



Research Article

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Post-ISIS Era and the State Dissolution in the Middle East: Iraq as a Case

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Abstract

Since its establishment, the modern Iraqi state has witnessed instabilities, insurgencies, continuous cyclic violent conflicts among its heterogenic components. The emergence of IS group in Iraq was the latest and at the same time one of the darkest episodes in the series of modern Iraq's turbulent history. This bloody and horrible violent wave that embodied in the form of such terrorist organization, which committed all kinds of brutality against humanity, forced ordinary Iraqi people from all its heterogenic populations, together with experts to question the possibility of peaceful coexistence, stability, and continuance in living together within the border of an integrated Iraq. Unlike most experts that tend to deal with each of Iraq's violent waves separately and prescribe particular prescriptions for each of them, this paper argues that those continuous, persistent, and intractable conflicts were just symptoms, and the cause of modern Iraq's problems had proceeded from misperception and miscalculations of both exogenous state builders (Great Britain and the USA) during their efforts for state-building in Iraq in the 1920s and 2003 respectively. According to this paper, in the case of Iraq's state-building, non-ethnic solutions (assimilation, and integration), and even ideal ethnic solutions like federation have been experienced without any tangible progress regarding durable and long-standing stability in Iraq. By keeping the fact that primordial ethno-sectarian affiliations are beyond transformation in mind, the study endorses the 'soft partition plan' presented as the latest proposal for a new state-building process in Iraq which supported by some scholars, academics, and essential international political figures that have their fingerprint on the global level.

Keywords: *Heterogenic Components, exogenous State-builders, State-building Failure, Primordial Ethno-Sectarian Affiliations, Soft Partition Plan*

1. Introduction

After three years of bloody confrontations, On December 9, 2017, and through a televised speech Iraqi Prime Minister, Haider al-Abadi, formally and at the same time warily announced the end of the Islamic State (IS) group in Iraq (Coker and Hassan, 2017). While he was defining this military triumph as a historical event that deserves annual celebration by Iraqi people, Abadi disclosed his concerns about a resurgence of IS group in the case of the causes of its cropping up do not appropriately address (McIntyre, 2017). Many others share the same concern about IS resurgence with Mr Abadi. Others like General Joseph Votel, commander of the United States Central Command, stated that an

organization like IS group is 'savvy' and 'adaptable' enough to be able to resurge (England, 2018). Major Brian P. Sharp argues that this uncertainty and doubt about sustainable stability have rooted in the case history of this post-colonial state (Sharp 2007, iii). He insists on the idea that continuous conflicts, scepticism, and different waves of violence along the history of this colonial-synthesized state (Iraq) are the result of miscalculations, misperceptions, and lack of real understanding about the unification and homogenization of heterogeneities of the three former Ottoman Empire provinces within the border of one political entity (Iraq) (Sharp 2007, iii). Kumaraswamy believes that Iraq along with its history as one of the Middle Eastern countries had (and still has) failed in establishing, defining and projecting a unified and an agreed-on national identity that represents their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic heterogeneities (Kumaraswamy 2006, 63-65). This failure has cost Iraqis continuous unrest, chaos, mass murder, ethnic cleansing and genocide which inflicted millions of casualties on Iraq's turbulent history (Kirmanj 2013, 9). The latest wave of violence that terrorized Iraqis along three years of brutal crimes was the emergence of the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State' (Laiouf, 2014). Nowadays and after announcing the victory over IS group, different optimistic and pessimistic perspectives have been predicted as expectations about the uncertain future that may face Iraqis generally and minorities particularly (Sworesho, 2016). Therefore, ordinary Iraqi people who experienced terrible shocks in transferring from conflict to another big one have got tired, and they are legitimately questioning their political elites: 'IS group defeated, so what? Can we dream to live the rest of our life in a stabilized and prosperous Iraq far from vicious atrocities of violent conflicts, or it is just the matter of time to be the witness of another cycle of violent insurgencies?' (Teti, Abbott, and Dagher, 2017). In this regard, academic study papers can present significant contributions towards exploring and identifying that "uncertain future" and the concerns mentioned above of Iraqis about it.

This study aims to investigate the likelihood of such concerns that coincided with the military defeat of IS group, and It tries to apply conflict resolution standards on the recent conflict (the rise and the fall of IS group) in Iraq. Moreover, the paper seeks to determine whether we can consider the end of the military existence of IS group as the starting point for conflict transformation towards de-escalation and reconciliation. Alternatively, it is just the end of a wave of violence or a chain in a series that soon will be followed by another destructive episode of violence, which will lead to further unpredictable and complex conflict escalation. Also, this study attempts to explore the cause of Iraq's intractable conflict that started with its invention and continued until the moment in different forms and waves.

This proposed article seeks to answer the following question:

After the military defeat of IS group, to what extent there are real chances for sustainable stability and long-standing peace in Iraq? The answer of this study question has been built on the hypothesis that the rise and the fall of IS group was just a wave of violence, and the manifestation of a symptom of Iraq's intractable problems which has originated from the failure in the state-building process, as a cause of the problem. Also, this article argues that unless the cause of the problem is not addressed correctly, prescribing solutions for treating the symptoms, as physician almost always said, will not guide Iraq and its population to a safe port, and as a result, instability will continue to exist. In other words, this article insists that in searching for the diagnosis of real causes that inhibit Iraq from acting as a functioning state on the international arena, the first thing to be blamed and questioned is the processes that underwent during both state-building attempts in (1920-1932) and (2003-2011) which downplayed the role of heterogenic and historic features of its components.

In answering the study question and testing the hypothesis, the qualitative approach of this study employed secondary data analysis and interpretive analysis of the literature that has been written on this subject.

This article comprised of three sections. The first one illustrates particular circumstances that led to the birth of the contemporary state of Iraq, and how Great Britain, as a colonial power, invented the Kingdom of Iraq with all its complexities. This section also explores the second attempt of state re-building in Iraq by the United States of America (USA) in 2003. The second one, by

providing a theoretical framework that based on the assumptions of both primordial and instrumental theories demonstrates misperceptions of both British Empire and USA's incorporation of modern Iraq during two different "world time", which led to chronic and continuous instabilities from the earliest time of its establishment till the moment. The last section will address the theoretical background of the latest suggestion of scholars, academics, and even top political leaders, that proposed as an optimized alternative for a new state building process under the title of 'soft partition in Iraq' based on the creation of three separate homogenous and autonomous regions for Sunni, Shi'i, and Kurds.

2. A Historical Review about the Genesis and Re-building of Modern Iraqi State

According to Patrick G. Miller, the history of the modern state of Iraq has witnessed two exogenous state-building efforts in different eras in "world time" through the attempts of two different superpowers, each at their reign of supremacy (Miller 2008, 2-3). In his book titled *Building Better Legacy: Contrasting the British and American Experience in Iraq*, Miller refers to state-building efforts of both British Colonial Empire during and after First World War, under the imperialist motivation and USA after the occupation of Iraq in its 2003 'pre-emptive attack' named Operation Iraqi Freedom, under the notion of establishing regional and global security and stability (Miller 2008, V). Miller also marks that before the British Mandate, there was no unified political entity under the name of Iraq (Miller 2008, 3). So, what the British Empire did was the corporation of a new state by integrating three semi-independent and self-ruled provinces of Ottoman Empire (Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul) into a unified modern state named Iraq. In contrast, USA's attempts in 2003 aimed to re-built and reconstruct this failed state after numerous cyclic violent, and unsuccessful governance during successive reigns of colonial (1920-1932), monarchial (1932-1958), and despotic nationalist (1958-2003) regimes (Miller 2008, 1-2).

The first state building attempt in Iraq (Mesopotamia at that time) started when Great Britain signed the Sykes-picot agreement with French in 1916 due to its expansionist policies for imposing control over some parts of the acquired territories of the declining Ottoman Empire (Fabal 2015, 10-11). Among those occupied territories, three former Ottoman Empire's *vilayets* (provinces), which known geographically as Mesopotamia, had its geostrategic and economic importance in facilitating transportation and connection between the poles of British colonial empire offices in London and India (Kirmanj 2013, 1). Immediately after the annexation of the three former Ottoman Empire provinces in 1914, 1917, and 1918 respectively, Great Britain faced unprecedented changes in the context of both international order and Mesopotamian domestic identity; that made its colonization in Mesopotamia a difficult task and at the same time something different from its previous experience in Indian colonization (Dodge 2003, 7). These dramatic changes baffled and divided the British Empire authorities to the extent that both administrations in India and London offices suggested two various proposals for how to deal with the three acquired provinces (Fabal 2015, 42). At the macro (international) level, the attempts of the British Empire for creation it's a new colony. They coincided with a dramatic transformation of the global order from colonial and imperial world system into a self-determining state system which had embodied in the President Woodrow Wilson's efforts to implement principles of Westphalia's system of the sovereign state, the right of self-determination, and also the right of access to open markets for all nations all over the world (Dodge 2003, 4). At the micro (domestic) level, Mesopotamian people under the aspiration of Woodrow Wilson's fourteen-point manifesto, which immediately after the First World War became America's new doctrine, were demanding for their independent statehoods (Sharp 2007, 3). All these significant shifts in the global and domestic contexts together with the growing pressure of public opinion at home became a political, economic, and military quagmire for the British Empire (Dodge 2003, 1-2). 21 These extensive alterations all together obligated Great Britain's administrations to relinquish the idea of "Indianizing" the Mesopotamia and unwillingly accepted the Mandate system that proposed by the League of Nation (Dodge 2003, 5-7). During the Mandate period (1920-1932), Great Britain's

administrations struggled with the difficulties of establishing the institutions of the new state within the cultural rural and urban (Dodge 2003, 63), sectarian Shiite and Sunni (Osman 2012, 25), and ethnic Kurds and Arab (Rafaat 2017, 1) Mesopotamian diversities in one hand, and the Turkish claim about the Mosul province in the other hand (Rafaat 2017, 3).

These unpleasant situations coupled with the lack of empirical knowledge about diversities within the societies of the three provinces, and the lack of reliable data-pushed Great Britain towards miscalculations in its efforts to build a modern liberal state; by homogenizing the three provinces with all diversities that they possessed under one flag and within the border of a unified political entity under the name of the Kingdom of Iraq (Sharp 2007, 7). By this unification, as Sharp argues "Churchill, unknowingly, set the world on a path of bloodshed and discord of generations to come", and complex management of Iraq for both Great Britain and its heterogenic components (Sharp 2007, 7).

The second attempt of state-building in Iraq started with the occupation of this country by the American-led coalition on March 17, 2003 (Melaragno and Ollunga 2003, 18). This time, when the USA invaded Iraq, many things had been changed, millions of casualties had lost their lives due to intro, and inter-state conflicts, economic crisis and state collapse had exhausted Iraqis. Most importantly, the successive Iraqi governments had failed to direct various components of this heterogenic state toward integration under one flag and within the border of a unified Iraq (Miller 2008, 4-5).

Both Great Britain and the USA were similar in filling the power vacuum resulted in from their invasions and collapse of the former regimes via imposing their external administrations; Great Britain through its Indian Office (Sharp 2007, 5) and USA through Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) (Bensahel, Nora, Oliker, Crane, Brennan, Jr., Gregg, Sullivan, and Rathmell 2008, 101). However, compared to Great Britain, USA tried to take sectarian, ethnic, and religious diversities into consideration by the formation of Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) on ethno-sectarian quota bases and establishing a federal and decentralized Iraq (Bensahel, Nora, Oliker, Crane, Brennan, Jr., Gregg, Sullivan, and Rathmell 2008, 116). Despite the differences in experiences of both Great Britain and the USA in their state-building efforts, Dodge argues that both attempts have failed in building a stabilized and functioning state in Iraq (Dodge 2006, 1).

3. Theoretical Assessment of State Building Attempts in Iraq, (What Went Wrong During State-Building Processes of both Great Britain in 1920-1932 and American-Led Coalition in 2003-2011?)

Since the creation of Iraq, this country has witnessed many cyclic violent conflicts among its diverse components. Some scholars return this persistent instability to the uniqueness of state-building complexities in Iraq (Al Kli 2015, 145). The unfortunate outcomes of the two state-building processes in Iraq have created the necessity of reviewing and rethinking the tested approaches of state-building in Iraq. This article exhibits five Theoretical criticisms of state-building in Iraq. First, state-building attempts in Iraq were exogenous efforts by foreign states to guarantee their interests rather than they had been stemmed from endogenous efforts of Iraqis themselves (Sharp 2007, 2). In other words, in exogenous state buildings, the foreign countries' (state builder's) priority is to protect its interests rather than taking the will and aspirations of the resident people into consideration. Second, the lack of knowledge of the state builders (especially in the case of Great Britain 1920-1932) about Iraq pushed Great Britain to use personal experiences of an Orientalist like Gertrude Lothian Bell rather than having empirical studies (Fabal 2015, 33). Third, during the first state-building process in Iraq, Great Britain downplayed the role of primordial and 'in-group/out-group' affiliations and solidarities within different sects and ethics of Iraq. According to the primordial point of view, Theory of Ethnic Nepotism suggests that conflict and in-group bias and favouritism are inevitable and most predicted options in diversified ethnic and sectarian communities within boundaries of a state (Vanhanen 1999, 62). The history of conflicted eventful past years of modern Iraq strongly supports these primordial

assumptions. Subhasish Ray in his book titled '*History and ethnic conflict: Does early state formation matter?*' examined the relationship between the nature of state-building in ex- British colonies and the incidence of ethnic conflict in post-colonial independent states, and he argues that the number of ethnic conflicts has risen significantly compare to the pre-colonial era (Ray 2018, 4-5). He arguably blames the exclusionary nature of state-building processes in the post-colonial era (Ray 2018, 22).

Ray insists on the idea that immediately after both state formation attempts of both Great Britain and the USA in Iraq, the excluded groups Shiite and Kurds in the first state-building, and Sunnis in the other state-building process) started to formulate an ethnonational grievance in order to mobilize their in-group members to stand up for their certain rights (Ray 2018, 5). Fourth, Great Britain, by ignoring ethnic and sectarian affiliations of Mesopotamia and integrating the societies of the three provinces into a modern unified Iraq with its uniform citizenry, wanted to bypass these in-group mentalities (Osman 2012, 29). However, the theory and assumption of Intransigence argues that these primordial ethnic and sectarian divisions are beyond transformation, even bypassing of time and contact with other out-groups (Simonsen 2005, 298). Fifth, in the American experience of state-building in Iraq (2003-2011), despite the ethno-sectarian quotas that recognized the right of representation in different state institutions, the constant intrastate conflicts continued, and America's prescription for re-building Iraq has failed to approve its efficacy in stabilizing this state (Byman 2008, 603). For Interpretation of this failure, Gurr who has a macro instrumentalist orientation in studying ethnic conflicts believes that policies which promote the centrality of ethnicity (ethnocentrism), ethnicization of politics, or ethnopolitics altogether bear the seeds of rebellion that might emerge and manifest itself at any moment (Landis and D. Albert 2012, 6-7). This argumentation of Gurr also applies to Iraq's political atmosphere which has been established after the American-led invasion in 2003. Coalition Provisional Authority, through revivifying ethno-sectarian identities and quotas, institutionalized sectarianism and ethnocentrism in Iraq (Osman 2012, 170). According to the instrumental orientation of studying conflict, this institutionalization will pave the way for Charismatic elites of each particular ethnic and sect to manipulate and accentuate ethnic and sectarian affiliation of their in-group people and deepening the divisions with others even if it is through reminding ancient hatreds (Majstrovic 1997, 170-172). Similarly, in post-2003, Charismatic elites of different ethnic and sects exploited these ethno-sectarian arrangements in the politics and sharpened actions and reactions of more ethno-sectarian violence, which as a result, they made coexistence among different sects and ethnics in Iraq a semi-impossible task (Abdullah 2015, 368-371).

4. What Makes Iraq a Stabilized and Free from Persistent Insurgencies?

Some scholars argue that persistent and, at the same time, violent ethno-sectarian conflicts of Iraq, which reached to the degree of ethnic cleansing and inflicted millions of casualties, became an ancient hatred within the memory of each ethnic or sect's member and will prevent any future reconciliation among them within a unified Iraqi border (Abdullah 2015, 1). They endorse on the idea that the past sufferings of different ethnic and sects in Iraq (Abdullah 2015, 2) generated common fear among the member of each group towards others which emerges as inter-group anxiety that described in Integrated Threat Theory, by both Walter and Stephan (Landis and Albert 2012, 4). Furthermore, according to the theory of security dilemma and ethnic conflict, by Barry R. Posen, in such anarchic and uncertain situations, each ethnic or sectarian group within Iraqi society will not be able to guarantee its security without blackmailing the security of others, which consequently they will face a security dilemma and stay tuned by arming and strengthening themselves for any unknown and unpredicted future confrontations (Posen 1993, 29). As mentioned previously in this paper, both state-building efforts were unable to stabilize Iraq, and this state remains open to all kinds of civil war and ethno-sectarian conflicts at any particular moment. Generally, there are two leading prescribed solutions that William Zartman described for multi-ethnic and heterogenic societies like Iraq under the name of non-ethnic solutions (which encompasses assimilation or integration) and ideal ethnic solutions (which consisted of the federation, confederation or secession)

(Zartman 2008, 186-191). According to this classification proposed by Zartman, in Iraq, non-ethnic solutions (assimilation and integration) have been tested in the first and second attempts of state-building respectively by both Great Britain and the USA. In the first state-building process, Great Britain, by ignoring the will of Shi'i majority and Kurds imposed Hashemite Monarchy and obligated them to assimilate under the Sunni minority rule (Fabal 2015, 70). As a result, both Shi'i and Kurds began to start conflict and insurgency with the central government at the very beginning of the establishment of monarchy in Iraq (Fabal 2015, 71).

While, in the second state-building attempt the USA tried to integrate different ethnic and sects within the structure of state institution and establishment of federations in Iraq, but the result was also further instability and insurgency (Osman 2012, 35). Zartman argues that confederation cannot be a successful solution for multi-ethnic societies because it is not able to offer sovereignty requirements that will arise due to ethnic disputes (Zartman 2008, 190). Therefore, the only remained untested solution for the conflict in Iraq is secession. The idea of secession is in harmony with what the former USA Vice President, Joseph Biden, and the former President of the Council on Foreign Relations, Leslie Gelb, proposed as a plan for solving intractable Iraqi conflicts under the name of 'soft partition in Iraq' (Joseph and O'Hanlon 2013, X). Biden and Gelb, in their proposed plan, suggested a division of Iraq into three homogenous Sunni, Shi'i, and Kurdistan regions by voluntary remaining or relocating of the population from their current positions to the region that feels safe and comfortable (Joseph and O'Hanlon 2013, 23). According to Biden and Gelb's plan, Baghdad will not include in any of those three regions, and it will remain as an international city (Joseph and O'Hanlon 2013, 16). Edward P. Joseph and Michael E. O'hanlon in their book *'The Case for Soft Partition in Iraq'* insist on the idea that the continuation of violent inter-state conflicts among Iraqi groups from different sects and ethnics will Balkanize Iraq, and the enormous numbers of internally displaced people that fled (and still fleeing) from mixed heterogeneous communities to homogeneous regions makes Iraq resembles Bosnia during Balkan war 1992-1995 (Joseph and O'Hanlon 2013, 4). Joseph and O'hanlon argue that the success of the Dayton Agreement in stabilizing Balkan region can be tested in Iraq with considering differences and creating new mechanisms of implementation (Joseph and O'Hanlon 2013, 33-34). Despite the supporters of the 'soft partition in Iraq', there are opponents at domestic (Iraqi officials), regional (neighbouring countries), and global levels that will implement this plan harder than it seems (Joseph and O'Hanlon 2013, 1).

5. The Post-ISIS Iraq and the Parallel Governance by Non-State Actors

The emergence and growth of non-state armed groups in the Middle East have started since the Arab Spring. After the collapse of the regime in Libya, Egypt, and Yemen and also in Syria (both Russia and Iran saved the latter) the new groups with different names created and became popular among these countries' populations. For example, in Libya, the different armed groups were, in the beginning, gained legitimacy due to their fight against the Qazafi regime, but after that, they became a problem for the Libyans society. Regarding the regime change in Yemen, a small group like Alhouthi overthrew the transitional government and put Yemen into a civil war. The rise of Shia armed groups in Iraq came after the collapse of the Iraqi army against ISIS in the Sunni areas. Today where the ISIS is defeated in many Sunni cities like Mousel, Hawija, Diyala, and Salahadin are now under the direct control of the Shia armed groups the so-called Popular Mobilization forces (Hashed Al-shaebi), and they have the legitimacy to govern these areas. Recently there has been a report that Hashd al-Shaabi taxes people in Diyala and the police cannot do anything to stop them from taxing people. In the Hawija which is the centre of Al-Hawija District in the Kirkuk province of Iraq, 45 km west of Kirkuk, and north of Baghdad with 100,000 inhabitants, a Shia armed group requires every individual to be security approved if he/she wants for example to renew their car license or ID card. The access to the state-funded services such as education service and the health care system is under the control of these armed groups, and they favour those who are loyal to them. The power vacuum in post-ISIS controlled Sunni cities resulted in the creation of the new phenomenon which can be called *parallel*

governance by Shia armed groups in Iraq. These groups are state/government-like in their organization, management and structure, and also to some extent, they challenge the central government in Bagdad. According to Bartosz Stanislawski, these actors gradually become an influential actor in politics because of their extensive transnational network and financial flows (Stanislawski 2004, 155-170). That is the case in Iraq nowadays; the groups like Badr, The People of Righteousness (Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq also known as the Khazali Network) and Sadr have a great impact on the on-going about the establishment of the new government. Politically they dominate the public debate about every political issue. Socially they have ability and support from the religious institution to reevaluate these social norms that they do not find appropriate (Kardo Rached, Ahmed Omar Bali 2019, 122-137).

Politically, these militant groups do provide a challenge for the conventional state-centric approach in IR theory for the reason that they might be considered illegitimate, and they still pursue governing territories. The central government has been challenged by the Popular Mobilizations Forces now, and the government's institutions capacities are lower than these groups ability, and their transccontinental nature creates a shift from national to international policy (Willets 2014, 320-336).

Finally, according to Charles Tilly, these armed violence groups will have a significant role in politics and contribute to state formation. Tilly has this understanding that these groups in the past during state-formation in Europe in 19th had a different impact in three essential stages of the state-formation process.

1. State-making stage: The armed group role was in this stage the elimination of internal competitors
2. War-making stage: They will eliminate the external competitors
3. Protection: To do these stages, they needed protection and extraction, which meant the acquisition of the necessary resources to accomplish the former three.

State making

- (Elimination of internal competitors)

Warmaking

- (Elimination of external competitors)

Protection

- Moreover, extraction (acquisition of the necessary resources to accomplish the former three).

To apply this model to the informal armed groups in Iraq today, we find vast similarities between these groups' strategy nowadays and the informal armed groups in Europe during the state-formation period. For example, the Popular Mobilizations forces intend to actively participate in the state-reformation of the Iraqi state in post-ISIS era, and they are willing to eliminate any groups that will work opposite their goal. They see the Peshmerga (Kurdish fighters) as their internal competitors and counterpart, particularly in post-ISIS time, so they are no longer willing to cooperate with them. The PMF see no any obstacles to fight outside Iraq and to transfer cross borders between Iraq and Syria and if it is necessary to keep their role active in politics in Iraq and to keep the legitimacy to exist so they can make war outside their field namely Iraq. Finally, to accomplish these goals, they need protection in kind of economic support which they have gotten from the religious institution (Al marja aldiyny).

6. Conclusion

In this paper, the researchers try to investigate the possibility of durable stability and long-standing peace in Iraq, especially after the end of the latest wave of instability and insurgency that embodied in the emergence of the so-called Islamic State group. This study paper argues that the persistent ethno-sectarian conflicts of Iraq will continue, unless the cause is diagnosed, addressed, and treated. According to this paper, initially, the cause of the conflict in Iraq returns to the process of state-building. It also argues that both Great Britain's attempt (1920-1932) and USA's effort (2003-2011) for

establishing and re-building of a stabilized Iraq were failed respectively. Great Britain in its state-building effort, during the mandate period, downplayed the role of primordial affiliations of heterogenic components of the three former Ottoman Empire provinces in favour of the unified citizenry and installed a central Hashemite Monarchy from a Sunni minority by obligating both Shi'i and Kurds and encouraging them both to assimilate this dictation. By this action, either in purpose or unknowingly, Great Britain deepened the ethno-sectarian divisions, generated the sense of deprivation, and forced marginalized and deprived Iraqis to define in-group/out-group affiliations according to ethno-sectarian lines, which consequently entered Iraq into continuous cyclic waves of bloody, violent conflicts. On the other hand, the USA in 2003 invaded Iraq under the excuse of constructing a stable and democratic Iraq. In its effort, the USA tried to integrate all heterogenic components into the state institutions through inventing ethno-sectarian quotas. However, the fate of this effort was also a failure, due to the impact of an ancient hatred, ethnocentrism, and accentuation of ethnic and sectarian affiliation under the effect of elite manipulation. Finally, chapter three in this study paper presents the latest suggestion of scholars, academics, as well as top political leaders like former USA Vice President, Joseph Biden, which proposed the plan of 'soft partition' as an optimized solution for chronic intractable conflicts in Iraq.

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