



Iraq, Neighboring Countries and its Allies

Dialogue of the Ambassadors and the Iraqi Elite

2017-2019

Editor

Dr Ibrahim Bahr Alolom

العراق والمطبوعة



العالمين للنشر



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Bahr Al-Uloom Foundation-NGO Iraq IZ 42071

P.O.Box 10444 Karada-Baghdad

Email: Alolom@gmail.com, nccr@bahar.iq

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Chapter I

Iraq, Neighboring Countries and its Allies

Dr Ibrahim Bahr Alolom

Iraq and its Relations with Neighbors its Allies

1- Iraqi-American Dialogue

Once we started writing an introduction to this book, which is a compilation of all the works and discussions organized by Bahr Alolom Forum during the past two years, a strategic dialogue began between Iraq and the USA. The mere fact that this dialogue is taking place is a sign that both countries are willing to listen to one another and strengthen ties, which can promote the sovereignty of Iraq and stability in the region. However, Iraq must express its political will within the frame of shared interests with the USA and discuss its vision on how to move forward. The government of Mr Kadhimi has committed to the agreement of its predecessor with the US administration to begin discussions on June 11th, 2020. This will progressively lead into a memorandum of understanding between the two governments on the economy, security, energy, the fight against terrorism, and supporting Iraqi security forces, giving effect to the strategic framework agreement concluded in 2008.

2- Iraq: Connecting Bridge or Separation Barrier?

Iraq is known for the diversity of its people that has made able to affect its neighboring countries positively or negatively. Therefore, solving the problems of Iraq can help avoid instability in surrounding countries; however, its strategic geographic location remains a factor in regional and international conflict that has manifested on its territory. Unstable relations with neighboring countries have prevailed since the fifties and can be split into two phases:

Phase One: Iraq adopted the Separation Barrier theory, also adopted by the Baathist school of thought, on the issue of Iran with the support of Arab centers of power, chiefly Saudi Arabia. This has led to the infamous Iran-Iraq war.

Phase Two: Iraq underwent strategic void and suffered the consequences of invasion and the weak foundations of the new Iraqi State. Thus, ISIS was able to invade one-third of its lands in 2014.

Nowadays, the greatest challenge facing Iraq is shifting away from the Separation Barrier theory to act as a bridge connecting different interests

instead. Investing in the countries natural and human resources suffices to turn it into a fourth regional power that bridges gaps between Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey. However, the shared interests of Iraq and its neighbors must be promoted first to mitigate regional conflict, the most important of which is investing in energy resources.

3- Regional Energy Security

Policies that aim to ensure regional energy security must take into consideration that energy sources used nowadays include renewable, inexhaustible sources, and that not all neighboring countries are capable of securing their energy needs. However, they consume different resources in varying degrees, so they must elaborate a strategic vision of how they can supply each other with their needs. However, energy self-sufficiency in Iraq may hinder regional stability, forcing it to strike a balance between national and regional energy security. We will use the Turkish case as a regional example.

4- Iraq and its Neighbors Turkey as an Example⁽¹⁾

In the spring of 2011, the Turkish President Erdoan visited Iraq and was warmly welcomed by dozens of citizens and applauded in the Parliament. Over a hundred businessmen accompanied him. In Najaf, he met with Sayyid Al-Sistani who saw that Iraqi-Turkish relations were flourishing. Indeed, Iraq had stood next to the Ottomans against the British and they were now concluding numerous economic and commercial agreements with Turkey.

However, their relations took a turn in 2012 following a number of events, namely the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs's visit to Kirkuk without the knowledge of the Government of Baghdad, as well as the conclusion of oil and gas agreements with the Kurdistan region which allowed its oil to be exported into Ceyhan without consent of the Iraqi Government in 2014.

In conclusion, one must not look solely for shared interests. Ideological, historical, or geographical commonalities alone do not build sustainable relations between countries.

5- What Does Iraq Want from Turkey?

It is in Turkey's interest to help Iraq become a point of equilibrium and neutrality between regional strategies and conflicts. First, Turkey must put an

(1) The author gave feedback on this topic in a workshop held by the East-West Research Center on February 12, 2020 on Turkish-Iraqi relations.

end to controversial issues affecting its political, economic, and cultural relations with Iraq. Second, Turkey must help promote the unity of the land and people of Iraq instead of divide them along sectarian and partisan lines. Third, Turkey must strive for economic integration with Iraq in all domains.

Iraq may forge integrated relations with its neighbors through energy resources. Turkey is rich in water but poor in energy resources and must import great quantities of fuel, gas, and coal. Iraq is amongst the main countries Turkey imports them from, and this may constitute a stepping stone for stronger relations.

6- Challenges under Turkish Interests

Turkey and Iraq must direct more attention toward international arbitration as it may help overcome obstacles and improve relations.

Five years ago, litigation was brought state oil marketing organisation SOMO, on behalf of the Iraqi Ministry of Oil, against the Turkish pipeline company BOTAS, on behalf of the Turkish Government, in the International Chamber of Commerce. The Iraqi Government saw that Turkey had violated the Iraq-Turkey Crude Oil Pipeline Agreement, signed in 1973, by allowing Iraqi Kurdistan to independently export oil via the Iraq-Turkey Pipeline in 2014 without the consent of the Ministry of Oil. However, Turkey considers itself unconcerned with disputes between central Iraq and the Kurdistan region government.

The International Chamber of Commerce held its final session in September 2019 and it is expected to issue a decision in favor of Baghdad within the next few months. In my opinion, this case offers Ankara, Baghdad, and the Kurdistan region the chance to reassess the ongoing oil dispute and establish oil projects that consolidate the partnership between both countries.

7- Opportunities for Shared Interests

The Iraq-Turkey pipeline was attacked multiple times during the ISIS invasion of Northern provinces and has ceased operating since then. Therefore, the Ministry of Oil adopted a project for the construction of a new pipeline capable of conducting 1 million barrels of oil. This was welcomed by Turkey. The pipeline would play an important role seen the projected increase in oil production in Iraq, but also because it offers a new trajectory for oil exportation in the Gulf. Baghdad seeks to establish 3 pipelines starting from a new area in Anbar to conduct oil to Turkey, Jordan, and the Mediterranean. The new Iraq-Turkey pipeline will reach Faysh Khabur then connect to the main line towards the Ceyhan port. It will cost around \$3 billion and Turkey had pledged \$5 billion

in contributions to rebuild Iraq including the construction of this pipeline. However, it is imperative that the region located 40km near the crossing point in Faysh Khabur be controlled by federal authorities.

Another project is the construction of a refinery in Mosul since the Baiji refinery has been out of service following ISIS attacks. Turkey could propose the construction of a modern refinery in Mosul as part of its efforts to help rebuild infrastructure. This can create jobs for Iraqis and decrease both countries' petroleum product imports.

8- On the Book and Forum Treatise

This book consolidates the works of the third season of the Bahr Alolom Forum that took place in Baghdad from 2017 to 2019 where political, cultural, and legal leaders in Iraq and neighboring countries took part of discussions to define these countries' relations and shared interests. Strengthening relations between countries and ensuring their stability cannot be achieved solely through endeavors like this forum, but this work can help stakeholders elaborate policies of the government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs more specifically. Sewing peace and trust in the region after it suffered from adverse policies requires that leaders of Iraq and its neighbors assume a more proactive role.

9- Who to Prioritize in Dialogue?

This project sought to elaborate a vision and methodology that can reinforce the opinions of decision makers and lead to political, social, and economic outcomes. Individuals who helped organize the forum debated who we must engage in debate with first. Generally, there are two theories: the first is the top-down approach where dialogue begins with the USA or UK because promoting relations with them is imperative to stability in Iraq and can later include regional countries. The second is the bottom-up approach which focuses on the region's characteristics, history, and shared interests, and moves upwards toward the international community.

This forum attempts to unify both visions: in our first module, we held discussions with the pivotal regional countries of Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, as well as British leaders. For our second module, we plan on meeting with other neighboring countries like Kuwait, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt as well as the USA and Russia. A third module will follow with remaining countries.

While the USA plays an important political, military, and economic role in our region and the world today, it is equally important to give attention to other regional players and European countries and the UK specifically seen its relations with the USA and colonial history.

10- What does Iraq Want?

As for the discussion content, it revolves around two main questions: First, what does every guest country want from Iraq? The ambassador of the guest country discusses this question. Second, what does Iraq want from that country? Three to four experts in politics, law, and sociology debate this question and allow the guest ambassador to give them and audience members feedback.

The first season covered the post-2003 crisis of the Iraqi political system and hosted leaders from most political blocs as well as independents. These works were documented, summarized into English, and released end of last year in the midst of protests that lead to hundreds of deaths, arrests, and kidnappings. It was a unique popular revolt that sought change and the prevention of threats looming over Iraq. Forum discussions that took place in 2013-2014 successfully diagnosed these issues, but those ruling failed to listen.

Final Statement...

Interests will always govern peoples and governments. If a country's vital resources are not invested in meeting its needs as well as its neighbors', predators will easily sow instability. Hopefully, these discussions are a small step on the long path to overcome the ego and promote stability in the region.

Baghdad, June 10, 2020.

Chapter II

Executive Summary of Discussions with the Ambassadors of Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia and the Iraqi Elite about Iraq and the Neighboring Countries Relations

(1)

What does Iran want from Iraq?

And what does Iraq want from Iran?

His Excellency Ambassador Arj Masjidi

August 22, 2017

Part I: Speech

- 1 - His Excellency emphasized the depth of historical, cultural, civil, and religious relations between the two neighboring countries, stressing the significant role played by geographical factors in promoting strong strategic, political, and economic relations with Iraq.
- 2 - His Excellency expressed that his country supports the government and people of Iraq in diverse domains and sees all political and social components of Iraqi society as equal. He stressed that his country's government has done so ever since the beginning of the political operation in Iraq in 2003, ensuring that it seeks to help preserve the unity, stability, and security of Iraq in its dealings with this country.
- 3 - His Excellency ensured that Iran respects Iraqi sovereignty and internal politics and does not seek to intervene in its affairs. Iran considers that helping Iraq fight ISIS is rooted in religious and moral duty and is not an attempt at intervening in its affairs. Those who claim that Iran is trying to intervene in political decision-making are insulting the people of Iraq, its sovereignty, and its independence. To end, Iran's relations with America and Saudi Arabia are not good, but it does not ask for the same things from Iraq.

Part II: Interventions - What does Iraq want from Iran?

A unified Iraq: Iraq is the only Middle Eastern country tying together Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The situation of Iraq will become more complex if it remains an insecure and unstable country and its division will have negative consequences on the three abovementioned nations as it transforms the political map of the region and affects the stability of the Middle East.

- 1 - A neutral Iraq: It is in Iran's interest to neutralize Iraq in the conflict between axes of power because they share borders. To manage its regional and international conflicts, Iran must adopt the Finnish model instead of that of West Berlin during the Cold War.
- 2 - Iraq as a State: Iran must not deal with movements within Iraq, but with the State of Iraq in order to promote its strength and stabilization, which is needed now more than ever.
- 3 - The political division in Iraq: This problem is originally Iraqi. Iraqis holds differing opinions on the relationship with Iran and other countries, whereas local politicians failed to build a State and determine its identity, interests, and priorities. We must demand from the powers of the State to unify their vision and performance before making any demands from Iran.
- 4 - The stance of Iran on oil resources: How can Iran claim to maintain the Iraqi peace, unity, and interests as it simultaneously allows the smuggling of Iraqi oil into its territories through the Kurdistan region?
- 5 - The Iranian stance on the Kurdistan region separation: How will it help preserve the unity of Iraq?
- 6 - The Iranian stance on cutting off waters that flow from Iran into Iraq through their shared borders.
- 7 - Because of their diversity, some components of Iraq view their relationship with Iran as an enemy, whereas others see it under a positive light and call for strategic relations with it.

Part III: Feedback from Mr. Masjidi

His Excellency the Iranian Ambassador responded to the interventions on Iraq. He emphasized the importance of stabilizing Iraqi politics unifying the decision making process and having Iraqi institutions work in that direction. He brought up the example of the decision-making mechanisms of the Islamic Republic of Iran emanating from its Constitution and which aim to codify regulate and institutionalize divergences in order to unify decision-making such as the Islamic Consultative Assembly the Expediency Discernment Council of the System the Supreme Leader and the unified political rhetoric. His Excellency cited the principles founded by Imam Khomeini founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and underlined his country's respect of the sovereignty of Iraq and independence of its foreign policies regardless of Iran's own international and regional foreign policies as the politics of axes which have recently surfaced in the region. Members of the audience mentioned the issue of water which they claimed are being diverted from Iraq into Iran thus harming its agriculture. His

Excellency used that as a starting point to focus on the importance of strengthening relationships between both countries in different domains. He then refused that Iran be accused of diverting rivers away from Iraq. He added that ñ to ĩ of Iraqi waters flow from Iran and ĩ of these waters still flow into Iraq today and any shortage is caused by rivers running dry.

(2)

**What Does Turkey Want from Iraq?
And What Does Iraq Want from Turkey?**

His Excellency Ambassador Fateh Yildiz

January 9, 2018

Part I: Speech

- ❖ His Excellency ensured that Turkey seeks to preserve unity, safety, and well-being in Iraq as well as the amicable cultural relations and history shared by both countries. He emphasized that the difficulties imposed by geography can be surpassed with mutual trust and rapprochement, pointing out how urgent it is for these two countries to forge brotherly relations instead of merely international relations.
- ❖ Before His Excellency took office, Turkish-Iraqi relations were not satisfactory. However, recent events have brought out the value that these two countries have for one another. He mentioned the referendum on the Kurdistan region which shed light on the two countries' common interests as well as the stance of Turkey, Iran, and other countries of the region on Iraqi unity. He confirmed that Iraq is capable of overcoming challenges such as ISIS and the referendum, ensuring that Turkey will remain on the side of Iraq in the future regarding these two matters.
- ❖ Reconstruction is one of the main priorities of Iraq in the near future. Turkey will propose ideas and projects for the donors' conference in Kuwait and coordinate with Iraq.
- ❖ Coherence within Iraqi politics matters to Turkey, which does not favor any sides. His Excellency ensured that special relations exist with the Turkmen of Iraq whom Turkey considers a bridge tying the two countries together. These people will not be submitted to an agenda of division; on the contrary, they support unity in Iraq.
- ❖ We have cooperated in various domains such as water, economy, energy and, most importantly, trade. Iraq is the third biggest importer of Turkish exports, whereas Germany is the first and the United Arab Emirates are

the second. However, I do not consider our commercial relations with the UAE to be very strong because they mainly consist of gold. What exists between Turkey and Iraq is a true commercial relationship because more than 3,000 different kinds of Turkish goods get exported to Iraq. However, there have been issues in terms of overland trade, such as being forced to carry out trading activities through two different commercial gates: Ibrahim Al Khalil and Al Safra. In any sovereign and secure country, there must be only one customs point, and this is why we highly support that the Ibrahim Al Khalil gate submit to the central authority of the government. His Excellency highlighted the potential to greatly increase trade if Iraq worked on facilitating this process. In turn, Turkey will do everything necessary without fail to increase trading activities between both countries.

Part II: Interventions - What does Iraq want from Turkey?

- ❖ It is necessary to see the convergence between different points of view in order for the two countries to overcome the obstacles impacting their relations. Turkey must deal and offer aid to the State of Iraq, neither to the Kurdistan region alone nor in the absence of coordination with the State. This ensures centralization.
- ❖ Communication has become more frequent between Turkey and the Turkmen of Iraq. This positive communication can act as a bridge tying both countries and helping unify Iraq. The Turkmen of Iraq cannot prioritize anything over the nation of Iraq.
- ❖ Anti-Turkish parties that exist in Iraqi territory are a cause for concern. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has become more active in the region and its negative impact has been worsening. These security issues must be dealt with on a national scale.
- ❖ Iraq has seven cards for Turkey, whereas Turkey has four for Iraq. They must all be taken into consideration if the two countries were to help fulfill each other's interests. The cards of Iraq are: Oil, trade, construction, the Kurds, the Turkmen, and terrorism.
- ❖ It is important that the upcoming Iraqi electoral scene represent the unity of its people and components to ensure political justice. Neighboring countries must also help with this matter.
- What does Iraq want from Turkey? The destinies of Turkey and Iraq are organically intertwined and what we demand from Turkey is related to the desired structure, form, and role of the Iraqi State. Iraq is the country

tying Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. This is not a blessing; it is a curse that we must make a blessing out of. If Iraq became divided, the three nations it ties together will also become divided and their stability, security, and unity weakened. This organic intertwinement can be sensed in the Turkish and Iranian responses to the referendum which were stern, because if a Kurdish nation were to be built on the ruins of Iraq, the Kurds of Iran and Turkey would inevitably follow the same path. What I am trying to say is that relations between Iraq and Turkey were not established on a strategic vision that takes into consideration their organic intertwinement or geographies in a strategic manner, despite the fact that geography impacts lands, peoples, and interests.

- ❖ Energy was and remains one of the vital cases that govern strategic relations between Iraq and Turkey. Iraq made sure to lay oil pipelines reaching Turkey outside the borders of the Kurdistan region because it desires to export energy through Turkish lands. This message should dissipate many of Turkey's fears and doubts. As for the role of Turkey in maintaining unity in Iraq, I say the following honestly: if it were not for Turkey's strict stance on the referendum, its results could have been devastating for Iraq. We ask that Turkey continue on this path and support this policy.
- ❖ In the midst of global warming and the absence of an Iraqi good governance policy for water, there is a growing need for a supportive and helpful Turkish stance on the issue of water. This support can come in the form of regular releasing of the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers or offering help in the introduction of modern irrigation techniques contributing to our good governance of water.
- ❖ Turkey has been forced to welcome thousands of displaced Iraqis, many of whom consider Turkey a transit point on their way to other countries in which they seek refuge. I wish that certain Turkish procedures be facilitated for displaced Iraqis.
- ❖ Iraq has been fighting different battles for the past while. This country is possibly the weakest link in the conflict we see in the region. For this reason, we wish for Turkey to be more open with Iraq in the same manner it has recently done with Iran. We also wish to be open with Saudi Arabia and other countries in order to achieve stability.
- ❖ We want Turkey to look at Iraq as a living country capable of facing challenges. We do not want it to deal with Iraqi affairs in a selective and one-sided manner. It must respect the interests of Iraq when intervening in regional affairs, such as the Syrian crisis.

- ❖ The recent coup in Turkey, activities of the PKK, developments in Kurdish and Syrian affairs, and the fight against terrorism are all issues that invite us to reconsider the theory of collective security to better protect the region's countries and their interests.
- ❖ Turkey has looked at the unity of Iraq with a narrow view and its own interests in mind. For example, it has worked with Kurdistan to isolate it from Iraq by laying out an oil pipeline and has made several agreements with the Kurdistan region unbeknownst to Baghdad.
- ❖ Turkey has dealt with Iraqis with a sectarian spirit. We look forward to see the Turkish government dealing neutrally with all Iraqi components and respecting the rules of non-interference and neighborly relations with Iraq.
- ❖ Turkey only exports to Iraq without importing from it. Thousands of Turkish people work in factories that produce solely for Iraq. Iraq is simply a consumer market for Turkey.

Part III: Feedback of the Ambassador

- ❖ I am inclined toward relying on cooperation for the benefit of both parties. Turkey does not limit its cards to the Turkmen, energy, or water. It does not manipulate any of these cards according to its wishes nor does it wish to achieve hegemony in the region.
- ❖ In order for commerce to take place in a proper manner between Turkey and Iraq, it must be reciprocal. Turkish investors must come here and invest in various fields, especially oil and gas. We support Turkish investors to do so, but Iraqis must also encourage their investors and industrials to get involved in these domains.
- ❖ Economic relations are not the only solution to our problems; we must look into other fields and sectors in order to overcome our current problems. The Strategic locations of Iraq and Turkey make it easier for them to cooperate in different fields.
- ❖ Turkey seeks to help preserve the unity and security of Iraq. It has not dealt with Iraq from a national and sectarian dimension, but as a State.
- ❖ Turkey must look into the agricultural sector of Iraq, since Turkey mostly exports food. Turkish investors must come here and invest in this sector.
- ❖ Water is one of the issues I work on most. Turkey has gone through phases that were very tough in terms of water, but it was able to manage and rationalize its water. We must work to rationalize water consumption

in Iraq. Here, I quote the President of the Turkish Republic Erdogan, “Turkey cannot accumulate riches at the expense of its neighbors. This cannot be considered enrichment.”

- ❖ Communication with others must happen face to face. If we only communicate with the State and its politicians, we cannot gain the trust of the country’s citizens. In my opinion, engaging others in communication and diplomacy would be very fruitful.

(3)

**What Does Saudi Arabia Want from Iraq?
And What Does Iraq Want from Saudi Arabia?**

His Excellency Ambassador Abdul Aziz Al Chumari

February 6, 2018

Part I: Speech

The policy of the KSA towards Iraq is axed around four main issues:

- 1 - Internal stability in Iraq,
- 2 - Foreign non-interference,
- 3 - Economical policy, and
- 4 - Political developments in Iraqi affairs.

Stability in Iraq is one of the main causes and we can therefore be assured that the Arab dimension will promote stability in the Iraqi society as it is considered an important pillar to the security of the Arab region as a whole.

His Excellency listed what the KSA wants from Iraq:

- 1 - For Iraq to return to its Arab cradle and usual strategic depth.
- 2 - For it to become secure, stable, and flourishing on all levels because its power will have positive effects on the KSA and Arab countries.
- 3 - For it to become a unified country, because its social fabric and components require that.
- 4 - For it to return to its usual pioneering role that is effective and positive in supporting the causes of the Arab and Islamic nation.
- 5 - The KSA sees that Iraq has every right to forge relations with all countries. It is not in our interest that Iraq cut ties with any country and we do not call for that and do not seek to intervene in any of Iraq's affairs.
- 6 - The KSA does not seek to expand its borders at the expense of others, and views relations with Iraq and other countries as based on shared interests and a shared fate.
- 7 - The KSA has taken many steps in helping Iraq build its economic,

political, and developmental capacities, such as: the establishment of the council for coordination between both countries which identifies all needs, which represents a true partnership between the two.

- 8 - To sign the agreement on border crossing points and coordinate with international forums that both parties choose.
- 9 - In 2014, the KSA, seeking to offer humanitarian aid, donated 500 million dollars to Iraq. The Kingdom sent the sum to the United Nations and did not put any conditions or requirements on what it gets spent on.
- 10 - To coordinate in international forums for causes that matter to both parties.
- 11 - To contribute to the war against ISIS within the Global Coalition Against Daesh.

As for the forum's central question, "What does Iraq want from Saudi Arabia?" His Excellency the Minister answered:

- 1 - To promote relations between both countries as well as cooperation via regional and international organizations,
- 2 - To promote economic, trading, and social relations by opening overland crossing points, airlines, and transportation in general,
- 3 - To open crossing points. Saudi goods enter Iraq through other countries, therefore their prices increase greatly. Opening crossing points can have a positive impact on commercial trade and can transform Iraq into an international trading center as it possesses many maritime ports aside from Shatt Al Arab, such as Al Jemima or Jadeedat Ar'ar,
- 4 - Iraq is rich in natural and human resources and wishes for the KSA to support it in launching vital projects that contribute to development in general, create jobs for Iraqi youth, and produce goods for the local Iraqi market. Several memoranda of understanding worth over 2 billion dollars have been signed during the Basra International Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition,
- 5 - There are Saudi Arabian global companies that rank higher than European and American companies. Among these companies is SABIK, which ranks 6th worldwide with yearly revenues surpassing 50 billion dollars. SABIK has recently opened a branch in Iraq in order to found partnerships with Iraqi government-owned or private companies to revive the petrochemical, oil, and agricultural industries,
- 6 - To conclude bilateral agreements in the domains of economy, culture, politics, and security to promote strategic cooperation between the two countries,

- 7 - To benefit from the shared historical, religious, and blood ties as well as Arabism which encourage us to cooperate in depth on various causes.

Part II: Interventions - What does Iraq want from KSA?

- ❖ Lately, the KSA has been inclined towards helping the State of Iraq and all of its components. The KSA has also been working within the coordination council at a faster pace and paving the way for Saudi Arabian and international companies that maintain good relations with the KSA to invest in Iraq.
- ❖ We need the KSA to contribute to the reconstruction of freed areas and other regions that have been destroyed, give space for Iraqi investors to invest, open up border crossing points, increase economic investment, help Iraq fight terrorism and rehabilitate terrorists, and open up relations between Iraqi and Saudi Arabian clans.
- ❖ The new rule in the KSA sent Iraq a positive message hoping to open horizons for cooperation. This message has no tactical or temporary intentions because it is important to gain each others' trust and, in its absence, problems will become more complicated. What we are facing is not an issue of religion or sect, but an issue of interests.
- ❖ Countries of the region, including the KSA, must support a unified, open, and peaceful Iraq that acts as a center of equilibrium between the three nations, ensuring stability in the region. The region must deal with Iraq as a State, not as a number of ethnicities, nationalities, or parties. They must also take initiative to establish a comprehensive strategic partnership that is unaffected by determinants dating back to any of the previous ruling eras of the KSA.
- ❖ The most important thing the current leadership in the KSA has achieved is striking down its religious institution. We want the KSA to open up to the State of Iraq, not just to a sect, clan, figure, or party. Iraq must be allowed to play a role in cooling down conflicts between the KSA and Iran.
- ❖ In the upcoming period, we must see a closing of the gap between the official and unofficial positions and rhetorics of some KSA institutions and that will promote relations between the two countries.
- ❖ The KSA must admit the fact that Iran is a neighboring country. We, however, are an Arab country that is proud of its identity. Our Arab identity can have a positive impact on the region if our relations are built on the shared interests of Arab countries.

- ❖ We are aware that there exists a Saudi-Iranian conflict in the region. The events taking place in Iraq will definitely have a positive impact on the Iranian economy. This calls for a new Baghdad Pact that establishes an economic structure that can compete with the European Union within the next 20 years. Therefore, KSA decision makers must spare Iraq from the Saudi-Iranian conflict, especially at the level of media.

Part III: Feedback from the Ambassador

- ❖ In short, we both took the bait during the previous period and, as a result, we grew apart and Iraq, the KSA, and the rest of the region became weak. Iraq impacts not only the KSA, but the entire region due to the diversity and strength of your people.
- ❖ Is it truly the Saudi-Iranian conflict that's hindering Iraq to be strong and decisive in its role as a link that helps solve the problems of the entire region, as well as between the KSA and Iran?
- ❖ Iraq has many blessings, such as its religious diversity and natural or human resources, which have helped the country play a pioneering role in the region. Leaders in the KSA and Iraq are coordinating in an effective and sophisticated manner through the coordination council.
- ❖ The upcoming phase in Saudi-Iraqi economic relations will be governed by the economy first, and Iraq possesses resources but needs to revive its economy to recover. We can offer a lot to Iraq in terms of economy and investment.
- ❖ If another country were to experience all the setbacks that Iraq has live through, it would have ceased to exist. Iraq, however, regained its strength and we hope that the KSA is able to leave a positive impact on this phase and the people of Iraq.

(4)

A Regional Perspective on the Political Crisis in Iraq

*Iranian Ambassador Hassan Danaeifar
and Lebanese Journalist Sarkis Naoum*

February 6, 2014

Part I: Speeches

First guest: Iranian Ambassador, HE. Hassan Danaeifar.

- ❖ The people of this region share a common history, geography, culture, traditions, and religion. They must coexist peacefully with one another, and this cannot be achieved without establishing security, development, welfare, and mutual respect under joint endeavors. Such factors may not be imported or imposed from outside. On the contrary, they are achieved through cooperation between countries of the region, which share many more commonalities than disputes. Therefore, we are able to negotiate with all countries of the region except the Zionist entity, but foreign countries do not support that.
- ❖ Since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, we have been proponents of unity and solidarity with other countries of the region and have never welcomed authoritarian regimes.
- ❖ We do not seek to gain authority over others nor to make decisions in their stead, because people in all countries of the region possess freedom of choice.
- ❖ We strongly condemn the fragmentation and segmentation of any of the region's countries, which incites division, weakness, and the imposition of authority by others.
- ❖ In Iraq, human and natural resources are abundant and its people are highly intelligent. This can transform Iraq into one of the region's most developed and advanced countries.
- ❖ Iran and Iraq possess many large-scale capabilities that enable both countries to complete one another, become strong, and introduce welfare

and development to the region. Our vision is not limited to cooperation between these two countries only, but with all other countries of the region.

Second guest: Researcher and Journalist, Sarkis Naoum

- ❖ The diversity of the Forum guests' religions, sects, doctrines, and of their positions in politics, parties, journalism, or society makes me glad. It is proof of a keenness to elucidate issues, a genuine desire to find solutions, and recognition of the other that we seldom find in the Arab world.
- ❖ Iraq suffers from internal divisions - this is something we all know: First, a division between Muslims and Christians. It is not demographically significant, but it has made headlines around the world and been exploited by the international community whenever Iraqi Christians are hit by operations that we can describe as terrorist, and that are perpetrated by parties that may be called Takfiri. Second, there is a division amongst Arab Muslims, or Sunnis and Shiites in other words. There are also ethnic divisions between Turkmen, Arabs, and others. In Iraq just as in Lebanon, the country's reality and issues are recognized and denied simultaneously, and we might hear people say that everything is alright, the State is strong, and the judicature is functional.
- ❖ Second, there exists a regional division over the question of Iraq. It was once the field for an Iranian-American war, but the USA has since withdrawn from Iraq and admits, alongside the international community, that Iran has taken part in the conflict, and that the two countries may agree on playing a bigger regional role commensurate with Iran's power. However, this can only be achieved after an understanding is reached over the nuclear issue. Third, Iraq became the field for an Iranian-Saudi conflict via Iraqi citizens, for internal Sunni-Shiite conflicts, Kurdish-Sunni conflicts, as well as conflicts amongst the Kurds. Fourth, it is the field for an Iranian-Turkish cold war.
- ❖ Are there solutions to the issues of Iraq? Establishing a centralized state may be an answer, but a difficult one indeed, as it would require many wars resulting in a state where a minority rules the majority, or vice versa, due to a lack of democracy.
- ❖ Federacy is a solution found in the Iraqi Constitution, but it has not yet been applied. Confederacy is not a viable solution because it is masked division of the country. Conversely, federacy seems advanced in theory, but it necessitates an advanced people in order to work.
- ❖ What is the function of religion in the light of the crises in Iraq? Is it an

awakening or a nightmare? Of course, religion is essential and must be referred to for guidance, but religious states are not easily established and sustained.

- ❖ The events in Syria eventually became a crisis for Iraq. Iran became both a crisis and solution for Iraq; but would the Shiites of Iraq accept that their country be nothing but a vital pathway for Iran? Saudi Arabia has also become one of Iraq's crises. What has come of Iraq's openness to Arab countries? Dr Ibrahim Bahr Alolom discussed this matter thoroughly in a conference in Cairo. He described what Iraq can do as an Arab country and how it can act as a bridge between Arab countries and Iran, which is needed but requires that Iraq solve many of its issues, chiefly establishing a State.

It is good to talk about unity among the Iraqi people and independence from the outside, but that is unrealistic and dependant on the establishment of a civil state. Conversely, it would be realistic to put effort into preventing the complete devastation of Iraq and wait as a new regional order emerges after the fall of Sykes-Picot.

Part II: Interventions

- ❖ The relationship between Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran is continuously developing. It is built on cooperation, brotherhood, and has been in place for a long time in spite of the hefty weight left on it by the previous regime. We are in need of regional cooperation on many fronts, and our relationships can be broadened to fulfill national and shared interests, and they must respect the Iraqi Constitution.
- ❖ Iraq desires to open up to all countries around the world without entering alliances. Democracy and the civil state are important topics that ensure social justice for all. Thus, federacy has been suggested as a solution following the Kurdish people's struggle. The Kurds possess the right to self-determination and consider federacy as a solution to the national issue of Iraq.
- ❖ Iraq suffers from the constituent elite. The country has always had elite groups that are immature, risk-taking, and biased towards their own identities. What do other entities in the region want from Iraq? They wish for it to remain weak, worried, and unstable. It is impossible to reshape this situation without the emergence of a national constituent assembly.
- ❖ The interference of other countries has hindered the establishment of a civil state. We have also struggled with terrorism. How can countries,

nearby or far, help solve these problems, especially those related to security? How has our closer regional entourage, with whom we have strong relationships, contributed to solving our security problems?

- ❖ The Iraqi crisis is mainly the result of the poor embracing of diversity and pluralism in the Middle East. I hope for neighboring countries to cooperate on the water issue seen that the Tigris-Euphrates river basin present a water shortage. To avoid conflict over water in the region in the 21st century, we could create a commission similar to the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, and the Mekong River Commission.
- ❖ Our main problem is that the parties opposed to despots were not themselves democratic. Thus, we have no democratic alternatives available. Additionally, our cause is both regional and international, so we must gain friends and neutralize enemies. In short, we are suffering from an incorrect definition of issues.
- ❖ Iraq is only one out of many reasons behind this drought. The Iraqi crisis and sectarian divisions continue to worsen. Iran and Saudi Arabia wish to arrive to a mutual agreement with one another, but the situation in Iraq is clearly hindering that.
- ❖ Terrorism is the main issue in Iraq. This is a newly-founded country recently introduced to democracy, and it is capable of solving many of its issues. Its main political issue is the absence of a real Sunni coregent.
- ❖ Iraq suffers from a compound issue: it is social and political, but mainly political. In addition, regional conflicts undermine the country's security. Iraq and the region as a whole are in need of an Iranian-Saudi and an Iranian-American agreement.

Part III: Feedback

1 - His Excellency the Iranian Ambassador:

- ❖ We consider Saddam a dictator. During his rule, Iran was open to Iraqis from all components. We were the first to establish an embassy in Baghdad after Saddam's fall, and the first to supply Iraq with electricity. Some might call that an exercise of influence, whereas it is actually a strengthening of relations.
- ❖ Some of our friends asked us to help ease the suffering of the Iraqi people and engage in dialogue with the Americans, and that is what we did. We

do not consider Iraq an arena that we export our problems to.

- ❖ Terrorism and Al Qaeda pose an important issue. We believe that no Al Qaeda terrorist entered Iraq via Iranian borders. Also, terrorists must possess exorbitant sums of money, but where do they obtain it?

Iran is ready for negotiations with all countries except for Israel. Of course, understandings have been reached between Iran and the USA since we are willing to cooperate with all countries in order to solve the region's problems.

2 - Mr. Sarkis Naoum:

- ❖ First, I consider that the Kurds have benefitted from every international and regional stakeholder they could. Second, I did not proclaim that a Kurdish state is every Kurd's dream, and one of the Kurdish leaders supports this notion. The Kurds have started to lean towards a more realistic view and they were advised by the Americans on several occasions to remain realistic.
- ❖ A number of politicians, political parties and factions are inciting sectarian tensions and mobilization for their own benefit and interests.
- ❖ The Shiites are now playing 'mother' because they have assumed their real role in building a new Iraq for the first time since the foundation of the republic, and they would not have gotten the chance to if it were not for the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- ❖ The civil state is the solution to Iraq's issues. As for how it can be founded, I cannot give an answer. I am not Iraqi, nor am I an expert in constitutions and state-building. Furthermore, I do not believe that Iraqis have reached the phase of state-building. For the while being, they must continue their fight to prevent the fragmentation of their country.
- ❖ Concerning the future of Iraq, it is an existing country. The question is will it remain a single country or not? How will this state be formulated? This is up to Iraqis to decide. As for the numerous outside parties that benefitted off of internal conflict, binding Iraqi components to their projects and interests, they must come to an agreement amongst each other, or amongst the strongest of them at least, and cease to subject the Iraqi people to their interests. Therefore, the Iraqi people will be enabled to build a new prosperous and stable Iraq if they are genuinely willing to.
- ❖ One last point I would like to mention about terrorism: There is not a single stakeholder that has not committed acts of terror. The Syrian regime, for example, benefitted from the change in the nature of the conflict. It drew the attention of the USA and the world, as if it

proclaimed, “I am fighting terrorism. Come and help me.” The Americans were late to work on a solution for the Syrian crisis, and were later forced to fight this growing terror alongside the international community. This may have been one of the factors that made Iranian-American dialogue possible.

(5)

Iraq and Neighboring Countries...
Vision on the Problem of Their Relations
and Horizons for Reform

Hussein Al Adili, Researcher

The following vision was elucidated during the researcher's discussion and research forum (for the monthly 'Tuesday Forum') of 2017-2018, where ambassadors of Iraq's neighboring countries - Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia - were hosted.

This theme is important seen that Iraqi relations with neighboring countries have been and remain a problem that is understood in many ways, has taken many directions, and can have different solutions. These relations have had countless consequences, explosive cases, and uncertain outcomes because they have not been founded on objective strategies that can rectify and stabilize them, enabling the Iraqi elite to forge strong relations between Iraq and other countries. Thus, the 'Tuesday Forum' promotes what we call 'diplomacy of the elite', which should drive any future diplomacy efforts that the intellectual and political elite undertake to elaborate visions and propose solutions. The present vision revolves around a principal idea called 'the blessing and curse of Iraq's location'. The location of Iraq dictates interests and struggles, and the manner in which the country is dealt with determines its fate as well as the region's, be it a blessing or a curse.

I think that Iraq benefits and suffers from its exceptional geopolitical and geosocial location. It is both a curse and a blessing because this location has made Iraq the 'eye of the storm' as well as a center point for the region's stabilization. In fact, Iraq is a meeting point for three political and cultural nations central to the region. They are heterogeneous, conflicting human masses that can affect each other either negatively or positively. We are talking about the Arabs, Iranians, and Turks, with Iraq tying all three together. Iraq's social diversity, ethnicities, sects, cultures, sources of wealth, and geography are intertwined with theirs; it is their point of communication and intersection of interests. Therefore, it has been an arena for their conflicts throughout history. In contrast, the social diversity in Iraq can impact these three nations' social

structures, deeply affecting their societies, sovereign geographies, and even political regimes.

Factors feeding into the curse: The failure to establish a national state in the modern Iraq of 1921 is the principal factor feeding into this curse. As a state, Iraq has been the captive of three political schools of thought - nationalism, leftism, and religiosity - which do not consider Iraq as a sovereign state. On the contrary, these schools see that Iraq must be in a state of agreement with others on a nationalist, sectarian, or ideological basis, hence the failed establishment of Iraq as a State. Thus, Iraq is in the hands of schools that wish to grant a physical space or province to nationalist, Arab, and Islamic nations instead of work to constitute a new sovereign nation of Iraq. Moreover, the three sovereign nations have helped create and feed into the aforementioned schools of thought through the policies of annexation, influence, intervention, and containment among others which are prevalent in their dealing with the project of a modern State of Iraq. Within Iraq, the root of the curse is the failure to establish a State and the founding fathers that worked for the interests of biased nationalism, implicit sectarianism, or wanted the country to be victimized. Throughout that, there has always been a display of the irascibility of authority, greed for wealth, obsession with adventure, and Oriental narcissism. Once the State collapsed in 2003, we were left with the debris of a country that yielded its sovereignty to wars, tyranny, and isolation. And with the collapse of the regime, enormous contradictions in the society of Iraq were uncovered. These contradictions were generated by the inflation of identities and the clashing and closed-minded ethnic and sectarian interests, charged by decades of oppression, discrimination, and marginalization. Finally, we have also inherited debris of an economy, infrastructure, and overwhelming debt.

Factors behind the current Iraqi crisis: Four different factors have generated the current Iraqi crisis: First: The legacy and debris of the overthrown Saddam regime, catastrophic on every level. Second: The inability of the current political process to successfully establish a state due to the failure of the constituting elite and clashes in visions, policies, agendas, and interests within the same political process. Third: The actions undertaken by most countries of the region which were counterproductive to the containment of change in Iraq in 2003 and have, instead, aborted it through the policies of: political boycott, organized terrorism, counterpropaganda, and passive containment. Fourth: The struggle between regional and international strategies of containment, direction, and employment which created a sharp polarized struggle, resulting in the model of the Iraqi State which was intended for the post-2003 era. The best models for the State of Iraq are: The State of Iraq as a gravity center and fulcrum for regional balance, rendering it a true strategic power that is balanced and balances greater regional strategies, preventing their clash and creating strategic stability in the Middle East.

Iraq, gravity center and fulcrum: The model of Iraq as center and fulcrum cannot be attained without heightened awareness of the following factors by all parties: The three nations - Arab, Iranian, and Turkish - gravitate around Iraq; it impedes any deadly clash between the three nations' strategies and interests. Since their tenacity is reliant on Iraq's, it must establish itself as a gravity center. Any bias within Iraq towards their three regional strategies will tear the country and region apart. Therefore, if everyone respected their own strategic interests before Iraq's, they must help Iraq build itself as a balancing State that acts as gravity center and fulcrum. Establishing a balancing State would require Iraq to reassess the structure of its political system while maintaining constitutional democracy. That is primarily Iraq's mission, but it cannot be accomplished without the understanding, engagement, and support of the regional centers of power. The model of the State as gravity center and fulcrum and balancing agent is an alternative to the current model of the Iraqi State, which has proved to be feeble, failed, and yielding. In order to establish Iraq as gravity center, fulcrum, and strategic balancing agent, the country needs an active nucleus that can rule through the project of State/nation/establishment instead of authority/component/party. The country also needs a communitarian resolution to ensure the end of national, sectarian, and ethnic rivalry, the adoption of a policy of reciprocal interests to ensure active containment of the regional axes, and self-distancing from the region's issues as much as possible. Additionally, a clear road map is necessary to protect and sustain the model of Iraq as a strategic balancing act from destruction by itself or others, until the State can uphold itself.

What does Iraq want from neighboring countries? Iraq wants its three neighboring countries (Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia) to clearly and decisively adopt a strategy that can help Iraq transition from being a fearful, explosive, failed, or yielding state into a successful gravity center. This would be a model for a unified and cohesive Iraqi State that plays the role of a positive balancing point between different regional strategies. It is a model that benefits Iraq and its neighbors strategically.

To achieve this vision, Iraq needs its neighbors to: Put a limit to the legacy of historical memory - Deal with Iraq as a State not as a number of sects and ethnicities - End issues of conflict (borders, resources, water, etc.) - Cut the ties between the Iraqi issue with other regional issues to make it easier to contain its internal status quo, struggles, and interests - Deal vertically with Iraq or, in other words, with the Iraqi State and its institutions, instead of horizontally, which would mean dealing with political and regional currents and parties - Use their influence to contain internal competition and strife in Iraq, and ensure that these conflicts do not become sectarian or ethnic or endanger the State and its unity - Ensure that no other neighboring country enters any internal Iraqi

conflicts and becomes part of its equation - Base relations with Iraq on economy rather than internal politics and commonalities - Make use of Iraq's strategic location for major economic interests between Arab countries and Iran, the Gulf and Turkey, Asia and Europe, Iraq and Europe, etc. - Neutralize Iraq in the conflicts of regional and international axes - Adopt the model of Finland, not Western Germany, in conflicts of interest and regional power - Support peace and reconciliation efforts between Iraqis to ensure peaceful coexistence and unity in Iraq.

And what do neighboring countries want from Iraq? Let's think as if we were countries neighboring Iraq and ask ourselves, "What do Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia want from Iraq?" They want to guarantee their strategic interests, ensure that Iraq does not turn into an arena for the rival strategies of any other country of the region, and seek economic complementarity with Iraq in all domains. Neighboring countries can achieve that by dealing with Iraq as a State and support its efforts to attain unity and success in order to build complementary relations with it in all domains.

Chapter III

Executive Summary of Discussions of the Ambassadors and of the Iraqi Elite about Iraqi-United Kingdom Relations

(1)

What Does the UK Want From Iraq?

What Does Iraq Want From the UK?

HE Ambassador, John Wilkes.

December 18, 2018

Part I: A Speech by Ambassador John Wilkes

- ❖ In spite of all of its challenges, the country's situation has been going in the right direction, and this year is a historical one.
- ❖ We want to start projects in Iraq, especially in education and capacity building.
- ❖ Iraq now has the chance to make a leap forward.
- ❖ What is most important is to make amends between different forces in Iraq, and the UK wants Iraqis to be patriotic.
- ❖ We do not see a chance to rebuild the country and make amends between its people if that is not done with solidarity in mind.
- ❖ We do not want the models of Lebanon and Iran to be recreated in Iraq or, in other words, for armed forces to exist alongside the State. We want solidarity between them both, and for a single armed force to exist.
- ❖ The Hawza and Sayyid Al Sistani are the reason that a democratic system exists in Iraq, not the USA, UK, or any other country in the world.
- ❖ When comparing between the years 2003 and 2010, one can notice that patriotism has grown stronger and sectarianism weaker.
- ❖ In this year, we will focus on economic and financial reforms to allow the Iraqi economy to provide job opportunities for the youth and start infrastructure construction projects.
- ❖ A crucial element for the success of the country is the agreement of the political class to subject itself before all to the rule of law.
- ❖ The political class is focusing on its own issues. We urge it to focus on the

demands of the street, which are now more crucial seen the effect that protests have had.

- ❖ The community, private sector institutions, and civil society must be given the chance to play their roles. The two most important examples are the Hawza and the Kurdistan region.
- ❖ Iraq is the most promising economic market.
- ❖ The presence of United Kingdom forces is not an occupation. Its sole purpose is to fight ISIS and build capacities by demand of the Iraqi government.
- ❖ The legacy of the United Kingdom occupation does exist historically, but I expect for this perspective to change across decades and centuries.
- ❖ Many Iraqis who hold a UK citizenship have not renounced their nationalities once they have taken office.

Part II: Feedback on “What Does Iraq Want from the United Kingdom?”

- ❖ We do not have a patriotic nation and the primary reason for that is the absence of founding fathers. If we are able to surpass the constituting phase, our conflicts would become those of administrations, not volitions. Presently, we are witnessing a conflict of volitions that can be reduced to sectarian, ethnic, and regional identities, and that is due to the absence of founding fathers. This is an important matter and we need a lot of time before we have any founding fathers. The current ones are not up to par because they have been tyrants, discriminating, or had poor administrative skills and understanding. In this case, what is the role of the United Kingdom? We urge the United Kingdom to help protect the model of the Iraqi State to prevent its internal collapse or external destruction by regional and international powers. With the help of this protection and patronage, we would be able to acquire force internationally, embodied by the international community, to achieve this model because the current one is feeble, yielding, and has been put in dangerous positions by many regional and international powers. Therefore, I urge for patronage not just by the USA or UK, but by the international community.
- ❖ A historical and moral responsibility ties the United Kingdom to Iraq. The United Kingdom has contributed to the constitution of the Iraqi State and has been present throughout the changes of 2003. However, it has not left any political, economic, or social imprints on the Iraqi situation, and has always been in the backdrop behind the Americans. I believe that the Iraqis want the United Kingdom to be present with them, offer help, and

reconsider its perception of the Iraqi society. I think that the Percy Cox map is still adopted in London. Nonetheless, it is now inapplicable and useless. With regards to education and health, the United Kingdom is helping establish a health community in Iraq. The Iraqi people want a British presence to help build their country and reconsider its perceptions of Iraq and its old maps because today, Iraq is not the same as it once was during the 20s.

- ❖ Whoever desires to make amends between Iraqi components must actively contribute to the process. Whoever helped create and worsen these scars has done so since 1920. One cannot forget the High commissioner's stance on the annexation of the Mosul province to Iraq in spite of a referendum that favored its annexation to Turkey. He claimed that annexation to Turkey would make the Shiites a crushing majority in Iraq, and that would upset their Sunni friends. This, however, constitutes sectarianism, and the policy that followed the annexation formed a sectarian government based on the outcomes of the revolution of 1920 which had resulted in tens of thousands of deaths among soldiers. I am not sure whether Abou Naji has overcome this complex in his current policies.
- ❖ I would like to mention two main points that will hopefully figure in the British agenda for the upcoming phase with Iraq: To give space to the community to participate because the Iraqi State does not only consist of a government, but also of a private sector and civil society. This partnership must be taken into consideration by the British government and must be based on the cornerstones of social equality, communitarian participation, and support of the private sector according to the correct fundamentals, not the monopoly of political authority over wealth.
- ❖ We need your assistance in developing the fiscal system, agriculture, industry, and health sectors, in reducing reliance on the oil sector, promoting the growth of the private sector, and providing job opportunities for the youth. We equally need your assistance to protect our new democratic system from foreign intervention, to strengthen our security in the midst of the regional situation, and to end any conflict that may negatively impact the situation in Iraq.
- ❖ We are in need of technology, and the United Kingdom has long been known to provide help in this respect. This would aid us in fighting corruption through the automation of our establishments. I hope for assistance with technological hardware and software. We also need help in imposing the Law and making political parties succumb to it.
- ❖ The British have made shy attempts to help Iraq, namely in the fight

against corruption, extradition of convicts, and recovery of Iraqi funds smuggled into the UK.

Big UK partnerships, especially in the oil sector, must believe in a promising future for Iraq and engage in a social partnership with its community in order to ensure social stability.

Part III: Feedback of the United Kingdom Ambassador

- ❖ The history between the UK and Iraq is complicated. The following messages stood out in this discussion: First, some might say this is mere diplomacy, but I think that is a complex. We share a historical legacy, but I believe these theories will dissolve over the upcoming decades and centuries. Opportunities will be born, but for now, we are facing obstacles. Despite that, I think that the presence of the UK has been more significant than any other Western country.
- ❖ I am not saying that the political class is unqualified or that all of its members are loyal to external powers because of their interests. This can, however, come to an end if we built a partnership and overcame our complexes and obstacles.
- ❖ In my return to Iraq, I no longer represent an occupying entity. The United Kingdom forces are present in Iraq for the sole purpose of fighting ISIS and building capacities by demand of the Iraqi government, and since the government did not ask us to exit the country. Nonetheless, we are well aware that neighboring countries are intervening in Iraq these days even though they insist on its people's right to defend their country. We believe that Iraq's independence and sovereignty are key for a stable situation.
- ❖ A long history truly does exist between the UK and Iraq and we do not ignore this fact. Next year marks a century since the first revolution against the English in Sulaymaniyah, led by Sheikh Mahmud Al Barzanji. I will be having dinner with my family then I will go on a tour in South Iraq in commemoration of the revolution of 1920. We do not ignore history, but let us benefit from the lessons it has taught us in order to improve the current situation and build a better future for both countries.
- ❖ I have learned that Iraqis would like to partner with us to build their infrastructure. I can confidently tell you that we are ready for this partnership. You may have heard of a water project in Basra run by "Bay Water". A British company has worked on it for 3 years, and another British-Lebanese-Greek company has worked on it for one year.

However, the council of ministers ordered that this project be ceased for various reasons, even though they had the ability to allow us to move forward with it and avoid the current water crisis. Therefore, I diplomatically say the following: This poses no imminent danger, but we must fix the system and relations between Baghdad and other provinces. Yes, it is necessary to fight corruption, but we equally need to build executive capacities in all institutions and authorities. As I mentioned, the political class is focusing on its own issues. We urge it to focus on the demands of the street, which are now more crucial seen the effect that protests have had. Iraq might not turn into an exemplary country within the next few years because it is in the political class' interest to remain in power and avoid any chaos, but we will surely witness relative improvement.

- ❖ I realize that some Iraqi citizens think that the English, Iranians, Turks, the West in general support those thieves. In reality, we are trying to reform the system in order to stabilize the situation in Iraq. I do not believe that any of its neighboring countries or those around the world seek chaos in Iraq; not Iran, Turkey, Arab countries, the West, Russia, or Japan. Thus, you can seize the opportunity if the government and political class accept the responsibility of introducing European journalism to Iraq. You also have friends around the world that will help introduce companies and institutions to Iraq.
- ❖ My third message is the following: Whenever we talked about the Iraqi society and making amends between its components, we would focus on election policies and government formation in spite of all of the other issues. I have spent a lot of time around old men from the three main components of this country. Of course, I have not forgotten that there are 40 million people in Iraq, and not all of them are old men. I am aware that women minorities and youth have rights, and that the youth should be given the opportunity to lead the country to success. When I first came to Iraq, I learned a lot from its people; many of them are intellectuals and thinkers. Some told me to read the work of Dr. Ali Al Wardi on the duality in the Iraqi personality and the history of Iraq since the Ottoman Empire till the British mandate and Revolution of 1920. This duality also exists between the legacy of tribes and sects on one hand and the legacy of modern culture and civilization on the other. I have always felt that there are more cultured people in Iraq than any neighboring country, and they will pave the way for prosperity and a partnership with the UK and Iraqi population in the UK.
- ❖ I have always felt that this country has a promising future ahead of it and

I now believe in it more than ever. I look forward to cooperating with you and others from institutions of the civil society, private sector, and government to achieve development. Such discussions can help elaborate useful ideas for Iraq and us as your partner. This is why I am ready to sit and talk at any time, and I wish you good luck and success.

(2)

The Role of the Values of Imam Hussein in the Political Future of Iraq

Lord Morris Glassman - The Labour Party

November 4, 2017

Outline of Dr Glassman's speech:

- ❖ ISIS is an extension of Yazid.
- ❖ Yazid is a universal concept; wherever there is the intention to control others or impose oneself through violence, there is Yazid.
- ❖ You have helped me see that there is hope for a better world and losers can win in the end.
- ❖ The traditions of Shiite Iraqis are not only local and internal to their community; they are universal.
- ❖ We, the UK government, used to and still stand on the wrong side.
- ❖ The Iraqi Shiites play a central role as allies and partners helping solidify democracy and preserve freedom of thought and belief.
- ❖ The Arba'een pilgrimage showed me how the world ought to be.
- ❖ I saw people feeding others, staying up till 1 in the morning cleaning and serving others, and sharing water and houses.
- ❖ In the Arba'een pilgrimage, there was ethical economy, not money.

Dr Glassman's speech:

- ❖ I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to the hospitable Iraqis who offered me the chance to meet this society in all of its civility, freedom, and good morals. As I began to understand the nature of this society, this trip became one of the best experiences of my life. I would also like to thank the Shiite community of Iraq for playing an essential role in the protection of humanity from the hatred and grudge of ISIS who wanted to rape, kill, and enslave those who do not submit to their beliefs.

Their fight against ISIS was honest and courageous. I salute all martyrs and their families, and may they rest in peace.

- ❖ I want to express my gratitude to the Shiite people for protecting and preserving the essence and memory of Imam Hussein a symbol of ethics throughout history. I think of ISIS as an extension of Yazid because those who revert to terrorism, oppression, corruption, authoritarianism, and violence to exert control over others are emulating Yazid. In my eyes, Yazid is a universal concept; wherever there is a will to control others through violence, there is Yazid.
- ❖ Allow me to tell you about myself; you can judge my intentions and what I am doing here later. I am a member of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom representing the opposition Labour Party. For many years I have worked on organizing society and improving living standards to allow those working in elementary occupations to make sufficient money for a decent life. I am also the director of a charity called The Common Good Foundation that aims to bring together different intellectual and political entities and find common ground between them. In fact, that is one of the main reasons I am in Iraq today, and I believe that the traditions of the Iraqi Shiites are not only local and internal to their community; they are universal.
- ❖ My mother always said, “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.” I do not think this applies in the world of politics where the opposite seems to be true; when there is a way, there is a will. I believe that Imam Hussein and the Iraqi Shiites have contributed greatly to a pragmatic and comprehensive vision where people and communities can coexist.
- ❖ The first principle in this discussion is sharing water. Water is essential to life. I have taken steps to organize discussions at Cambridge University and the House of Lords and invited important figures from the Catholic Church, academics, secularists, philosophers, and communists who unanimously agreed that sharing water is a very important principle. However, what I witnessed during the Arba’een pilgrimage was very different: I saw an ethical economy. It is important to develop the vision of the Shiite community and reinforce the independence of its civil institutions, decentralized democracy, and respect of people and sanctuaries.
- ❖ I discovered that the Hawza is an independent civil institution that is not headed by the State. I met religious authorities such as Ayatollah Al Fayyad, Ayatollah Al Sayyed Al Hakim, and many other Hawza scholars, and they were clearly making decisions according to their personal

convictions. That is an evident sign that the institution is not governed by corruption, and I believe this is the best way to move forward.

- ❖ I think that Brexit paved the way for an opportunity in the UK to build non colonial relations with other countries, rectify previous mistakes, and follow a new path built on respectful dialogue, civic relations, and common interests. As an opposition politician, I have criticism against the UK foreign policy which has given preference to Sunnis throughout history, and that must change.
- ❖ We are preparing a TV documentary about the Arba'een pilgrimage. It shows the British how there exists a people with a story that carries deep meanings for the political future of Iraq, the Middle East, and even the United Kingdom.
- ❖ It was an honor to be in your country and take part in the Arba'een pilgrimage. I've learned a lot and would like to reciprocate your generosity back in London. I hope to visit Iraq again, and thank you once more for all you have offered to me and the world.

Audience feedback:

- ❖ If Europe is proud of Aristotle and Plato, than all of humanity should learn about the importance of Imam Hussein's Revolution. Lately, countries around the world have come to realize the weight and legacy of Hussein concepts through their intellectuals and philosophers. Applying Hussein values will have serious implications for the future of Iraq. If they are not respected, justice and equality will erode, many will be excluded from the political process, and political parties will become more factional.
- ❖ If we were to look through the lens of Imam Hussein (PBUH), Iraq's problem lies in the failure to set standards and policies. Imam Hussein revolted for social justice and the liberation of rule from oppression, injustice, and personal, factional, or denominational interests. Throughout the royal and republican eras, the State of Iraq was built upon rule on the basis of a single communitarian identity, ignoring all other Iraqi identities. The State was not founded on partisanship, diversity, democracy, coexistence, acceptance, and enabling others to partake in authority and wealth as equal and competent co-citizens. Following 2003, we shifted from the model of a single-identity State to a State containing multiple competing identities. Till present, we fight all over authority, wealth, and power within the State. This is a fight between components at the expense of citizenship, justice, and participation. The duality of Imam Hussein and Yazid is a duality of values, where history repeats itself with

the alternating reemergence of the Husseini state and Yazidi state. Imam Hussein has been the antagonist of tyrants as well as the cowardly who embrace false peace and beliefs at the expense of values, virtue, and justice.

- ❖ The change that Imam Hussein aspired for was considered as an individual duty, not a duty that can be fulfilled by one person for the sake of others. This change seeks the truth with every possible effort. Plato said, “Seek truth with all of your being.” We must not reserve any effort when looking for this historical human truth. We must call attention to oppression and reject it, and this is why we must give this cause the importance it deserves.
- ❖ The observations of Dr Glassman and his diagnosis of the Karbalaa’ protest are not political or factional. They are value-based, spiritual, and inspired from the freedom and justice that Imam Hussein promoted as a way of life. Imam Hussein had diagnosed the roots of corruption in the political authority of his time. His values shall prevail throughout history, not as revenge against anyone, but as victory of the freedom, equality, and justice which form a value system that humans believe in rationally and instinctively. As for the phenomenon of Yazid, it is perpetual. Karbala and its Shiite community have suffered from it throughout history. Your interpretation of our current situation and history seems accurate, but we also want to discuss future prospects. Do you expect to see a convergence between Husseini and Western values, not only in terms of interests, but also values and cultures?
- ❖ The question we would like to ask the United Kingdom and the West is, “Who killed Imam Hussein?” In my opinion, the nation that failed to support him is his killer and the calling, “Is there not a man willing to flank our side?” will resonate throughout history. Lastly, I would like to say that you represent one of the political powers in the United Kingdom. When political powers remain silent on the issues of Palestine, Yemen, and Bahrain, they are killing Imam Hussein.

Dr Glassman’s feedback:

- ❖ I want to thank everyone for their interventions and feedback. Dr Ibrahim Bahr Aloloom, I wish for this to represent the beginning of non colonial relations built on dialogue. We cannot allow politicians to control this dialogue, it must happen on several levels. We have to prepare ourselves to engage civic as well as academic dialogue.
- ❖ I understand politics the way a society rules itself and how we coexist in social justice. This is the main purpose of politics and I believe that the

best way to achieve it is by sharing water, which can occur in parallel with sharing energy, gas, and oil. If we look into this holistically, it becomes clear that this dialogue revolves around the ability to live together, sustain one another, and help each other achieve our aspirations. This is absolutely essential. However, we must remember that Yazid is still in power and the desire to control others and hinder their participation exists around the world at all times. This is why it is important to build participatory relations. Regarding my position on the European Union: The EU began discussions about sharing iron and coal a long time ago. With time, discussions turned into a legal administrative system that is impossible to act against. Eventually, this destroyed the ability of local institutions to self-govern.

- ❖ I want to share a story with you that will show how I understand Iraq. Following the referendum in favor of Brexit, people were so upset that it almost seemed like a popular revolt. I was the only one to think of it as the moment where the example of Imam Hussein emerges. However, that moment (my moment) was not timed well, so I had to make an effort to look upset when I actually felt happy on the inside since I am a Brexit supporter. I had to show some sympathy as everyone waited for time to pass and the situation to crystallize. You, as Iraqis, went through a violent battle against ISIS as a result of the rule of Saddam and it cost you martyrs and a lot of energy. Nonetheless, we must wait for results during the next 50 years.
- ❖ I've read a lot about Imam Hussein during my journey, and I have had a lot of conversations with you. Thus, I can say that I have plenty of confidence in you and you will get the right institutions for you with time. I want you to have confidence in yourselves and in democracy. What is beautiful about the democratic system is that it allows you to rectify past mistakes. This is just my reflection on the questions that you posed.
- ❖ Politics are vital for two main reasons. The first, which is the key reason, is the lack of command and control. The second reason is of an economic nature. No small group of people can control all the resources. We must think of a local banking system to help, for example, provide workers with education, culture, and professional training. This is one of many plausible democratic ideas that people have fought and died for. When one of our kings tried to overstep the authority of the Parliament, we decapitated him. That had an important impact. It forced other kings to respect this British institution and showed people that no one can transgress their relations with others.
- ❖ To conclude, there is a lot of work to be done to build a dialogue that

helps resist the power of private interests. This must be a joint dialogue and we must be prepared and patient for it. The story of Imam Hussein has helped people move forward for over a thousand years. So, we must build relations with patience, commitment, and a strong will, hence the engagement I came to Iraq for. In parallel, the documentary we are preparing will attempt to raise awareness in the UK about the connections you are establishing here. Big changes are taking place in Iraq and around the world and they can either tip the balance in favor of Yazid or Imam Hussein. As Dr Ibrahim Bahr Aloloom mentioned, we must go about this the right way with civility, mutual respect, a strong will, and empowerment.

- ❖ I would like to end where I started off: I am sad to leave Iraq and will not forget the time that I spent or the beautiful spirit that I feel here. I hope to meet again soon.

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**My experience throughout the three different phases
of Modern Iraq**

HE Ambassador, John Wilkes.

November 29, 2019

Part I: Speech

First, I want to offer my condolences to the relatives and friends of all the victims of the latest protests. Sometimes, new diplomats feel that everything has been ruined in Iraq because of the nature of its challenges. Nonetheless, the past 16 years have seen many positive developments and we must all work together to take a step in the right direction.

Let us begin with my first experience in Iraq. During my service in Iraq, I would often hear a local expression that seemed to express good will, but had implicit negative connotations. It reflected the duality and the political rhetoric in Iraq. In other words, two political rhetorics exist: an overt one and a covert one used with 'close friends'. I do not find that strange and I have seen this in other countries that suffer from oppressive regimes or dictatorships.

I think that Iraq's human resources are more important than its oil or agriculture, because once the era of oil comes to an end; it will have its human resources to depend on. We would like to build a new partnership in higher education with you to offer our support in this domain by utilizing the human bridge between the United Kingdom and Iraq, since a significant portion of the educated class in the United Kingdom, such as doctors and engineers, are originally from Iraq.

Iraq's nature and geographic, cultural, religious, and intellectual diversity are very important. I respect the attempt of the country's intellectuals to preserve them and their rejection of any ideology that has tried to impose models alien to Iraq.

I participated in the observation of the 2010 elections and worked with the European Union electoral observation team. Together, we toured Baghdad as elections took place. Even though I left the country before the government was

formed, it was very clear that the balance between different political currents was reflected in the results. I believe that this balance exists today between different ideologies and religious schools, such as secularism, Sunnism, Shiism, and Kurdism. I also believe that respecting this pluralism, diversity, and balance between different currents will help us solve this crisis.

When I arrived to Iraq as an ambassador two years ago, ISIS had already been defeated. At that time, there were discussions about how to sustain this victory and move forward. Relations with the United Kingdom markedly improved due to the support of the Coalition against ISIS in a military capacity. This improvement was clear with all politicians; Shiites, Kurds, and even Sunnis joined the political process with more efficiency and concentration than previous periods.

I tried to build upon this victory because Iraq and the United Kingdom share a common interest, which is sustaining stability in the country to push things forwards in the domains of economy, culture, and education. However, we must avoid slipping into chaos. We do not want this phase to create an oppressive system, and I fear this might happen because some of those security officials and politicians believe that a message must be sent to terrorists and rioters, i.e. young protesters. This presents duality in their political rhetoric. We do not want the system to be dictatorial like the Syrian regime, yet some people truly believe that Bashar Al-Assad successfully managed to remain in power and they must follow his footsteps. This is unacceptable. We want to push reforms and support the legitimate demands of the street. The government cannot offer the street everything it demands without first engaging in reforms. That is because the quota system impacts everything negatively while putting private interests over the public good.

Judging by my knowledge and experience in this country and others, reform only comes when the political system undergoes maximal pressure. In that case, the government is faced with two options: engage in reform or slip into the unknown. We may be currently facing the latter scenario. The reform of the quota system, the reform of the economy, and allowing the private sector to seize new opportunities are examples of the ideas accepted by everyone. However, private interests embodied by the quota system hinder such ideas. This is something we are working on and would like to help you with during this phase.

In closing, I would like to say that I have loved communicating with the people of this country since the very beginning. I find that there is always a balance between its positive and negative aspects. We can change this balance towards the best, and I believe that the next 10 years at least will be a bright period for Iraq and its people, who will benefit from international relations with neighbors and major Powers.

However, we are now at a crossroads. Therefore, we must work together and coordinate efficiently to avoid slipping into chaos or creating an even more oppressive system, which I know the people of Iraq would not accept. Even if an oppressive system were able to instill security, the people will revolt again and that is not something we desire. I wish you luck and success during this phase, and hope that the next 10 years end with a positive outcome in terms of building the State and its institutions, enforcing the rule of law, and instilling a democratic system that respects every citizen. Thank you.

Part II: Interventions

- ❖ You mentioned that Iraqi citizens are politically aware. Were you surprised by the broad political culture among the Iraqi youth in Tahrir Square? Of course, I am referring to protestors, not infiltrators, because outlaws infiltrate every revolution and protest around the world.
- ❖ We are impressed by Your Excellency's command of Arabic. There are signs that a national identity cannot be crystallized as a result of decades of low aspiration and expectations. Economically, we have a hybrid system that is neither socialist nor capitalist; we do not have solid economic policies and plans. The problem is that the United Kingdom and United States came to Iraq and tried to push it into refinement, but we are still in the early stages of democracy, and democracy is a culture that necessitates time to be acquired, so we need a shock to set things straight.
- ❖ Do you agree that Iraqi citizens must have some feature of British service, maybe a bridge, a hospital or university to remember the British colony for?
- ❖ Have you found any knowledge chasms between the political class and civil society? In the midst of the absence of the UN and EU commissions, do any other behaviors or mechanisms exist to deal with the crisis, which you boldly described in your first tweet as Ambassador as brilliant and daring?
- ❖ What are the real reasons why the government and companies of the UK have abstained from entering in the Iraqi business sphere, even though it has become a promising environment attempting to take steps in the right direction in terms of investments?
- ❖ Where do you stand on the current protests? Have you clearly voiced your rejection of the oppression of innocent protesters? I would also like to ask about the slogan of this forum, which is the duality of rule and opposition. Is there a real opposition in Iraq today?

- ❖ Is Iraq heading down the same path as Libya, or are there solutions that can propel it into a brighter decade? My second question is the following: You had mentioned that the current and upcoming years will be focused on building new relations between Iraq and the United Kingdom. Is that your personal view or the United Kingdom's view?
- ❖ We have adopted the British system for 16 years. However, the parliamentary consensus system failed drastically in producing a leader. This is one of Iraq's main problems; it is now without a leader and this has come to the attention of Iran, Turkey, and other neighboring countries. Iraq started out with a parliamentary system then switched to a presidential system. Do you think that the latter can benefit Iraq or should we rely on the former, even though it has failed to produce a leader?
- ❖ Many reports are not optimistic about the latest events in Syria and their impacts on Iraq. They predict that they might cause the situation in Iraq to worsen. What is your opinion? Also, Syria has become the victim of the Russian-American conflict. Can the United Kingdom help relieve the tension between Russia and America?

Intervention of the Ambassador of the European Union to Iraq, Martin Huth: You might find it strange to see the Ambassador of the EU standing next to the Ambassador of the UK. However, I ensure you that we remain friends even following Brexit. As for a modern-day diplomacy and dealing with society, the European Union maintains strong relations with the civil society as well as society in general. There is no doubt that we must deal with more than just the civil society. Unfortunately, some security issues in Iraq do not allow this to happen. Therefore, I would like to ask a question: If I went to Tahrir Square today as a Western diplomat, met protesters, listened to their demands and discussed issues with them, would some Iraqi groups accuse me of intervening in internal affairs or come up with conspiracy theories about what I am doing?

Part III: Feedback of the Ambassador of the United Kingdom

- ❖ I always feel optimistic about this. The issue lies in the institutions, not individuals and citizens. We know that Iraq was and still is doing somewhat better than other countries of the region in terms of culture and education. We must rebuild this political awareness which is already prevalent to some extent, while simultaneously reducing the chasm of political culture between society and the political class. I expect that some protesters will demand to participate in politics in the future independently from established parties. We must accept and respect their political awareness.

- ❖ This is the 21st century and we can no longer impose ourselves the United Kingdom on other countries. In general, other countries have played a different role than the United Kingdom. For example, we built roads and bridges a century ago, but nowadays, companies from Iran, Turkey, China, and Arab countries can build absolutely anything. I am following up on the water project agreement in Basra on a daily basis.
- ❖ The cultural chasm between society and the political class is evident. As a diplomat, I am obliged to sit with politicians, activists, and officials, but I personally prefer sitting with average Iraqis.
- ❖ We do not want chaos in Iraq and I believe that we are not playing a role that contributes to it. We must coordinate between citizens and the United Nations more efficiently. First, we shall focus on avoiding oppressive measures, respecting the demands of the street, and integrating reforms enabling the government to achieve concrete results. We must avoid sliding into chaos, materialize a political formula to preserve the legitimacy and credibility of the government, and drive the growth of the private sector and economy in general. We share the same concept of the role that the United Nations as an observer if early elections took place to ensure their efficiency and credibility. If participation rates in the upcoming elections are the same as previous elections, credibility in the system will be lost.
- ❖ As for the remarks and question about the legitimacy and failure of the system, it is true that building and maintaining legitimacy has been one of the Middle East's greatest challenges. However, I think that political institutions have successfully contained violence, wars, and conflicts; their performance has been passable. For example, the conflicts between main political parties in the Kurdistan region spanned over 20 years, beginning in 1996 till present. Nonetheless, political institutions in this region have managed to contain them, and Southern Iraq has not witnessed any violence for 10 years. We must maintain these political successes wherever possible.
- ❖ With regards to encouraging UK companies to work in Iraq, commercial exchange between both countries has increased by 20% and there are now 200 UK companies operating in Iraq. But in general, we expect to use the second billion to fund infrastructure and other major projects.
- ❖ Regarding protests and the opposition: Of course, we have not yet developed a culture of democracy to the point where a "loyal opposition", as we call it in the UK, can emerge. Loyal opposition is when all parties respect the rules of the game and engage in a peaceful exchange of

authority between ruling and opposing parties. Some in Iraq defend that the quota system maintains relative security and claim that this is not a convenient time to overcome the quota system. However, we all are aware that this system does not only consist of distributing seats, but also resources or, in other words, financial transactions. I believe that even the Iraqi people know that the protesters have legitimate demands for the improvement of institutional and governmental performance. It is the government that must bear the people, not the other way around.

- ❖ We do not want these conflicts to set back the Iraqi system and, in my opinion, this is the main reason we must avoid sliding into chaos. Regarding your question on the parliamentary and presidential systems, this remains an ongoing debate. However, I have to pose a question: Are state institutions and the parliament strong enough to prevent a regression into an authoritarian and oppressive system? This is up to the Iraqi people and political class to answer.
- ❖ Syria has definitely had a negative impact on Iraq and we must help you protect your borders. If we were to compare British and American interventions in Iraq with Russian and Iranian interventions in Syria, I see more hope for Iraq. I think that upcoming developments over the next few years will allow us to become partners and push things in the right direction.
- ❖ I believe that there are more positive than negative aspects in Iraq, despite the influence of regional problems on the country, be it the Syrian war or the American-Iranian confrontation. I must point out that the United Kingdom holds a different position from the United States. We are for the nuclear deal with Iran and maintain relations with this country, which is something natural. It is understandable that Iran wants Iraq to be its economic hub, but they must explicitly admit that Iraq is a sovereign country that cannot act as a strategic tool for Iran because that will impact it internally. During the protests, anti-Iran sentiments were visibly expressed, thus it is crucial for the future of Iraq to diffuse the tension between Iraq and Saudi Arabia on one hand and Iran and America on the other.
- ❖ Generally speaking, Trump, Obama, and the Democratic and Republican parties want to withdraw from the region, whereas Russia wants to solidify its presence in it. This means that we have entered a new phase in the Middle East. That being said, we are left face an issue. The nationalist Arab ideology and Islamic currents want Americans to leave the region, but are Arab states capable of running the region? Are neighboring countries - Iran, Turkey, and Israel - able to manage the region

themselves? Or are Russia, Iran, and Turkey the real main players of the region? This reality is new to the region, but is it a desirable one?

- ❖ Sooner or later, the United Kingdom will exit the European Union. Of course our alliance with European nations and the USA will persist, but we will give more focus to our relations with countries outside of Europe, such as China, India, and other major powers of the 21st century. We will also focus on relations with the Middle East. For example, we have special relations with Gulf countries and Jordan, and hope to strengthen relations with Iraq if things go in the right direction. We would both benefit from stronger trading, investment, and political relations.













