European members, and that total fusion within the European entity was merely an illusion (Monkoff, 2007, p. 125). The period until 1995 was characterized by total American dominance, with Russian-USA relations being kept at the friendly level instead of an actual collaboration, and the promises of taking Russia out of economic stagnation were not fulfilled.

#### **4.1.5 Post-Zyuganov Era**

In 1995, the Communist party under Gennady Zyuganov leadership had the majority of chairs in the State Duma, the Russian parliament, along with the Liberal Democratic Party. The head of the latter was Vladimir Zhirinovskiy who was a fervent nationalist. Accordingly, the policies of both leaders were going hand in hand into a new direction. Their demands of independence from European and American dominance echoed voices during the Cold War era. They also called for a resurgence of a ‘great Russia’ once again in order to be a challenging force to imperialism personified in the USA.

Moreover, the new policy would be more pragmatic and less ideological. A number of catalysts made Russia had such a change of heart towards USA. To begin with, the pro-American politicians failed to fulfill their promises of economic prosperity before the Russian people. The NATO decision to expand east, close to the Russian borders, was considered a threat, and socialist and nationalist members of the Duma took advantage of this event to consolidate their positions of the U.S. government and its allies. This *status quo* became to be even more consolidated when socialist-supported Primakov became the Russian minister of Foreign Affairs in 1996, and who is to become

the Prime Minister later in 1998. He called for transformation in the Russian foreign discourse and the way to deal with the growing American power (Anlar, 2006, p. 36).

Primakov response was ultimately founding the Shanghai Five Group, (SCO) in 1996—ultimately becoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2011—, which included powerful allies such as China, India alongside Russia. Primakov also opposed the NATO expansion in former USSR nations and ended up having the NATO to sign the mutual treaty in 1997, which proposed ending the bellicosity. President Yeltsin on his part took the Chinese-Russian to a better place following the aloofness the countries experienced in recent years. Yeltsin, moreover, aimed at resolving the border issue the Chinese government, secured arms deal and many other trade agreements. The newly found cooperation helped both countries overcome the financial crisis in 1997. The Russia's growing power was further strengthened when Vladimir Putin became the new president following Yeltsin's resignation in 1999 (Anlar, 2006, p. 53).

#### **4.1.6 Post - 9/11 Era**

One might say that the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001 was a turning point in world history. Many historians agree on the division of the modern political era as Pre-9/11 and Post-9/11. After the attacks, surprisingly enough, Putin declared his support for the US government and citizens, commenting, "Russia knows directly what terrorism means;" After some serious and in-depth discussions, both Putin and George W. Bush "resolved to advance cooperation in combating new terrorist threats" (Joint Statement, 2001). This step had revitalized the relations especially when the American-led coalition troops decided to fight Taliban in Afghanistan (Withington, 2002).

When comes to mind is the Soviet/Russian experience in Afghanistan during their long fight with insurgents known as the Mujahedeen during 1980s. Henceforth, Russian was a crucial player in this war even though there were not any Russian troops on the ground. The nature of this support however was not limited to intelligence, but also included tanks, armored personnel carriers, reconnaissance vehicles, and infantry

fighting vehicles, in addition to building the first coalition hospital in 2002, which treated over 6.000 patients (Withington, 2002, p. 43). With their knowledge of strategic locations for troop deployment and movement within Afghanistan, the Russians renovated the Salang tunnel, which reconnected the northern and southern provinces of Afghanistan (Withington, 2002, p. 44).

A question might pop up: What was the Russia's benefit from entering into this coalition with U.S. government in Afghanistan War? There are a number of possible scenarios that could be examined. "If nothing else, Afghanistan had been a source of instability in the region for years," writes Petykowski (2004, p.18). Resolving this instability then might open up new Russian-American interaction in the future, stop any illegal activities such as smuggling, and secure the borderlines from any potential threat. For Putin, this particular threat came from the south: Chechnya. The entangled Chechen issue is a source of complication for the successive Russian governments throughout history. Still, the tension between the two parties intensified throughout mid-nineties until the time U.S-coalition decided to strike Afghanistan; bloody wars broke out in the period between 1994 and 1996, and the Russian invasion in 1999, with both campaigns reaping the lives of thousands of Chechen people, among whom the majority were civilians. This caused an outcry within the international community against the actions of the Russian army due violations of human rights. In the period after 1996, with a devastated Chechen and feelings of vengeance brewing especially with the youth, Islamic fundamentalism seemed to be the only outlet, because arms and training were provided, not to mention the religious sense of belonging that fed the Chechen separatists. Through Afghanistan, the Taliban fundamentalists had been supporting the Chechen separatists in their struggle against Russia. According to one source, Osama Bin Laden donated almost 25\$ million to the Chechen separated, coupled with intensive combat training (Anand, 2004).

With the American war on terror, Putin was thinking of hitting two birds with one stone: exterminating the Taliban threat in the region and with this happens, no more support would be supplied to Chechnya. This would eventually weaken the Chechen

resistance and Putin would have the upper hand over the south. Prior to the 9/11 attacks, Putin's attempts to persuade Washington and the West that Russia's struggle was not ethnic-based, but rather he was dealing with a major terrorist group that poses a serious threat on a global scale. Ben Laden's attack on the Twin Tower supported Putin's thesis. And establishing a connection between Chechen and Taliban simply added more legitimacy to Putin's actions in Chechnya. With U.S. criticism on Russia becoming significantly less, the EU had a similar stance as "Chechnya was reportedly discussed behind closed doors during two EU-Russia summits, but was not mentioned in any public statements" (Petykowski, 2004, p. 33). With the complexity of the Chechen case set aside, Russia can work on other socioeconomic projects, mostly economic. The transformation of Afghanistan into a modern state could mean that Russia can invest in the new country's infrastructure and trade; Afghanistan could be the new market of Russian exports. Similarly, Putin reaped another fruit of this coalition: Russia was admitted into World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2002, a step that would further support the Russian economy in terms of export revenue and tax reduction. Russia, again, was on the way to join G8 in the same year. Finally yet importantly were the Russian oil exports that made an ample amount of its GDP. Being part of both WTO and G8, the Russian government thought, would shift the interest of international oil buyers from OPEC towards Moscow. Based on this analysis, the Russian-American during the post-9/11 period was in its honeymoon phase.

#### **4.2 The U.S Threats and the Russian Role**

The American-Russian relations witnessed a significant oscillation in recent times, ranging from the dissolution of the Soviet Union to Putin coming into power. Yet, the decisive moment in the nature of this relationship came after the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers. With Russia's realist policies in the war on Afghanistan, the relations were burgeoning. With Russia's rise to the international scene again, the two rivals were close allies now. However, when the U.S. government under George W. Bush was entertaining the option of military intervention in Iraq, the relations took another detour.

Afghanistan was posing a threat to the Russian interests in the region as stated previously, and it made perfect sense for Putin to be an indispensable ally to Bush. This was tied with the idea that Taliban groups were a destabilizing element in the region as whole since they were funding and resourcing the Chechen in south Russia. Nevertheless, when it came to Iraq, the story was different. Iraq, for more or less, had always been an important ally with Russia and the USSR before that. Besides, it was not posing any threat whatsoever to Russia and “without proof of weapons of mass destruction or linkages to Islamic terrorists, Russia did not view Saddam’s regime as threatening. Instead, it was considered a valuable economic partner” (Petykowski, 2004, p.44). What also strengthened Russian stance from the war on Iraq was the weak basis on which the U.S. government was making its accusation of associating Saddam Hussein’s regime with Al-Qaida and Taliban, and including Iraq as one of the countries within the “Axis of Evil.”

The Russian foresaw another dimension to this forthcoming attack, known as Operation Iraq Freedom: American was acting out its own agenda and plans at the global level without much consideration to Russia or even decisions of the United Nations. The step was alarming to many countries including France and Germany, and prompted the Russia to switch sides against the United States though Germany and France did not promise concessions of any kind such as the European stance from the Chechen cause. We might deduce that by siding with the strong European allies instead of America, Russia might have been able to alter their views on the Russia’s aggressive approach in dealing with Chechnya. However, Europe did not seem to change these stiff views i.e. Russia was using excessive force without much consideration for human rights. Therefore, the short-lived alliance did not bring any tangible benefit to Moscow. Still, Russia was a major player in the Euro-American dispute. In fact, Putin was mediating the relations among the allies as Russia had a better proximity to Bush administration during that period. This issue had a strategic advantage to Russia.

As for the economic advantage, Russia wanted to secure more oil-related concessions from the U.S. government in the post-Saddam era. This move is a

crystallization of the Russia's realist policies under Putin administration in the sense that if the concessions were guaranteed by their US counterparts, Moscow would have had an entirely different approach to the war other than the one that it followed afterward. However, this proved to be futile endeavor since Bush and Blair administrations wanted to acquire full acquisition of the oil contracts. When the issue is further pressed, it seems that Russia was ardently trying to secure oil contracts with Iraq whether it during Saddam era or after ousting his regime. This manifests itself when we look at LUKoil — the main oil producing Russian company. They had already secured one contract prior to 2003 in West Qurna. This is one veiled reason why Russia was attempting to impede the U.S. coalition-led war; ousting Saddam means terminating the contracts for good. These contracts were valid as long as the U.N. sanctions were removed, as this was the essential condition for activating them. Another issue was the Iraqi debt to Moscow to the arms deals during the Iran-Iraq war. Though many countries such as France were willing to reduce or even forgive the debts on the new Iraq government, Russia was adamant on its position of fully collecting its debts—almost 7 billion U.S. dollars (Belton. 2003, p. 7). In an eye-opening report, Michael Rubin reports the tremendous range of Iraq-Russia trade plans:

According to the Interfax new agency's report on the 5th of April 2002, the Iraqi Oil Ministry had invited the Russian company Zarubezhneft to develop a large field in southern Iraq with estimated reserves of 3.3 billion barrels and on the 2nd of April, ITAR-TASS reported that Iraqi Trade Minister Muhammad Mahdi Saleh had suggested that Iraq-Russia trade could increase to 40\$ billion.<sup>39</sup> In September 2002, Russia and Iraq signed 40\$- billion trade agreement, which include plans on cooperation in several sectors including oil, electric energy, and railroads. (Quoted in Anlar, 2006, p. 59-60)

Further, two months before the war broke out, Russia was playing on both sides: sending Yevgeny Primakov on a 'secret mission' to Iraq while simultaneously sending the Chief of Presidential Administration Alexander Voloshin to Washington in order to, using Belton's words, "sniff out business deals for Russia in return for its support" in a military intervention in Iraq (Belton, 2003, p.5). Despite the Russian opposition to the

war, Putin's administration had not sought any drastic reaction that could harm the relations with the United States. However, in order to maintain its interests no matter what happens after the war, Russia "discretely" sent a delegation to "the Iraqi opposition so that no matter who emerged on top in Iraq, Russia would continue to have access to Iraqi oil (Freedman, 2003, p. 70).

A belligerent rhetoric was taking shape in Washington for a long time now. Bush administration was heightening the tensions since after the Gulf War of 1991 that ultimately resulted in including Iraq within the 'Axis of evil' and was seen by many observers as the onset of military action. This was interesting because North Korea was part of that 'axis' but the Americans had not raised an accusing fingers towards them, which was, and still, a big question mark. The threats were present right after the Gulf War of 1991 as the Clinton's administration accused Iraq of possessing weapons of mass destruction, limiting Iraq air movement by dictating a no-fly zone on Iraqi airplanes in the south. This was followed by total embargo on export-import transactions, as Iraq was relying heavily on exporting oil. The tight grip of this embargo was loosened a little with the food-for-oil, with Russia being an integral part of this program.

Henceforth, the prospect of war was about to damage essential Russian interest in Iraq. Saddam had always favored the Russians over the Americans based on ideological and common political interests; the Iraqi regime had always attached the label 'imperialist America' as opposed to the socialist ideals of the Ba'ath Party. To begin with, The U.S-propelled United Nations and its Security Council issued sanctions on Baghdad in 1991. This was done initially put a halt to Iraqi aspirations in the regions, as seen by Washington, and for not being fully cooperative regarding the alleged possessions of weapons of mass destructions. Later one, oil-for-food agreement was agreed with Baghdad. There was in fact an increasing involvement of Russia in the lucrative oil-for-food agreements:

Russian oil firms obtained an important role in exporting Iraqi oil in the U.N. Security Council-imposed oil-for-food program. Other Russian enterprises obtained an

important role as authorized sellers of goods to Iraq under this program. There were also persistent reports before the 2002-03 Iraqi crisis of continued Russian arms sales to Iraq (Kanz, 2003, p. 2)

Along with France , Germany and other powers in the United Nations, Russia arranged for the agreement on the return UN inspectors of weapons of mass destruction in 2002 when these inspections teams left Iraq in 1998 and was followed by a four-day air strike—Operation Desert Fox. After the inspection had undergone so much ambivalence between 1991 and 1998, the condition this time was that if nuclear/biological warheads to be found in Iraq, or if the latter was to be uncooperative, the U.S. coalition would launch a military attack on ‘strategic targets’ which ended up in a full-swing conquest of the country. When the Saddam’s regime was toppled down, Russia wanted to be part of the deal involving lifting the UN sanctions on Iraq, but the other European allies did so without Putin. Henceforth, Russia’s hope of curbing the United States and becoming close allies with Paris and Berlin, and ultimately reaping the fruits of this European collaboration, was not attained.

#### **4.3 The War in Relation to International Laws**

The military intervention of 2003 is an intertwined matter and comes with many complications and much controversy. As stated before, the U.S. government had justified the intervention according to three main dimensions: (1) the possessions of weapons of mass destruction, (2) Saddam’s connection with Taliban and Al-Qaeda, and (3) replacing the ‘dictatorship’ of the current Iraqi regime with a more ‘democratic’ system. Each one of these allegations were proven to be invalid and inadequate as firm grounds for a military assault on another country. Despite the UN Resolution 1441 that found Iraq in “material breach of its obligation” and that the country might face “serious consequences as result of it continued violations,” nothing in this statement suggests the need for military intervention, and the truth of the matter is that the Iraqi threat was being largely magnified by the US government in order to legitimize the assault (Zandstra, 2013, p. 4). As far as the weapons of mass destruction were concerned, the



United States proposed the ‘preemptive self-defense.’ The term is often used conservatively to describe an anticipatory militant action by a certain country against another, a pretext employed by the Bush administration in its war rhetoric to project Iraq as an imminent and contingent threat to the United States, while, in reality, the definition is different:

The claim to preemptive self-defense is a claim to entitlement to use unilaterally, without prior international authorization, high levels of violence to arrest an incipient development that is not yet operational or directly threatening, but that, if permitted to mature, could be seen by the potential preemptor as susceptible to neutralization only at a higher and possibly unacceptable cost to itself. (Reisman & Armstrong, 2006, p. 526)

Hence, the rhetoric was that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and that this threat must exterminated, and U.S. government is exercising its legal to defend itself against an enemy. By looking at the UN charters on international laws of self-defense, the condition is not fulfilled according to article (51) as the word used is not *aggression* but *armed assault*. Since Iraq had not intervened militarily against U.S.A, it negates the thesis based on self-defense as no armed assault had taken place. As was the case with Nicaragua in 1986, the International Court of Justice refused labeling a military attack as self-defensive.

Back home, Bush was gaining more and more support from the Congress for toppling Saddam’s regime. Bush needed the necessary support both political and financial since the invasion needed tremendous funds. The ongoing war rhetoric started in 1998 when the Congress passed Iraq Liberation Act, which stated that “It should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime” (Congress, 1998, p. 112). This act remained inactive for four years with conservative attitude towards any military intervention since the United States needed to acquire international acceptance in addition to the huge funding it required. The moment presented itself after 9/11 attacks as the Congress passed the

AUMF Against Iraq Resolution of 2002, which authorized the president “to use the Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in order to: (1) defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq; and (2) enforce all relevant UN Security Council Resolutions regarding Iraq (Congress, 2002, p. 116). when the second point is scrutinized, the observer is under the impression that Iraq was an adjacent nation to the United States, threatening the frontiers of the country while Saddam’s forces are imminently about to start an invasion. We might also conclude that Iraq and Saddam were acting as a nerve-racking reminder of Cuba and Castro as memories of the Cuban Missile Crisis are still fresh and reoccurring. Nonetheless, the comparison of the two situations was illogical, lacking firm grounds in the political reality of the time.

Even if the definition of preemptive self-defense is taken in the broad sense, it comes with certain limitations and regulations. Accordingly, the nations that exercise its right of self-defense must present well-founded evidence that it is under a direct and imminent military threat to its lands and people. In case of not providing convincing evidence, the attack of that nation is considered vengeful and unlawful assault on the nation in question. In the Iraqi case, the needed evidence was not provided while the justifications given by Bush administration were far from substantial, and one might even say that they were fabricated to wage war as soon as possible. By the same token, Kofi Annan, the secretary-general of the United Nations at that time, told the BBC World reporter that the war was “illegal” and that it outright breach to the decisions of the United Nations: “I have indicated it was not in conformity with the UN charter. From our point of view and from the charter point of view it was illegal” (MacAskill & Borger, 2004). Another aspect about the rightful self-defense: the military option must be the last resort and the only available solution. But in the Iraqi case, more diplomatic initiative should have been implemented in order to find an intermediate solution to the entangled U.S.A-Iraq dispute. Finally, and within the same definition, the presumable nation under attack must limit its military action within the defense boundaries, not assault, otherwise it would be a direct invasion on the other country; Ironically, Iraq, and

not the coalition forces, was the party entitled to exercise that right: “Indeed, if we were to endorse this doctrine [of right to self-defense], we might say that Iraq had a better claim to use force in pre-emptive self-defense against the US than the US did against Iraq. Either way, it does not sound like a prescription for peace among nations” (Simpson, 2005, p. 172). Turning from self-defense into a full-blown invasion, the US-led coalition forces violated another international law: using prohibited and proscribed weapons against unjustified targets and civilians especially in the siege of Fallujah, a town in western Iraq. According to variety of sources, in Fallujah and other locations across the country, the coalition forces used white Phosphorus and napalm bombs, two of which are widely considered unconventional, proscribed and chemical in nature (Monbiot, 2005). Beside preemptive self-defense theory that the US adopted in its political rhetoric, there was the notion of implied authorization of a military assault. The UN Resolution 1441 was utilized as basis for the invasion. What negates this claim is that the Security Council did not pass a resolution for military intervention on Iraqi soil when the U.S. sought the legal support from it, is it difficult to get the majority of nine votes of the Permanent Members of the Security Council and for fear of vetoing the decision.

If the war was not an act of self-defense, then what is it? Based on the international law of United Nations Security Council, the military intervention was an act of aggression. Resolution 3341, Article 1 defines *Aggression* as “the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations as set out in this Definition” (United Nations General Assembly, 1974). Henceforth, the military intervention of the coalition forces led by the United States and Britain perfectly and accurately fits the definition since the war was a transgression against the sovereignty, independence and rights of Iraq and Iraqis; Bush government used excessive force instead of peaceful ways to resolve the disputes, since violating international laws dictated by the United Nations. One might simply wonder, as Murphy does in his article *Assessing the Legality of Invading Iraq*: “If the United States

proceeded without authority under international law, then what good is international law? If the United States proceeded in the face of opposition of the UN Security Council, then what good is the Security Council?" (Murphy, 2004, p.9). Another commentator describes the US decision of waging war adhering to "Texan international Law:" an American version of international law that emphasizes the "threat from outlaws, the need for self-help, the unreliability of institutions and the frontier spirit" (Simpson, 2005, p. 171).

#### **4.4 An Overview Analysis of the Russian Role in the 2003 War**

When the Russian role is put under the spotlights, a number of thought-provoking conclusions manifest themselves. The Iraqi war was a difficult test for the post-Cold-War Russia; this entails that there was a clash between the new realist tendency of Putin's administration and the deep-rooted ideological and power rhetoric that has been always a distinctive feature of Moscow. On the one hand, Russia had been trying to secure the much-needed concessions and prerogatives out of the war. On the other hand, the Russians were thinking about the regional ally with which they had productive and firm relations for over 35 years.

The traces of the shift from West to East were not without logical reasons. As we have noted in a previous part of this study, Boris Yeltsin's proximity to Bill Clinton's during the mid-nineties was not actually translated into a full-blown collaboration. Instead, as member of the parliament also noted and objected, the relations were kept at a friendly level only without any attempt to aid the Russia economy in serious terms. A similar scenario happened with France and Germany as Russia strongly objected the incoming military action in Iraq, both for political reasons—to gain acceptance for the Russian actions in Chechnya and to hinder the unipolar U.S. government from having more power — and economical reason — admitting and involving Russia into European organizations that would help revive the dilapidating economy. That is why Moscow was eyeing old allies in the Middle East such as Iran, Egypt, Libya and Iraq. Yet the latter was the perfect destination for that shift due to a myriad of historical and

ideological grounds not to mention the sole reason of common interests. This collaboration with Iraq was realized partially when Putin first came to power. Again, the strategic locations and the future prospects the Middle Eastern country has to offer were all reasons that encouraged the Russians to incentivize the bond with the oil-rich country. Another notable scholar asserts that, For Putin, “it appears that Russian economic interests, and particularly the role of Russian oil companies in developing Iraq’s oilfields, have been a primary consideration” (Freedman, 2003, p. 73).

As far as interests were concerned, Russia was thinking about the oil contracts that would lift up the Russian economy and provide a great number of investments internationally and, indeed more urgently, locally. However, it is worth reminding that Russia had no actual and tangible economic or financial gains from the U.S. government; these promises were never really fulfilled on the ground. Nevertheless, when we think of Iraq-Russia collaboration prior to the war, we notice that a serious cooperation in terms Russian exported products and oil contracts—such as the ones signed by LUKoil—that would have boomed if it were not for the war. In other words, Russia was badly hoping for the UN to alleviate the sanctions on Saddam’s regime in order to attain the long-awaited economic prosperity thanks to the trade and oil deals with Iraq.

Another economical dimension is associated with the debts. As previously mentioned, Iraq and Russia had an extensive and a large body of trade and transactions in a variety of fields such as products and oil contracts—of an estimated of amount of over 7 billion US dollars (Belton. 2003, p. 7). Yet after the war, no sign of full payment was looming in the distance. Policymakers (and businesspersons) in Moscow knew that only a stable Iraq could stabilize Russia whether the issue at hand is paying the debts or having a peaceful atmosphere for Russian companies to operate in a war-stricken country such as Iraq. This is an especially valid point after the turbulence Iraq and Iraqi politics had lived after the American conquest and ousting Saddam Hussein. With the formation of the Iraqi Intern Government and the election of the first Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, the Iraqi-Russian relations found a new shape and form under leaders and

new visions. Everything was up in the air at this point. The Iraqis were to take initiative and visit Moscow on December 7, 2004 in order to understand Moscow's stance now that a long-term ally, Saddam Hussein, is no longer in power. The historical meeting had a number of implications. Putin on his part, whether he was obliged to do so or not, "noted that Russia is writing off more than 90 percent of Iraq's debt – more than other member of the Paris Club – out of solidarity with the friendly Iraqi people" (Kremlin, 2004). Alongside this generous gesture, Putin wanted to emphasize the Russian interest in having more trade deals with Iraq as he "hoped the Iraqi leadership would take into account the interests of Russian companies in Iraq following the elections scheduled to be held on January 30, 2005" (Kremlin, 2004). An observer might point out that Russia was attempting to salvage any shred of interest and rekindle the hope of large-scale dealings with Iraq. Thus, the first encounter in the post-Saddam era was almost exclusively economic in nature, because this latter factor played an essential role in the active Russian politics and policies involved accordingly. Yet this meeting was not going to pass without a subtle critique—to both Americans and Iraqis— on the *status quo* in Baghdad: the question of having democratic elections in a country occupied by foreign powers namely America and Britain. He conveyed his comments to Allawi that "it is not entirely clear how it will be possible to both organize elections while Iraq is still occupied by foreign troops and normalize the situation in the country" (Kremlin, 2004). The fruits of this meeting, sort of speak, was finally reaped in 2009 when the Russian LUKoil, "in a consortium with Norway's Statoil, won the tender to develop West Qurna-2, one of the world's largest oil fields" (Mamedov, 2019). What characterized the Russian oil company was the long-term plans in Iraq since the 1990s. The long-awaited consolidation of oil interests in Iraq was finally realized the realist Russian policies were paying off after the long standstill. Ruslan Mamedov portrays the scale of the cooperation that was unimaginable only a few years before. The extent of dealings was expanded beyond what Putin would have hoped for and that "Russian companies may invest up to USD 45 billion in the country by 2035:"

Apparently, despite the remaining risks of working in Iraq, LUKOIL had a long-term strategy. In 2012, the company expanded its activities when it acquired the rights to explore and subsequently develop Block 10 of the field in conjunction with Japan's INPEX CORPORATION. In 2017, LUKOIL and INPEX successfully completed the testing of Eridu 1, the first Block 10 appraisal well. LUKOIL is steadily improving its indicators in Iraq. Currently [as of 2019], the company strives to increase production in West Qurna-2 from 400,000 barrels per day today to 480,000 in 2020. The government and the company are updating the contractual framework of LUKOIL's work in Iraq on a mutually beneficial basis. For instance, in 2013, the contract was prolonged until 2035. LUKOIL's 2018 oil field development plan entails reaching the production level of 800,000 barrels per day in 2025 (Mamedov, 2019).

The third dimension is the oil prices. Since the beginning of the new millennia, this issue has been a growing concern to Moscow bearing in mind that Russia is heavily dependent on oil as its primary industry — \$25.3 billion in revenue — and any change in the oil prices internationally would strike directly into the heart of Moscow. By the end of 2002, as the military intervention of U.S.-led coalition was becoming imminent, an oil crisis hit the world since Iraq is one of the main oil-producing nations at the international level. During that critical period, the oil prices on which Russia depends for more than one-third of its tax revenues, shot up from \$25 per barrel to an average \$38 per barrel, giving Russia an economic windfall” (Freedman, 2003, p. 70). Ironically, the war that Russia tried so much to prevent was now bringing forth unprecedented profits, and Russia surreptitiously wanted the crisis to protract. As Freedman observes in the same context, the profits would come in handy in paying Russia's international debts and for Putin to fund the Duma elections of 2003 and the Presidential elections in the following year, both of which eventually won by Putin and his United Russia Party (Freedman, 2003, p.70). The actual fear was in the post-Saddam era in which nothing can be certain and everything is subject to change. Russia, and not unjustifiably, was worried that this change will affect negatively, this is due to that possibility that all the signed contracts during Saddam's might be overruled and invalid. Another reason could

be America's monopolizes the concessions regarding the oil fields the Russians were previously promised. Mark Brzezinski and Lee Wolosk add another factor to the equation: exploring more oil in Iraq means cheaper oil prices: "Russian leaders fear that a post-Saddam Iraq (with the second largest proven oil reserves in the world) might maximize its oil output, dramatically driving down the price of oil. Some analysts estimated that a \$6/bbl fall in the price of oil could cut Russia's projected economic growth in 2003 in half. A sharper price drop, below \$18/bbl, would severely impact Russian government revenues, jeopardizing Moscow's ability to pay salaries and pensions and to fund its already meager social expenditures" (Brzezinski & Wolosk, 2003, p.8. Quoted on Congress Report, 2003, p. 2). There is one scenario in which Russia would come out as a winner: only if the contracts were to be given, as designated, to Russia and its companies, which ultimately happened in 2009 as mentioned earlier.

Hand in hand with the economical factor, Russia had to pay serious attention to its global policies. It is believed that Russian strategies before and after the war were equally incentivized by a need circumscribe the U.S. global dominance in apparent U.S. propensities toward unilateralism and exorbitant dependence on military power. The possibility of a multi-polar world not completely overwhelmed by a solitary superpower in which Russia would be a significant worldwide player, has actually a certain attraction in Russia. Being seen and perceived as leader who can bring Russia to the foreground once again, Putin was more than willing to enter into mutual agreements and talks with Washington. Yet at the same time, he did not want to be seen, especially by Russians back home, as someone who is easily manipulated by the U.S. politicians. In this way, Russia may have had an interest on a basic level in contradicting the notion of 'one-sided' U.S. military intervention in Iraq. Putin had no intention in overtly making a statement opposing America to the extent that might harm the relations that were only revived in the last ten years. Instead, he aspires for, in participation with the usual U.S. partners France and Germany just as with Russian allies, for example, China, to put a few restrictions on U.S. growing power, because from the outset, America seemed to on



the way to be an unchallenged superpower. This would in turn have a downside in the Middle East, and it plays on two sides. First, as the world politics are becoming more interest-oriented, other nations would seek a powerful ally such as America to have strong relations with which would guarantee a smooth and safe transition of workforce and merchandise and transactions under the U.S. 'blessings,' let alone having the U.S. government on their sides in political matters. Second, to the Russian allies in the Middle East, it appears that Russia had 'let down' and even betray Iraq in its long struggle against the 'imperial' USA. That is why, Russia and Putin wanted to maintain a certain equilibrium between the economic gains domestically and its political image on the global stage.



## CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the intricate matrix of the Russian position on the UN sanctions on Iraq and the subsequent US-led war in 2003. This position had been evaluated and projected into a variety of aspects in order to demonstrate the Russian policies in the region that were characterized and incentivized by pragmatic ends.

Theoretically speaking, the current study has employed Realism (along with some its offshoots) to demonstrate that Russia's international relations with both allies and enemies had always been based on the notion that interests are the incentive and the driving force. These pragmatic undercurrents were observed within a political framework that guarantees both diplomatic and economic outcomes. Many examples had been cited such as the Russian-American cooperation and the proximity of the former to countries in the Middle East—mainly Iraq—in order to secure economic concessions that would eventually benefit and reconstruct the local economy and, indeed, consolidate Russia's reputation as a political and economic power.

The study answers the questions posed in the introduction and arrives at a number of conclusions. To begin with, the American-Russian relations had fluctuated and still do in the current political climate that is marked by both pragmatic and political incentives. The East had been always a driving force for interests and sometimes the locale for geopolitical and strategic rivalry and even conflicts. Iraq, one of the richest countries within that geography played an essential role in defining a substantial portion of the nature of American-Russian relations. The mechanism of these relations oscillated and shifted in shape and form, as stated before, according to the givens of that particular era and the way interests of the two nations were dictated. In addition to this, this study also provided an in-depth analysis of certain events, decisions and political moments in order to observe and assess the nature of the Russian-Iraqi relations. One important conclusion is that the actual alteration happened after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and that there was an evident change of heart in Russian policies: it had become more interest-oriented rather than ideological-oriented. Henceforth, Russian

politics have become realist-pragmatic in nature and essence especially after the collapse of USSR.

Second, due to the geopolitical and strategic location and oil promises, Iraq had always been an important Russian/Soviet ally in the Middle East. The Iraq-Russian relations go back to the time of 1950s, when Iraq was a kingdom. The relations became more substantial after Kasim's coup that transformed the country into a socialist republic, a catalyst to the relations thanks to the proximity of the communist-socialist ideologies of the two nations. The extent of cooperation had gotten even more productive after the Ba'ath Party came to power, and the Soviets economically and strategically benefitted the eight-year between Iran and Iraq, as the Soviet Union was the major military supplier to the Iraq side. As a result, this war had strengthened the relations and rendered it more consistent. Iraqi continued to be an essential ally to Moscow throughout the 1990s up to the war in 2003.

Third, Iraq had always favoured the Russian/Soviets over the West. One reason is the ideological proximity as stated above. Another reason is subsequent governments after the kingdom were all revolutionary in nature i.e. took power following a military coup. The Iraqi politicians in that sphere had projected the West and the United States as imperialist power for which the sole aim was world dominance and suppressing any counter-thesis to its policies at the global and even domestic stage. This vision was shared by the Soviets ever since the beginning of the Cold War, and continued until Gorbachev's and Yeltsin's eras in which the Russians tilted towards Washington regarding the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait (as they sought concessions from their new Europeans and American allies). Other than that, the Russians and the Iraqis have had a steadiness and constancy of cooperation and mutual understanding. In mid-90s, when the nationalists had the majority of voices in the DOMA, they called for an instant revival of relations with the old eastern allies rather than the western as the economically-hurt Russia had not received the promised concessions and support it badly needed following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Part of that decision was essentially economic in nature: Iraq was indebted to Moscow with over 8 billion dollars. And it was high time that Moscow find appropriate passageways to collect this

tremendous amount. Beside the debts, Russia wanted to secure lucrative oil contracts that were contingent on the obliteration of the Security Council sanctions on the country. Thus, the Russian worked hard in order to alleviate the sanctions in order to proceed with suspended contracts signed already with the Iraqis. Strongly attached to this chain of events was Russia's role in facilitating the work of the inspections committees as they searched the country for alleged weapons of mass destructions. Beside its image as a supportive ally, Russia was after its interests in the process of collaboration (and intermediary) with Iraq and United Nations in order to attain the economic advantages it sought—something that actually happened after the ousting of the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein and the advent of a new government in 2003. But even before dethroning Saddam, Russia was directly observing and actively participating in the oil-for-food program from which it had the lion's share in selling oil, beside the import-export process (and even to somehow extend that period as long as it possibly can to keep the 'cash flow' to Moscow).

Finally, the U.S-led war against Iraq in 2003 was another defining moment. Based on the evidence presented, war is seen as an assault on another nation because the rhetoric of war—having weapons of mass destructions and posing a direct threat the existence of the United States—was feeble and insubstantial. As for the war itself, Russia had other objectives to oppose. Along with the economic gain, Moscow opposed the war for another reason: Russia saw that the U.S government wanted to proceed with its decision condoning the recommendations of the United Nations and Security Council, and that USA is becoming the sole superpower while the Russian still wanted bipolar world order in which the US supremacy is constantly challenged. At the same time, seeing that decision to invade its Middle Eastern ally was eminent (it was only a matter of when), Russia was played on both sides. In order to secure its concessions in both scenarios, Moscow kept its connections with Iraq and persisted that the decision was unjust. (This was partly done to placate its other Middle Eastern allies who felt that Russia was abandoning an ally in critical time). On the other side, Putin's administrations revived the seeds of partnership with George W. Bush in order to secure a foothold in the case of toppling Saddam's regime. By surreptitiously siding with the

Americans, Moscow would guarantee the diplomatic support and recognition Washington would grant (being recognized again as an ally on equal footing as before) and secure economic concessions in the new Iraq characterized in sought-after oil contracts.



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