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REGIONAL PLAYERS INFLUENCES ON THE IRAQ-KUWAIT RELATIONS POST- SADDAM ERA (2003-2011)

HUSSEIN ABDULHASAN MOEH

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REGIONAL PLAYERS INFLUENCES ON THE IRAQ - KUWAIT RELATIONS POST- SADDAM ERA

HUSSEIN ABDULHASAN MOEH (94862)

A Thesis submitted to the Ghazali Shafie Graduate School of Government in fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy
Universiti Utara Malaysia
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the divergence of the political and economic interests of the key regional players in the Gulf region, i.e., the United States of America (US), Iran, and the member states of the Gulf cooperation council (GCC) States. The study also analyses how those three main key players influence the development of Iraq-Kuwait relations in the post-Saddam era from 2003 until 2011. Therefore, the general aim of this study is to discuss why, how and what type of roles the three regional players have played in influencing the convergence and divergence of Iraq-Kuwait relations in the post-Saddam era. To achieve the aims of this study, a qualitative approach was adopted. This study's framework of analysis is carried out by adopting the Game Theory. This study employed both face-to-face and telephone interview techniques as the primary sources of data collections. The interviewees were divided into three main groups. The first group of interviewees included lecturers from the Political Science Faculty at the University of Baghdad and Kuwait University, whereas the second group of interviewees was diplomats from Iraq, Kuwait and Iran. The last group of interviewees was professional researchers from the GCC States and the Middle East. The other primary sources of data collections derived from the United Nations Security Council Resolutions, official statement and publications of the GCC, and archival documents. As for the secondary data, the sources came from theses, books, journal articles and online and printed newspapers reports. The findings of the study reveal that Iraq-Kuwait relations were affected significantly by the divergent interests of the three regional players (the US, Iran and the GCC). Those interests were reflected by a desire of each party to achieve the greatest political and economic gains. As a result, improving relations between Iraq and Kuwait in the post-Saddam era has been in a snail pace. The two countries have to double their diplomatic efforts in re-strengthening their relations given some difficulties in solving some bilateral and outstanding political and economic issues.

Keywords: Iraq-Kuwait Relations, Post-Saddam Era, the United States of America, Iran, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)
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HUSSEIN ABDULHASAN MOEH
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degrees at Universiti Utara Malaysia or other institution.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE ................................................................. iii
ABSTRAK ....................................................................................... iv
ABSTRACT ......................................................................................... v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ................................................................. vi
DECLARATION ................................................................................... vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS ............................................................... viii
LIST OF TABLE … ........................................................................ Xii
LIST OF FIGURES … .......................................................................... Xiii
LIST OF MAPS … ............................................................................ Xiv
LIST OF ABBREVIATION … ........................................................ Xv

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION ............................................. 1
  1.1 Background … ........................................................................ 1
  1.1.2 Statement of the Problem … ................................................. 7
  1.3 Research Questions … ............................................................ 8
  1.4 Research Objectives … ........................................................... 9
  1.5 Significance of the Study … .................................................... 9
  1.6 Theoretical Framework … ...................................................... 10
    1.6.1 The U.S. Interests Model as a Pivotal State .......................... 15
    1.6.2 The Iranian Interests Model as a Wing State ....................... 16
    1.6.3 The GCC States Interests Model as a Wing State ................ 17
  1.7 Research Methodology … ..................................................... 19
    1.7.1 Research Strategy ............................................................. 20
    1.7.2 Data Collection Procedure … ............................................. 21
      1.7.2.1 Primary Data … ......................................................... 21
        1.7.2.1.1 Face-to-Face Interview … ........................................ 21
        1.7.2.1.2 Reports and Official Documents .............................. 24
      1.7.2.2 Secondary Data … ....................................................... 24
    1.7.3 Data Analysis Technique … .............................................. 25
  1.8 Scope of Study … .................................................................... 25
  1.9 Limitation of Study … ............................................................ 26
  1.10 Operational Definition … ...................................................... 27
  1.11 Organization of the Thesis … ................................................ 29
4.3.1.2 Security and Political Interests of the U.S. in Iraq .................. 95
4.3.2 U.S. Interests in Kuwait ......................................................... 101
  4.3.2.1 Strengthening the U.S. Presence in Kuwait and the Arab Gulf ... 101
  4.3.2.2 Control over Kuwaiti Oil .................................................. 104
4.4 Role of the U.S. Interests in the Outstanding Problems between Iraq and
Kuwait ......................................................................................... 108
  4.4.1 Border Dispute between Iraq and Kuwait ................................ 108
  4.4.2 Problem of Constructing Kuwait’s "Port Mubarak" .................... 111
  4.4.3 Problem of Iraq’s Debts and Reparations to Kuwait ............... 114
  4.4.4 Problem of Iraq Remaining under Chapter VII of the UN Charter .... 117
4.5 Summary ............................................................................... 121

CHAPTER FIVE: IRANIAN INTERESTS IN THE IRAQ–KUWAIT
RELATIONS .................................................................................. 123
  5.1 Introduction ............................................................................ 123
  5.2 Iran’s role in the Middle East ................................................ 124
  5.3 Iranian Interests in Iraq in the post-Saddam Era ...................... 130
    5.3.1 Political Influence of Iran in Iraq ....................................... 130
    5.3.2 Economic Influence of Iran in Iraq ..................................... 135
  5.4 Iranian Interests in Kuwait in the post-Saddam Era ................. 139
    5.4.1 Political Interests of Iran in Kuwait ................................... 139
    5.4.2 Economic Interests of Iran in Kuwait ................................. 143
  5.5 Role of Iranian Interests in Iraq-Kuwait relations in the post-Saddam Era ... 146
    5.5.1 Iranian Interests in Fueling Sectarian Conflict ..................... 146
    5.5.2 Iranian Interests to Forestall the American Democracy Project ...... 150
    5.5.3 Common Interests of Iran with the Regional States .............. 154
  5.6 Summary ............................................................................... 158

CHAPTER SIX: GCC STATES INTERESTS IN THE IRAQ – KUWAIT
RELATIONS .................................................................................. 160
  6.1 Introduction ............................................................................ 160
  6.2 The GCC As a Regional Power during Saddam Era .................. 161
  6.3 The GCC States and Iraq in the post-Saddam Era .................... 165
    6.3.1 The Political Interests ....................................................... 165
6.3.1.1 Maintaining the Unity and Independence of Iraq .............. 166
6.3.1.2 Stabilizing the Security Situation in Iraq .................. 168
6.3.1.3 Fear of Increasing Iranian influence ......................... 170
6.3.2 The Economic Interests ............................................. 175
6.4 The GCC and Kuwait’s Mutual Political and Economic Interests ...... 178
6.4.1 Political Interests of the GCC States in Kuwait ................ 178
6.4.2 Economic Interests of the GCC States in Kuwait ................ 180
6.5 Role of the GCC in Iraq-Kuwait Relations in the post-Saddam Era ...... 183
6.6 Summary ........................................................................ 188

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ......... 189
7.1 Introduction ........................................................................ 189
7.2 Discussion of the Findings ..................................................... 190
7.2.1 Role of U.S. Interests ...................................................... 190
7.2.2 Role of Iranian Interests .................................................. 194
7.2.3 Role of GCC States’ Interests .......................................... 199
7.3 Contribution of the Study ...................................................... 204
7.3.1 Theoretical Contributions .............................................. 204
7.3.2 Practical Contributions ................................................... 205
7.4 Directions for Future Research .............................................. 206

REFERENCES ...................................................................... 209

APPENDIX ......................................................................... 229
Appendix A: Interview Questions – English .................................. 229
Appendix B: Interview Questions – Arabic .................................... 230
Appendix C: The Iraqi-American Security Agreement .................... 231
Appendix E: Final Statements for GCC States ............................... 246
LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Iraq's Oil Production, Exports and Oil Revenues from 2003-2008....94
Table 4.2 Oil Exports of the Middle East Countries between 2007-2011.....105
Table 5.1 Length of Iran's Coast and that of the Arab Gulf States...........126
Table 6.1 Military Spending in GCC States during 2009-2011..............180
Table 6.2 Production of Oil in the GCC during 2008-2011.....................181
Table 6.3 GCC Intra-Trade: Export...................................................182
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1  Theoretical Framework of Analysis .............................................. 14
Figure 4.1  Military Expenditure Increase of the U.S. 2000–2009 ....................... 91
Figure 4.2  Kuwaiti Mubarak Port ................................................................. 113
Figure 5.1  Trade Exchange between Iraq and Iran 2006-2009 ......................... 138
Figure 5.2  Iraqi Body Count Estimate Trends in Casualties (2003-2010) ......... 149
Figure 6.1  Iran’s Nuclear Facilities ............................................................... 173
LIST OF MAPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Iraq and Kuwait</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Oil and Gas Fields in Iraq</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Main Oil Fields in Kuwait</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Geographical Location of Iran</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Members of the GCC States</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>Petroleum Exporting Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEA</td>
<td>International Energy Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCC</td>
<td>Gulf Cooperation Council</td>
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<td>IEA</td>
<td>International Energy Agency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Iraq-Kuwait relations are one of the most contentious bilateral issues in the Middle East region and there has been a lack of political and economic stability in this region over many decades of the last century (Ahmed 2015:56). The importance of Middle East is due to its geographical location which is connected to the three continents, namely, Asia, Africa and Europe, as well as its possession of many natural resources such as oil, which is estimated to be about 60% of the world’s total reserves (Aldlabih 2011:20-21). The United States of America (U.S.) has tried to control this vital area by preventing other international powers from gaining control over the production of oil and also by controlling its price. The U.S. also has supported its allies in this area, especially Israel, in order to ensure its military superiority and this has ignited Arab-Israeli conflicts which have resulted in four wars (1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973). Unfortunately for the Arabs, Israel has proven its superiority by emerging as the victors in all four wars (Al-Brizat 2008:10).

In the eighties of the last century, significant changes took place in the Gulf region and they were the emergence of Iraq and Iran as rival powers each with aspirations to expand their interests over the Arab Gulf States, the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war
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215


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