

US HEGEMONIC INTERESTS AND THE STRATEGIC DILEMMA IN IRAQ

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Abstract:

Iraq parliament has passed a resolution on January 5, 2020 to oust US-led coalition forces from country, as hostile response grew after the assassination of Qasim Sulemani, a top Iranian military commander, near Baghdad airport. The US State Department rejected this demand and said Washington and Baghdad should instead focus on fixing their alliance. US and its allies were expecting that their presence in Iraq will be welcomed by different Iraqi communities as these communities came out of Saddam's suppression with the help of US and its allies. This study tends to address the fundamental challenge regarding US' consistently diminishing influence over the Iraqi society. Though heterogeneous in its nature and fabricated in its essence, US still have no pivotal power-say over any of the Iraqi societal, religious or political groups. Particularly, the Iraqi majority Shiite population is real beneficiary of US campaign against Saddam as they remained under the despotic rule of Sunni minority led by Saddam. In post Saddam period their increasing inclination towards Iran has changed the entire socio-political scenario of Iraq and despite huge strategic investment in Iraq, US has been marginalized in main stream decision making process. Consequently, US supremacy in entire Middle East went under question.

Key Words: *Middle East, Iraq, US Hegemony, Foreign Policy of Iran, Terrorism*

Introduction:

Since the discovery of oil, Middle East has been in the prime focus of the West, mainly USA. Though historically been the colony of Britain and France, the then superpowers, Middle East became the breeding ground for the propagation of US interests after WWII. Not only for the oil but Middle East was also geopolitically important for US in the Cold War against the Soviet Union. For that purpose, US needed a strong ally in the region that could be the stabilizing factor and had the capabilities to assume the hegemonic role in the region. Iran, under Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979), proved to be such ally. Not only it undertook the role of "policeman" of the region after the withdrawal of Britain, but also being extremely western backed Iran maintained US interests. However, things changed haphazardly in Iran after the "Islamic Revolution" of 1979. This sudden overturn of the events left US under the shadows of a "Foreign Policy Dilemma". Iran's slogan of creating the third pole by refuting both East and West and populist mantra of exporting the revolution was seen by West as the disruption in the existing status quo. It could determinedly transform the Cold War dynamics against the US objectives. Hence, it was in a rush to search for another ally in the region. Unsurprisingly, Saddam was proven to be the one trustworthy partner of US with required capabilities. Saddam's paranoia of the uprising of Shiite Majority was quite obvious considering the fact that Iraq was the natural

destination for Iran to export its revolutionary ideas. It was mainly due to two reasons; first was the geographical proximity and second was the ideological coherence i.e. Shiite Bond. To sustain his authority, Saddam launched a full fledged war over Iran and received the huge influx of Western Weaponry and aid.¹

After eight exhausting years of war with Iran, Iraq became the undisputed and also unrestrained power of the Middle East. However, this obsession with power and the burdening demand of the payback of loans by the Persian Gulf states, led Saddam for the military adventure in Kuwait. This set the alarm bells within the West as this move was unprecedented. US never liked the unilateral action of its allies in the region. The basic strategy for the US is to exert its influence in the region so as to persistently making others aware of its "Super Power Status" in Post USSR era. Though US had provided a soft signal to Saddam by apparently opting for "neutrality" in "Arab-Arab Conflict"² yet US had fully realized the potential aspirations of Saddam i.e. eyeing at the regional hegemony without US backing. This anxiety was felt in the entire region as KSA (another major ally of the US) sought US assistance in its defence. Since Shah of Iran was completely loyal to US and Saddam was seen as the alternative to Shah, the intervention in Kuwait drastically subside the chances of US-Saddam cooperation. The consequence was the befitting reply to Saddam in the form of "Operation Desert Storm" (17 January 1991 – 28 February 1991). Having acquired legitimacy through UNSC Resolution 678 and assimilated the support of regional and NATO allies, US inflicted heavy damage to Iraqi Forces, forcing them to retreat.³ This was the turning point for the region that would have the everlasting impact on "US Policy in the Persian Gulf."

The "1991 Shiite Uprising" against the decade long repression was followed months after the Kuwait crisis i.e. The First Persian Gulf War. Though US Administration supported the uprising by inciting the sentimental tendencies and sympathizing with the rebels yet its support was never materialized. The anti-climax was in the form of brutal state oppression that led to the killing of approximately 30,000-60,000 Shiites⁴. The lack of response by the West against the dictatorial practices of Saddam explicitly made it realized for the Shiite community that US follows the policy based upon realism and prioritizes its interests over human rights or the so-called "Liberal Intervention".

The 1991 insurgency was carried out by two groups; Shiite Islamists in South and Kurd Nationalists in North. Kurds being Sunnis but secular had the long-standing struggle for their separate identity within the region. Historically being an ally of US, Kurds were assisted by the Washington in their attempt to overthrow the Ba'athist Regime. However, they felt marginalized when the relations with US came to a standoff in 1980s. This was partly because of US newly build alliance with its new strategic partner, Saddam of Iraq. This is another manifestation of US' self-centred policies.

The decade of 1990s proved to be the "speculative assembly" and "narrative building stage" against Saddam. Getting overwhelmingly defamation in the international arena, largely due to the "Weapons of Mass Destruction" narrative, Saddam's fate was sealed by

the US which only delayed for the ripening moment. Mysterious September 11 Attacks in 2001 proved to be the source of American expansionist tendencies in post-cold war era. By restructuring its policy, US shifted from "Realism" to "Offensive Realism" by intervening in Afghanistan and Iraq under the disguise of "Global War on Terror". Eventually the series of strikes lead to the toppling of Saddam in 2003 termed as "The Second Persian Gulf War".

The effort to introduce democratic values within the country which was considered to be the pretext for the whole region naturally favoured the Shiite Majority. Hence the Ba'athist Sunni Elite who had been exercising power for the past decades was left begrudged. The sentiments were further exploited by the extreme De-Ba'athification process which included the complete dismantling of the Iraqi Army. Hence, the circumstances were perfect for the escalation of the sectarianism which followed afterwards in the coming years, eventually leading to the creation of a dogmatic group, Islamic State (ISIS).

Apparently, US sought its specially designed objectives that were: a) disposition of its serious threat i.e. Saddam, b) preventing the disruption in oil flow and the prices, c) introducing the US interpreted universal liberal values like democracy, d) weakening the state so as to bring it under its influence, e) safeguarding the humanity from the fear of weapons of mass destruction, f) assuming the more coercive leadership role and ultimately reasserting the uni-polar world structure. Another, however unintentionally might be, was successfully creating the discord between two main rival groups i.e. Shiite and Sunni. With this creation of the power vacuum, US presence seemed legitimized. However, the subsequent events depicted the complex scenario in which US presence became the determining settlement for the armed opposition by the radical Shiite factions i.e. Mahdi Army. On the other hand, the eruption of the terrorist attacks and US failure to fully rein it imposed a question mark on its model for the modernization of Iraq. Strong Iranian influence among Iraqi Shiites and even some non-Shiites groups have been one of the major considerations of US about its failure in Iraq. Such considerations have ultimately pushed Washington to directly confront Iran on Iraqi soil and President Trump directly ordered to assassinate General Qasim Sulemani, the commander of Iran's Al-Qods Force along with Abu Mehdi, a prominent figure of Iraqi Army. Consequently, Iraqi parliament passed a resolution demanding expulsion of US led coalition forces from Iraq. This study be apt to address an important question regarding US' consistently deteriorating influence over the Iraqi society as US still has no pivotal power-say over any of the influential Iraqi groups. So the basic question would be "Why US couldn't legitimize its role in Iraq despite of witnessing the positive attitude upon its arrival and why not only Sunnis but also Shiites, who were the beneficiary party, don't accept US presence in Iraq?"

US goals in Iraq can be analysed under the Realist perspective particularly tenets of "Offensive Realism". Mainly "Power Politics" developed the sense of alienation within the

indigenous groups and they perceive world system as anarchic. On the other hand, the resentments of both Shiites' and Sunnis of Iraq against US can be understood and examined while underpinning "Constructivism" which will help in highlighting the perceptions and soci-political constructs of both these factions.

US Urge for Power Attainment after Cold War

During the Cold War, the main focus for the US assimilation of power was the containment of Communism. Since the world was polarised between two blocks i.e. Capitalism, advocated by the West and Communism with Soviet Union as the main flag bearer, US emerged as the leader for the Western Bloc, primarily because of the weakening of Europe after the devastation caused by WWII. This provided leverage to the US domination with the ideas of liberal world order, mainly democracy and free market economy.

Subsequently, the newly decolonised states with their weak political structures and shattered economies were in a quest for their sustainability and survival. With the flow of aid and recognition by international community through the unifying platform of UN, most of the third world states went under the umbrella of US which was undoubtedly the largest aid provider and had the significant say over the UN decision making policies. The same trend followed in the Middle East where most Arab States devised a political bandwagon with US. Historically being the chaotic region with the inter-tribal rivalry for the dominance, the discovery of oil made Middle East more vulnerable to both domestic power struggle and foreign invasion. Hence, "the oil for security and economy"⁵ policy proved beneficial for both the West and the Arab States which kept the Soviets away from the region for most of the Cold War Era.

However, the end of Cold War marked the shifting point in the security and strategic apparatus of US. With no major threat in sight, the ripening moment had come for the propagation of Western Liberal Ideals in the world. Despite of the transformation of the world order from being security centric to economic centric, US preservation of a large military might which can unilaterally and freely respond to any event created doubts among the world community, including US allies. US involvement in First Persian Gulf War and in Bosnian Civil War testified the US ambition for hegemony. Thus, it resulted in inculcation of the fear for the hampering of multi-polarity. The regional powers felt disturbed by the phenomenon of uni-polarity as it could make them completely dependent upon the self-proclaimed "Policeman of the World." Since, Iran-Iraq war had made Iraq the exclusive power in the region, Iraq's ambition to assume the role of regional power without the assistance of US met with disaster. US perceived the emergence of multiple poles as a destabilizing factor and Washington was quick to restrict the growing role of Iraq through the "Operation Desert Storm" (August 1990 – January 1991). However, weakening the strong ally created a huge power vacuum which didn't bring peace⁶ rather produced more chaos. By establishing another enemy, US found the

excuse of holding the large military bases throughout the globe and assumed the role of “World’s Leader.”

9/11 Attacks and Coercive Policy

The growing involvement of US in mainly Muslim Dominated Regions during the 1990s led to the anti-Americanism in Muslim Societies.⁷ For most of the groups, the upheaval in Muslim Countries and the wavering status of Islamic Values were mainly due to the American Intervention which brought with itself the Western Culture. This was out rightly rejected by the fundamentalists like Al-Qaeda. Being formed on the slogan of “Global Jihad against the West”, Al-Qaeda was blamed for attacks at the World Trade Centre which cost the lives of approximately 3000 people. This was unprecedented in the history that a non-state actor could inflict this heavy sort of damage at the heart of a Super Power.

9/11 Attacks made a drastic shift in US policy which can be categorized in two ways. One is the necessity which US felt regarding its presence in every region mainly Muslim Dominated Areas. Before the attacks, US would intervene and would provide the strategic support for the regime. However, after the attacks, US would directly engage hand to hand in an armed conflict with the terror groups⁸ on foreign territory so as to ensure the constraint in such attacks in future.

Second is to highlight those states which breed the grounds for anti-Americanism. September attacks where shook the entire US establishment, gave confidence on the other hand to the various others groups who shared the same hostile sentiments towards America. This led to the US labelling certain states as “Axis of Evil” and gathering the support of International Community for the military action. The axis included Iran, Iraq and North Korea. While U.S. was already engaged in “Global War on Terror” in Afghanistan, naming the axis would open a new confrontation ground. Whereas North Korea had the support of China and Russia, and Iran having the huge stockpile of missiles, Iraq under international isolation, proved to be the next target which would bear the consequences of anti-Americanism.

US repeatedly raised the concerns regarding the ineffectiveness of sanctions over Saddam’s Regime in Iraq which was consistently working against the US interests. The pinnacle is the US claim regarding Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. However, that argument was later debunked as no such evidence was found. Still the rift between US and Iraq is due to the fact that the sanctions were not conditional i.e. no assurances were made with Saddam and US had never ever taken the step to contain Saddam during the past years.⁹ When the deterrence failed, US employed the coercion which led to the pretext of “Second Persian Gulf War” and the toppling of Saddam in 2003.

This unilateral decision of invading Iraq by US reasserted the US role of world’s Super Power and its intention to ensure its presence in those regions which could prove to be detrimental for US. But what US lacked was the insight that the inimical emotions against the West were not the policy of the state rather it was entrenched in the society as well.

The aftermath of the US invasion on Iraq witnessed more violence and unacceptability towards “Western Liberal Democracy.” Various factors contributed in shaping the antagonism of the society towards US which are explained in detailed length below.

The Fragmented Society

Though the Nation State System has been the major theme in world politics yet, in case of Middle East, sub-state factors are more influential. This is because of two major reasons. One is the historic culture of the Arabs which promoted tribalism and religious segments while other is the artificial borders of Middle East which were created by the colonial powers for securing their own interests. Hence Iraq, like many other Arab States, could not unify its population on the coherent subject.

Apart from this, the unbalanced approach and unnatural division of power and resources particularly in Iraq also hindered the chance of mutual cooperation. Demographically, Shiites make up the majority of Iraq with 60-65% of the total population while Hanafi Sunnis are 15-20% and Kurds who are Shafe’i Sunnis but secular constitute about 18% of the population. Despite being a minority, Sunnis largely dominated the 20th century of Iraq under the Baath Regime. Hence, while social culture was dominated by Shiites while political landscape was led by Sunnis, the internal conflict was inevitable, especially when the dynamics changed in Post-Saddam era.

US initial plan to control Iraq was because of the perception of loose political structure due to sectarian rift. The on-going clashes among different groups were perceived by US as an opportunity to consolidate its authority. What went wrong in this approach was the alienation from the ground realities. Despite having internal divisions, both Shiites and Sunnis were not receptive towards US presence in Iraq for their own respective reasons.

Sunni Apprehensions about US

Middle East has traditionally been the seat of Caliphate, ranging from Medina to Baghdad and Damascus. Limiting the scope of the study to Iraq only for the purpose of the conceptualizing the Iraqi dynamics, it is worth noticing that Baghdad had been the capital for Abbasids, the Sunni Caliphs. After the Abbasids, Ottomans ruled over Iraq till the dissolution of Caliphate after WWI. Afterwards, Leadership and the officials in Baath Regime were Sunnis. In addition to that, unlike Shiite Mujtahids, Sunni Muftis used to receive the endorsement from the Religious Ministry¹⁰. Apart from that, Sunnis had the greater exposure towards resources. All this contributed to the wellbeing, prosperity and strong social status for the Iraqi Sunnis.

However, with the introduction of democratic system after Saddam, the majority Shiites were the natural beneficiary. Hence, the restructuring of Iraqi State after the complete collapse was carried out on religious lines with more authority to Shiite political parties. Along with that, the decision of De-Baathification removed thousands of ex-Baathists from bureaucracy and military, however, some of them returned to their posts through appeal¹¹. The vacuum was soon to be filled by Shiites who had witnessed the decades long of marginalization.

Also being the beneficiary group throughout the history, the rule of Shiites was also not acceptable to not only the local Sunnis but also to the neighbouring Persian Gulf States all of whom were Sunni Monarchies. This is also because of two reasons. One is the fact that power assimilation in the hands of Shiites in Iraq could also ignite the uprising of Shiites throughout the region especially where they were in majority like Bahrain. Other is the fact that democratization of an Arab country was a threat to their Monarchical Structure and hence their diminishing status.¹²

All of these events were perceived by the Sunni Elders as an attempt of their subjugation in front of their Shiite counterparts. Unlike Shiite religious leadership, Sunni religious elite is non-hierarchical and less influential over their community. Moreover, due to the closer ties with Baath Regime, neighbouring Sunni Persian Gulf States were also reluctant to forge ties with the Iraqi Sunni Community. This also led to the weakening of Sunni Resistance Movement after Saddam.

Eventually, having been disgruntled and abandoned most of the Sunni Elders sought the assistance of various dogmatic groups like Al-Qaeda which led to the intense civil war in Iraq. That consisted of the attacks on Shiite holy sites, notably the attack on Al-Askari Shrine in the city of Samarra, on Feb. 2006, and the attacks on US troops.¹³ Moreover, the General Elections of 2010 proved to be the last nail in the coffin which resulted in the more absolute authority of Shiites' in the political scenario. Only after a year, in 2011, ISIS emerged having the recruitment centres in Sunni Majority areas like Mosul and Anbar. This is also evident from the fact that areas like Mosul, Kirkuk and Anbar were the stronghold of ISIS till the operations by Iraqi Army.

Though most of the Sunni Arab Tribal Elders detested their decision of welcoming ISIS afterwards yet their initial response of solidarity with the group indicated their frustration against the political system and pessimism towards the Shiite government. Their opposition to ISIS was also derived not by the devastation it had caused to Iraq in general but the oppression they faced under ISIS rule. This is to put in other words that ISIS anti-Shiite stance was not the reason for Sunnis to quit their support for the group rather their own social factors like kidnapping of young girls, strict Sharia Law forced them to resist ISIS. Sunnis under Baath Regime were devoid of any cohesive identity which created the identity crisis for them in post-Baath setup. The situation of disarray made them fallacious of considering ISIS or Al-Qaeda or any other extremist organization as their consoler.

The shaping of events eventually brought US to their help and that again only for limited scope. The establishment of "Awakening Councils" by US assistance initially helped the tribal elders to purge ISIS but eventually the councils crumble due to lack of organizational structure and the internal struggle for power.¹⁴ Any other attempt was never made to provide refuge to the Sunni Community from ISIS rage. This again led to the distrust of US by Iraqi Sunnis who considered US as an ally of Iraqi Shiite Government and the cause for their misery due to toppling of Saddam. Eventually, their sense of loss and sense of

victimhood¹⁵, due to regime change, prevailed which validates the argument of constructivism regarding perceptions.

Shiites Opposition to US

To argue that opposition of Iraqi Shiites to US presence is due to the influential role of Iran is not entirely accurate. In fact, it subsides to the local dynamics and indigenous anguish of Iraqi Shiites. Iraqi Shiites are not only a unified entity by virtue of their school of thought but the Arab nationalistic tendencies also prevail in their conduct. Victimhood and oppression under Baath Regime still plays a crucial role in forming a strong Shiite Communal Structure. Moreover, the influx of a large number of Iraqis from Iran after 2003 who became refugees in Iran after escaping the brutality under Baath Regime also brought with themselves the Shiite centric ideas. The notable person in this regard is Ammar Al-Hakim, who is the head of Revolutionary Council of Iraq and a strong adherent of Shiite religious government in Iraq.

Shiites opposition to the US was initially due to two factors. One is the presence of US troops in Iraq even after the ousting of Saddam which was perceived as the colonial representation. Second is the US intentions to formulate the constitutional framework on secular agenda which confronted the Shiites desire to setup such a system which could benefit them as a religious entity. The disapproval of US post-Saddam plans for Iraq was motivated by the past experiences. Shiites were suspicious that it might end up for them becoming US pawns against US adversaries in the region.

After the general elections of 2005 and consolidation of power by Shiite parties, still the uneasiness with US prevailed especially because of US overwhelming support to Israel in the wake of Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. The continuous attacks on Shiites and their holy sites along with the engagement of US troops with the Mahdi Army, a local Shiite militia headed by Muqtada Sadr, just outside Karbala, the holy city for Shiites all around the world, also provoked the local politicians to show their disgust with US due to the fearful consequences of involving into the civil and sectarian war.

Another big factor which kept the Shiite politicians, in general, and public, in specific, aloof from the US was the agitation of Najaf Clerics with US. Najaf holds the symbolic gesture of authority for Shiites for the past thousand years. As the centre of Shiite scholarship, the head of Najaf Hawza (Shiite highest religious institute) holds the incredible authority independent of the state. It is because that unlike Sunni Clerics, Shiite Clerics are not appointed by the state rather they are promoted to the higher seats by virtue of their knowledge. The highest religious authority in this hierarchical structure is called a "Marjaa" which is a source of emulation for the Shiites around the world. Through this practice, the power of a Marjaa is not limited to the geographical boundaries rather he becomes a transnational entity.

Currently, the Najaf Hawza is supervised by Grand Ayatollah Sayed Ali Sistani who was a strong proponent of the withdrawal of US troops from the Iraqi soil. Moreover, his refusal to meet with the US Governor in Iraq, Paul Bremer, was perceived by many Shiites as his

aversion towards US. Though he doesn't hold any public office and widely believed to be an apolitical personality yet his statements play an influential role in the policy making. Authority of Sayed Ali Sistani over the Iraqi Shiites also invalidates the argument of Iranian influence over the Iraqi Government and public attitude against US.

US – Kurd Alliance and Regional Geo-Politics

Kurds alignment with US is because of two major reasons. One is the secular approach which assures the cooperative dynamics for western interests while the second is their nationalist tendencies which are advantageous for US in combating the Islamic Fundamentalism in the region, eventually guaranteeing the suppression of Anti-Americanism. The nationalistic tendencies of Kurds got further strengthened in the wake of conflict in 1972-1975 and in 1991. In both the events, the Kurdish uprising was backed by US in order to have the deterring policy against the Baath Regime. However, in both the cases, Kurds received minimum US support which did not go beyond the rhetoric and bore the devastating consequences.

US cooperation with Kurds was not based on the idea of freedom and liberty. Since WWII, US has been a strong proponent of the sovereignty of the state which constitutes the core of the international system. The main objective for US to lend its assistance and diplomatic outreach to Kurds was the restraint upon Iraq. During the 1970s, Iraq was more prone towards Soviet Union which was detrimental for US objectives in Middle East. After the Kuwait Crisis, US support to Kurds was mainly motivated by the ambition of keeping Saddam under pressure so as to weaken his efforts of becoming the regional hegemon.

Similarly, after the toppling of Saddam, though Kurds were able to gain relative autonomy under the 2005 constitutional framework yet the previous events had made them in a continuous conflict with the Iraqi State. The emergence of ISIS has brought Kurds once again closer to US. Being able to secure the city of Kirkuk from ISIS after the retreat of Iraqi Army in 2014, Kurds provided the ground stability which was necessary for US for combating ISIS. The support of US along with the control over the Kurdish region prompted the Kurds to hold the referendum in 2017.

However, once again they failed to comprehend the US grand strategy for the region. Not only the decision of referendum was met with the aggressive opposition by the neighbours who have the Kurdish minorities like Iran, Turkey, Syria but it also witnessed the mobilization of Iraqi troops towards Kirkuk, hence reinforcing the sovereignty of the state. Despite of the vocal support shown by Israel and Persian Gulf countries, US opposition to the referendum made Kurds deserted once again. US main concern was the possibility of a sharp reaction from Iran¹⁶ who had the considerable influence in the country and could shift the balance of power in the region against US.

Another significant event is the decision of US President, Donald Trump, who announced the withdrawal of US troops from Syrian soil. This has encouraged Turkey to conduct its operation against Kurds more freely which it deemed as a major security threat and has

left the Iraqi Kurds in a state of disarray. Not only it would substantially diminish the Kurds strength but could put their struggle for autonomy in jeopardy.

Eventually, it is evident from the aforementioned arguments that US support to Kurds, one of the main allies of US in the region, was for forging US interests which was perceived as a principled stance of freedom by the Kurds. Consistent sense of betrayal on the behalf of US along with the futile efforts of gaining self-dependence and autonomy could make Kurds, like Shiites and Sunnis of Iraq, the antagonist for US.

Conclusion

Modified version of offensive realism presented by John Mearsheimer, highlights that great powers' motivation is global hegemony and this assumption has lost its value that the democratic great powers are less likely to follow revisionist policies. The United States' choice to expel Saddam regime in March 2003 is one of the best example for this claim.

Constructivists consider that inter-state associations are dependent upon the way identity is created: supra-state and -national identities, such as the Shiites or Sunni identities, compete with state identity in the Middle East. These kinds of identities also produce trans-state movements and limit state-centric behaviour. Therefore, a Constructivist line of explanation maintains that the bottom-up logic dominates in what is purported to be the Revival of the Shiites particularly in Iraq.

The study highlighted the US strategy in Iraq which is based upon the hegemonic designs. The world order after WWII has shaped the US role in the world such that it had to contest for the leadership role with Soviet Union. This Cold War Dynamics modified US policies towards forging its ties with other states and to bring them under its influence. This is best described as the expansion of American Values. Due to the fear of the emergence of multiple poles after the collapse of Soviet Union, mainly due to the Saddam's invasion to Kuwait, US policies revolved around using proxies against the adversarial states so as to weaken them internally. However, after the September 11 Attacks, US opted for the direct military invasion of certain countries including Iraq.

The territory of Iraq is divided into northern, central and southern parts having dominated by three different groups. The majority of Kurds in North, Sunnis in Centre and Shiites in South makes Iraq a complex ground for devising any uniform strategy for the entire country. Hence, US invasion to Iraq where benefitted Shiites and Kurds who have long been subjugated by Sunni Dominant Baathist Regime, disillusioned the Sunnis at the same time who had enjoyed the power for nearly 40 years. Hence, the chaos was inevitable.

However, what is astonishing to observe is the lack of support for US in Iraq. The opposition of US by each group lies in their perception regarding US being a partisan in the internal conflict. US insistence on democracy which was bound to favour the Shiite Majority along with the cooperation with newly formed Shiite Centric government was received with scepticism by the Sunnis. Similarly, US insistence upon keeping its military presence in Iraq, cooperation with Kurds and assistance to Sunni tribes in the wake of ISIS,

hinted towards the status of a “Client State” of Iraq where the Shiite government would act as a forerunner for US own interests.

This prevalent notion of US being following the realist policies which would secure its own self-interests and policeman role in the region has developed the sense of unity among the contending parties. US inability in understanding the complex ground realities which are shaped through the historical discourse led to its failed adventure in Iraq. Having said that, the cultural and religious ties of Iraq with the other regional states especially Iran also hindered the attainment of objectives for US. What US tried was to forge relations with the state and didn't concentrate on developing the relations with the Iraqi society. This is to say that US didn't assist in reconstructing the infrastructure and didn't compensate for the loss. Also, US opposition by the religious authorities in Najaf made it quite impossible for US to operate in Iraq.

Eventually, it is safe to assume that US, being a realist state, has forgotten that other groups, whether state or non-state, also have their respective interests. The generalizing of the Iraqi society without accepting the categorization has tempted US to adopt the uniform policy. Similarly, US continuous swing in its alliances hampered the development of trUSt. This has led to the US being perceived as a “non-trust worthy” ally. Unfortunately, US is still following the same path as recent decision of withdrawal of troops from Syria has left Kurds, the ally of US, helpless. Taking into consideration the past experience, this decision might cost US another ally in the “turbulent region.”

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