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

HUSSEIN ABDULHASAN MOEH



UUM
Universiti Utara Malaysia

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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RELATIONS POST- SADDAM ERA**



HUSSEIN ABDULHASAN MOEH (94862)

UUM
Universiti Utara Malaysia

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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Problem Statement?

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.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------|-------------------------------|
| OPEC | Petroleum Exporting Countries |
| UAE | United Arab Emirates |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| UN | United Nations |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| IEA | International Energy Agency |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| U.S. | United States |
| GCC | Gulf Cooperation Council |
| IEA | International Energy Agency |



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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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