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SYRO-IRAQI RELATIONS: THE PUZZLE OF THE PERPETUAL RIVALRY

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<u>ABSTRACT</u>

This thesis investigates and analyses the puzzle concerning the constant hostility between Syria and Iraq. Empirical and experimental examinations show that while pan-Arabism played a secondary role in the conflict between Syria and Iraq, the geopolitical realities of the two countries, and resemblance of the belief systems of the two presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn played a determining role in Syro-Iraqi hostile relations.

The rivalry between Syria and Iraq was driven by power consolidation and regional leadership, but also in an ideological sense by a romanticised conception of pan-Arabism. When the Baʿth party came to power in both countries, the two regimes became almost identical ideologically (Sluglett, 2000). As a result, they ended up competing over the same tools of regime legitimacy (Eppel, 1999). Therefore, although pan-Arabism has always played a role in Syro-Iraqi tension, its role during this period was secondary.

The geopolitical position of Syria and Iraq determined their foreign policy role. The Persian Gulf was the Iraqi regime's area of influence, while Lebanon was Syria's area of influence because of its lack of strategic depth. As a result, geopolitics stretched the two regimes in two opposite directions (Ehteshami, 2015). Thus, the Iraqi regime adopted a dogmatic approach in the Arab-Israel conflict, whereas the Syrian regime took a pragmatic approach in this conflict because of its geographical proximity to Israel. The two main subjects of geopolitics, the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline, and the water of the Euphrates, also played a significant role in feeding the tension between the two countries.

When Presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn – both powerful personalities - came to power (1970 and 1979 respectively), they added a personal element to the dynamics of hostile Syro-Iraqi relations. This thesis argues that because the two presidents dominated the process of decision making in their countries, their belief systems played a determining role in shaping Syro-Iraqi hostility. The experimental research demonstrates that the two presidents had similar belief systems – represented by dogmatism and mistrust of others, risk-taking, and adopting passive cooperation as a strategy in their foreign policy behaviour – which made reconciliation between Syria and Iraq exceedingly unlikely during the period they were in power (1979-2000).

DECLARATION

The author confirms that this thesis presented for examination for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy (Politics) at the School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University (2013-2016), has not been submitted for any other degree at another university. The author also affirms that this thesis is entirely his work and that the published and the unpublished work of others utilised in the thesis are credited to their authors. The author also declares that the thesis consists of (76,474) words.

STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT

<u>DEDICATION</u>

To my parents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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<u>ACRONYMS</u>

ACC	Arab Cooperation Council
ADF	Arab Deterrence Force
AFP	Agence France-Presse
ALS	Arab League States
AMU	The Arab Maghreb Union
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IPC	The Iraq Petroleum Company
IPSA	The Iraqi Pipeline in Saudi Arabia
LF	Lebanese Forces
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NCRC	The National Council of the Revolutionary Command
NDP	The National Democratic Party
PDK	Kurdistan Democratic Party
PDRY	The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
PLO	The Palestine Liberation Organization
PSP	Progressive Socialist Party
PUK	The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
RCC	The Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolutions
VICS	Verb in Context System
WWI	The First World War
WWII	The Second World War
YAR	Yemen Arab Republic

<u>TABLES AND FIGURES</u>

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I think that when we know that we actually do live in uncertainty, then we ought to admit it; it is of great value to realise that we do not know the answers to different questions. This attitude of mind - this attitude of uncertainty - is vital to the scientist, and it is this attitude of mind which the student must first acquire.

Richard Feynman

Syro-Iraqi relations are described as one of the "most perplexing" relations in Arab politics (Baram, 1986). No two other Arab countries match up to those two countries' relations regarding the level of rivalry and constant hostility in the region. Although the two countries were never in an armed conflict, enmity was repeatedly the primary outcome of their interaction. From 1921 to 1933, King Fayṣal attempted to annexe the Levant to his Kingdom using Arab sentiment, but the Syro-Lebanese National Bloc (*al-Kutla al-Waṭanīya*) viewed King Fayṣal's attempts as an instrument to control the Levant region. The Bloc desired to establish a Syrian "republic" rather than to become part of a Hashemite monarchy. During WWII, the Iraqi Prime Minister Nūrī as-Saʿīd proposed his Fertile Crescent Federation plan to establish a federal state in the area that is known today as Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, and Lebanon. The Syrians, again, were sceptical about as-Saʿīd's proposal and viewed it as a tool of hegemony over Syria. Later, in 1945, they signed the Arab League States (ALS) protocol, which legalised the colonial borders among the Arabs.

The establishment of the ALS and the state of Israel was a complete disappointment to the Arab masses. Thus, the Arab Baʿth Socialist Party (*ḥizb al-Baʿth al-ʿArabī al-Ishtirākī*) was established in Syria in 1947, presumably as a reaction to these pivotal events concerning Arabism. This party was transnational. It advocated the establishment of a larger Arab state. With the establishment of this party, the possibility of unification between Syria and Iraq came to the fore. In 1963, the party came to power via a coup d'état in both countries. Theoretically, the two countries would establish unity and erase the colonial-imposed borders. In practice, the party became a source of a menace to the two Arab countries.

In fact, their bilateral relations was determined by power consolidation of the political elites in both branches (The Syrian branch and the Iraqi branch) of the party. This struggle of power was undergirded by pan-Arabism romanticism. Each branch claimed leadership of the party for the

purpose of power legitimacy. For instance, when the tripartite unity negotiations collapsed in 1963 between Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, President ʿArif launched bilateral unity negotiations between Syria and Iraq. President ʿArif's efforts, however, failed because of the power struggle and disagreement inside the Baʿth party. Therefore, President ʿArif expelled the Baʿthists from the government in Iraq. Eventually, a split within the party took place in 1966 in which new young Baʿthists took over the government in Syria and exiled the founders of the party, the old guard.

After the 1968 revolution in Iraq, the Baʿth party came to power. The Syrian regime perceived the new Iraqi regime as a serious threat to its domestic legitimacy and regional ambitions of Arabism leadership, especially after the Iraqi Baʿthists received the old guard of the party. The Syrian Baʿthists believed that this would allow Iraqi Baʿthists to claim the leadership of the party.

The two countries briefly stopped their reciprocal antagonism when Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad became the President of Syria in 1970 because he adopted a less ideological foreign policy strategy. This short reconciliation ceased when Syria demanded from Iraq an increase of 100% in the transfer tariffs following Iraq's nationalisation of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) in 1972.

Tensions between the two countries occurred again after the 1973 war too. Both began to discredit the pan-Arabism of each other, each one of them claimed to be the true leader of the party because the party provided them with legitimacy. Both also supported the domestic opposition of the rival. When Iraq signed the Algiers treaty with the Shah of Iran in 1975, Syria accused it of selling Khuzestan and betraying the pan-Arab cause. The Syrians also began to support the Shiʿa and the Kurds against the Baʿth regime in Baghdad. Iraq, for its part, supported the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood against the Baʿth regime in Damascus while oppressing the Iraqi branch.

Syro-Iraqi hostility did not stop until President as-Sādāt's historic visit to Jerusalem in 1978. Both Syria and Iraq had to re-assess their bilateral relations. They entered full unity negotiations to establish a federal state and signed the Charter of Joint National Action to deal with the unification process. By then Iraq began to re-transfer oil through Syria to the Mediterranean. Unexpectedly, in July 1979, President Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr resigned from his post as President of Iraq and his Deputy, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, became his successor. In the same month, the new president of Iraq claimed that the Baʿth regime in Damascus was plotting to topple the Baʿthi regime in Baghdad. Although Damascus rejected these accusations, the unity talks failed.

The two countries entered into a new historical stage, what Mufti (1996) calls the 'Bonapartistian age', or the 'age of realism' as Hinnebusch (2014) terms it, when Presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and

Ṣaddām Ḥusayn came to power (in 1970 and 1979 respectively). Their arrival to power added a personal factor to Syro-Iraqi hostility. Both of them had the ambition to turn their countries into strong regional players, presumably as a tool of state formation, since the process was still ongoing. To do that, both rulers believed that one-man rule and an authoritarian system of government with limited pluralism would transform their countries into regional players. Thus, both established their Sultanistic regimes (a term used by Weber, 1978) in which loyalty to them is granted by fear and reward. Both were equally inclined to use force against their foes, however, while President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn used the power of the party, President al-Asad utilised the military to stay in power. The former, like his predecessor, al-Bakr, managed to keep the military away from the regime. He portrayed himself as the man of the party, the comrade (Baram, Telephone interview, 15 May 2016). The military was kept professional. Nevertheless, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn organised *Jihaz Haneen*, which became the "nucleus" of the *Mukhābarāt*, the intelligence agency, "the chief organ of Baʿthis policies" (Makiya, 1989, p. 30). He also managed to buy the loyalty of the non-Baʿthist military officers by either fear and/or reward. President al-Asad, on the other hand, turned the party into a military institution. The civilian wing became powerless under his presidency. He also established paramilitary organisations, such as the Defence Companies, *Sarāyā al-Difāʿ* led by al-Asad's brother, Rifʿat al-Asad, to protect his regime. Eventually, both presidents completely controlled the party. However, they never attempted to revoke the party, because they still needed its seal of approval. Thus, as soon as the two 'giant' presidents were in power, a personal clash took place between them that arguably spilled-over to the state level.

In the Iran-Iraq war, Syria backed Iran. Although Syrian-Iraqi antagonism was at a peak, both managed to adopt a pragmatic approach during the first two years of the war. For instance, in October 1980, President al-Asad refused to meet an Iranian envoy to discuss the war with him. He also did not close the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline from the Syrian side. At the same time, he supported Iraqi opposition groups and provided them with a haven in the country. For his part, although Iraq cut its diplomatic relations with Syria in October 1980 following the Syro-Iranian rapprochement, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn kept the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline open. The Iraqi oil continued to flow into the global market.

Throughout the eight years of the war, enmity was the constant feature of Syro-Iraqi relations. This hostility was interspersed by brief periods when Iraq attempted to achieve rapprochement with Syria. The latter also managed to turn Syro-Iraqi relations into a hot/cold game, to gain oil

concessions from Iran. As the war ended in 1988, Iraq, in revenge, supported the anti-Syrian Lebanese factions for no strategic purpose other than to irritate Syria.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in Autumn 1990, the Syrian regime completely opposed it, partially to preserve its pan-Arab image, and for geopolitical purposes to constrain and weaken Iraq regional ambitions. An Iraqi victory in Kuwait would have turned the country into a formidable regional power. Thus, Syria demanded a complete Iraqi withdrawal. Iraq attempted to gain Syria's support to back the annexation of Kuwait and to establish a regional alliance against Iran and Israel. Syria rejected it, and declared that the Iraqi invasion weakened the Arab position in the Arab-Israel conflict, and had given the United States the pretext to intervene militarily in the region. When the allied forces drove the Iraqi army out of Kuwait, the Syrians briefly endorsed a possible regime change in Iraq but soon abandoned the idea.

Research question and objective

Apart from the above, the struggle of power, pan-Arabism, and geopolitical issues such as the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline, and the water of Euphrates continuously were consistant stumbling blocks to Syro-Iraqi unity. Yet, as essential as bilateral relations between Syria and Iraq is to the politics of the MENA region, particularly to Mashreq, relatively little work has been published regarding Syro-Iraqi relations. Much of the literature about the conflict in the MENA region has focused on the Arab-Israel conflict, perhaps because it is one of the central issues of Middle East politics. Perhaps the most significant published work on this issue is Eberhard Kienle's book *Ba'th vs. Ba'th* (1990). Kienle's core argument was that pan-Arabism was the key *determinant* of Syro-Iraqi relations. Another comprehensive work on Syro-Iraqi relations is Malik Mufti's book *Sovereign Creations* (1996). Mufti acknowledged that the role of the ideology of pan-Arabism was as a tool for regime consolidation. Although both writers argued that pan-Arabism played a significant role in Syro-Iraqi relations, Kienle viewed it as a *determining factor*; Mufti viewed it as a product of sovereignty consolidation.

The central question of this study is to investigate whether Syro-Iraqi relations were determined primarily by ideational factors, or was the relationship in fact configured around other factors, notably operational factors, in which ideational competition was used to ensure regime legitimacy.

This study also aims to investigate whether there were any other hostility patterns throughout the period given above, in order to assess future prospects concerning the bilateral relations of those

two countries. This includes the role of the authoritarian rulers: Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn in driving politics between Syria and Iraq, because such rulers usually have complete control over the processes of decision-making (Hermann, 1976, Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2014, 1016). Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (2014-2016) argue that the two had different personal predispositions therefore Syria and Iraq had different foreign policy behaviour. The two rulers, however, seems to have had a similar background – both belonged to the minority sect in their countries. Both were more or less the same age. They both had "their rural lower class roots, iniquitous socio-political environment, and the influence of Arab nationalism" – and both had to seek power "in compensation for their modest origins" (Brown, 1984, pp. 3-4). This study includes this factor in the analysis of Syro-Iraqi relations and investigates whether the two had similar or different personal predispositions, and how their predispostions shaped Syro-Iraqi relations.

International Relations (IR) theory debate

The foreign policy behavior of states in world politics has been studied in depth and explained widely. Various theories have been developed to explain why states act in certain ways and not in others. However, Constructivism, Reflectism, and Rationalism seem to be the three main approaches to IR theory (Smith, 2002). Constructivism is a famed theory of international relations. Although it acknowledges the anarchical nature of the international system, it does not view the latter as a given and a pre-existing fact but as a socially constructed system by states over time (Wendt, 1992). Anarchy only exists, argues Wendt, because all the states subscribe to the same belief, and that is the 'self-help system' (1992). Thus, anarchy would not have been constituted if states believed in cooperation.

Concerning a state's foreign policy behaviour, this theory gives weight to the role of ideas in shaping the politics among nations and argues that 'identity' is the base of states' interests and foreign policy behaviour (Wendt, 1992). Accordingly, a state's behaviour towards another state depends on the way it perceives it. It would, therefore, trust and cooperate with a state that is seen as a friend and would mistrust the one that is seen as an enemy.

Yet, constructivism's focus on the formative power of ideas is over-exaggerated. Ideational forces alone cannot explain the foreign policy behaviour of the states. Power struggles occurs between states that share the same foreign policy ideology such as the dispute over the leadership of the Communist world between the Soviet Union and China during the Cold War. In the case of

the MENA region, power struggles always worked in the background of inter-states relations. Pan-Arabism, for example, that was supposed to be an instrument of Arab unity was, in fact, a tool for Arab disunity. It was a tool for power consolidation by self-centred leaders (Ajami, 1981). Thus, constructivism has "difficulty explaining particular events or change in regional politics" in MENA (Fawcett, 2014, p. 30). This is seen especially in the case of Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Libya. President Nāṣer's leadership of pan-Arabism provided him with a potent tool to weaken his regional foes and seek regional hegemony. When he established unity with Syria (UAR 1958-1961), he controlled the shape of the republic (Hinnebusch, 2002). He also intervened in the Yemen civil war in 1962-1970. His death in 1970 created a gap of pan-Arab leadership in the region. Syria-Iraq and Libya immediately endeavoured to take on this role. Each claimed the competence to lead the Arab world, and thus ended up competing viciously over the leadership of pan-Arabism.

Historical sociology is one of the theories of reflectism's approach to IR. This theory recognises the state as the key player in global politics. It gives greater weight to domestic factors in the formation of states' external behaviour than any other IR theory including *innenpolitik* (Halliday, 2005, p. 36).

Thus, it sees the nature of the state as a reflection of the society and a tool of coercion that is shaped and reshaped over time by the requirements of the establishment and the maintenance of the social institutions of the state (Smith, 2002, p. 230). Accordingly, the external behaviour of the state is an image of its internal socio-political dynamics. The society of the state, asserts the leading scholar of historical sociology Fred Halliday, "creates the context" of its foreign policy behaviour (2002). This theory, however, does not neglect the role of the international system in shaping states' behaviour. States' foreign policy behaviours emerge from systemic conditions. In Tilly's famous words "War made the state, and the state made war" (Smith, 2002, p. 231).

Nevertheless, a state's foreign policy behaviour is not necessarily a reflection of its society. Historical sociology does provide a theoretical ground for states' foreign policy behaviour in the MENA region, be it Arab nationalism or pan-Islamism (Halliday, 2005) or pan-Kurdism, but it does not explain why some states that have societal similarities exhibit different foreign policy behaviour, and vice versa. For example, the societal differences between Syria and Iran did not prevent them from having a similar regional policy after the Iranian revolution of 1979. Halliday himself acknowledges that extreme generalisation of the role of domestics politics in shaping states' foreign behaviour is a prime limitation of this theory (2005, p. 38).

International society or the English school is also one the popular theories of reflectism approach of IR. This theory recognises the international system as an anarchical system, and the state as the key actor in world politics, but at the same time, it recognises non-states actors, be they international organisations, terrorist groups, or quasi-states (Bull, 1977; Linklater and Suganami, 2006; Buzan, 2004). This theory postulates that states, like humans, are inclined to establish an international society within the anarchical system, through collectively designed laws and rules or through diplomatic practices of states' political elites, in order to overcome their differences and decrease the likelihood of war (Bull, 1977).

The central elements of this theory are mutual sovereignty, recognition, and common interests between the states. States need to recognise the sovereignty of one another to establish the international society and to achieve minimal shared interests through institutions, to take part and sustain the international society (Dunne, 2010). This theory has significantly contributed in the understanding of world politics, but the MENA region tends to challenges one of the fundamental elements of this theory, namely sovereignty recognition. The rise of the trans-border ideologies of pan-Arabism, pan-Islamism and pan-Kurdism after WWI, due to colonial borders (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2014), challenges the current Westphalian state-system in the region (Lawson, 2014; Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2014, 2016). The Arab masses have always rejected the post-WWI colonial borders, an issue that has contributed to the shape of foreign policy behaviour of the Arab countries. For example, pan-Arabism undermined the sovereignty of the MENA region as it granted legitimacy for Arab leaders to interfere in the internal affairs of the other Arab states (Barnett, 1998; Eppel, 1999).

Theories of Neorealism (Waltz, 1979) and Neoliberalism (Keohane and Nye, 1989) are two theories of the rationalist approach of IR. These two theories argue that the nature of the state is egotistical, and that states are rational actors and physical power maximisers. Although these two theories view the international system as an anarchical arena, they disagree over the nature of world politics. While neoliberalists see the world in terms of cooperation, neorealists see it in terms of war and conflict. Neoliberalists argue that the egotistical nature of the states and international anarchy does not prevent them from cooperation to achieve their desired goals (Koehane and Nye, 1989). Thus, states collectively design institutions where they can bargain and negotiate to meet their interests. Those institutions, along with the states, are the main actors of world politics. Through these institutions, states acquire information about other countries' intentions and

preferences, which reduce the ambiguity of global politics and the likelihood of being cheated (Sterling-Folker, 2009).

Neoliberalism's argument in dismissing the role of ideas in shaping states' foreign behaviour limits this theory regarding an understand of integration within MENA. Arabness and Arab order has shaped Arab cooperation and alienation. For example, when the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) was established between Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, and North Yemen in February 1989, it only survived a few months and was dissolved after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Although Jordan and North Yemen supported Iraq during the Kuwait Crisis in August 1990 (more on the Yemeni side), Egypt staunchly opposed the Iraqi invasion. As a result, this economic bloc dissolved. Although Egypt gained aid and the Egyptian military debt was cancelled because of its support of the coalition forces during the crisis, it was the stability of the Arab world order that pushed Egypt to react against the invasion in the first place (ʿAbdl al-Raʿouf al-Rīdī, Former Egyptian ambassador to Washington, interview to RT, 2015).

In addition, the existing economic interdependence in the region did not spill over to political interdependence. Although the regional economic blocs in the region such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) have established shared norms and rules, they showed an inability to sustain these shared norms (Fawcett, 2014, p. 189). This is perhaps because of the weakness of these economic blocs themselves. In addition, regional trade traffic is relatively weak, and cross-border collaboration in manufactured products is limited (Ehteshami, 2007). Thus, Neorealism offers only a partial analysis of the politics of the region because "the behaviour of the Middle East also demonstrates the power of ideas – both shared and conflicting identities – and their constant interaction with regimes and people" (Fawcett, 2014, p. 188).

Neo-Realism is essentially a theory of security and power. It argues that states seek security and power to survive because they live in a self-help system. The international system to this theory is anarchical because of the lack of world government to organise the relations between the units of the system, the states. This theory assumes that states behave according to what the international system brings about. Further, outcomes of the system drive states to choose the ideal foreign policy, and that states act adaptively and irrationally towards the systemic conditions. Therefore, it does not consider the domestic determinants from being part of states' behaviour. Rather, it perceives the states as black boxes in the system.

Realists often disagree with each other. States seek to attain material power in order to achieve balance of security (Waltz, 1979), or to achieve balance of power (Mearsheimer, 2001); or balance of threats (Walt, 1986), or to achieve balance of interests (Schweller, 2008). However, all of them agree that all states seek the opportunity to increase their material power because it offers the capability to react to the systemic conditions posed by the anarchical system.

Neorealism discounts the role of the ideational power in shaping the politics among the nations. Such a disregard of the formative power of ideas fails to explain the politics in the MENA region, where identity matters. The criticism of Neorealism is that it reflects the politics in Europe where the nation-state was formed inside by the European nations themselves after the Westphalia treaty of 1648. Hence, it assumes convergence between the state and identity (Hinnebusch & Ehteshami, 2014, 2016). In contrast, the outside-in creation of the nation-state system in the MENA region after WWI dismissed elements of shared culture and language among the masses (Hinnebusch & Ehteshami, 2014). Borders were drawn without taking into consideration these societal elements. Therefore, the "the international relations of the Middle East", asserts Fawcett, "are shaped, and reshaped, by criss-crossing local, regional and international, and transnational pressures" (2014, p. 188). As a result, the colonial borders led to the rise of trans-border ideologies such pan-Arabism, pan-Kurdism and pan-Islamism. These trans-border ideologies had a great impact on the politics on the region, because people in the region grant loyalty these transnational communities, not to the state itself (Hinnebusch & Ehteshami, 2014, 2016).

Ideology also works as a foreign policy constraint in the region. Syria suffered from Arab isolation when she established an alliance with Iran after the 1979 revolution, in order to achieve some balance of power with Israel and Iraq. The creation of an alliance with a non-Arab country against another Arab state, however, was conceived as a betrayal of pan-Arabism. Similarly, Israel according to the realist argument, would have been Iraq's ideal ally to confront Syria, but such an alliance was unthinkable because the opposition of the MENA regimes to the state of Israel provided them with internal legitimacy, and external popularity among the Arab masses (Ajami, 1981; Barnett, 1996, 1998; Barnett and Telhami, 2002; Korany and Dessouki, 2008; Hinnebusch & Ehteshami, 2014, 2016).

The politics of the MENA region is thus too complicated to be understood by a single theory. If foreign policy is about opportunities and constraints, then the states in the Middle East have a double burden, due to the complexity of the international system and to domestic politics which is

less secure and less manageable than it is the developed countries (Korany and Dessouki, 2008, p. 41). As a result, it makes the foreign policy behaviour of the states of the region more complicated. In Fawcett's words, "understanding the behaviour of the Middle Eastern states in the international system, therefore, demands a flexible and inclusive theoretical framework – one that incorporates that politics of power and influence, but also the role of diverging ideas, norms, and domestic consideration". "No single theory or level of analysis", Fawcett continues, "offers a way of exploring satisfactorily the shifting dynamic of interregional politics, or the international politics of the region" (2014, p. 189).

Ehteshami and Hinnebusch recently developed a theory called "Complex Realism" to explain the politics of the MENA (2014; 2016). This theory suggests a flexible method and considers several explanatory variables to understand the politics of the MENA, which makes it a distinct IR theory both ontologically and epistemologically. Because the central question of this study is wide-ranging – that is whether the formative power of pan-Arabism determined the Syrian-Iraqi hostility, and/or was in fact constituted by other factors – this study interacts with this theory to address the question because it offers a spectrum of variables of foreign policy behaviour of the states in the MENA region.

Complex Realism resembles neoclassical realism (Gideon, 1998) in its ontology as it adopts a range of variables to explain the foreign policy behaviour of the states, including the systemic constraints, the regional sub-constraints, domestic politics, and the role of individuals. Perhaps the only ontological disagreement between those two theories is that Complex Realism views the international system as a hierarchical system, not anarchical as neo-classical realism postulates.

Epistemologically, the two theories differ in prioritising the variables of foreign policy analysis. Neo-classical realism considers the systemic outcomes as the key factors determining the foreign policy behaviours of the states, and domestic variables as intervening factors that contribute to shape the extent of states' reaction to the systemic constraints (Gideon, 1998). Complex realism, on the other hand, does not adopt a specific epistemology. For this theory, a state's foreign policy is determined by a combination of systemic, sub-systemic, and domestic politics factors (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2014, 2016).

Complex realism acknowledges the role of the systemic outcomes in shaping the foreign policy behaviour of the states in the MENA region. It asserts that because of the weakness of the MENA, it is penetrated at all levels by the great powers. Thus, the politics among these great powers affects

the foreign policy behaviour of the region's states. And when global powers intervene in the region, Ehteshami and Hinnebusch argue, the states of this region submit or resist them (2014, 2016). Another indication of systemic constraints is that those great powers are the main arms suppliers to the MENA states.

Complex realism theory also acknowledges the role of the regional environment, or the sub-systemic restrictions and the role of ideology in shaping the politics of the MENA. This is represented by a constant search for material power to confront the regional threats, and a search for the formative power of Arabism or Islamism (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2014, 2016). Ultimately, the competition over the leadership of pan-Arabism was one of the key platforms of interactions between Syria and Iraq. This formative power provided them with internal legitimacy and regional leadership, respectively.

Complex realism considers a state's geopolitics as one of the key determinants of its foreign policy behaviour (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2014, 2016). Indeed, Iraq adopted an ideological stand in the Arab-Israel conflict, arguably because it did not share borders with Israel. While Egypt, Jordan and Syria adopted rather a pragmatic approach in the conflict instead because of the geographical proximity. Thus, thegeopolitics of states, including those in the MENA region, is critical to count when analysing their foreign policy behaviour.

Treating Middle East countries as black boxes has led to mistreatment and a misunderstanding of the foreign policy behaviour of these countries (Korany and Dessouki, 2008, p. 8). Ehteshami and Hinnesbush argue that there is a need to explore the black box, the state, to understand its foreign policy behaviour. "The level of the state formation", asserts Ehteshami and Hinnesbuch, " determines the main threats that the foreign policy is used to manage" (2014, p. 226). That is to say, states, through their regimes, form foreign policy preferences based on certain diplomatic strategies, military capacities, and foreign and economic agendas, which are fully calculated by states' decision makers and elites, and which all depend on the level of state formation

Another factor of foreign policy behaviour that can be drawn here is that the power distribution among the political elites vis-à-vis the society can affect the rationality of a state's foreign policy decisions (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2014, p. 228). States do not make policy per se, stresses Schweller, but through its governments that consist of its political elites (2006, p, 46). Schweller argues that the systemic outcomes are the consequences of four domestic determinants. These domestic determinants are often represented hy the elite's view of world politics, their

preferences and perceptions (Schweller, 2006). In the same respect, Zartman argues that politics can best be understood through a study of those who exercise power– those who make decisions and run the society… it is the elites who run the political system" (1980, p. 8).

Thus, when elites disagree over the degree of the threat, it distorts the rationality of a state's response (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2014, 2016). Therefore, consensus between the elites is crucial for a balanced behaviour of the state. Nevertheless, forming a consensus among elites is a hard task and depends largely on the structure of the political system of the states. For instance, in democratic states, due to the veto, it is hard to come up with an agreed policy towards certain external threats.

In authoritarian regimes, however, the leader of the country controls the process of decision making regardless of the degree of legitimacy of his or her regime (Hermman, 1976; Dawisha, 1976; Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2014, 2016). As Zartman argues, "Foreign policy is a reflection of the whims and caprices of the man in the top (Korany and Dessouki, 2008, p. 26). It is true that the leaders of the MENA region take decisions under certain social circumstances and within an institutionalised context, but because most of the regimes in the region are not pluralistic and lack institutionalised foreign policy, the personality and perception of statesmen matter, (Korany and Dessouki, 2008, p. 40). In this regard, Ehteshami and Hinnebusch assert that personality does affect decision-making (2014, 2016).

Indeed, it is difficult to analyse the foreign policy of Egypt in the 1960s without a reference to President Nāṣer's role or to analyse Syria or Iraq's foreign policy without referring to presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn in the 1980s and the 1990s. Those leaders had an absolute monopoly over the processes of decision-making and it would be fruitless not to consider their beliefs of themselves and of others in shaping the foreign policy of their countries, because at the end of the day, they were the solo policy makers.

Ehteshami and Hinnebusch go beyond neoclassical realists' arguments of personality, and postulate that regardless of the situational factors and perceptions and misperception of facts and information, "in regimes in which power is personalised and concentrated, and especially in times of fluidity and crisis", the leader's predispositions "can make an enormous difference" (2014, p. 229).

The relationship between personality traits, the external situation and individuals' images and values is rather complex. One of the key issues here is that a leader's impact on policy making

is related to their definition of the situation and to public opinion and other "factors of the political role and various administrative procedures" (Holsti, 1995, p. 281). However, neither public opinion nor administrative measures matter in authoritarian regimes. Thus, leaders' personal impact increases over the process of decision making in their countries. This is not to say that leaders in the democractic countries have less impact on decision making. Rather, even in democratic regimes, leaders' personal inputs matter, but is highly constrained by public opinion and the high organisational degree of the foreign policy institutions, Yet, even in those countries, a leader's impact increases during a crisis. Undeniably, it was the personal input of President John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev that prevented an apocalyptic nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 (Allison, 1971).

Values and beliefs are all attitudinal elements that influence the process of foreign policy decision making (Holsti, 1995, p. 270). Yet, leaders have different personality factors in dealing with domestic and external constraints (Holsti, 1995, Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2014, 2016). A leader's predisposition would be for example his/her skills of future predictability or his/her level of risk assessment. For instance, Etheredge argues that those with personalities defined as "high dominance" and "introvert", usually adopt hardline policies regardless of what their values and beliefs are. " Hardliners", asserts Holsti, "are persons, whatever their images, values, and sources of information, who have predispositions to deal with adversaries and certain kinds of general foreign policy problems by the advocacy of "tough" measures, including the use of military forces; who find if difficult to compromise goals and purposes; and who generally are not empathetic to perspectives of others" (1995, p. 279). While personalities that are defined with "low dominance" and "extrovert" tend to take more accommodative policies in dealing with crises. Thus, they find "use of force repugnant, place emphasis on avoiding conflicts, and should conflicts arise nevertheless, seek to find negotiated compromise" (Holsti, 1995, p. 279).

Figure one: A Model of Foreign Policy Decision Making
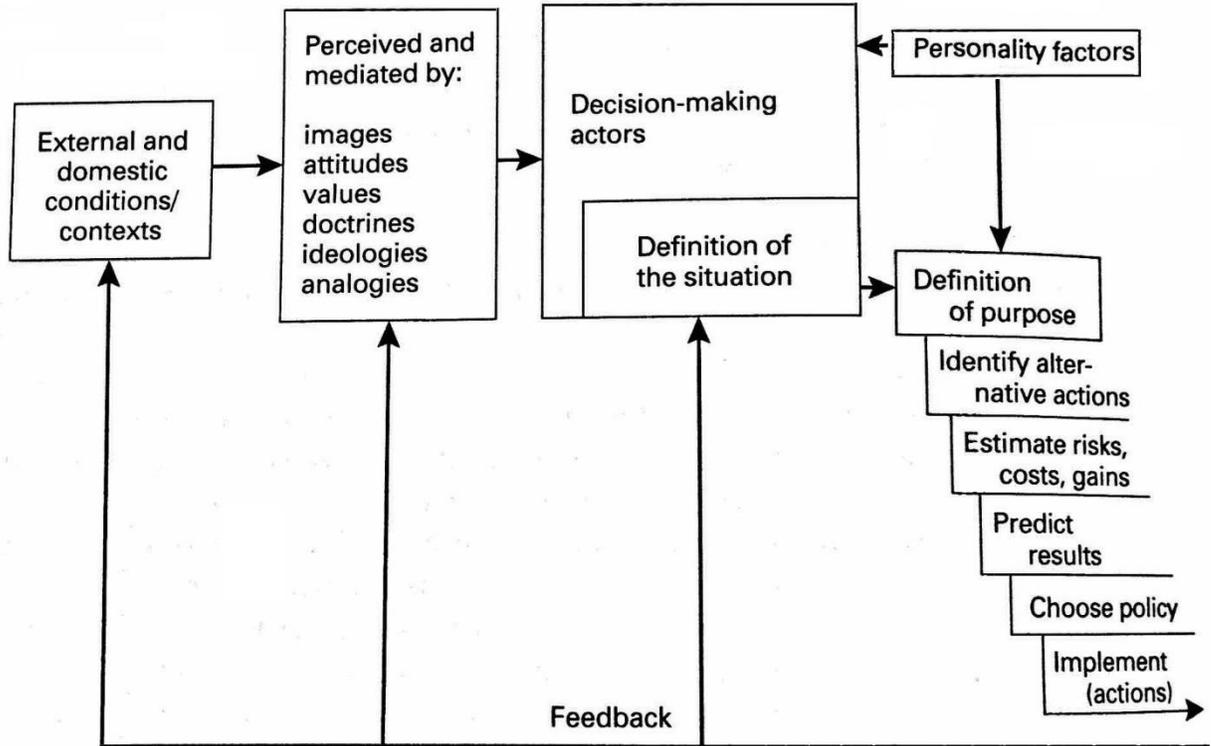
Developed by Holsti (1995, p. 282)

The case of Presidents Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad – the core actors of this study – can be considered one of the definitive cases of how leaders' personal characters matter in world politics. For instance, scholars of personality studies agree on several circumstances in which the influence of leaders becomes a significant factor in shaping the foreign policy of their states. All of these conditions apply in the case of the two presidents. The first condition is the nature of the position that the leader occupies (Post, Walker and Winter, 2003; Hermann, 1976). The higher the position in the structure of foreign policy making, the higher is the leader's influence in shaping the foreign policy of his or her country. In this study, Presidents Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad were at the top of the political pyramid. They were the sole decision-makers in their countries. Thus, it is fruitless to explain the foreign policy decisions of Syria and Iraq, under their rule, without referring to their personality characters.

War and political crises are the second condition in which a leader's impact on foreign policy making increases. A crisis is a situation that is perceived by the head of state as a threat to national security (Hermann, 1976, p. 330). The process of decision-making during crises usually becomes

central. Because it is often hard to get information about the crisis quickly, decision makers act using their abilities and experiences (Hermann, 1976, p. 331). Accordingly, the two presidents had a significant impact on the shape of the foreign policy behaviour of their countries especially during the Iran-Iraq war and the Kuwait crisis, and thus ultimately on Syro-Iraqi relations.

The third condition in which a leader's role increases over foreign policy is whether he or she is interested in foreign policy issues. The more the head of state is interested in foreign policy issues, the more he or she influences the making of foreign policy (Hermann, 1976, p. 331). For example, United States President, George W. Bush (2001-2009) focused far more on foreign policy issues than his successor, President Barak Obama (2009-2016). In fact, President Obama handed the foreign policy agenda to his Deputy, Joe Biden, and his assistant and speechwriter Ben Rhodes (Traub, 2012; Ricks, 2016). Presidents Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad were both interested in foreign policy because it provided them with internal legitimacy and that was through utilisation of pan-Arabism as the base of their foreign policy. Thus, both kept the process of decision-making in their own hands and bolstered the legitimacy of their regimes internally by acting as promoters of pan-Arabism externally.

The fourth condition is the relative level of development of the foreign policy organisation of the state. Hermann argues that the more established the foreign policy body is, the less influential the leaders are in the shaping of foreign policy (1976, p. 330). In developing states, foreign policy is not that institutionalised, which gives space to the leaders to be influential in foreign policy making (Hermann, 1976, p. 330). Because the process of state formation was still going on, foreign policy in Syria and Iraq was not to any extent institutionalised. Uninstitutionalised regimes usually lack stable foreign policies. This applied in the case of Syria and Iraq, and allowed both presidents to significantly influence the shape of the foreign policy of both states.

The fifth condition is the way in which leaders come to power. Hermann argues that leaders who come to power in chaotic situations such as coup d'états and revolutions usually dominate the foreign policy of their states. Leaders are in a honeymoon period immediately after these dramatic events, and that allows them to control the domestic and the foreign policy of their states (1976, p. 329). Both Presidents Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad came to power through relatively bloodless coup d'états. President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad managed to remove President Ṣāliḥ J'dīd quietly in 1970. Similarly, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn calmly removed President al-Bakr from power in 1979.

The sixth observation concerns the charisma of the leader. A charismatic leader is one who manages the domestic and foreign policy of the state, the one who is expected to solve problems, and the one whose values and beliefs become the values and beliefs of his or her followers (Hermann, 1976, p. 330). The masses perceived both Presidents Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad as charismatic leaders. The public called them the father, leader, and struggler against imperialism. Their photos, posters, statues were in every single town both in Iraq and in Syria. There were infrastructure projects, streets, and hospitals named after them. Perhaps this perception is to a larger extent applicable in the case of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, who surrounded himself with the illusion of being the victorious president, the comrade who faced the yellow storm from the east, Iran, and imperialism, the infidel state (*dawlat al-Kufr*) and the great Satan (*al-Shayyṭān al-akbar*) the United States, in 1991. Thus, the two were to an extent popular in their countries, as they managed to conceive and manipulate the public through a well-controlled media that they were indispensable.

The Study of Personality factors: presenting a modified Complex Realism theory

But if the role of the perosnality factors is crucial, especially in the authoritarian regimes, and in the conditions mentioned earlier, can their role be systematically studied? Complex realism does not offer an empirical methodology on how to explore the role of the idiosyncratic variable. Therefore, this study has modified the complex realism of Ehteshami and Hinnebusch by adding cognitive theory to the complex realism tenet in order to explain the role of the idiosyncratic variable in shaping Syro-Iraqi relations during the time that the two giant presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn were in power. The justification of using the cognitive theory is that the personal impact of leaders and their capability to address domestic and international constraints are limited by their belief systems (Leites, 1951, 1953; Holsti, 1962; George, 1967, 1969; Walker, 1977, 1983, 2011; Walker, Schafer and Young, 1998). Such belief systems are composed of a set of predispositions that individuals acquire over time about themselves.

Cognitive theory gives a subjective explanation of the foreign policy of states, and that is by studying the belief systems of the foreign policy decision makers. It focuses on the outcomes of foreign policy decisions, and "analyses the processes through which foreign policy is actually

made" (Levy 2013, p. 305).[*] This theory holds two main assumptions. The first is that environmental factors are not important per se, but the way decision makers *perceive* them. "If that is the way the statesman saw the situation, it is no wonder that he acted as he did" (Jervis, 1976, p. 14). For example, if a leader *views* the world as a hostile arena, he or she might adopt a conflictual foreign policy, but if he or she *sees* it as a cooperative arena, he, or she might take a collaborative foreign policy approach instead.

This does not mean, however, that cognitive theory dismisses actual environmental settings. "The usefulness of adopting a cognitive psychological approach to the role of ideas hinges on the potential for systematic slippage between policy-guiding mental representations of reality and reality itself" (Goldgeier and Tetlock, quoted in Rathbun, 2007, p. 546).

The second assumption of Cognitive theory is that uncertainty occurs in world politics, not because of lack of information, but because there is too much information. Furthermore, leaders adopt some cognitive beliefs to help them grasp this abundance of information (Rathbun, 2007) and to simplify the complexity patterned by this information (Levy, 2013). However, confusion occurs because of their cognitive limitations. Leaders "see through a lens darkly," with the "lens" capturing the subjective nature of perception, "darkly" the inability to see the world as it truly is due to its complexity (Rathbun, 2007, p. 546).

Within Cognitive theory, this thesis uses the most advanced approach in the field of personality studies: the Operational Code approach (Developed by Leites, 1951; modified by George, 1969; re-edited by Walker, 1977, 1983) to explain how the cognitive capabilities of presidents, Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, shaped Syro-Iraqi hostility. The Operational Code is "a classic approach to foreign policy and international relations within the general cognitivist research program in world politics" (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 4). Nathan Leites was the first scholar who introduced this approach in his study of Bolshevism (1951). He studied the effects of Lenin's personality and the cultural norms in Russia on the Bolshevik revolution in 1917. Leites (1951) defined "Operational code" as "the conceptions of political strategy" in Bolshevik ideology and "Operational code analysis" practised by Leites (1951, 1953) was a psychoanalytic method of measuring those

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[*] Psychological assumptions alone are not enough to understand world politics (Levy, 2013). Thus, this thesis does not explain Syro-Iraqi relations by studying only the belief systems of President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. It also considers the material powers represented by geopolitics and the ideational power of competition over the leadership of the pan-Arabism ideology in its explanation of the bilateral relations between those two Arab neighbouring countries.

conceptions. Alexander George (1967, 1969) expanded the Operational Code to explicitly include the leader's worldview or what he called philosophical beliefs as well as instrumental beliefs about strategy. Thus, he developed ten questions in two categories: philosophical beliefs and instrumental beliefs to explain leaders' belief systems in shaping the foreign policy of their states. The questions are: (George, 1967, pp. 201-216)

The Philosophical Beliefs

1. The Nature of the Political Universe (P-1), Hostile vs. Friendly: What is the "essential" nature of political life? Is the political universe essentially one of harmony or conflict? What is the fundamental character of one's political opponent?
2. Prospects for Realising Fundamental Values (P-2), Pessimism vs. Optimism: What are the prospects for the eventual realisation of one's fundamental values and aspirations?
3. Predictability of the Political Universe (P-3), Unpredictable vs. predictable: Is the political future predictable? In what sense and to what extent?
4. Control over Historical Development (P-4), Low/High level of control: How much "control" or "mastery" can one have over historical development?
5. The role of Chance (P-5), Low/High level: What is the role of "chance" in human affairs and historical development?

The Instrumental Beliefs

1. The direction of Strategy (I-1): Cooperative, Mixed, Conflictual. What is the best approach for selecting goals or objectives for political action?
2. The intensity of Tactics (I-2): How are the goals of action pursued most effectively?
3. Risk Orientation (I-3): Averse to Acceptant: How are the risks of political action calculated, controlled, and accepted?
4. The Importance of Timing of Actions (I-4): Low to High Flexibility: What is the best "timing" of action to advance one's interests?
5. The utility of Means (I-5): Low to High: What are the utility and role of different means for advancing one's interests?

Why the Operational Code

This study utilises the Operational Code approach for several reasons. First, this approach is useful in studying the belief systems of the leaders since it does not require reference to the psychological analysis of the leader because it uses the words of leaders to map their cognitive beliefs (George, 1969, p. 195). For instance, this approach does not attempt to give a psychoanalytical explanation of the leader based on their early stages of life as such an analysis usually requires data and sources from the early life of the leaders, and this is often difficult to acquire. The Operational Code, on the other hand, "can be investigated without reference to psychoanalytic hypotheses. These beliefs, implicitly or explicitly held by the political actor, can be inferred or postulated by the investigator on the basis of the kinds of data, observational opportunities, and methods generally available to political scientists" (George, 1969, p. 195). Second, this method offers a comprehensive explanation of the beliefs of the leaders because it does not only deal with the way leaders see world events (their philosophical beliefs) but also how they respond to these developments (their instrumental beliefs).

Third, this approach uses leaders' public utterances as the raw data of analysis; these data can usually be obtained easily. Walker, Schafer, and Young claim that the "most relevant source for the systematic prediction of the state's behaviour is probably the public speech. It is a theoretical assumption of Operational code analysis that a leader's public behaviour is constrained by his public image and that, over time, his public actions will consistently match [his] public beliefs. This assumption seems counterintuitive because it appears not to allow for the possibilities of impression management and deception" (Walker, Schafer, and Young, 2003, p. 223).

Fourth, this approach helps to examine the different behaviour of the leaders by just comparing the instrumental beliefs of the same leader in various situations and investigating how the belief systems of leaders change from one event to another (George, 1969, p. 195). Fifth, this approach also helps to examine the consistency of the leaders' cognitive beliefs over time, because it covers numerous numbers of leaders' beliefs that can be considered, to investigate the coherence of the beliefs of the leaders and the effect of these beliefs in policymaking (Renshon, 2008). Sixth, it offers the opportunity to examine the belief systems of different leaders towards the same political event (Crichlow, 1998; Malici and Malici, 2005; Winter, Hermann, Weintraub, Walker, 1991). For instance, the Operational Code offers the opportunity to distinguish between leaders under the same given situation whether leaders behave differently or similarly in similar circumstances. Seven, the

Operational Code also contributes to forecasting leaders' approach in dealing with the situations they face. Because this method assumes that the beliefs of the leaders shape their decisions, it therefore helps to predict the policy that they may adopt in given situations (Walker and Murphy, 1981). Eight, through the use of the Operational Code typology developed by O. Holsti (1977) and refined by Walker (1984)[*], the Operational Code provides the opportunity to analyse the belief systems of more than one leader at a time.

Contribution

This thesis aims to contribute to the sparse literature on Syro-Iraqi relations. It attempts to decode the paradox of their constant hostility from the early establishment of the contemporary MENA following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in WWI to the Kuwait crisis. Another reason is that there is very little analytical literature on the role of giant Arab leaders such as Naser, Qadhdhāfi, Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn is shaping inter-Arab relations. Most importantly, there is little literature on the personal interaction between Arab leaders, and in what way that interaction affected the Arab regional order. Thus, this study finds it fruitful to investigate how the personal predispositions of Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and their personal relations contributed to the formation of Syro-Iraqi relations.

In addition, although there are a few studies that analysed the personal predispositions of leaders using qualitative discourse analysis, such as *Saddam's Word: The Political Discourse in Iraq* by the eminent scholar of Middle Eastern studies Professor Ofra Bengio (1998), there is almost no literature on the study of the personal predispositions of leaders using quantitative discourse analysis. Walker, Schafer and Young (2003) wrote about the cognitive beliefs of president Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. Hermann (1998) profiled the leadership style of president Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad. This research, however, analyses the personal predispositions of the two leaders together and considers the results as one of the key factors that formed the Syro-Iraqi relations.

Another focus of this study deliberately examines the hostility between the Syria and Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war and the Kuwait crisis. First, investigating Syro-Iraqi hostility during those two crises provides a better chance to understand the hostility between those two countries because wars create socio-economic and political conditions that compel states to employ rationally and purposively all means available to survive (Centeno, 2010, 2013). They often bring out the worst

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[*] The operational code typology will be explained in details in chapter two of the thesis.

in individuals. Thus, one could expect that the two regimes in Syria and Iraq would do the worst to each other, especially as those two wars weakened Iraq's position towards Syria perhaps for the first time since the establishment of the state of Iraq in 1921. Therefore, this thesis focuses on the domestic dynamics of those two countries – especially Iraq, the object and the target of the two mentioned wars – in order to make sense of their external behaviour.

However, the personality factors of leaders are not enough to understand the international relations among the states (Levy, 2003). This study finds it significant to study other variables that shaped the rivalry between Syria and Iraq during the time given. Thus, this research studies the history of Syro-Iraqi relations since the creation of the contemporary MENA after WWI. To do this, a theory of international relations was required that could comprehend a wide range of variables of foreign policy behaviour. Therefore, this study interacts with the theory of complex realism of Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (2014, 2016) to analyse Syro-Iraqi relations. This theory, however, does not provide a systematic methodology on how the personal predispositions of leaders affect the process of decision-making. This study, therefore, modifies this theory by adding variables of the cognitive theory, the operational code (George, 1967-1969; Walker 1983) to analyse the personal predispositions of president Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and treating it as an independent variable to analyse Syro-Iraqi relations.

In sum, this study contributes to the spare literature that has been written about Syro-Iraqi relations and brings a new perspective to the study of the MENA. This study is also the first comparative study of the personalities of Presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. It is also the first of its type that use the VICS technique to study Syro-Iraqi relations during the Iran-Iraq war and the Kuwait crisis by systematically comparing the belief systems of the two presidents and how their beliefs contributed to the formation and the development of Syro-Iraqi relations. This study also offers an alternative theory of international relations of the MENA by combining the complex realism of Hinnebusch and Ehteshami (2014, 2016) and the cognitive theory of international relations. By adding the cognitive theory to the tenet of complex realism, this study offers a theoretical contribution to the field of international relations theory.

Methodology, and Data Collection

Methodology

The focus of this study is to analyse and assess the relative weight of the key factors of Syro-Iraqi hostility. This study relies on empirical and experimental research tools to investigate the constant hostility between Syria and Iraq, and utilises a mixed methodology, a qualitative and quantitative methodology. Furthermore, it uses the descriptive-interpretive methodology to investigate in what way and for what reasons, the competition over the ideational power, and other conflicting issues (if there are any), shaped Syro-Iraqi relations during the timeline of this study, namely from the establishment of the Kingdom of Iraq in 1921 to the end of the Kuwait crisis in 1991.

With regard to the idiosyncratic variable of presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, the study uses the *Verb in Context System* (VICS), the only content analysis technique that is developed so far to obtain the operational codes of leaders. VICS is a technique of analysis to numerically investigate the role of the cognitive beliefs of the two presidents mentioned above, in shaping Syro-Iraqi relations. VICS is a verb-based quantitative analysis technique that is part of the Operational Code approach. At first, qualitative methodology was used to study the Operational Code of leaders (George, 1967, 1969). Later, Holsti (1977) and Walker (1983, 1990) utilised quantitative content analysis to numerically study the belief systems of the leaders.

Walker, Schafer, and Young (1998) developed the VICS quantitative technique. It is verb-based, and codes the verbs leaders' use in their public utterances because they indicate their belief systems. Moreover, it is "a content analysis coding procedure designed to retrieve information contained in statements made by political decision makers. Certain properties of each politically related, verb-based attributions are coded for the subject (actor) verb (action), and object (target). Each one of these coded attributions is then combined in different ways to calculate index scores that provide answers to the research questions associated with a leader's Operational code" (Walker, 2006, p. 1).

This study codes the public utterances of the two presidents according to VICS procedures using the automated programme profile+ that was developed by Walker, Schafer, and Young (1998). The VICS tenet and the way profile+ works and interprets the belief systems of leaders will be discussed

in detail in chapter two. It codes 18 Interviews and 14 Speeches of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, and 6 interviews and 11 Speeches of Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad during Iran-Iraq War and the Kuwait Crisis.

Data Collection

This study uses several techniques to collect primary and secondary data. I first conducted semi-structured interviews with foreign (non-Arab) and Arab officials and with Iraq and Syria country experts. This technique, however, faced some challenges. First, Iraqi and the Syrian Baʿthists declined to participate in the project and denied interview requests, for unknown reasons. Second, given the security risks of conducting fieldwork in both Baghdad and Damascus, this study carried out the research at a distance with appropriate individuals via Telephone, Skype and emails.

This study relies heavily on the widely known database Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) and the Middle East Contemporary Survey (MECS) published by the Moshe Dayan Centre, Tel Aviv University as the two main sources of primary data. FBIS provided the media reports and news about the two countries and their mutual interaction and transcripts of speeches and interviews of Presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn during the Iran-Iraq war and the Kuwait crisis. Finally, other sources of primary data utilised in this study include interviews of Baʿthists officials on different broadcasting services and YouTube videos.

This study uses secondary data from the literature written about Syria and Iraq. Country experts have published a number of works regarding Syro-Iraqi relations. Although those scholars do not explicitly touch upon the core argument of this study, their work includes a rich literature on the didactic dynamics between Syria and Iraq. Among those scholars are Anoushiravan Ehteshami, Raymond Hinnebusch, Amatzia Baram, Charles Tripp, Ofra Bengio, Peter Sluglett, Adeed Dawisha, Itamar Rabinovich, Moshe Ma'oz, and David W. Lesch who extensively wrote about Syria and Iraq and about the politics of the Middle East in general.

Methodological challenges facing the Verb In Context System (VICS)

VICS analysis across the sources of utterances

The discussion here is whether the Operational Code of the leaders obtained from VICS changes across the sources of the utterances. Past research differentiates between the use of speeches and interviews (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985; Schlenker, Dlugolecki, and Doherty 1994; Woodward,

2003) in the study of the leaders' belief systems. Nevertheless, the empirical research which has been done show a marginal difference between the Operational Code obtained from private and public utterances, or from speeches and interviews (Marfleet, 2000). Moreover, I tested whether the Operational Code of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn changes across the sources, speeches and interviews, or his private and public utterances. I ran the statistical *t*-test to investigate the variance across the sources. The findings show no significant change of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's Operational Code typology across his speeches and interviews (The test on the Operational Code of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn across speeches and interviews is in the appendix).

Translation

Translation is perhaps the most challenging problem facing the VICS analysis because Profile+ only codes English texts. A translated text might not fully reflect or cover the meaning of the original one. Thus, it might be misleading to study the belief systems of leaders using translated texts from their original languages into English. The transcripts of the speeches and the interviews employed in this study are originally in Arabic but translated into English by 'professional translators', employees of the widely and internationally recognised Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) database. I assume that the translated texts (speeches and interviews) of leaders are translated into English professionally (Walker, email exchange, 1 September 2015). There are several scholars of the Operational Code approach who used translated texts of leaders, and which have been published in prestigious journals. These include Walker, Schafer, and Young (2003) who wrote the Operational Code of Ṣaddām Ḥusayn using the texts translated from Arabic to English. Malici and Malici (2005) analysed the Operational Code of Fidel Castro and Kim II Sung utterances using translated scripts from Spanish and Korean respectively into English. Crichlow (1998) used the translated text from Hebrew to English to compare the Operational Code of Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres.

Authorship

The conundrum here is that leaders' speeches might have been written by their speechwriters, i.e., the VICS results might not actually be the leader's belief systems. Schafer and Walker argue that a speechwriter "is likely to know the leader's views on specific policy issues and general cooperative and conflictual tendencies" and that "Speechwriters do not write speeches that belie

the leader's general positions and policy preferences" (Schafer and Walker 2006, p. 47). Therefore, even if the leaders do not write their own speeches, it does not necessarily mean that their pre-prepared statements do not reflect their beliefs and views (Schafer and Walker 2006, p. 47).

Deception

Deception means that the speechwriters might have deceived their leaders when writing their speeches. In general, if deception occurred, it would not affect the primary purpose of the speech. Deception might affect a few of the transitive verbs of the leaders. For instance, "it may be possible to deceive the public or other actors in international politics with a few brief phrases, but it is an entirely different matter to deceive VICS indices calculated from whole speech acts that include large numbers of utterances" and also "speech act - even deceptive ones - often locking leaders into courses of action; otherwise they can be accused of lying" (Schafer and Walker 2006, p. 47). Given the brutal nature of the targeted presidents of this study, deception was unlikely.

Leaders' Advisors

The issue here is whether there is a need to explain the Operational Code of all those involved in the process of decision-making or not. Theoretically, Operational Code researchers focus on the leaders only, as they speak on behalf of their states and nations. Therefore, their Operational code reveals the preferences of their states. Thus, the Operational Code of those leaders is usually not that much different from the Operational code of their advisors. "In theory, Operational codes of advisors feed into the Operational code of the leader and the state. The focus of most of our research has been the leader of the state, because his or her speeches are more likely the product of the whole state, he or she speaks on behalf of the state, and is generally the most important decision maker for the state" (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 48).

Plan of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter is this introductory chapter. It poses the problem of Syro-Iraqi constant hostility and international relations theory in the MENA, and presents the concept of modified complex realism as the most suitable theory of international relations to help understand the politics in the region. It then applies this theory to Syro-Iraqi relations. This chapter also discusses the descriptive-interpretive approach and the textual analysis

approach as methodologies utilised to address the premise of this thesis. It also describes the methodology; the data collection techniques followed to support the methodology selected.

Chapter two explains the *Verb In Context System* (VICS) technique. Chapter three provides a historical explanation of the relations between Syria and Iraq since the establishment of the contemporary MENA after WWI up to the Iran-Iraq war. It mainly focuses on the process of state formation, the role of pan-Arabism, and the role of geopolitical dynamics in shaping the bilateral relations of these two Arab countries.

Chapters four and five are the two experimental chapters in which the thesis analyses Syro-Iraqi hostility during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) and the Kuwait crisis (1990-1991) using the modified complex realism tenet.

Finally, chapter six discusses the general findings of the thesis and the concluding remarks regarding Syro-Iraqi relations, and the modified complex realism theory developed here. It also discusses the potential of this study and its contribution towards future research regarding Syro-Iraqi relations and IR theory of the MENA.

CHAPTER TWO: PROCESS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE VERB IN CONTEXT SYSTEM (VICS)

The introductory chapter of this thesis briefly explained the Verb in Context System (VICS). This chapter is devoted to discussing in detail the way the VICS works, the mathematical processes employed in this analytical technique and the scientific justifications behind using them. This chapter will also explore the methods of interpretation of the VICS results along with the Operational Code typology and its relation to the belief systems of leaders.

Stephen Walker, Mark Schafer and Michael Young developed *the Verb in Context System* (VICS) to arithmetically explain the Operational Code of leaders (1998). This technique is "a content analysis coding procedure designed to retrieve information contained in statements made by political decision makers" (Walker, 2006, p. 1). It codes the transitive verbs of leaders and calculates them" following certain mathematical formulas" in order to "provide answers to the research questions associated with a leader's Operational code" (Walker, 2006, p. 1). The central argument of this technique is that leaders' public utterances are forms of exercising power. Furthermore, although it acknowledges the classical elements of material powers such as military and economic capabilities, VICS argues that the actual exercise of power take some verbal forms that are not identified in the conventional understanding of power. The VICS "conceptualisation of power emphasises the use of words or deeds by Actor A [a leader] to control the behaviour of Actor B, which employs one or more elements of power to achieve the desired effect. We distinguish six basic forms of conduct (words or deeds) that constitute different ways to exercise power: Reward, Promise, Appeal/Support, Resist/Oppose, Threaten, Punish" (Walker, 2011, p. 14).

How does VICS work?

The process of VICS can be used either manually or automatically. This thesis chooses to use an automatic coding using profile+ programme to avoid errors and bias that might come about because of human intervention. This study uses profile+ programme online via Michael Young's website https://profilerplus.org/. There are several steps that the VICS takes to code the transitive verbs.

Nevertheless, the study finds it critical to illustrate how the coding process is done manually too, to get a clear illustration of how the VICS and profile+ works. The first step in the VICS coding

process is to extract the verb in the transcript of the speech or the interview of the leader. In the case of interview scripts, they do contain questions of the interviewer and the answer of President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn (the targets). Thus, these questions are manually deleted (the interviewer's questions) before the process of coding by profile+ as it might misrepresent the Operational code of the targeted leaders.

This approach only deals with the "transitive verbs" that a leader uses in his or her speeches and interviews, verbs that include actions, the "doing verbs" such as hit, promise, send and so forth. This technique does not deal with the intransitive verbs, the "being verbs" that are usually follow the verb-to-be, for example, "he is a nerd". The reasoning behind this is that the former verbs reflect action, verbs that include an actor, an action, and an object, while the following verbs are only descriptive verbs and do not project any behavioural action because "there's no word in the sentence that tells who or what received the action" (http://grammar.yourdictionary.com). Therefore, they are irrelevant when it comes to the philosophical and the instrumental beliefs of leaders, because these beliefs require actions to reason them. Some of the transitive verbs come in the infinitive structure; they come after the word "to". Here it is important to link the infinitive verb with the non-infinitive to get the transitive verb (Walker, 2006). An example of this: the Iraqi army plans to cross the Iranian border. The coding process skips the verb "cross" because it is qualified by the non-infinitive verb "plans". Therefore, the coding process will only identify "plans".

Once the transitive verb is identified, the second step is to associate it with him/herself or others. For instance, was the speaker referring to him/herself when he or she used that particular transitive verb or was he/she referring to others? The Operational code argument here is that when the targeted leader talks about others in the statement he/she unveils his/her beliefs about the external world (philosophical beliefs, see p. 19). Therefore, the VICS deals only with the verbs that are attributed to others when analysing the philosophical beliefs of the targeted leader. When the targeted leader talks about him/herself in the statement, he/she reveals his/her behavioural beliefs (instrumental beliefs, see p. 19). Therefore, the VICS deals only with the verbs that are attributed to self when analysing the instrumental beliefs of the targeted leader. The self-references include the leader him/herself, his/her country, the government, the regime.

The third step is to classify the identified verb to a word or deed. The verb is considered a word if it does not talk about specific actions and usually take past future tense form. "Words are not specific actions, but rather are verbal intentions and expressions. Examples of these include

protests, demands, threats, promises, or appeals, where the speaker is not actually taking an action, but is talking about taking action" (Walker, 2006, p. 6). The verb is a deed if the leader was referring to an explicit "action that someone has taken (past tense) or is taking at the time (present tense)" (Walker, 2006, p. 6).

The fourth step of the coding process is to categorise the identified verbs into two groups: positive (+) and negative (-) verbs to numerically investigate the number of the positive and the negative verbs the targeted leader has used. For example, "We--have attacked--Germany--over support for racism," the transitive verb attacked is coded as (-) deed because it is something negative that has already happened, if we say "We--will work--with the United Nations--for peace", the verb work is coded here as (+) word because it is something positive, according to the context, going to happen in future (Walker, 2006, p. 7).

The fifth step of the coding process is that words-verbs are categorised regarding their intensity. For example, verbs that are associated with power exercises Appeal/Support or Resist/ Oppose power exercises, are categorised as (+1) and (-1) respectively. If the verbs are associated with 'Promise' or 'Threaten' exercise of power, then they are categorised as (+2) and (-2) correspondingly, but if they are associated with Reward or Punish power exercises, they are categorised as (+3) and (-3), respectively.

Following that, VICS weighs each transitive verb by multiplying it by its scale value (Punish -3, Threaten -2, Oppose -1, Support +1, Promise +2, Reward +3). The percentage of each verb in the attitude scale is also needed in the analysis process. This mathematical process is done by dividing the frequency of each verb by the total verbs for *Self* and *Others* (Walker, 2006, p. 14). After that, VICS calculates the Mean and the Mode "in which the Mean is the weighted column's total divided by the number of attributions and the Mode is the highest percent in the percent column's distribution" (Walker, 2006, p. 14). Here is an example of President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad's Operational Code analysis of an interview of him in July 1981.

Table 1: VICS scores of President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, 1981

Transitive verb	SELF			OTHER		
	Freq.	Wtd.	Percent.	Freq.	Wtd.	Percent.
+3 Reward	4	12	20.00%	16	48	18.00%
+2 Promise	0	0	0.00%	6	12	4.00%
+1 Appeal/Support	12	12	60.00%	36	36	40.00%
-1 Oppose/Support	2	-2	10.00%	11	-11	12.00%
-2 Threaten	1	-2	5.00%	4	-8	4.00%
-3 Punish	1	-3	5.00%	20	-60	22.00%
Totals (N=13)	20	17	100%	93	17	100.00%
Measures	Mean=0.85	Mode=0.60		Mean=0.10	Mode= 0.53	

Calculations and Interpretation of the verbs

After all of these steps are finished, VICS calculates the score of the Operational Codes of the targeted leader. VICS calculates of the Operational Code questions of Alexander George (pp. 22-23) in several mathematical forms. For instance, it utilises **balance scale** to calculate the two master beliefs: philosophical belief, *the nature of the political universe* (P-1), and the instrumental belief, *direction of strategy* (I-1). VICS computes P-1 belief by subtracting the total number of the positive (+) verbs that are associated with others from the total number of the negative (-) verbs that are associated with others, divided by the total number of the verb that is associated with others. If a leader scored negatively, it means that he or she sees the political universe as being hostile. Conversely, if he or she scored positively, it means that the leader sees the political arena as a friendly arena. To interpret that, the VICS uses a simple ratio index between (-1 and +1) to interpret the score (Walker, Schafer, and Young, 2003, p. 226).

P-1 The nature of the political universe (Hostile/Friendly) (Walker, Schafer and Young, 2003, p. 227)

HOSTILE   FRIENDLY

Extremely	Very	Definitely	Somewhat	Mixed	Somewhat	Definitely	Very	Extremely
-1.0	-0.75	-0.50	-0.25	0.0	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+ 1.0

VICS uses a balance scale also to calculate the direction of strategy (I-1) of the leader between the two frequencies, cooperation (+) and conflictual (-). This belief determines the best strategy directions a leader might follow in his or her response to the circumstances at the time. Thus, VICS here only calculates the verbs that are associated with self. The rationale behind using balance scale here is that if a leader uses more cooperative self-verbs, it means that he or she is more inclined to adopt a collaborative approach to deal with the situation in hand. If he or she uses more conflictual self-utterances instead, it means that he or she will possibly adopt a conflictual strategy as a response to the situation.

The VICS of leaders' best strategy in dealing with the political universe ranges between conflictual (-), mixed (-/+), and cooperative (+). VICS uses a simple ratio index between (-1 and +1) and computes it by subtracting the total number of the cooperation verbs from the total number of the conflictual verbs, divided by the sum of the total (cooperation and conflictual) self-verbs. For example, if the leader scored I-1= +0.30, this means that he or she adopts a weak cooperative strategy in dealing with the political universe.

I-1 Direction of Strategy (Conflict/Cooperation) (Walker, Schafer and Young, 2003, p. 227)

CONFLICT   COOPERATION

Extremely	Very	Definitely	Somewhat	Mixed	Somewhat	Definitely	Very	Extremely
-1.0	-0.75	-0.50	-0.25	0.0	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+ 1.0

VICS uses **central tendency** scale to compute *the prospects for realising fundamental values* (P-2) belief. This belief is related to philosophical belief, the nature of the political universe (P-1). For instance, if the leader sees the world as being conflictual, he or she would possibly be pessimistic about realising his or her fundamental goals, but if he or she imagines the world is friendly, he or she will possibly be optimistic about them instead (Schafer and Walker 2006, p. 34).

The difference between P-1 and P-2 is that the latter goes beyond the balance between cooperative and conflictual utterances. It measures the intensity of *Others'* actions. The rationale behind this is that a leader "might see the political universe as balanced between good and evil (P-1), but if [he] sees the evil side in much more intense terms – as engaging in more hostile deeds – then [he] is less optimistic about his prospects for success" (Schafer and Walker 2006, p. 33). Thus, VICS uses a central tendency to compute this belief. This is done by multiplying each other-verb

by the weight values associated with its category (Punish -3, Threaten -2, Oppose -1, Support +1, Promise +2, Reward +3, see Table 1) adding the results, calculating the mean and dividing it by three. The central tendency index gives results between -1 and +1. For example, if a leader scored P-2= -0.10, it means that he/she is pessimistic when it comes to realising the essential goals.

P-2 Prospects for Realising Fundamental Values (Pessimism/Optimism) (Walker, Schafer and Young, 2003, p. 227)

PESSIMISM								OPTIMISM
Extremely	Very	Definitely	Somewhat	Mixed	Somewhat	Definitely	Very	Extremely
-1.0	-0.75	-0.50	-0.25	0.0	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+ 1.0

VICS utilises the **central tendency** scale to calculate the *intensity of tactics* (I-2) belief. This instrumental belief investigates the extent of the intensity of the tactics that leaders pursue. VICS multiplies each self-verb by the scale values associated with its power exercise category (Punish -3, Threaten -2, Oppose -1, Support +1, Promise +2, Reward +3), sum up the results, calculating the mean and dividing it by three (VICS divides the exercise of power into six forms, three skewed toward the negative side Punish -3, Threaten -2, Oppose -1, and three skewed toward the positive side Support +1, Promise +2, Reward +3). The results indicate the average level of conflictual or cooperative intensity of the tactics the leader uses in his or her foreign policy. The summary index for this belief ranges between -1 and +1. The lower scores refer to a leader's belief about the effectiveness of conflictual tactics, and the higher scores refer to the utility of cooperative tactics. For example, if a leader scored -0.65, he or she prefers to utilise conflictual tactics in dealing with the external world.

I-2 Intensity of Tactics (conflict/cooperation) (Walker, Schafer and Young, 2003, p. 227)

CONFLICT								COOPERATION
Extremely	Very	Definitely	Somewhat	Mixed	Somewhat	Definitely	Very	Extremely
-1.0	-0.75	-0.50	-0.25	0.0	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+ 1.0

VICS employs **proportion** to compute the philosophical belief *control over historical development* (P-4), and the instrumental belief, *the utility of means* (I-5). Concerning (P-4) belief,

it is the only philosophical belief where VICS calculates the *Self* and *Other* utterances together. This belief explains whom the leader sees as the one who controls the shape of politics, him/herself, or others (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 34). For instance, if a leader talks more about others taking actions more than he or she does, it means that he or she attributes control of politics not to him/herself but to others. If he or she talks more about him/ herself taking the actions, then he or she believes they have control over the shape of politics (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 34).

VICS computes (P-4) by dividing the percentages of self-verbs by the sum of the percentage of self-verbs and the percentage of others-verbs (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 34). The summary index here is from 0.0 to +0.1 instead. The interpretation here is that if for example the leader scored 0.80 (80%), it means that he or she believes they have a high degree of control over historical developments, and he or she believes that others only have 0.20 (20%) control over historical developments, and vice versa (Walker, Schafer and Young, 2003, p. 228).

P-4 Control over Historical Development (very low/very high) (Walker, Schafer, and Young, 2003, p. 228)

VERY LOW CONTROL				VERY HIGH CONTROL
Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
0.0	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.0

VICS uses a **proportion** formula to compute the fifth instrumental belief *the utility of means* (I-5). This belief investigates how interested leaders are in pursuing different tactics when they exercise power (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 37). To compute I-5, VICS divides the verbs attributed to self by six (the six categories of power exercise Punish -3, Threat -2 Oppose/Resist -1, Appeal/Support +1, Promise +2, Reward +3) in order to know the proposition of each one of these six categories of action. The summary index is from 0.0 to +0.1, and the code "with lower scores indicating less utility and higher scores indicating more utility for each form of the exercise of power" (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 37). For example, if a leader scores (Appeal/Support +0.20, Promise +0.15, Reward +0.10), (punish -0.35, Threat -0.28, Oppose/Resist -0.12), this indicates that the leader is more inclined to use punishment as a useful tool (35%), and less inclined to use reward as a tool for utility means (10%).

1-5 Utility of Means (very low/very high) (Walker, Schafer, and Young, 2003, p. 229)

LOW UTILITY   HIGH UTILITY

Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
0.0	0.08	0.16	0.24	0.32

VICS calculates the third philosophical belief, *the predictability of the political universe* (P-3), and the third instrumental belief *risk orientation* (I-3) using **dispersion** of verbs across the six categories, (Punish -3, Threat -2, Oppose/Resist -1, Appeal/Support +1, Promise +2, Reward +3). The (P-3) belief examines a leader's sense of predictability of the political future. The reason behind using this mathematical formula in (P-3) is to investigate the variation of distribution of these six categories (Punish -3, Threat -2, Oppose/Resist -1, Appeal/Support +1, Promise +2, Reward +3) when the leader talks about others' actions. If a leader believes that others take several different actions rather than few, it means that he or she cannot predict their future actions. Conversely, if he or she believes that the others are engaging primarily in one or two categories of actions, then he or she believes that others' behaviour is constant and predictable (Schafer and Walker 2006, p. 34). Therefore, if a leader talks about others taking different types of actions, the less he or she is skilful in predicting their future actions. However, if he or she talks about others taking fewer types of actions, he or she can predict their behaviour.

Schafer and Walker use the information theory of Garner and McClelland to compute this belief (Garner 1962; McClelland 1968, 1972). This theory "suggests that uncertainty corresponds to a distribution pattern of total variety for a set of observations across a set of categories while certainty corresponds to a distribution pattern of total uniformity within one category in a set of categories" (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 34).

VICS computes (P-3) belief by subtracting the Mode from the expected percentage of the verb then divides the result by the remaining percentage of verbs in the non-modal VICS categories when the distribution is random. The Mode is calculated by dividing the most frequent verb attributed to others by the sum of the verbs attributed to others. The expected percentage of each of the six VICS categories of verbs when the verbs that are attributed to others are distributed randomly across (Punish -3, Threat -2, Oppose/Resist -1, Appeal/Support +1, Promise +2, Reward +3) is 0.166. To get 0.166, 1.0 is divided by 6. The remaining percentage of verbs when the distribution is random is 0.834 (1-0.166=0.834). When VICS subtracts 0.166 from the Mode, it gets

an x score, which is the percentage of the verbs in the modal category above the expected proportion of a random distribution. By dividing this x score with 0.834, VICS standardises the percentage of verbs above the mode so that the P-3 rating's value ranges between zero and 1.0.

P-3. Predictability of Political Future (very low/very high) (Walker, Schafer, and Young, 2003, p. 230)

LOW PREDICTABILITY				HIGH PREDICTABILITY
Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
0.0	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.0

VICS uses the same mathematical formula to compute the instrumental belief *risk orientation* (I-3). This belief investigates whether a leader accepts risks or declines them. This belief is also interpreted on a scale between 0.0 and 0.1. For example, if a leader scored 0.75, then he/she is inclined to accept the risk, or to take decisions without taking into consideration the consequences that might follow his or her decision. In other words, the leader will not be careful regarding decisions that may put the regime at risk.

I-3 Risk Orientation (very low/very high) (Walker, Schafer, and Young, 2003, p. 230)[*]

RISK AVERSE				RISK ACCEPTANCE
Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
0.0	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.0

The fourth instrumental belief, *the importance of timing of actions* (I-4), is related to the time of leaders' actions. The importance of time is directly related to the diversity of actions that leaders take in responding to the situational conditions they face. Schafer and Walker put it this way "[T]he the idea is that diversity levels provide insight into the relative frequency and, therefore, the flexibility of actions" (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 36). Therefore, VICS here is only dealing with

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[*] Risk is actual and perceived. This study considers the perceived risk in its analysis because it is the type of risk that is related to individuals' cognitive capabilities. It "represents a distorted version of actual risk, shaped by the ignorance, prior beliefs, and subjective personal experiences of non-experts" (Jasanoff, 1998).

Self-verbs on two different levels, both of them range from 0.0 to +0.1. The first level investigates the diversity of leaders' policy options in self-verbs regarding cooperation and conflict (I-4a). The second level investigates the variety of actions regarding the distribution of self-words and deeds (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 36). The logic behind using this formula is to measure the diversity of the choices in both directions.

Here, VICS uses the **absolute value** of the percentage formula to compute the two levels of utterances mentioned above. The absolute value of a percentage helps us to know the diversity of the choices that leaders have in each direction of strategy, the cooperation direction, and the conflictual orientations. The mathematical equation of this belief is:

I-4a = 1- (percentage of self-cooperation utterances- percentage of self-conflict utterances)
I-4b = 1- (percentage of self-words-percentage of self-deeds)

For example, if a leader scored 53% in self-cooperation utterances, and 47% in conflictual utterances then the I-4a will be 1-(0.53-0.47). The final result is 0.94, and it means that the leader has a great diversity of cooperation and conflictual choices, which indicates the flexibility of his or her actions. The same is for words/deeds utterances. If a leader scored 70% in the cooperation utterances, and 30% in the hostile utterances, the final results will be 1- (0.30-0.70). The final result will then be 0.60, which shows that the targeted leaders registered a high flexibility between words and deeds.

I-4 Flexibility of Tactics (very low/very high)

Cooperation and Conflict

LOW FLEXIBILITY   HIGH FLEXIBILITY

	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	0.0	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.0

Words and Deeds

LOW FLEXIBILITY   HIGH FLEXIBILITY

	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	0.0	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.0

The last philosophical belief is *the role of change* (P-5). This belief is related to the belief P-3 and the belief P-4. It assumes that the more the leader predicts the world politics, the more he or she is in control over historical developments, and therefore, the level of change in human affairs is not significant. In reverse, the less skilful the leader is in predicting global politics, the less he or she has control over historical development, and the level of chance in human behaviour is proportionately greater (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 35).

P-5 Role of Chance (very low/very high) (Walker, Schafer, and Young, 2003, p. 232)

	CHANCE				CHANCE
Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
0.0	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.0	

This VICS calculates P-5 belief by multiplying the P-3 and P-4 scores and subtracting the result from 1 (Walker, Schafer and Young, 2003, p. 232). The reason behind this is that the higher the level of predictability of the leader, the stronger the control over historical development and the smaller the role of chance.

The explanations above of VICS show that this technique provides a detailed analysis of leaders' philosophical beliefs, and how leaders translate these beliefs to policy response, namely their instrumental beliefs. The good news is that the profile+ program does all the mathematics automatically. Therefore, it helps to provide a valid, and reliable study of the leaders and their beliefs. Moreover, because this approach only uses leaders' words to analyse their personal characters, it provides a platform for the study of the personality of the leaders without reference to their childhood life, as it is always difficult to obtain. The targeted leader might also be out of reach.

For instance, studying the personality of these leaders is a difficult task for two reasons; first, one needs to conduct interviews with them, which is usually difficult, and second, it is a double-edged sword too. For instance, the degree of politicisation of the writings on Presidents Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad is high. On the one hand, both presidents had a very secret life, and most of those who wrote about them did not meet them personally. On the other hand, some of those who did meet them often wrote about them sympathetically, perhaps because it would have been hard to meet them otherwise. In any case, the validity of some of these resources might be questionable. As a result, VICS provides the opportunity to study the personality of the leaders more credibly.

Quantum Politics: The Operational Code typology

If everything is energy and can be measured, as Einstein argues, then the transitive verbs that leaders use are also energy than can be measured. According to VICS, leaders exercise power through transitive verbs (Walker, 2011, p. 14). Inspired by Einstein's quadrant of energy, Holsti (1977) developed a quadrant, and calls it the Operational Code typology, in which he tries to answers ten questions developed by Alexander George in his modified Operational Code approach (1967). The quadrant was later re-modified by Walker (1983). This technique of Operational Code analysis provides a general perspective on the cognitive beliefs of leaders as it combines the philosophical beliefs and the instrumental beliefs of leaders into one diagnostic proposition. Furthermore, it provides the opportunity to conduct a comparative analysis of the Operational Codes of more than one leader. Therefore, this study uses this analytical technique to provide a comparative typology Operational Code of Presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, which helps to investigate how their belief systems shaped the bilateral relations between those two countries.

There are several steps to take to build up the typology Operational Code of leaders. First, and according to this typology, there are six power propositions leaders adopt in dealing with an external actor. These propositions need to be located in the quadrant (Walker, 2011, p. 38). These propositions are:

1. If actor A's exercise of power and distribution of power regarding Actor B is (+, <), then Actor A prefers settlement>deadlock>submission>domination as outcomes of their interaction.

2. If actor A's exercise of power and distribution of power regarding Actor B is (+, =), then Actor A prefers settlement>deadlock>domination>submission as outcomes of their interaction.

3. If actor A's exercise of power and distribution of power regarding Actor B is (+, >), then Actor A prefers settlement>domination>deadlock>submission>as outcomes of their interaction.

4. If actor A's exercise of power and distribution of power regarding Actor B is (–, <), then Actor A prefers domination>settlement>submission>deadlock as outcomes of their interaction.

5. If actor A's exercise of power and distribution of power regarding Actor B is (−, =), then Actor A prefers domination>settlement>deadlock>submission as outcomes of their interaction.

6. If actor A's exercise of power and distribution of power regarding Actor B is (−, >), then Actor A prefers domination>deadlock>settlement>submission as outcomes of their interaction. (Walker, 2011, p. 38)

The second step is to obtain scores on the horizontal and the vertical axes. The vertical axis represents the master beliefs of the leaders, and that includes the philosophical belief of *the nature of the political universe* (P-1), and the instrumental belief *direction of strategy* (I-1). P-4 belief is about the control over historical events. If for example, a leader attributes 80% (P-4b) of control to others, it means he or she has 20% (P-4a) percentage of control. "Historical Control scores for self (P-4a) and other (P-4b) adjusted to P-4d difference scores (Self P-4d = P4a − P4b; Other P4d = P4b − P4a) so that a unit change in P-4 as a vector is weighted equivalent to a unit change in I-1 or P-1, making the P-4d indices range between -1.0 and +1.0 just like I-1 and P-1. Using these scores as coordinates, it is possible to locate a leader's images of Self (I-1, P-4a) and other (P-1, P-4b) in the four quadrants of the typology" (Walker, 2006, pp. 8-19).

Figure 2: Operational Code typology

Developed by Walker, 2006

Conclusion

This chapter discussed in detail the methodology of VICS. Although the study uses the profile+ program to automatically code the speeches and the interviews of Presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn to get their Operational Code, this study found it necessary to discuss the manual coding process in order to illustrate the rationale of VICS. Therefore, this chapter deliberately discussed the manual process of coding. This included the verbs identification, categorisation into self and others, and into positive and negative verbs. In addition, the chapter explained in detail the mathematical methods needed in the process of coding analysis including the mathematical equations profile+ utilises to make sense of the Operational Code results. This included a comprehensive explanation of those mathematical processes and the rationale behind using them for each particular belief systems of the Operational Code. The chapter also discussed the Operational Code typology, which is part of the VICS analysis, essential in the Operational code analysis. This advanced method inspired by applied physics offers a general outlook of the Operational Code of leaders and interprets them in a unique manner to serve the purpose of Operational Code analysis. This method also provides the opportunity to visually compare the Operational Codes of the two targeted presidents in this thesis, which enables an analysis how their beliefs shaped Syro-Iraqi relations during the Iran-Iraq war and the Kuwait crisis. This chapter paves the route to our next empirical chapters, chapter three and chapter four, which will discuss the beliefs of both Presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn in shaping the foreign policy of Syria and Iraq during the crises mentioned above.

CHAPTER THREE: SYRO-IRAQI RELATIONS, ARAB NATIONALISM, AND GEOPOLITICS 1921-1979

Syria and Iraq relations: From the Mandate to the establishment of Arab League States

Ideology seems to have shaped Syro-Iraqi relations since the creation of the contemporary MENA after World War One. The roots of Arab nationalism in the region, and in the Levant in particular, can be traced to the seventeenth century during the anti-tyrannical movement that was carried out by Americans and the French against Ottoman rule (Petran, 1978, p. 51). This movement succeeded in recruiting a group of progressive intellectuals and military officers who were taking part in politics in Constantinople (Petran, 1978, p. 51). The first achievement of that intelligentsia was to participate in the Committee of Union and Progress, CUP (*jamʿiyyat al-Ittihād wa at-Taraqī*) in Constantinople. Within this committee, the Syrian intelligentsia advocated a decentralisation of the Arab-inhabited areas of the Ottoman Empire. When the Ottoman Empire faced difficulties in the Italian war in 1911-1912, some Arab members of the parliament in Istanbul wrote to the Sharīf of Mecca, Ḥusayn Bin ʿAlī, with the proposal that they would recognise him as the caliph. They sought to end the "Tyranny and the Slavery" of the Ottomans over the Arabs (Petran, 1978, p. 51).

During WWI, the Arabs were promised a vast state. According to the correspondence between Sharīf Ḥusayn of Mecca and Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, famously known as the Ḥusayn-McMahon correspondence (between 14 July 1915 and 30 March 1916), Great Britain promised to establish an independent Arab nation state in the Arab-inhabited territories of the Ottoman Empire in return for their support against the Ottoman Empire (Mufti, 1996, p. 19).

The British-Arab alliance in the war soon materialised after the formation of a military unit under the command of Amīr Fayṣal, the second son of Sharīf Ḥusayn and joined the British army against Djamal Pasha, the Ottoman ruler in the area. It included volunteers and officers who dissented from the Ottoman Army. Those officers were soon called "Sharifian" officers.

Two years later, the Mudros armistice on 30 October 1918 took place and ended 400 years of Ottoman rule in the area that is known today as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine. On 1 October 1918, the Third Australian Light Horse Brigade led by the Australian General Henry Chauvel entered Damascus. On the same day, the latter appointed Shurkī al-Ayubī , "a Damascene, who had been a high-ranking officer in the Ottoman army, as the head of the local administration

of the city in the name of the Sharīf of Mecca" (Mack, 1998, p. 167). Soon after, Amīr Fayṣal formed an interim government in the city under the protection of British forces. He looked forward to establishing the promised vast Arab country.

During this time, the Bolsheviks published the Sykes-Picot agreement, signed secretly in May 1916 by the French diplomat François Georges-Picot and his British counterpart, Sir Mark Sykes (Rogan, 2016, p. 47). The agreement divided the controlled Ottoman territories into three categories; A, B and C. The vilayets of Diyar Bekr, Adana, Aleppo, the northern parts of Zor Sanjak and the Syrian Emirates became a French protectorate. Baghdad and Basra, 'the southern part' of Zor Sanjak and Syria, which was also known as Transjordan, became a British protectorate. Beirut and Jerusalem Sanjaks were destined to become an International Zone in future. Mosul vilayet was divided between the two. The western part came under French control, and the east (Sulaimanyya city) came under British control. The agreement was seen as a betrayal of Britain's commitments to Sharīf Ḥusayn (See Map 1, p. 54, and Map 2, p. 55).

Amīr Fayṣal, his father, Sharīf Ḥusayn and the Arab masses received the news of the Sykes-Picot agreement with significant anger. They felt they had been betrayed. Amīr Fayṣal attempted to legitimise his rule in Damascus by turning his administration (constituted members of the Young Arab Society *jamʿiyyat al-ʿArabīya al-Fatāt*, established in Paris in 1911) into a 'Council of Directors (*majlis al-Modīrīn*) (Tauber, 1995, p. 20). At this time, there were several pan-Arab groups and societies; each had a different view on how Syrian independence should be. *Al-Fatāt* along with the Arab Club (*al-Nādī al-ʿArabī*, established in Damascus in 1918) demanded absolute independence from the French Mandate. Amīr Fayṣal and many of the officials in the interim government demanded an American-sponsored independence; a minority demanded independence under the sponsorship of France (Tauber, 1995, p. 18).

The agreement temporarily provided the "blueprint" for the post-Ottoman rule in the region, but not in the way the British Prime minister, Lloyd George desired (Barr, 2011). For the latter, Britain had defeated the Ottoman almost single-handedly, and therefore he believed that Britain should "take the lion's share of the spoils" (Barr, 2011, p. 64). Lloyd George wanted Palestine and Mosul. He believed that Britain should control the oil of Persia, and that Mesopotamia would be a great source of energy in the future. The British Prime Minister threatened to encourage America to take control of Syria if the French rejected this deal (Barr, 2011, p. 65). Eventually, those two regions became under the British mandate. The French Prime Minister, George Clemenceau arrived

in London in December 1918 and met Lloyd George. The latter told him, "I want Mosul", Clemenceau replied, "you shall have it", Lloyd George continued, "I want Jerusalem too", Clemenceau replied, "you shall have it too" (Barr, 2011, p. 72). Clemenceau was later forced by Lloyd George and Wilson, the US President, to turn the areas they control to mandates under the legitimacy of the League of Nations. To legalise this arrangement, it was agreed to arrange a peace conference in Paris.

As WWI came to an end, Sharīf Ḥusayn chose Amīr Fayṣal to represent the Arabs at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The French officials excluded Fayṣal's name from the list. They did not trust him because he was Britain's man. "The head of the Asian department at the Quai d'Orsay, Jean Goût, tried to detach him from his British sponsors by claiming that it was they who had deliberately excluded him. If [Feisal] transferred his allegiance to the French, said Goût, we can arrange things for you" (Barr, 2011, p.75). The British officials were furious about Goût's behaviour and insisted on Fayṣal's inclusion. Indeed, the latter addressed the conference on 6 February 1919. The Paris Peace Conference was disappointing to the Arabs. Amīr Fayṣal tried to make a deal with the French government but instead of gaining the French trust, he lost allies at home. *Al-Fatāt* and *al-Nādī al-ʿArabī* rejected any form of a sponsored independence, nothing less than absolute independence would do (Tauber, 1955, p. 21).

In April 1921, Amīr Fayṣal proclaimed himself the King of the Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Israel). A month later, he travelled to Europe again to discuss the fate of Syria with the European powers. During the absence of the king, the Young Arab Society *al-Fatāt*, and the Covenant Society (*jamʿiyyat al-ʿAhd*, founded in 1913 in Constantinople) controlled the politics of Damascus. *Jamʿiyyat al-ʿAhd* seems to have played a role in sowing division between the Syrians and the Iraqis. The zonal affiliation of Arab officers soon became a source of tension. As the war ended, the Iraqi officers happened to have a greater role and leverage in the city compared to their Syrian colleagues. The Syrian officers obviously were unhappy about it. The Syrian-Iraqi participants in the Arab revolt began to become divided. This early event was perhaps the first sign of enmity between the Syrians and the Iraqis. The Iraqi officers felt discriminated against by their Syrian officers in Damascus. Therefore, they decided to move to Aleppo and operate from there for the liberation of Mesopotamia, the area that would soon be called Iraq.

As a result, *jamʿiyyat al-ʿAhd* disintegrated into two separate societies: the Syrian branch *al-ʿAhd al-Surī*, and the Iraqi branch *al-ʿAhd al-ʿIrāqī*. Later, the *al-ʿAhd al-Surī* collapsed because of

its inability to challenge *al-Fatāt* society in Damascus. The *al-ʿAhd al-ʿIrāqī*, led by the Iraqi General Yasīn al-Hashimī, remained influential not only in Mesopotamia but also in the Levant too. It had four offices in Aleppo, Damascus, Mosul, and Baghdad (Tauber, 1995, p. 362).

Geopolitics played an important role in the shaping of the Syro-Iraqi relations since the establishment of the contemporary MENA after WWI. The *al-ʿAhd al-ʿIrāqī* officers desired to annexe Dayr al-Zur (or Zor Sanjak) to Baghdad. Dayr al-Zur consisted of "small towns, villages, and few nomadic tribes" and it "was given an independent status by the Ottoman authorities" (Tauber, 1995, p. 363). Therefore, the inhabitants of Mesopotamia vilayets perceived it as an Iraqi region, even though administratively it was not (Tauber, 1995, p. 363). The British forces conquered Baghdad in 1916; they later entered the city of Qāʾim and ʿAna, which were administratively part of Baghdad vilayet. British troops, however, did not advance to Dayr al-Zur. The British Commissioner in Iraq, Arnold Wilson wrote, "Now as in the past, [it is] a no man's land between Syria and Mesopotamia". When Sharīf Nāṣer, Sharīf Ḥusayn's grandson, established an Aleppo government in October 1918 under British protection, the inhabitants of Dayr al-Zur requested their city be annexed to Aleppo. Accordingly, Sharīf Nāṣer sent his a division of his army to the area and appointed Marʿī al-Mallā, a native Aleppan, as Mutasarrif (governor) there.

Nevertheless, in April 1920, the San Remo agreement was signed which led to the establishment of League of Nations mandates in the Ottoman territories of the region. The Hashemite family and the Arab street received the San Remo resolutions as a recantation of the Ḥusayn-McMahon correspondences. British troops were pulled out of the cities of Damascus and Aleppo for the French troops to take over. Obviously, Britain was not willing to lose France's friendship to win Syria. "For us", said Prime Minister David Lloyd George, "the friendship of France is worth ten Syrians" (Mufti, 1996, p. 20). On 14 July 1920, the French High Commissioner, Henri Gouraud, demanded an unconditional acceptance of the French Mandate over Damascus. Amīr Fayṣal and his followers refused to hand over the city peacefully. Shortly after, French troops marched out from Lebanon and headed for Damascus. On 23 July 1920, the Arab and the French forces met at Maysalun to the west of Damascus. The French army had a decisive victory over Amīr Fayṣal, and his followers. Two days later, on 25 July, French troops occupied Damascus. Amīr Fayṣal left for Baghdad.

Map1: The Ottoman Vilayets

Source: Wikipedia

Map 2: Sykes-Picot agreement 1916
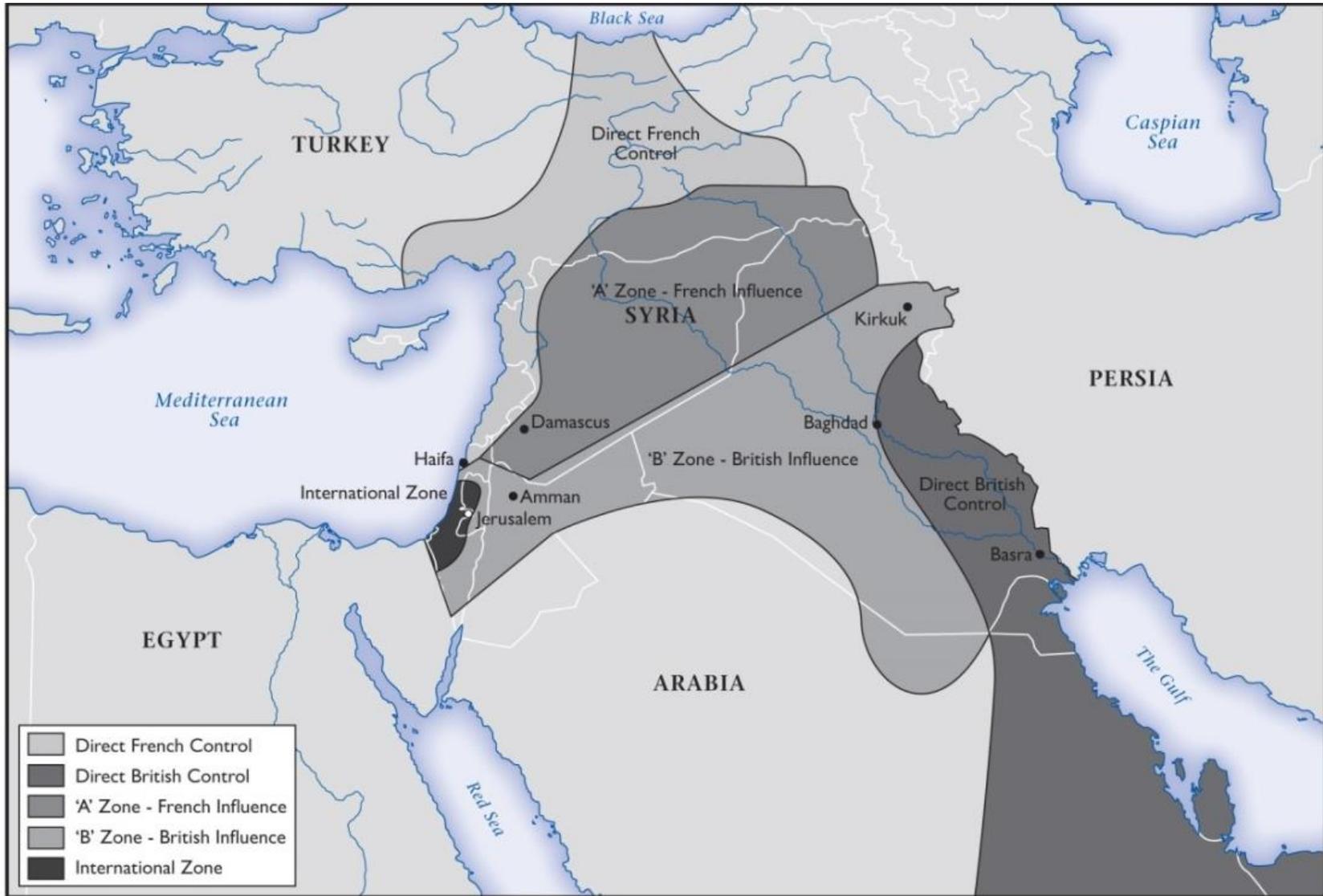
Source: Dona J. Stewart, The Middle East Today: Political, geopolitical, and cultural perspectives (Routledge: New York and London, 2013

King Fayṣal of Iraq and the French Mandate in Syria

In March 1921, the British Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill arranged the Cairo Conference to determine the fate of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul vilayets. Several British officials, including military officers and Oriental experts such as Gertrude Bell and Edward Thomas Lawrence, also known as Lawrence of Arabia, along with the British High Commissioner in Baghdad Sir Percy Cox attended the conference. Some of the ministers of the interim government that the British Mandate created in Baghdad also participated in the meeting (Tripp, 2007, p. 46). The decision was made to merge the three Ottoman vilayets into one state to be called "Iraq" under the kingship of Fayṣal.

The formation of the Kingdom of Iraq would soon go through a historical period in which pan-Arabism would play a significant role in the process of state building and with Iraq's relations with Syria. King Fayṣal had to build up an Iraqi identity from scratch and confront the issue of creating a collective identity and political community (David, 2005, p. 31). The social structure of the three vilayets was tribal. Thus, loyalty was first granted to the tribe, not to the state. Also, Baghdad and Basra vilayets had mutual economic, tribal, and cultural ties. Mosul, on the other hand, was culturally and economically interactive with Diyarbakir, Zor Sanjak, Aleppo, and Syria vilayets. It had almost no relations with Baghdad and Basra vilayets.

Iraq's oil contributed to the annexing of the Mosul vilayet to Iraq. King Fayṣal had to cede Iraq's economic autonomy to gain Iraqi legitimacy over Mosul. To gain Mosul, he had to agree to grant oil concessions to Britain. The latter had previously threatened King Fayṣal with support for Turkey's claims of annexing Mosul at the League of Nations if they did not get the oil concession. This reward was set out in the Anglo-Iraqi treaty that Iraq and Britain signed in 1924. King Fayṣal's "unwillingness to grant oil concessions to the British-owned Turkish Petroleum Company – a move that has ceded control of an important potential revenue source – further fuelled resentment in London. In the end, Iraq's leadership was forced to succumb" (Mufti, 1996, p. 26). Less than one year later, the League of Nation's Council annexed the vilayet to the newly established Kingdom.

King Fayṣal probably thought that he would pave the way to set up Hashemite rule in the whole area, or perhaps beyond this region; establish a large Arab Union similar to Prussia's control of Germany (Masalha, 1991, p. 685). Domestically, he believed that advocating pan-Arabism would help him build up the Iraqi identity. He had to discourage the Shīʿa from seeking protection from

Iran by emphasising the historical and tribal ties between the Shīʿa and Sunnis in Baghdad and Basra. He also asked the Arabs to put their religious differences aside and shift their loyalty to Arab nationalism instead (Masalha, 1991, p. 679).

King Fayṣal's policies to institutionalise the ideology of pan-Arabism were rather remarkable. He first approved conscription in the country, as he believed that it would serve identity building in Iraq. In its early years, the military was a voluntary organisation. At that time it had around 2000 volunteer soldiers and the government had to launch promotional campaigns through newspapers to motivate youths to join the institution (al-Marashi and Salama, 2008, pp. 20-21). The King, along with the political elites believed that such a policy would centralise power in the hands of the King and his supporters, and that it would undermine the state's domestic foes (al-Marashi and Salama, 2008, p. 29), mainly the Kurds in Kurdistan and the Shīʿa tribes in the south.

The problem was that King Fayṣal relied on military officers who were mainly from low and middle-class Arab Sunni families, 'the Sharifian officers' who followed King Fayṣal in Syria and Iraq. Most of them had been active in secret Arab national societies such as *jamʿiyyat al-ʿAhd* (Mufti, 1996, p. 25). In addition, the legacy of the Ottoman conscription was still a raw wound. "Despite the reforming decrees of the nineteenth century, recruitment under the Ottomans had been arbitrary and brutal, and the Shiʿa tribes had borne the brunt of it" (Sluglett, 1976, p. 96). These two reasons led to the Sunni Arabs domination over the military. Thus, although the military academy was open to all, the Kurds and the Shīʿa believed that it was a tool of Arabisation (al-Marashi and Salama, 2008, p. 29). By forcing youths to join the army, the state intended to put the Kurds in check and win the Shīʿa's loyalty to the state rather than to their sect. As a result, those two communities were reluctant to join the academy.

The second strategy of King Fayṣal, to promote pan-Arabism, was educational policy. The King appointed his former minister of education during his short-term government in Damascus, Satiʿ al-Ḥusarī (Ibn Khaldun), a nationalist from Aleppo, as director at the Ministry of Higher Education (Mufti, 2006, p. 28). Al-Ḥusarī believed that installing a common language and history of Arabs in school syllabuses - through emphasising the greatness of the history of Arabs-would lead to Arab unity (Mufti, 1996, p. 28; Dawisha, 2002, p. 64). The Shīʿa received these educational policies with a high degree of suspicion. They believed that such policies disgraced the Shīʿī creed. For example, when, the Syrian teacher Anīs al-Nusulī published his book on Umayyad history in Baghdad in 1927, he made some "uncomplimentary" comments about Imam ʿAlī, the cousin of

the prophet Muḥammad, who had a significant and unique status in the Shīʿī order (Mufti, 1996, p. 28). In reaction, three schoolteachers mobilised a protest in front of the Ministry of Education in Baghdad. The protestors demanded al-Nusulī's punishment for publishing such a "disgraceful" book (Mufti, 1996, p. 28). The Ministry of Education, however, dismissed those three teachers and supported al-Nusulī's case instead.

Clearly, the educational system was designed to serve the pan-Arab ideology of King Fayṣal. It promoted the Arabic language over minorities' languages such as Kurdish and Assyrian (Mufti, 1996, p. 29). Britain restricted funding the educational sector and discouraged secondary education perhaps to avoid Arab domination in Iraq (Sluglett, 1976, pp. 194-195). However, the Ministry of Education kept endorsing these policies. Al-Ḥusarī's successor, Sāmī Shawkat wrote "Prussia sixty years ago used to dream about uniting German people. What is to prevent Iraq from dreaming about joining Arab lands now that it has achieved its dream of becoming independent?" (Mufti, 1996, p. 29).

The third policy of King Fayṣal was to adopt pan-Arabism as Iraq's foreign policy role. The Anglo-Iraqi treaty of 1922 gave Iraq a semi-independent foreign policy, which allowed King Fayṣal to seek hegemony in the region, particularly with Syria. The time to claim back Syria had finally arrived, King Fayṣal thought. Perhaps he thought that France would leave Syria eventually, and he would rule after the French evacuation. Just four years earlier, Britain had made him the ruler of Damascus. He believed that he was popular in the Levant, and the Syrians would prefer to see him as their King since many Syrian officers, doctors, and teachers accompanied him to Iraq after the battle of Maysalun (Masalha, 1991, p. 680). In addition, the political elites in Damascus shared King Fayṣal's pan-Arab views, which might pave the way for a possible unification between Syria and Iraq.

Geopolitics always played a determining role in shaping Syro-Iraqi relation. The geopolitical position of the Levant determined King Fayṣal's desire to the rule the region. The King was aware of the importance of the Levant's strategic location. Unity with this region would mean access to the Mediterranean Sea, and to the outside world. As soon as Britain crowned him King of Iraq, he was in desperate need of interaction with the external world to build up the Iraqi economy. Besides, Aleppo was considered one of the most important trade cities at that time. The Aleppo-Mosul trade route to Persia was one of the most active trade routes. Therefore, controlling the Levant would mean control of this strategic path (Masalha, 1991, p. 680). Thus, the King also developed the

desert motor route of Baghdad-Damascus as a step towards greater integration that would lead, as he believed, to control of the area.

Thus, he attempted to capitalise on pan-Arabism and to use it to seek control over this area. Pan-Arabism in the Levant, however, did not resemble the pan-Arabism of King Fayṣal. While the latter utilised it to support the process of state formation, most Syrians used it as a tool for the struggle against the French Mandate and to claim irredentism in the Levant; it was in effect pan-Syrianism instead. The region itself was not unified yet, and the sense of being Syrian was far from being established. Thus, pan-Arabism was utilised primarily in the area to overcome these social divisions, end the French Mandate and unify the region, and did not intend at first to unite all the Arabs into one large Arab state (Petran, 1972, p. 66).

Historically, the Arabs arrived in the Levant during the seventh century A.D (Petran, 1972, p. 24). The cities of Damascus and Harran were the capitals of the Islamic world during the Umayyad caliphate (661–750). During the Ottoman Empire, the Levant was 'administratively' divided into five vilayets; Aleppo, the Sanjak of Zor, Beirut, Damascus – also known as Syria – and the Jerusalem Sanjak. After the end of WWI, these vilayets came under the French Mandate, except Jerusalem Sanjak, which was under the British Mandate. The communities of these vilayets were mixed religiously and ethnically. Aleppo included Arabs, Kurds, Turks, Armenians, and Turco-Circassian families (Khoury, 1987, p. 103). Its cultural and economic affairs were more aligned with Anatolia than to other Arab-inhabited vilayets such as Damascus or Beirut (Khoury, 1987, p. 101). Syria or Damascus vilayet consisted of a majority of Sunni Muslims and Druze. Zor Sanjak vilayet was made up of Sunni Arabs, Kurds, and Assyrians. Beirut vilayet included Sunnis, Maronites, other Christians, and Druze. Furthermore, Shiʿism was founded in this area in the tenth and the eleventh century (Petran, 1972, p. 26). Within the Shīʿa sect, Ismāʿīlī, and the neo-Ismāʿaīlī (the Nizaries), the Nuṣayris and Druze are to be found in Levant (Petran, 1972, p. 26). When the French high commissioner General Gouraud arrived in the area in June 1922, he created a federation of states; Aleppo, an autonomous Alawite state, Jabal Druze, and Damascus (Khoury, 1987, p. 127). This federation collapsed after two years due to the economic difficulties and the anti-democratic policies of General Gouraud.

The French Mandate opposed pan-Syrianism. Therefore, it took great pains to keep the Mandate territories away from pan-Syrian sentiment. As a result, it banned any political activity in the Mandate. It also banned King Fayṣal from entering the region, believing that he and Britain were

attempting to undermine its Mandate in Syria, and eventually to banish it from the region (Paris, 2003, p. 53). Consequently, the anti-Mandate sentiment increased. Eventually, the 1925-1927 revolution took place, which would soon pave the route for the King of Iraq to interfere in Syria's affairs.

King Fayṣal attempted to capitalise on the revolution against the French Mandate (Masalha, 1991, p. 681). While he condemned the French repressive policy in dealing with the crisis, he was reluctant to offer full support to the nationalists in Damascus, in order to gain the French trust. When ʿAbd al-Raḥman Shahabander visited Baghdad and asked for support for the Syrian rebellion, the King only offered him humanitarian relief for the victims of the insurgency. Thus, Shahabander decided to leave Iraq (Masalha, 1991, p. 681). The King was aware of the French difficulties in handling the rising anti-French resentment in the Levant.

The French decided to change the High Commissioner in the Levant. In 1927, Henri Ponsot arrived in Syria. He sought to establish a new structure for the political life in the Mandate (Khoury, 1986, p. 245). In October 1927, the French amended the constitution in Lebanon. These new amendments abolished the Senate Council, which had been created in the Constitution of 1926. The new law left the Representative Council as the only legislative power in the country. The Senate Council consisted of 16 members, which the French distributed according to sect and religion. By abolishing it, the French authorities created the Lebanese state. The nationalists in Damascus strongly opposed these amendments. They believed that such amendments would legitimise the existence of an independent State of Lebanon separate from Syria. As a result, a six-day conference took place in Beirut to discuss these developments. The nationalists expressed their resentment against the Mandate and called for a national coalition to represent the people of 'Syria'. In addition, they advocated the independence of the area.

In reaction to French policies, the nationalists founded the National Bloc (*al-Kutla al-Waṭanīyya*) in the state of Syria. This Bloc would soon block King Fayṣal's claim to the Levant. This bloc was considered one of "the most influential nationalist movement in the Syrian Mandate" (Thomas, 2005, p. 255). It offered a platform for French-Syrian talks (Thomas, 2005, p. 255), and steered the "course of the independence struggle in Syria until its completion 19 years later" (Khoury, 1987, p. 248). Because of the bloc's pressure, the French Mandate offered an amnesty to those who participated in the revolution of 1925-1927. This issue boosted the popularity of the National Bloc. Therefore, many of the amnestied leaders immediately joined the Bloc (Khoury,

1987, p. 248-249). The Bloc by now included members from all over Syria: almost 50% from Damascus, 30% from Aleppo, and 20% divided between Homs and Hama (Khoury, 1987, p. 250).

During this time, Aḥmed Namī, a Circassian, and the son-in-law of the Ottoman Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II was heading the government in Damascus that was established after the 1925 revolution. On 2 February 1928, the French commissioner asked him to resign. Six days later, he asked Sheikh Taj Dīn al-Ḥassanī, a Muslim scholar from Damascus, and the director of the Royal Palace during Fayṣal's government in Syria to form the interim government to prepare for elections across the state of Syria (Khoury, 1987, p. 327). Al-Ḥassanī endorsed monarchy in Syria, arguably because he had strong relations with King Fayṣal, established during the latter's first Arab government in Damascus. By choosing him to form the cabinet, the French Mandate may have sought to create conditions to turn Syria to a Kingdom. Nevertheless, al-Ḥassanī was willing to deal with any political party that would support him to form a government (Khoury, 1987, p. 328). The elections took place on 10 - 24 April 1928. On the eve of the elections, the National Bloc and al-Ḥassanī worked as an Alliance (Khoury, 1987, p. 333). Al-Ḥassanī and the National Bloc won the majority of the votes, especially in Damascus and Aleppo cities (Khoury, 1987, pp. 334-335). As a result, al-Ḥassanī remained as Prime Minister of the state of Syria. He would, therefore, form the first Arab cabinet in Syria under the Mandate, which would soon draft a constitution to determine the fate of the country. Indeed, the cabinet formed a Committee and Chamber under French supervision to draft a constitution. The committee, however, was not completely free and Ponsot intervened in its affairs (Khoury, 1987, p. 337).

Ponsot himself endorsed a monarchy in Syria too. He wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in France that monarchy "would ensure stability, protect national traditions, and safeguard the prestige of the country" (Khoury, 1986, p. 337). Thus, he recommended a few names as potential Kings of Syria. Among them were Amīr Zayd and ʿAlī from the Hashemite family, Amīr Fayṣal of the Saud family, Amīr Yusuf Kamal of Egypt, Amīr Saʿīd al-Jazāʾrī, the grandson of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾrī, the Algerian militant and politician who fought the French in the nineteenth century, but was exiled to Damascus in 1883 (Khoury, 1986, pp. 337-338).

King Fayṣal of Iraq found an opportunity again to pursue his desire to rule Syria. He sent his trusted advisor Rustam Ḥaydar, a Shīʿī from Baalbek, and Sorbonne-educated, to Damascus to convince the political forces to choose him for the throne of Syria. Ḥaydar, however, found that the National Bloc and most of the moderate nationalists preferred a Syrian 'republic' instead, and

rejected a Hashemite monarchy (Khoury, 1987, p. 339), perhaps they did not trust him because of Fayṣal –Weizmann agreement. Nearly a decade earlier, in 1919, King Fayṣal signed the Fayṣal – Weizmann Agreement with Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the leader of the Zionist Organisation in which the King would support a Jewish settlement in Palestine, and the Zionist organisation would support the establishment of a large Arab state. The agreement had marked a political victory for Weizmann, who would later become the first President of Israel.

The constitutional committee in Syria drafted a constitution, which consisted of 115 articles. The most relevant article was the first one. This first article defined the nature of the state and declared it to be a Syrian parliamentary republic. The constitution would not come into force in the near future, though, but King Fayṣal's desire to annexe Syria to his monarchy was thus constrained. During this time, King Fayṣal was willing to transport Iraqi oil through Syrian territory to the Mediterranean Sea. However, because of his mistrust of the French authorities, he proposed to construct a pipeline to the port of Haifa through Transjordan instead (Masalha, 1991, p. 680). He perhaps thought that transporting Iraqi oil through Syria would motivate France to delay their evacuation from the country.

The Palestinian issue also had an influence on Syro-Iraqi relations. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the Fayṣal –Weizmann agreement of 1919 created domestic pressure on King Fayṣal to support the Palestinian cause and to propose Syrian-Iraqi unity. When Sir Alfred Mond, a British Zionist supporter visited Iraq in February 1928, a demonstration was organised in Baghdad to condemn his visit, and to show solidarity with the Palestinian cause (Masalha, 1991, p. 683).

Following demonstrations in August 1929, Prime Minister Yasīn al-Hāshimī's government formed a pro-Palestine Arab committee. It "was reported that a massive rally had been held at the Haydarkhanah mosque in Baghdad on 3 August at which speakers denounced the Balfour Declaration and British policy in Palestine" (Masalha, 1991, p. 683). However, Iraq's foreign behaviour was constrained by Britain until the signature of the Anglo-Iraqi treaty of 1930.

The treaty finally made progress towards the full sovereignty of Iraq (Sluglett, 2007, p. 123). This treaty gave the King of Iraq a greater space to act freely at the external level. As a result, the King called for erasing the colonial borders between Syria and Iraq by romanticising about pan-Arabism. "The ambition of the Arabs", the King declared, "is to achieve unity, in the first place between Syria and Iraq. If treaties on these lines [Syro-Iraqi] were signed the division between Syria and Iraq, binding the former to the French and the latter to the British, would be perpetuated"

he said (Masalha, 1991, p. 686). He forgot that he annexed Kurdish territories in the north to his new state. Eventually the King found the opportunity to become involved in the Palestinian issue. In 1931 when the Muslim Congress in Jerusalem was convened, it was covered significantly by the press in Iraq (Masalha, 1991, p. 685). Later, King Fayṣal offered to host a pan-Arab conference to be held in Baghdad, and suggested that the Syria-Iraq union be at the top of the agenda (Masalha, 1991, p. 688).

In Syria, the resentment against the French Mandate did not cease. France, at this time, considered setting up Hashemite rule in Syria hoping to resolve the rising of national sentiment in the country (Masalha, 1991, p. 681). Thus, the French mandatory authorities allowed King Fayṣal to sponsor a political party in Syria, and to publish a newspaper advocating for it (Mufti, 1996, p. 30).

King Fayṣal's government came under pressure from the British high commission to close *al-Waṭan* and *an-Nahẓa* nationalist newspapers. This did not stop other nationalist newspapers writing in favour of the Palestinian cause but indicated that the King and his government were encouraging this nationalist trend as part of their pan-Arab foreign policy (Masalha, 1991, p. 684). In 1931, King Fayṣal visited Paris and was received like the King of all Arabs. France admitted that it had been a mistake to expel him from Damascus in 1920, but they never considered making him the King of Syria (Mufti, 1996, p. 30). Two year's later, the King died in hospital in Switzerland, and his son, Ghāzī became the King of Iraq.

Syro-Iraqi relations during King Ghāzī's reign: Same ideology, different direction 1933-1939

King Ghāzī's reign was a continuation of King Fayṣal's pan-Arabism in the region but in a different direction. While Syria obsessed his father, King Ghāzī hoped to control Kuwait. The death of King Fayṣal, however, created a power vacuum in Iraq. King Ghāzī was not as wise as his father was (Dawisha, 2009, p. 93). He was not able to create a balance between the political elites, the tribal chiefs, and the generals. Therefore, ambitious Iraqi politicians "were left unchecked, and the rivalries of influential personalities such as [Nuri Saʾid] and [Yasin al-Hashemi] came out into the open" (Mufti, 1996, p. 31).

The turning point in King Ghāzī's reign was when the public demanded land reform that would show the role of pan-Arabism as a force that shaped the domestic and the foreign politics of Iraq. The landowners in the country avoided paying a significant amount of tax to the state because of

the consumption tax law of 1931, which reduced the amount of tax due (Tripp, 2007, p. 83). This issue eventually led to the coup d'état of 1936 conducted by General Bakr Sidqī, a Kurd from Kirkuk, supported by a political group called *al-Ahālī*, which advocated land and agricultural reform. The coup d'état successfully toppled the government. General Bakr became the chief of staff of the Army, and King Ghāzī asked Ḥikmat Sulaīmān, a member of the *al-Ahālī* group to form a new cabinet.

Soon after Ḥikmat Sulaīmān took power, a clash occurred between Iraqi patriotism (*waṭanīyya*) and pan-Arabism (*qawmīyya*), which would later lead to another coup d'état against his government, to restore pan-Arabism of the country. Ḥikmat Sulaīmān was not an Arab nationalist and had little sympathy for pan-Arabism (Tripp, 2007, p. 87). He believed in Iraqiness that would not necessarily be commited to any Arab commitment. Thus, his foreign policy focused far more on Turkey and Iran than on the Arab world. By adopting this approach, Ḥikmat Sulaīmān and General Bakr wanted to create an Iraqi identity entirely separate from the domination of the Sunni minority (Tripp, 2007, p. 88) and outside the Arab sphere. This policy provoked the Arab nationalists in the country. When Iran and Iraq signed the Iran-Iraq frontier treaty in 1937, which drew the borders between the two countries in Shatt al-ʿArab following the Thalweg principle (Tripp, 2007, p. 88), the nationalists received the news of this deal with great anger. They saw it as a betrayal of the Arabs in the Arabian/Khuzestan region (Tripp, 2007, p. 88).

The commitment to pan-Arab ideology determined the legitimacy of the Arab regimes (Barnett, 1998). Demonstrations took place in Baghdad and Basra that demanded the redirection of Iraq's foreign policy towards the Arab sphere. In addition, pan-Arab sentiment was growing inside the military establishment. Consequently, several nationalist officers plotted a coup d'état against the chief of the army, General Bakr, and Sulaīmān's government. In August 1937, General Bakr was assassinated in Mosul while he was on his way to Turkey (Tripp, 2007, p. 91). Ḥikmat Sulaīmān was forced to resign.

Seven nationalist military officers were behind the plot; Ḥusyan Fawzī, Amīn al-ʿUmarī, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Sabbāgh, Kamil Shabīb, Moḥamood Salmān, ʿAzīz Yamulkī and Fahmī Saʿīd, all Sunni in origin (Tripp, 2007, pp. 91-92). Some of those officers would continue to shape politics inside Iraq and would participate in another coup d'état a few years later to restore the pan-Arab ideology of the country. Pan-Arabism for those officers was an ideology that every government in Iraq had to keep. They believed that this ideology "was not simply a question of foreign policy" but rather

an issue "of their vision of Iraq's identity which they felt it was the duty of any government to preserve" (Tripp, 2007, pp. 91-92). Soon after, Jamīl al-Madfaʿī, a nationalist, and an officer who participated in the 1916 war with King Fayṣal, formed the cabinet, but he soon resigned in late December 1938.

Another powerful politician, who would immediately launch a unity project with Syria, was asked to form a new government. This politician was Nūrī as-Saʿīd. The latter had good relations with those seven aforementioned military officers. They shared similar views on pan-Arabism (Tripp, 2007, p. 94). As-Saʿīd restored pan-Arabism as Iraq's foreign policy. He also proposed his project of the Fertile Crescent Federation to Britain (Tripp, 2007, p. 95) replacing the "Iraq first" of Ḥikmat Sulaīmān and General Bakr (Dawisha, 2009, p. 139). The project initially called for the establishment of a federal system of governance between Iraq, Syria, Transjordan, Palestine, and Lebanon. Nevertheless, King Ghāzī continued to focus on Kuwait. This issue eventually provoked Britain. The British reaction was intense. "King [Ghazi] seemed not to realise that he was playing with fire, and it was to be feared that he might one day burn his fingers" (Mufti, 1996, p. 34). In March 1939, violent disorders took place in Kuwait, aimed at bringing down Amīr Jaber's rule. King Ghāzī deployed the Iraqi army on Kuwait's borders, hoping to gain some control in the region, but the Saudi and British forces prevented any possible intervention from the Iraqi side. A few days later, King Ghāzī died in a mysterious car accident in Baghdad (Mufti, 1996, p. 35). His four-year-old son, Fayṣal II, became King, but because of his age, Ghāzī's brother-in-law, ʿAbd al-Ilāh became Regent.

The Fertile Crescent Federation of Nūrī as-Saʿīd and establishment of the Arab League

One of World War II's key consequences in the region was British control over Iraq. In 1940, the Iraqi Prime Minister Rashīd ʿAlī al-Gaylānī met with German officers in Ankara and Berlin and promised them support for the uprisings in Transjordan and Palestine against Britain (Mufti, 1996, p. 35). On 3 February 1941, as a result of British pressure, the Regent, ʿAbd al-Ilāh replaced al-Gaylānī with Ṭaha al-Hashimī. Al-Gaylānī, and the "Golden Square" military officers; Colonel Fahmī Saʿīd, Colonel Kāmal Shabīb, Colonel Maḥmood Salmān, and Colonel Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Sabbāgh, arranged their second coup d'état on 1 April 1941 and toppled al-Hāshimī's government. The Regent was forced to leave Iraq. Shortly afterwards, the national assembly replaced him with another member of the Hashemite family, Sharīf Sharaf (Mufti, 1996, pp. 35-36). Hitler sent arms

to the Iraqi army. Four shipments were delivered via the Mosul railway. This support did not save al-Gaylānī.

Britain intervened and foiled al-Gaylānī's coup d'état. The Royal Air Force landed in Habbāniya airport to the east of Baghdad and militarily brought down the government. Al-Gaylānī and the Golden Square group fled to Iran (Mufti, 1996, p. 36). As a result, the Regent ʿAbd al-Ilāh returned to Baghdad and asked Nūrī as-Saʿid to form a cabinet. The Iraqi masses expressed their discontent about the British intervention. They were furious about the reinstallation of the British control of the country. This would soon lead to another coup d'état against the Regent ʿAbd al-Ilāh and as-Saʿid's government that would change the politics of the country.

Yet again, the Iraqi' pan-Arab project was directed to Syria, and ultimately shaped Syro-Iraqi relations. Nūrī as-Saʿīd energised the idea of the Fertile Crescent Federation. He rationalised his project using the pan-Arab tools of shared history, culture, and language. Nūrī as-Saʿīd realised that Kuwait was out of reach due to the British presence. Saudi Arabia was more concerned with keeping their Kingdom away from their old rivals, the Hashemite family (Mufti, 1996, p. 37). Transjordan was problematic because of King ʿAbdallah's plans of expansion in the West Bank. In 1942, Nūrī as-Saʿid attempted to convince King ʿAbdallah to become the 'King' of the entire Levant region as a first step to be followed by federation with the Kingdom of Iraq (Mufti, 1996, p. 37). King ʿAbdallah refused the offer, presumably hoping to establish his own dynasty in Jordan. Syria was as-Saʿid's last resort.

Although the country became "independent" in 1936, Syria was still under the influence of France before and during WWII. The French government-in-exile in London promised to end the Mandate in the region once the war was finished. In June 1941, General Charles de Gaulle appointed General Catroux as the French representative in the area. Later in 1942, the autonomous region of Latakia was annexed to the state of Syria. In 1943, France ended its Mandate of the two countries under Anglo-American pressure. The National Bloc that earlier drafted the 1930 constitution formed the government. It selected one of its active members, Shukrī al-Qawatlī, as the President of the state.

In 1944, Nūrī as-Saʿīd travelled to Damascus and conducted some meetings with Syrian officials, to discuss a Fertile Crescent Federation. These meetings were fruitless. The Syrians viewed as-Saʿid's project as a tool to achieve regional hegemony. They were more inclined to form an Arab regional system that included all the independent Arab states. Indeed, all as-Saʿīd's

attempts failed. On 6 October 1944, seven Arab countries signed a protocol in Egypt to establish the Arab League (Mufti, 1996, p. 37).

Syro-Iraqi relations: From the Establishment of Baʿth party to *al-Khold* Hall 1947-1979

The establishment of the Arab League brought about a clash between the nation-state and pan-Arabism (Al-Jabri, 1995; Barnett, 1998; Dawisha, 2002). The Arab League finally legalised the colonial-made borders in the region. Following this, in 1946, the Security Council of the United Nations issued a resolution to wind up the French presence in Syria and Lebanon. France evacuated its troops from the Levant on 17 April 1946. Although the establishment of the Arab League did regulate relations among the Arab states as it set up roles of strategic interaction and constrained foreign policy (Barnett, 1995, p. 486), it failed to produce a shared identity at the societal level.

Amid the clash between the ideology of pan-Arabism (*qawmīyya*) and the nation-state (*waṭanīyya*) system of the Arab League, the Baʿth party was founded in Syria on 7 April 1947 by Michel ʿAflaq, a Greek Orthodox Christian, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Bīṭār, a Sunni Muslim, and Zakī Artusī, an Alawite. Those intellectuals considered themselves as leading a movement capable of inspiring Arabs with the ideas of Arab nationalism. The birth of the Baʿth party was a product of the political circumstances in Syria. Furthermore, the area needed a liberation movement that opposed French rule and revived Arab national sentiment, which was at a low level (Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, p. 87). The party replaced pan-Syrian ideology in Syria with pan-Arabism. It not only called for a free Syria but freedom for all the Arab-inhabited areas of the ex-Ottoman Empire, crossing the traditional Levantine borders. At first, the party called itself the Arab Baʿth Party (*ḥizb al-Baʿth al-Arabī*). In 1953, the socialist party led by the politician Akram Ḥourāni joined it; its name became the Arab Baʿth Socialist Party (*ḥizb al-Baʿth al-Arabī al-Ishtirākī*).

This pan-Arab party became the main channel of Iraq and Syria interactions. It advocated freedom for Arab countries and called for an elimination of the traces of colonialism through the unity of Arabs from the Persian Gulf, which they called the 'Arab Gulf', to the Atlantic Ocean based on three principles; Unity, Freedom, and Socialism of the Arab World. Its mission was to create a large Arab country with "One Arab Nation with an Immortal Mission" as its slogan (Delvin, 1975, p. 1397), *umma ʿarabiyya wāḥida dhata risāla khālida*. The party adopted socialism as the base of its economic philosophy. "It saw itself as a culmination of the history of Arab nationalism, and considered itself to be the one movement that would finally drive home the

Arabs' secular dream of political unification, and so fulfil their supreme aspiration" (Kienle, 1990, p. 22).

In late 1949, the party was introduced to Iraqi society by Syrian teachers, and by Fu'ād al-Rikābī, a Shīʿa engineer from the city of Nasiriyya to the south of Iraq (Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, p. 90). Through social and clan networks, the Baʿth ideology spread in the Arab cities of Iraq. "In 1957 [al-Rikabi] took the [Ba'ath] into the opposition National Front" and the party "claimed to have attracted 300 active members, 1,200 organised helpers (ansar), 2,000 organised supporters and 10,000 unorganised supporters" (Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, p. 90).

In the 1954 elections in Syria, the Baʿth party won 30 seats out of 142 (Kienle, 1990, p. 12). Along with Egypt, it adopted "positive neutrality" in the Cold War. Iraq, along with the other conservative Arab countries such as Jordan, on the other hand, adopted a new foreign policy approach that isolated it from the Arab world after WWII. Iraq a pro-Western country was a founding member of the Baghdad pact in 1955, which directed the foreign policy of the country towards non-Arab countries such as Iran and Turkey. This increased resentment within Iraq. Although the Baʿthists at that time were active both in the political life and inside the military establishment, it was not yet in power.

With the apparent growth of communist influence in Syria, the Eisenhower administration feared the fall of Syria into the Soviet bloc, and eventually Iraq and the rest of the region. The United States saw Syria no longer adopting "positive neutrality". It, therefore, sought to increase pro-western sentiment in the conservative Arab countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. It also hoped for an Arab military intervention in Syria to prevent the spread of communism in the area. The Arab countries were reluctant to intervene militarily in Syria. They feared the reaction of their people (Yaqub, 2011, p. 116) since the legitimacy of these regimes was attained in large part by their commitment to pan-Arabism (Barnett, 1998). Turkey also viewed Egypt and Syria as potential allies of communism in the region and to have lost their positive neutrality. It tried to utilise the Eisenhower Doctrine to strengthen its power in the region. The Eisenhower administration rejected Turkey's call (İşçi and Kayaoğlu, 2014). Nevertheless, it marched its troops to the Syrian border. As a reaction, Egypt sent troops to Syria to protect it from any possible Turkish aggression. Turkey finally pulled its troops back because of Soviet and American pressure (Brecher, 1997; Yaqub, 1999). Consequently, in February 1958 the United Arab Republic (UAR)

was established between Syria and Egypt immediately after the crisis of 1957 in which the Syrian Baʿthists had played a significant role by convincing President Nāṣer to make it occur.

A few months later, on 14 July 1958, General ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim and General ʿAbd a-Salām ʿArif carried out their coup d'état against the government and the Monarchy in Iraq for their pro-Western policies. Those officers believed that the royal family and the government's pro-British policies made Iraq a subordinate country and sustained the British legacy of controlling the state even after the termination of the Mandate post-World War II.

The coup d'état changed the political system of Iraq from a monarchy to a republic. The country, therefore, saw the birth of the first republic since its establishment in 1921. General Qāsim became the first President and withdrew Iraq from the Baghdad Pact in 1959. The tension between Syria and Iraq deceased. Both claimed to have the same foreign policy role of pan-Arabism. There were already unofficial talks for Iraq to join the UAR.

By withdrawing from the pact, Iraq became less constrained and controlled by Britain and the United States. As a result, the flow of Soviet foreign aid and military supplies to Iraq increased (Tripp, 2007, p. 159). In addition, Iraq's relations with Iran deteriorated after Iraq's withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact, and the dispute over navigation in the Shatt al-ʿArab re-emerged. The Shah unilaterally abrogated the 1937 agreement, and supported the Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDK) in its fight against the central government in Baghdad.

President Qāsim retaliated by seeking hegemony over the Gulf. He claimed Kuwait was a district of the city of Basra. He changed the name of the Persian Gulf to "Arab Gulf" in Iraqi public statements (Tripp, 2007, p. 159). By doing so, he revived King Ghāzī's demands on Kuwait. Qāsim was well aware that any action to annexe Kuwait would come at a high price. He continued to claim that Kuwait was part of Iraq, to counter the Shah's hegemony in the region.

President Qāsim was an Arab nationalist. He sought, like Ḥikmat Sulaīmān and General Bakr in the 30s, to establish an Iraqi nationalism away from Arab nationalism (Tripp, 2007; Dawisha, 2009; Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001). He later moved closer to the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), presumably to attract the Soviet Union. Thus, his negligence of the UAR project and pan-Arabism ideology created tension with his Deputy, ʿArif. The latter was not a Baʿthist but he admired Nāṣer's pan-Arabism.

At this stage, the Baʿth ideology was spreading within the military, and ʿArif's popularity was growing. Supported by the army, ʿArif insisted on unity with the UAR. He visited Damascus and

had a discussion with the founders of the party, Michel ʿAflaq and Ṣalāḥ Dīn al- Bīṭār about the possibility of joining the unified republic. In September of the same year, Qāsim, who was also backed by Communist officers inside the army, dismissed ʿArif from his post as a Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior and in October 1958 appointed him as Iraqi ambassador in Bonn. ʿArif initially rejected the post but then accepted it, but he maintained his desire to unify Iraq with the UAR. Thus, he threatened to revolt against President Qāsim. In November 1958, he returned secretly to Baghdad and was arrested, tried in public and sentenced to death, but in February 1959 President Qāsim granted him an amnesty (Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, p. 60).

Although ʿArif was not a member of the party, the Baʿthists faced challenges when he was arrested. Ṣalāḥ ʿOmar al-ʿAlī, a former member of the Baʿth party and a former Minister of Culture, said in a televised interview that the party faced a harsh time after ʿArif's arrest (Al-ʿAlī, interview with Al-Jazeera, 18 May 2003). Alongside ʿArif, many other nationalists, civilians and officers were arrested. Among those were the nationalist officer, Aḥmed Ḥassan al-Bakr, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's uncle, Lieutenant-Colonel Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ʿAmmāsh, and the Baʿthist activist ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī. These people would play a significant role in Iraq's politics following their later release.

In an interview with Ḥāmed al-Joburī, one of the Baʿthist leaders in Iraq, he claimed that al-Bakr was not a Baʿthist at first, he was a conservative, and practising Muslim; he perceived the party as a secular one. Thus, it was hard for the Baʿthists to recruit him at the beginning, said al-Joburī. The latter continues; al-Bakr was usually leading prayers in prison. In Islam, those who lead prayers are well-respected persons and those to whom people listen. Thus, al-Bakr was famous, and a respected figure among his followers, so the Baʿthists were attracted to him, said al-Joburī. A Baʿthi officer, ʿAmmāsh, suggested to his followers to pray behind al-Bakr, although none of them was practising Islam to show that the Baʿth party was also a Muslim party (al-Joburī interview with Al-Jazeera, 8 May 2008). They succeeded in recruiting al-Bakr to the Baʿth party. During this time, ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī, the civilian Baʿthist, established close ties with ʿAbd a-Salām ʿArif (Tripp, 2007, p. 163).

During this time, the ICP in Iraq formed a militia called the Popular Resistance militia. Its task was to protect the 1958 revolution and challenge all the nationalist forces, including the Baʿth Party. Many of the Baʿthists were persecuted, arrested and tortured (Al-ʿAlī, interview with Al-Jazeera, 18 May 2003). The conflict between the Communists and the Baʿthists began to build up. The Baʿthists reached the conclusion that the only way to terminate Qāsim's rule was to take his

life. On 7 October 1959, seven or eight young Baʿthists, including the young twenty-three-year-old Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, attempted to kill Qāsim in al-Rashid Street in Baghdad. They failed. Two of the plotters were captured and sentenced to death, but the court's verdict was never implemented. Ṣaddām Ḥusayn was injured yet managed to escape to Syria, not knowing that he would return home after a few years and would become perhaps the most powerful President the state of Iraq had since its creation in 1921.

At that time, the UAR faced several challenges, these eventually led to its dissolution on 28 September 1961. Among these challenges was the dissolution of the party system in the Republic, and land reform policies, which threatened the officials of the Baʿth party with loss of their private properties (Hinnebusch, 2000). The majority of the Baʿthists were unhappy at President Nāṣer's decision to dissolve the political parties. In addition, disagreements between the political elites of the two regions and between the Syrian elites themselves made it difficult for the UAR to survive (Palmer, 1966, pp. 50-67).

A military coup d'état was carried out in Syria on 28 September 1961 led by ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Naḥlāwī to dissolve the UAR. The coup d'état succeeded in bringing down the unity government in Damascus and announced Syria's separation from the UAR. A separate government (*niẓām al-infiṣāl*) was formed. President Nāṣer sent troops to crush the revolt, but recanted, and Marshal ʿAbd al-Ḥakim ʿAmr, the Deputy President of the UAR, was asked to return to Cairo. After the dissolution of the UAR, Syria normalised its relations with Iraq. President Qāsim and the Syrian President at that time, Nāẓim al-Qudsī, had a three-day-long meeting in the border village of Albu Kamal to improve Syro-Iraqi relations (Library of Congress, 6 January 2015), but President Qāsim did not see Syria as a strategic ally and his focus was more towards the Gulf.

1963: the year of the coup(s) d'état

In 1963, the unity of Syria and Iraq emerged once again on the political agenda of the two countries. Backed by ICP, in late 1962, Qāsim was, apparently, confident that he and his followers were politically dominant in Iraq. The National Democratic Party (NDP) was fragmented, and the PDK opposed the central government. The Baʿthists sought power. All of these political forces desired to topple Qāsim's regime. Eventually, on 8 February 1963, the Baʿthists, with the help of Nāṣerist and independent officers, carried out a coup d'état against Qāsim's regime (Kienle, 1990, pp. 24-25).

ʿArif, with the help of the Baʿthist officers, Brigadier Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr, Lieutenant-Colonel Ṣālīḥ Maḥdi ʿAmmāsh, and a few Nāṣerist officers, prevailed. Pan-Arabism was yet again a force for shaping Iraqi politics. The coup d'état succeeded to overthrew Qāsim's regime. The latter was killed the day after; ʿArif became the second President of the Republic, and he appointed Ḥassan al-Bakr, his deputy. A successful installation of a pan-Arab regime next door made the Syrian nationalists feel inspired.

Exactly one month later, on 8 March 1963, the army in Syria carried out a coup d'état led by the nationalist officer, Zīād al-Harīrī (Rabinovich, 1972, p. 50) against the government *niẓām al-infiṣāl*. Right after the coup d'état, the National Council of the Revolutionary Command (NCRC) *al-majlis al-Waṭanī li-Qīyādat a-Thawra* was founded and Luʾaī al-Atāssī, who was the chief of staff during the UAR (1958-1961) was released from prison and appointed Chair of the Council. The Baʿthist Ṣalāḥ Dīn Bīṭār became Prime Minister and the young al-Baʿthi Lieutenant Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad was soon promoted to a Lieutenant Colonel in charge of the Syrian Air Force.

The top officers who orchestrated the Syrian coup d'état were independent and non-Baʿthi unionists (Pro-UAR) such as Zīād al-Ḥarīrī, the chief maker of the coup who became the army chief of staff (Seale and McConville, 1990, p. 79), but the Baʿthists inherited it (Rabinovich, 1972, p. 49). This does not mean that the Baʿthists did not participate in the coup d'état. It is just that their participation was relatively less influential than the other factions, but they got the credit. The battalion that controlled the Syrian radio station was commanded by the Baʿthist Captain Salīm Ḥaṭum. This allowed the Baʿthists to exert pressure to bring back the Baʿthist officers who had been dismissed from service. Among them were Lieutenant Ṣalāḥ J'dīd and Lieutenant Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, (Rabinovich, 1972, p. 49) who would both in future carry out their own coup d'état and come to power. The battalion also recited its slogan "Unity, Freedom and Socialism" twice in the revolution decree over national radio.

Between 14 March and 14 April 1963, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq launched tripartite talks in Cairo to establish a United Arab Republic similar to the UAR (Mufti, 1996, p. 149). President Nāṣer agreed to discuss the unity project despite his previous bitter experience, perhaps to maintain the pan-Arab public image. Perhaps he considered the unity negotiations as an opportunity to restore his pan-Arab credentials lost in the Yemeni civil war (Mufti, 1996, p. 149). This time, he did not ask for the dissolution of the political party, particularly because the issue was one of the factors that had led to the collapse of the UAR in 1961. Instead, he demanded power sharing and more

seats in the NCRC in Syria. The talks took place in three stages: 14-17 March, 19-21 March, and 6-14 April in 1963 (Mufti, 1996, p. 150).

The Baʿthists sought to reach a compromise. They suggested decentralisation in decision making, especially for domestic and military matters. They proposed creating a Presidential Council headed by President Nāṣer, with the governing body within the Federal Assembly. Since proportional representation regulated the latter, President Nāṣer accepted the offer (Mufti, 1996, p. 152). He was confident that he would manage to gain seats in the elections to allow him to have a powerful leverage over politics in the United Republic. On 17 April, the agreement was signed. It announced the establishment of the United Arab Republic, with Cairo as its capital, which gave Egypt considerable control over foreign affairs and national security (Mufti, 1996, p. 152).

As for the Baʿthists, this centralization of foreign and security policy did not mean, "the dissolution of the existing unionist parties… this alone constituted of a significant advance over the UAR accord of 1958" (Mufti, 1996, p. 152). In addition, the Baʿthists in Syria were desperate to sign the agreement to control public opinion and consolidate power there (Mufti, 1996, p. 149). They were also satisfied with the agreement. The Iraqi Baʿthists were under less domestic pressure to sign the agreement. At the government level, the deal also helped to balance the power between the Nāṣerites and the Baʿthists in Iraq.

The Nāṣerites in Iraq and Syria, however, opposed the agreement. They felt they had been compromised or betrayed by President Nāṣer because it gave leverage to Syrian and Iraqi Baʿthists over the Nāṣerites in both countries (Mufti, 1996, p. 153). Indeed, on 27 April 1963, fifty Nāṣerite officers were removed from the army in Syria. As a result, the Deputy Chief of Staff and the Minister of Defence, both Nāṣerites, and five Nāṣerite ministers from the government resigned (Mufti, 1996, p. 153). A series of pro-Nāṣer demonstrations took place in the main cities supporting Nāṣerism. Bīṭār formed a new government consisting of 18 Ministries, six headed by Baʿthists, six by nationalists but pro-Baʿthists, and six by Nāṣerites. This is did not please the Nāṣerite officers. Eventually, in July 1963 and backed by Nāṣer and the Egyptian intelligence, Lieutenant Colonel Jāsim ʿAlwān and his men carried a coup against the new government, but it failed (Seale and McConville, 1990, p. 83). Following ʿAlwān's foiled coup, the tripartite negotiations ended.

Al-Ḥarīrī was a strong military man, something that did not please the Baʿthi officers, especially that he was an independent officer. Thus, they planned to get rid of him. In June 1963, al-Ḥarīrī joined Bīṭār's delegation to Algeria. While he was away, the National Council of the Revolutionary

Command (NCRC) instructed Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, who at that time was promoted to major general, to get rid of al-Ḥarīrī. The day after the delegation's arrival in Algeria, Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad called the commanding officer of the 70th brigade and officers who backed al-Ḥarīrī, to Army headquarters. There they were told that some of them were retired, and others were "assigned to the diplomatic service" (Devlin, 1976, p. 281). Al-Ḥarīrī was assigned to the Syrian embassy in Washington DC as military attaché. The delegation was instructed not to allow him to return to the country. He rejected the post and returned home to Damascus, but, fearing Baʿthi repercussions, left for France. It is reported that Bīṭār accompanied him to the airport, with tears in his eyes (Rabinovich, 1972, p. 70). The Baʿth party now monopolised power in Syria.

Syro-Iraqi relations: from the bilateral negotiations of 1963 to the Baʿth's split in 1966

As soon as the tripartite negotiations failed in July 1963, the two Baʿth branches in Syria and Iraq launched bilateral negotiations. President ʿArif fled from Cairo to Damascus to discuss bilateral unity with Syrian officials after he failed to persuade Nāṣer not to withdraw from tripartite bargaining. But the party soon became a source of significant source of hostility between the two countries. By now four different groups had emerged within the Baʿth party; the first one represented by the old guard led by Michel ʿAflaq, the second one represented by the civilian alliance of the regional command in Iraq led by ʿAlī Ṣaliḥ as-Saʿdī, Ṭāleb Shabīb and Ḥāzem Jawād and in Syria led by Ḥammud al-Ṣufī and Sāmī al-Jundī. The third group was represented by the Syrian Military Command led by Ṣāliḥ J'dīd, Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, Amīn al-Ḥāfeẓ and others. The fourth group was represented by the Iraqi military officers Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr, Ḥardān al-Tikrītī, and Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ʿAmmāsh, Ṭāhr Yaḥya (Mufti, 1996, p. 159).

While the army officers in both countries opposed unity, the civilian wing endorsed it. This signalled the first power struggle within the party. The military in Syria and Iraq apparently had a weak ideological commitment. They rejected integration because of their fear of losing privileges and position due to possible changes in the military hierarchy that unity might bring (Mufti, 1996, p. 159). In Iraq, al-Saʿdī advocated for unity. He sought to weaken military officers in both countries with the unity project. In Syria, Sāmī al-Jundī, a Baʿthist and pro-UAR, endorsed unity.

President ʿArif and al-Jundī met and discussed unity as the first step for towards full unity between Syria and Iraq. Al-Jundī hoped not just to achieve actual integration between the two countries, but also to help ʿAlī Ṣaliḥ as-Saʿdī prevail over ʿAflaq. He proposed a transitional period

of federation between the two nations as a first step towards "a comprehensive pan-Arab unity" (Mufti, 1996, p. 168). President ʿArif accepted al-Jundī's unity proposal. The two sides agreed to form an ad hoc committee led by al-Jundī to move this forward. The latter appointed al-Saʿdī his Deputy (Mufti, 1996, p. 159). The two countries later signed a military charter, which combined the armies of Syria and Iraq into one army under a unified leadership, and set up economic integration between the two nations to be implemented gradually (Mufti, 1996, p. 160).

The struggle for power within the party determined Syro-Iraqi relations. For instance, the results of these developments created a split within the Iraqi government. The ʿAflaqis (military faction) strongly opposed the talks. ʿAflaq was aware of as-Saʿdī's growing popularity in Iraq. Thus, he cooperated with a few other Baʿthist officers in Iraq to eliminate al-Saʿdī by opposing the unity proposal from his position as the chair of the party (Mufti, 1996, p. 159). When al-Jundī went to Baghdad to try to reach an understanding between the conflicting parties, Ṭālib Shabīb who was the Foreign Minister of Iraq at that time, pulled him aside and told him; "Are you really serious about all these unity talks? We are about to slaughter each other over here" (Mufti, 1996, p. 162).

The Baʿthists did not reach an agreement. The party was greatly divided in both countries. The civilian wing in Iraq led by ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī, Ṭālib Shabīb and Ḥāzem Jawād attempted to take over the party. To do so, as-Saʿdī created a para military militia "the National Guard, which was made up primarily of Baʿthists (or at least those who claimed fidelity to the party), and which by August 1963 was 34,000 strong" (Dawisha, 2009, p. 84). Backed by the National Guard, as-Saʿdī dominated the party's meetings and decision making of the party, thus marginalising the military wing. Resentment soared between the civilian and the military wing of the party because of the power of the National Guard militia. Tripp observes that as-Saʿdī was an influential politician (2007, p. 165). Dawisha wrote that he portrayed himself as a "neo-Marxist" and his two colleagues, Ṭālib Shabīb and Ḥāzem Jawād as fanatical nationalists (2009, p. 184). ʿAflaq was asked to visit Baghdad to settle the division within the party. It was later agreed that he would be in charge of the party's affairs in Iraq (Tripp, 2007, p. 168).

However, the popularity of the Baʿth founders, ʿAflaq and Bīṭār (sympathizers with the Iraqi branch), was steadily declining in Syria. While both were busy with bigger issues related to state administration and inter-relations with the other Baʿth parties in the region, they lost control over the base of the party in Syria. Furthermore, ordinary and ambitious youth members, who held low positions within the party hierarchy, led the organisational work within the Baʿth. Eventually, the

party became more radicalised and an internal conflict began which led to the emergence of the neo-Baʿthists.

The disagreement between the old and the neo-Baʿthists was ideological. The old guard, or the nationalists (*qawmiyyun*), including the President of the country at that time, Amīn al-Ḥāfeẓ, a Sunni officer from Aleppo, advocated for a rapid union under their terms. The neo-Baʿthists, led by the Alawite officers, Ṣalāḥ J'dīd, Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Muḥammad ʿUmrān, endorsed a "go-slow approach to opponents of the union" (Collelo, 1987, p. 34). They also advocated the restoration of the land reform programme carried out during the UAR period. They were later referred to as 'regionalists' (*qutriyyun*) and called the radical wing or 'the extremists'.

The regionalists dominated the Military Committee (MC) inside the party. The committee consisted of five members after the February coup d'état of 1963. All of them belonged to religious minorities: Muḥammad ʿUmrān, Ṣalāḥ J'dīd and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad were Alawites; ʿAbd al-Karīm Jundī and Aḥmad al-Mir were Isma'ilis (Kienle, 1990, p. 33). Soon afterward, the Committee expanded to include fifteen new members only six of whom were from the Sunni Muslim majority (Kienle, 1990, p. 33). Therefore, the regional tendencies of these officers were based on their religious background, the secular approach of the Baʿth party provided security to these minorities, and any union with another Sunni-dominated Arab country would jeopardise them (Kienle, 1990, p. 33).

The tipping point was September 1963 during the Sixth National Congress of the party. It included 25 members from Iraq led by ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī and his followers, and 18 members from Syria, led by the neo-Baʿthists. The purpose of the Congress was to re-structure the party and accept new members. The Congress introduced a resolution humiliating ʿAflaq and his followers. It blamed them for all the past failures in the tripartite and the bilateral unity negotiations. The resolution stated: "Those comrades (*rifaq*) responsible for the opaqueness of the Party's thought and for the failure to take power in Syria prior to 1958 and for accepting the Party's dissolution and for staying in power despite its obvious deviationism since the early months of the Union and for similar mistakes that are still taking place now, should present the Congress with a written self-criticism" (Rabinovich, 1972, p. 83).

ʿAflaq threatened to leave the party if he was not elected as the General Secretary, and consequently was elected. The Iraqi Baʿthists received the congress with anger and regretted attending it. Ṣalāḥ ʿOmar al-ʿAlī said that while the Baʿthists in Iraq were facing difficulties after

their dismissal from the government by President ʿArif, they were hoping to get support from the Baʿth in Syria. He added, "We were shocked, and we wished we had not participated in this conference" (al-ʿAlī, interview with Al-Jazeera, 10 January 2005). Ultimately, the military wing in Iraq moved against ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī and his followers in a meeting on 12 November 1963. As-Saʿdī and a few of his followers were sent to exile in Spain, and a new congress was formed led by General al-Bakr (Dawisha, 2009, p. 185).

By 1964, President ʿArif had lost enthusiasm for Arab unity. Although he was an Nāṣerist, his relations with Nāṣer later deteriorated, especially after President Nāṣer's rejection of President ʿArif's request to cancel the execution of Sayyd Qutb, an Islamic scholar and President Nāṣer's chief internal enemy. President ʿArif later abandoned his zeal for Arab unity and his commitment to Nāṣerite ideology (Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, p. 94). He was strong enough to stay in power. He surrounded himself with his family and clan, especially his brother ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿArif, and Colonel Saʿīd Ṣlāyybī. Those two Colonels controlled the "key army units including the Republican Guard, which was largely formed from members of al-Jumayla, the tribe from which the [Arif's] originally came" (Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, p. 94).

The Baʿth party in Syria was increasingly sectarianised, especially after the coup d'état of 1963. In 1966, they became even more dominant when the Alawite Baʿthists removed the Druze faction led by Salīm Ḥaṭum from the party. Sāmī al-Jundī in his memoir wrote, "people might ask; was Bīṭār sectarian or not? He might and might not be, but he indeed used it [sectarianism] and made it as a party within the party" (in Mansour, 2015). The congress elected a new Syrian regional command. It consisted of eight civilians and seven military officers, headed by Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad. The civilian wing itself was made up of a majority of army committee supporters, with a minority of ʿAflaq's men. The latter and his followers found themselves "with a regional Command dominated by the military and their protégés" (Rabinovich, 1972, p. 105). For Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, this was his first appearance in national politics (Seale and McConville, 1990, p. 87).

As time passed, the majority of the Baʿthists who monopolised power in Iraq were Sunnis, while the top leaders of the Baʿthists in Syria were Alawites (Kienle, 1990, p. 36). Having taken power as General Secretary of the party in 1964, ʿAflaq selected his relative, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, a young Baʿthist at that time, as the Secretary of the Iraqi Regional Committee, and Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr as the head of its Military Committee (Kienle, 1990, p. 33).

The conflict between the regionalists and the nationalists eventually led to the coup d'état of February 1966. The Military Committee of the Baʿth party of Syria, including the Druze faction led by Salīm Ḥatum, took over the regime in Syria (Kienle, 1990, p. 34). Nuraddīn al-Atāssī, a Sunni general and a neo-Baʿthist from Homs became the President. ʿAflaq and his followers were expelled to outside Syria. They left the country and headed for Iraq to seek a haven. Bīṭār and his followers were put under house arrest, but Bīṭār then succeeded in escaping to Beirut (Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, p. 60). President ʿArif's Government and the Baʿth government in Syria now became enemies of the Baʿth party in Iraq (al-ʿAlī, interview with Al-Jazeera, 10 January 2005).

The Baʿth ideology after the February 1966 coup d'état became a significant factor of fragmentation between Syria and Iraq. For the party's leadership purposes, the neo-Baʿthists in Syria became a threat to the Baʿthists' rule in Iraq. The neo-Baʿthists in Syria established an organisation called "Vanguards of the People's Liberation War" (*Ṭalaʿa Ḥarb al-Taḥrīr al-Sha'abiyyah*) in Palestine, which intended to fight an asymmetric war against Israel. This organisation attracted many members of the Baʿth party in Iraq. Thus, the leadership of the Iraqi Baʿth felt threatened by the neo-Baʿthists. The competition over pan-Arabism and the bet on the Palestinian issue had just begun between the two Baʿthi branches.

Later, a Baʿthist delegation from Iraq, led by Ṣalāḥ ʿOmar al-ʿAlī, visited Damascus to meet Ṣalāḥ J'dīd, the general secretary of the National Command of the Baʿth party in Syria. Ṣalāḥ ʿOmar al-ʿAlī said that the purpose of the visit was to identify the 'political orientation' of the plotters of the coup d'état in Syria (al-ʿAlī, interview with Al-Jazeera, 10 January 2005). After exchanging views with the neo-Baʿthists, the Iraqi delegation returned to Iraq. It delivered its report to the Baʿth National Committee in Baghdad. The report stated; "the new leadership in Syria could be revolutionary, leftist, perhaps Marxist, but it is not a Baʿthi one" (al-ʿAlī, interview with Al-Jazeera, 10 January 2005). After this event, the relations between the two Baʿth branches were cut.

Following these developments, on 13 April 1966, President ʿArif's plane crashed in mysterious circumstances, and he died. The Baʿthists were accused of being behind the accident. Ṣalāḥ Omar al-ʿAlī denied this claim. He stated that he personally asked Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr several times about this matter, and the latter denied any Baʿth involvement in the plane accident (al-ʿAlī, interview with Al-Jazeera, 10 January 2005). According to the constitution, the Prime Minister, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bazzāz became the President of the country. Shortly after, on 17 April 1966

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿArif, ʿAbd Salām ʿArif's brother, was elected President of Iraq. Although he was one of the strong candidates for the presidency post, al-Bazzāz encouraged President ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿArif to become the President of the country to avoid any possible conflict that might arise (Ṣalāḥ ʿOmar al-ʿAlī Interview with Al-Jazeera, 10 January 2005). Al-Bazzāz was a liberal politician. His views about solving the Kurdish issue in Iraqi Kurdistan, and ensuring basic civil and political liberties in the country put him in direct opposition with Baʿthists, Nāṣerite and the other nationalist members of the regime.

As a result, President ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿArif fired al-Bazzāz from his premiership position (Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, p. 99). President ʿArif asked Nājī Ṭāleb, a well-respected Shīʿa Iraqi officer (David, 2005, p. 152) to form the government. Ṭāleb's government included seven officers and twelve civilians, mostly technocrats, but "Needless to say, no more was heard about the democratisation of the political system, and negotiations with the Kurds came to an abrupt end" (Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, p. 99). The negotiations with the PDK failed, and "the situation in Kurdistan returned to a wary armed truce in which the Iraqi Army could achieve little" (Tripp, 2007, p. 181).

Along with their ideological competition, during Ṭāleb's premiership term, an oil transit fees crisis between Iraq and Syria took place, making geopolitics again a key factor of Syro-Iraqi resentment. At the end of 1966, a dispute between the Iraqi Petroleum Company (IPC), and the al-Baʿthi Syrian government began (Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, p. 99). The Syrian government demanded 'tariffs' increase, but the IPC rejected the request. As a result, the Iraqis stopped pumping oil to the Mediterranean via the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline, "which formed 70% of government revenue. This was immediately cut by two-thirds" (Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, p. 99). Iraq's economy suffered significant damage. In March 1967, Iraq resumed pumping oil through Syria, after the Syrians and the IPC agreed to compensate the Iraqi government for its lost revenue (Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, p. 100).

In June 1967, the Six Days War took place between Israel and the Arab countries: Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq. The speed of the defeat meant that Iraq did not participate largely (Tripp, 2007, p. 181). Israel occupied the West Bank, Golan Heights, and Sinai. It reshaped regional politics (Hinnebusch, 2003, p. 171). The Arab defeat of 1967 heavily damaged pan-Arabism (Shlaim and Louis, 2012; Ajami, 1981). "It greatly damaged Arab socialism, nationalism, and unity projects. Its effects on the acceptance of the existing states were ambiguous" (Kienle,

1990, p. 27). The war indicated that no Arab country was ready to sacrifice for Palestine. Thus, the defeat of 1967 is considered as the defeat of pan-Arabism too (Ajami, 1981; Shlaim and Louis, 2012). Most importantly, the 1967 Arab defeat burned deeply into the Syrian psyche. No Syrian President would dare to achieve peace with Israel without demanding the return of the Golan Heights (Lesch, 2012, p. 79). Syrian foreign policy for decades to come centred on one single issue; return of the Golan Heights. It is still unresolved.

The defeat of the Arabs in the 1967 war gave an opportunity for the Baʿth party to rise to power in Iraq again. It attacked Ṭāhr Yaḥā's government and accused it of laziness and corruption (Tripp, 2007, p. 183). They requested President ʿArif form a new cabinet. The latter consulted senior military and official figures about the choice of a Prime Minister to lead the government, but there "was no consensus either on the composition of the new administration or in the direction of the country as a whole" (Tripp, 2007, pp. 183-184). He, therefore, declined to form a new government.

The Baʿthists at this time were preparing to bring down the government. Other non-Baʿthist officers who also wanted to take over power knew about the plot. According to al-Joburī, those neo-officers included the assistant director of intelligence ʿAbd al-Razzāq Nāīf, the head of the Republican Guard Ibrāhīm Dāoud, and Commander of Military Protocol Colonel Saʿīd. These officers told the Baʿthist officers that they had information about a Baʿthi plot to assume power. They challenged their plan and threatened to arrest them if they were not included in the plan, demanding positions in the government when the plot succeeded. The Baʿthists had no option but to accept their offer (al-Joburī, interview with Al-Jazeera, 29 May 2008).

On 17 July, while Brigadier Saʿīd Ṣlāyybī, the commander of the forces in Baghdad, was absent, those Baʿthist and non-Baʿthist military officers and a few civilian Baʿthists, including the secretary of the Iraqi regional committee Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, launched their coup d'état against the government. They closed down the National Radio station, the Ministry of Defence and Headquarters of the Republican Guard (Tripp, 2007, p. 184). President ʿArif was forced to leave the country, and Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr became the President of Iraq (Tripp, 2007, p. 184). ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Nāīf became Prime Minister, and Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ʿAmmāsh, the Minister of the Interior (Tripp, 2007, p. 184). Iraq thus represented the right wing of the party, dominated by civilian members, but enjoyed the support of the founders of the party, and in Syria the far left wing that was dominated by Baʿthi officers.

Syro-Iraqi relations after the July 1968 revolution in Iraq

The legitimacy of Arab regimes was closely dependent upon their commitment to pan-Arabism (Barnett, 1998; Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2016). Thus, the Iraqi 1968 revolution institutionalised the party split of 1966 discussed earlier; making the ideological competition over the leadership within the party exceeded to the inter-state level. The neo-Baʿthists in Syria felt their regime-legitimacy was in danger after the 1968 coup d'état in Iraq. The two parties were now in power. The regime next door became "too much of a nuisance" to the regime in Syria (Kienle, 1990, p. 31). Theoretically, the moment to achieve unity had just arrived. Practically, it became a source of menace. Because pan-Arabism and the Baʿth party were "primarily tools of power control in the two countries" (Ambassador Rugh, Telephone interview, 6 July 2015), both regimes ended up competing over the same tools of power control, in order to legitimise their regime domestically and achieve regional balance.

The Baʿthists in Syria started a propaganda war against their counterparts in Iraq to delegitimise their regime (Kienle, 1990, p. 31). The Baʿth party in Iraq preferred a defensive stand. The new President of Iraq Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr tried to overcome the differences between the two branches of the party. "The Syrian and Iraqi Ba'th had no disagreements over principles but views", saying that they are all Baʿthists (Kienle, 1990, p. 40). Nevertheless, Iraq had already welcomed the Syrian Baʿthists in exile, and had helped Lebanon economically after the Syrian's imposition of economic sanctions on the country (Kienle, 1990, p. 40).

The Iraqi Baʿthists were financially and politically stronger than the Syrians were. They claimed that they represented the true Baʿth ideology, as they now hosted the founder of the party Michel ʿAflaq, and that Iraq had the political and the economic potential to take on the role of Baʿth leadership. However, the Syrians were politically strong too. They proudly saw Syria as the historic leader of the party and its rhetoric constantly dwelt on this. Michel ʿAflaq was Syrian and although he "defected" to Baghdad in his later years, his origins were always cited as showing Syrian primacy in the Baʿth movement. In addition, Syria was the headquarters of Baʿth while Baghdad, along with other Arab countries, was only a regional centre (Ambassador Murphy, Email interview, July 12, 2015).

Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad climbs the ladder

The 1967 War unsettled Syrian domestic politics. One its direct repercussions was the emergence of the animosity between two colleagues, the leader of the party Ṣalāḥ J'dīd, and the minister of defence Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad. The latter started to accuse Ṣalāḥ J'dīd of mishandling Syrian domestic and foreign affairs. Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad recommended liberalisation of the economy (*infitaḥ*), opening up the party to people and to create local administration at the provincial level; Ṣalāḥ J'dīd was more inclined to centralise power, close party membership to avoid infiltration, and for socialism (Seale and McConville, 1990, p. 146). Most importantly, Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad recommended normalising Syria's relations with Iraq (Seale and McConville, 1990, p. 147).

The animosity between the two steadily increased. Both strove for power and support within the party, from the civilian and the military wings alike. As Minister of Defense, Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad replaced the chief of staff, J'dīd's reliable ally, Aḥmad al-Suwaydanī with his ally, Muṣṭafā Ṭlas (Seale and McConville, p. 148). Ṭlas was Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad's friend - both had joined the military academy in Homs in 1951 (Seale and McConville, p. 145). Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad also dismissed J'dīd's other ally, Aḥmad al-Mir, who had commanded the Syrian forces in the Golan Heights during the Six Days War in 1967 (Seale and McConville, p. 149). By 1968, Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad was almost in total control of the entire military establishment. Ṣalāḥ J'dīd was still in charge of the security and intelligence apparatus through his ally, ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jundī. The latter had been the minister of Agrarian Reform after the February coup d'état in 1966 and was a member of the NCRC of the party. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jundī was somewhat violent and nihilist, famous for his brutality and cruelty (Seale and McConville, p. 150).

Al-Jundī was accused of plotting to assassinate Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad. The issue became personal. Rif'at al-Asad, Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad's brother and the commander of a special security force of the party, launched a semi-coup d'état against al-Jundī. Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad seized the latter, but fearing torture and prosecution; he shot himself (Seale and McConville, 1990, pp. 150-151). Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad now began to have a significant say in decision making in Syria and in 1970, became the man who effectively ran the show in the country. When the distinguished Algerian diplomat, Lakhder Brāhīmī visited Syria to discuss the Jordanian-PLO 1970 crisis, he met with President Nuraddīn al-Atāssī. The latter told him "do not discuss serious matters with me' … [Hafiz Assad] is in charge" (Seale and McConville, p. 162). On 28 September 1970, President Nāṣer passed away. Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad attended the funeral, and by the time he returned home, Seale argues, Syria was

without a government. Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and "[J'did] and their respective supporters, no longer on speaking terms, confronted each other with undisguised venom" (Seale and McConville, p. 163).

On 12 November 1970, J'dīd was arrested and put in Mezza prison (Seale and McConville, p. 164), and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad became the president of the country. The ex-president, Nūr ad-Dīn Muṣṭafā al-Atāsī, was put on tria l and jailed in Mezza prison too. On 16 November, and while President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad was busy with the final touches of his plot, the President of Libya, Muʿammar al-Qadhdhāfī, landed at Damascus airport and was waiting in the VIP room. President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad went to receive him and joked, "It is a good thing you did not arrive half an hour earlier" (Seale and McConville, p. 165). On the same day, he went to the airport again to receive the Iraqi foreign minister, who arrived to congratulate President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad on taking over the regime in Syria (Seale and McConville, p. 165).

President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad was less ideological in his foreign policy approach than his predecessor. He restored Syria's relations with Iraq. The two sides discussed the partition of the Euphrates water in May 1971 (Kienle, 1990, p. 59). The two countries also removed trade restrictions, and agreed to build a new pipeline from North Rumayla to be attached to the existing one (Kirkuk-Banias), but this extension of the pipeline was never built. The two countries also discussed building a railway to link Baghdad with Dayr al-Zur and Aleppo (Kienle, 1990, p. 59).

In 1972, geopolitics again became a source of tension between the two countries. In June 1972, the Baʿth regime in Iraq nationalised the Iraqi Petroleum Company (IPC), which was owned at that time by British, Dutch, French, and American companies (Baram, 1986, p. 128). Syria was receiving tariffs from these enterprises for the oil transferred through its territories via the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline. When Iraq nationalised its oil, Syria demanded almost double the transfer tariffs. The Iraqis were upset. "As part of its identity [pan-Arabism], it [Syria] should have supported this step [nationalisation of the Iraq oil] instead," said Ṣaddām Ḥusayn in July 1982 in a recorded tape (available here, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAp-DeT31Gg). In January 1973, Iraq reached an agreement with Syria on almost all the Syrian demands. "Iraq, with no outlet for its Kirkuk oil and faced with a Syrian threat to shut down the pipeline, had little choice but to yield to Syrian pressure" (Baram, 1986, p. 129).

At the same time, Iraq immediately constructed a new pipeline from Haditha to the Persian Gulf. Iraq now became independent of Syrian pressure over Iraq oil transfers (Baram, 1986, p. 129). The pipeline was officially opened on 27 December 1975 with a capacity to transport 48

million tonnes a year from Kirkuk to Haditha and the Gulf (Baram, 1986, p. 129). Iraq also launched talks with Turkey to build a pipeline to transfer Iraqi oil though Turkey. On 1 May 1973, Iraq and Turkey signed a "protocol for the construction of a 40-inch pipeline, having an initial capacity of 25 million tonnes a year, from Kirkuk to Dortyol" (Baram, 1986, p. 129).

Syro-Iraqi relations during 1973 war and after

With the advent of the October 1973 war, tension between the two countries re-emerged. Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel. They succeeded in controlling the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights, which they had lost to Israel in the 1967 war. Israel fought back and succeeded in pushing back the Syrian troops from the Golan Heights. The Israeli army reached the outskirts of Damascus.

At that time, the Iraqi army was gathered on the border with Iran. The Shah had begun his hegemonic ambitions in the Gulf as a reaction to the pan-Arab politics of Iraq after the coup d'état of 1968. The Iraqi regime had also established its strategy to consider the Gulf as its area of influence at the Baʿth Congress of 1974, arguably because of its strategic position and its oil reserves. Thus, the Shah believed that the Arab nationalism of the Iraqi regime would eventually lead to their control of the Persian Gulf. Moreover, he thought that the USSR was cooperating with Iraq and Egypt to weaken Iran in the region, in order to control Gulf oil. The Shah was an ally of the United States and therefore, worked at hindering the Soviet's penetration of the Gulf. He consequently introduced his strategy of regional hegemony over the Gulf region. As a result, Iran-Iraq relations became tense and occasional armed clashes took place. The Shah also heavily supported the Kurdish forces in Iraqi Kurdistan against the central government in Baghdad (Romero, 2006).

Although pan-Arabism was a tool of regime legitimacy and regional hegemony, it was at the same time a foreign policy constraint (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2016). Iraq, therefore, decided to engage in the war against Israel in 1973 to defend Damascus. Ṣaddām Ḥusayn in a recorded video claimed, "Without Iraqi troops, Damascus would have been occupied by Israel". Indeed, the Ṣalāḥ a-Dīn armour division stopped the Israeli advance at a critical point, which gave Iraq the credit of saving Damascus from falling (Baram, 1986, p. 131). Although the Iraqi leadership was disappointed at not being informed about the war, it still pulled back its troops from the borders with Iran and sent them to Syria.

Iraq sent a cable to the Shah proposing a political settlement to resolve the tension. Some of the senior leaders in Iraq viewed this whole scenario as high risk and were concerned about a possible Iranian occupation of Iraqi territory. Ṣaddām Ḥusayn himself was keen on sending troops to Syria. He said, "We answered that if the Shah entered into a war with Iraq, once we finish the war in Syria, we will turn to him", and Iraq pulled its troops from the borders with Iran before they got an answer to the secret cable they sent to the Shah (available here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wf7tHJF6Kt4). On 12 October 1973, the first Iraqi armoured unit arrived in Syria and on the day after it engaged in the war (Baram, 1986, p. 130).

On 25 October 1973, Syria and Egypt accepted the ceasefire with Israel. By that time, Egypt returned Sinai it lost in the 1967 war. President Anwar as-Sādāt also sent a cable to the United States Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, offering to enter into direct negations with Israel. On the Syrian frontiers, the Israeli army was forced back to the 1967 ceasefire lines. The Iraqi leadership was displeased about the ceasefire agreement. *Newsweek* described the Iraqi attitude to the ceasefire: "agreeing to negotiate with the Zionist enemy and to conclude a peace treaty reduces the Arabs' national cause to its homeland into the hands of American imperialism, and this just for the sake of remaining in power... we denounce the Syrian regime, which is composed of a clique of renegades who care more for their own interest than for the party and the Arab nation; which is the promoter and instrument of a conspiracy aiming at surrender and scheming to liquidate the national cause of the Arabs" (Kienle, 1990, p. 82).

Iraq then ordered its army in Syria to return home. The Syrian regime was unhappy about the Iraqi decision and asked for a rapprochement with Iraq. The Iraqis demanded the continuation of the war with Israel as a precondition of cooperation with Syria. This business was expensive for the Syrians, Baram argues (1986, p. 131). The relations between the two countries deteriorated. Iraq kept pressurising Syria not to follow the UN security resolutions 338 and 242 relating to a ceasefire with Israel (Baram, 1986, p. 131). The Syrians simply could not meet these high demands to continue the war without Egypt.

This situation continued to be tense between the two until 1975. Syria began to support the newly-established Kurdish party in Iraqi Kurdistan, the Patriotic Union Party (PUK), led by Jalāl Ṭālabānī, against the central government in Baghdad, while the other Kurdish Party (PDK) kept its distance from the regime in Syria at that time (Kienle, 1990, p. 48) and relied more on the Shah's support instead. From its side, Iraq stopped sending its oil to the global market through

Syrian territory in April 1975, which damaged the Syrian economy. In December 1975, the Shah and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn finally signed the Algiers pact, to solve the conflict over the Shatt al-Arab and normalise mutual relations. The agreement strengthened Iraq's internal and regional position (Kienle, 1990, pp. 87-88). Syria, therefore, felt threatened by the new regional arrangements, as it "sought to enhance its regional position and mobilise the Arab's resources" (Kienle, 1990, p. 88). To score a pan-Arab point, the Syrian regime criticised the Iraqi regime. Syria started a propaganda war against Iraq arguing that it was working against Arab interests in the region, and by signing the 1975 agreement it had sold "Arabistan" Khuzestan to the Shah (Kienle, 1990, pp. 96-97). *Al-Baʿth* newspaper wrote "[T]he fascist right-wing in Iraq has forfeited its claim to call itself [Ba'ath] after having conspired against the interests of the party and the Arab masses" (Kienle, 1990, p. 101). They forgot that two years earlier Iraq pulled out its army from the border with Iran and sent it to Damascus to defend it.

At the same time, the Ṭabqa dam, built on the Euphrates in Syria by the USSR between 1968-1973, significantly decreased the level of the river in Iraq. While the lake of the dam was flooding, the level of the water in Iraq sank to its lowest levels (Kienle, 1990, p. 97). The Iraqi peasants suffered greatly from a shortage of water. However, it was hard to judge whether the Ṭabqa dam in Syria caused the decline of the level of the Euphrates in Iraq, because snowmelt in 1975 in Turkey took a much longer time than usual (Kienle, 1990, p. 98). According to Iraqi statements, Iraq received nearly 9000 million cubic meters by the end of 1974, while in 1973, it received about 15,300 million cubic meters. This strengthened Iraq's perception that Syria was behind the decrease. Iraq demanded that international rules be applied to share the water of the river (Kienle, 1990, p. 99).

Syrian officials denied the Iraqi reports but did not deny the Iraqis' "established right" according to international law principles. It had its "rational argument" too. It argued that Syria, with comparatively less natural water resources than either Turkey or Iraq, should therefore be allocated more of a share of the Euphrates' water (Kienle, 1990, p. 99). No compromise could be reached, and this increased the level of hostility between the two countries and led to occasional cross-border skirmishes (Baram, 1986, p. 132). Iraq also threatened to bomb the dam (Allan, 2002, p. 73). In May and July 1975, Syria closed the Iraqi consulate in Aleppo and asked the military attaché in the Iraqi embassy in Damascus to leave (Kienle, 1990, p. 108).

Syro-Iraqi relations remained tense after the interruption to the pumping of oil via Syrian territory in April 1975. The stoppage was expensive for the Syrians. In March 1976, the Iraqis transferred 500 thousand barrels that should have been sent to Syria via land by trucks through Jordan and Turkey and via the Kirkuk-Haditha-Faw pipeline. As a result, Syria lost nearly half of its oil revenue, which was at that time nearly $63 million (Kienle, 1990, p. 113). By April 1976, Iraq had completely stopped pumping oil through Syria. The Syrians lost about $272 million (Kienle, 1990, p. 113).

The tension with Syria was expensive for Iraq as well. Iraq faced some technical problems with sending oil through the Kirkuk-Haditha-Faw pipeline to the Gulf. This issue led to a decrease of the amount of Kirkuk oil on the global market. Iraq was not able to pump more than 500 thousand barrels a day via the pipeline, which was less than half the previous amount (Kienle, 1990, p. 113). This incident cost Iraq more than the Syrian transfer demands.

In January 1977, the Iraqi-Turkish pipeline was officially opened in "an impressive ceremony" which the Turkish Prime Minister, Sulaīmān Demirel attended (Kienle, 1990, p. 129). The pipeline was officially put into service in May/June 1977, although during that time, the pipeline was only capable of pumping 25 million tonnes a year (Kienle, 1990, p. 129). Its capability later increased (Kienle, 1990, p. 129). The Iraqi-Turkish agreement also stated that Iraq would sell 40 percent of its oil to Turkey below the market price. Therefore, the oil pumping stoppages through Syria damaged Iraqi as well. It was evident that Iraq would prefer to sustain its financial losses than to pump oil through Syria. The Iraqis attributed this to Syrian behaviour relating to the remaining "pro-status quo of the Syrian forces in Lebanon after the eruption of the civil war in the country in 1975" (Kienle, 1990, p. 113).

The Lebanese context was yet another theatre for Syria and Iraq to display their pan-Arab credentials. In June 1976, Syria intervened militarily in the Lebanese civil war to establish a truce there. In October 1976, at an Arab Extraordinary Summit in Riyadh, the Lebanese government requested an Arab peace operation to restore order in the country. The Summit proposed the formation of the Arab Deterrence Force (ADF) to be sent to Lebanon (Orakhelashvili, 2011, p. 214). The ADF consisted of 30,000 soldiers from Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Libya, but mainly from Syria (Murphy, 2007, p. 39). The ADF was to be administered by an Arab committee consisting of members from Syria, Egypt, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait financially supporting Syria. Israel was anxious about the ADF. Soon afterwards, most of the Arab

states withdrew their soldiers from Lebanon, lowering tension in Israel (MECS, 1981-1982, p. 243), leaving around 25,000 Syrian troops in the country (Murphy, 2003, p. 39).

The Syrian army was stationed in the Biqaʿ Valley, near the Christian town of Zeḥla. The town was controlled by the Christian militia, the Lebanese Forces (LF), with the PLO and Syria, their most powerful and organised rival. The LF represented the Maronites of Lebanon who rejected the Syrian hegemony over the country, and the PLO's presence in the country, as it increased the Sunni population of Lebanon. This threatened Maronite rule that had been established with the creation of Lebanon in 1943, and also threatened the stability of the country by conducting military operations against Israel. The Syrian intervention was also intended to crush the anti-Syrian factions too, mainly the pro-Iraq factions, control the PLO, and to achieve Syrian domination over Lebanon. The Syrian intervention in Lebanon was "a defeat for Iraq as it enhanced Syrian influence in Lebanon and ultimately on the PLO" (Kienle, 1990, p. 116).

President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad knew the importance of Lebanon. Although he never planned to annexe the country to Syria, "he resented the pressures from various parties to define the Syro-Lebanese border and, without actually saying so, he treated Lebanon as Syrian property" (Ambassador Murphy, Email interview, 12 July 2015). President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad was very much attached to Lebanon, and always viewed it as being part of Syria (The ex-Deputy President of Syria, ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām, Russia Today, 2012). "President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad used Lebanon as a pitch against Syria's foes, and the Syrian regime's foes" … "he [al-Asad] did not think to annex Lebanon to Syria, or not recognise the legitimacy of the Lebanese state, he desired to control the country" (Khaddām, 2012, p. 61; Rabinovich, 1985, p. 99), and block any Israeli infiltration in the country that might threaten Syria and his regime (Ambassador Armanazi, Email interview, 2 August 2015). Accordingly, the south of Lebanon became a PLO stronghold after the PLO was driven out from Jordan in 1970, and from there they conducted military operations against Israel.

Iraq retaliated by supporting Abu Niẓāl's organisation, the Palestinian anti-Syrian Baʿth organisation that was stationed in Baghdad, in its attack on the Semiramis Hotel in Damascus in September 1976. Weeks after the Semiramis bombings, the same group attempted to take the life of ʿAbd Ḥalīm Khaddām, who was the Foreign Minister of Syria at that time (Kienle, 1990, p. 117). The same official escaped another assassination attempt during his visit to Abu Dhabi in October 1977. The organisation also claimed responsibility for attacking the Syrian embassies in Rome and Islamabad in October 1976 (Kienle, 1990, p. 117). Iraq also financed the Syrian branch

of the Muslim Brotherhood party *Ikhwān*. The Iraqis gave the party weapons and money to carry out sabotage activities inside Syria. The party enjoyed popularity, especially in Hama.

On the Syrian side, the country supported the Kurdish political party the PUK. Iraq also accused Syria of being behind the riots in Najaf and Karbala in the ʻAshura celebration in February 1977 (Kienle, 1990, p. 116). Syria was mainly fighting Iraq in Lebanon. Having a weakened PLO would allow Syria to monopolise the Palestine issue, which would give it legitimacy in Arab leadership. Iraq, therefore, tried to undermine Syria's position in Lebanon.

When the Arab League Summit took place on 25 October 1976, Iraq hoped to gain Arab support, mainly from Egypt, to issue a resolution against Syria. When the Summit was held, the Saudis and the Egyptians agreed to the status quo presence of Syrian forces in Lebanon. The Summit decided that "the Syrian Army could remain there as the bulk of an Arab security or deterrent force" (Baram, 1986, p. 132). The tension between the two countries continued until as-Sādāt visited Jerusalem in November 1977. As-Sādāt's visit shocked the Arab world, and forced the Syrians and the Iraqis to re-assess their bilateral relations.

Syro-Iraq relations 1977-1979: From harmony to disharmony

As-Sādāt's historic trip to Jerusalem changed the balance of power in the region and created conditions for a temporary rapprochement between Syria and Iraq. In December 1977, Libya called for an Arab Summit to discuss the Egyptian attitude to the Arab-Israel conflict. Iraq, Algeria, Syria, the PLO and Democratic Yemen attended the Summit. Libya and Algeria tried to bring Iraq and Syria to the negotiating table to solve their differences. Iraq accepted the difficulty of its demand on Syria to reject UN resolutions 242 and 338 (Baram, 1986, p. 132). Thus, it abandoned this demand and insisted that Syria allow the PLO to operate freely across the Syrian border into Israel, to make a serious commitment to liberate Palestine, not just the Golan Heights, and to withdraw from Lebanon (Baram, 1986, p. 133). The purpose of these demands was evident: to establish Iraq's supremacy over Syria and lead Arab politics. President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad rejected these conditions.

Despite this failure, the propaganda, and the terrorist attacks between the two decreased. Syria suspended its support for the PUK and announced that it would allow Ṣalāḥ Dīn Bīṭār, the symbol of the national wing of the Baʿth party, to visit Syria, and temporarily opened the Turkish-Iraqi railway that passed through Syria (Kienle, 1990, p. 133). Nothing more was achieved to establish

a real reconciliation between the two Arab countries, and this temporary understanding ended. But the two countries started their unity talks again after the signing of the Camp David accord between Israel and Egypt. After twelve days of secret talks, on 17 September 1978, Israel and Egypt signed Camp David accord. It was followed by the signing of the peace agreement in Washington DC on 26 March 1979. The Egyptian initiative led Syrian and Iraqi interests to move closer together. After the Camp David Accord, the Iraqi Revolutionary Council Command (RCC) issued a statement calling for a complete reconciliation with Syria. This dramatic shift in Iraq's attitude towards Syria had certain implications.

First, Syria was put in a vulnerable position. Geopolitically, it became the only power directly confronting Israel. "It could no longer count on Egyptian help in the event of Israeli aggression, and Israel no longer needed to fear Egypt siding with Syria" (Kienle, 1990, p. 135). Iraq intended to benefit from Syria's vulnerability. Thus, it offered an unconditional rapprochement with Syria. The Iraqi leadership was well aware that this rapprochement would ensure their supremacy over Syria as the latter was desperately in need of support to confront Israel (Kienle, 1990, p. 136).

Secondly, Iraq was worried about the possibility of other Arab states making peace with Israel. It had to take steps to halt the spreading of "isolation" in the Arab world after the Camp David agreement (Baram, 1986, pp. 133-134). Thirdly, the Iraqi leadership finally found an opportunity to lead the Arab world after the Camp David accord (Baram, 1986, p. 134).

Egypt, Syria and Iraq sought to use the conflict with Israel to gain political supremacy in the Arab world. Having Egypt out of the picture and having a weak Syria would allow Iraq to lead the Arab world against Israel. As a result, Iraq adopted a softer approach to Syria on this occasion.

The Syrian regime was happy to cooperate with Iraq. All they desired was to establish some parity with Israel and perhaps also to share Iraqi's resources. As discussed earlier, Syria had to seek alternative allies in its war with Israel. Therefore, Syrian officials welcomed Iraq's decision. On 3 October 1978, the Iraqi Minister of Trade, Mu'ayyd ʿAbdalla, visited Syria. Four days later, Ṭāriq ʿAzīz, a member of the RCC, and a close ally of Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, who was the Deputy President at that time travelled to Damascus carrying a letter from al-Bakr to President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, asking him to pay a visit to Baghdad (Kienle, 1990, p. 137). On 23-25 October 1978, President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad visited Iraq to discuss unity with Iraqi officials (Kienle, 1990, p. 137). On this visit, the two sides agreed to establish the Charter of Joint National Action (*mīthāq al-ʿAmal al-Qawmī al-Mushtarak*) to deal with the unification process (Kienle, 1990, p. 138). The two sides

worked to unify the curricula in schools and universities. Furthermore, Iraq started transferring its oil through Syria, and the borders between the two countries were re-opened (Baram, 1986, p. 135).

The two sides accepted the unity of vision, but its implementation was hard to achieve, in particular on the Syrian side. Given the fact that Syria's material capabilities were less than Iraq's, a united state would mean Iraqi supremacy over Syria. Therefore, it sought to gain some practical benefits without losing its full independence (Kienle, 1990, p. 141). Although Syria was desperate for military support from Iraq, it avoided full military unification with Iraq. The unification of the two armies would give Iraq the upper hand over the Syrian officials because Iraq would be the one who financed it, which would eventually allow the Iraqi regime to control it. For instance, the unification "would have exposed the members of the Syrian armed officers to dangerous Iraqi ideas, or made it easier for the Iraqi side to distribute financial favours and thus corrupt officers still loyal to the less well-off Syrian leadership" (Kienle, 1990, p. 140).

The Syrian regime was particularly cautious not to take further steps to unify the two branches of the Baʿth party. Although the unification of the two branches of the party was indeed discussed within the Baʿth party in Syria, President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and his close circle never believed in such party unity. For al-Asad, as for some Iraqi Baʿthists, the party was a tool to remain in power (Baram, Telephone interview, 15 May 2016; Eppel, Telephone interview, 15 August 2015, Bengio, Skype interview, 15 May 2016).

Power struggles dominated the unity talks. Moreover, the Syrians were afraid that a unified party would pave the way to army unification (Kienle, 1990, p. 140). President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad's brother Rifʾat al-Asad, who was in charge of the military divisions, *Sarāya al-Dīfaʾ* and *al-Ḥaras al-Waṭanī* strongly opposed the unity proposal. *Al-Ḥaras al-Waṭanī* distributed leaflets within the army criticising unity with Iraq (Kienle, 1990, p. 140). The inner circle believed that any organisational unity would lead to a unified army under a central command dominated by the Iraqis. It is notable here that the Baʿth party in Syria was dominated by the army, while the Baʿth party in Iraq was a more efficient instrument that kept a close eye on the armed forces (Kienle, 1990, p. 145). Thus, a united party would give Iraq sufficient, if not absolute, power over Syrian officers. It would, therefore, establish the supremacy of the right wing and the old guard over the left wing, a division that was established in 1966.

Iraq, on the other hand, was in favour of the unity of the military and the party at the same time. In a joint press conference with President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad on 6 November President al-Bakr said; "we will work in Baghdad and Damascus as one party and one state" (Kienle, 1990, p. 141). "Our relationship with Syria," said Deputy President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, a few days later, "should be a unionist relationship. It is not a relationship of a neighbouring policy because Syria is not a foreign country to us" (Kienle, 1990, p. 141).

Iraq was in favour of a unified army, but not in a hurry to implement it. Nevertheless, it continued to push for party unity to be applied as quickly as possible. It believed that the unification of the Baʿth party should be the first step towards unifying the army (Kienle, 1990, p. 139). Thus, it demanded a united Baʿth party to be led by the founder, Michel ʿAflaq, and the Iraqi national command (Kienle, 1990, pp. 144-145).

The two sides met three times to discuss the unity scheme. The first meeting was on 16 January 1979. This session saw no progress in respect to soft issues such as the oil transition fees and Euphrates water. It came as no surprise that the same applied to hard issues such as a united armed forces and a united Baʿth party. The second meeting took place on 28 January. The Iraqis started pressing for closer unity issues such as setting up a united constitution between the two countries and a United Baʿth Party (Kienle, 1990, p. 146). The meeting achieved no concrete results, and a third session was arranged to be held in Baghdad (Kienle, 1990, p. 145). On 17 June 1979, the third meeting took place. Between the second and the third meeting, there were constant talks between the two sides to reach a deal.

On 19 June, the two sides issued a declaration stating that both sides agreed to form a constitutional committee to draft a unified constitution, and to establish a legal structure of a unified military leadership (Kienle, 1990, p. 148). The declaration announced the establishment of another committee to prepare the 'foundation' for party unification (Kienle, 1990, p. 148). However, both sides were unhappy with the progress of unity. After signing the declaration, President al-Bakr said; "we all hoped that our unionist steps would be greater than the ones achieved", and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad commented; "We are not where we should be" (Kienle, 1990, p. 148).

In July 1979, relations between the two Arab countries deteriorated again. President Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr was forced to resign by his Deputy Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, and his followers inside the Baʿth party (Baram, 1991). According to the constitution, the Deputy President, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn,

became his successor. The Syrian foreign minister, ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām, visited Baghdad immediately to congratulate Ḥusayn (Kienle, 1990, p. 149). In the meeting with him, Ḥusayn told him that Syrian Baʿthists had attempted to topple the Baʿth regime in Baghdad.

On 28 July 1979, the Iraqi regime claimed that the Syrian regime had plotted to change the regime in Iraq. The plot was exposed in a recorded meeting of the Baʿth party in Baghdad in the famous event at *al-Khold* Hall. In the meeting, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn talked about President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad's plan to topple the Baʿth regime in Baghdad and become the president of the united state. President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn publically exposed the names of Iraqi Baʿth members who had collaborated with President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad. Those named were among the attendees at the general meeting and were immediately executed on charges of treason. One of the plotters confessed, saying that the coup d'état meant to remove the regime in Baghdad; unity with Syria would be the second step, with President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad as head of the unified state.

The Syrian side entirely denied these accusations. President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad sent his foreign minister ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām and Chief of Staff Ḥikmat Shīhābī to Baghdad to see if Iraq had any proof of the alleged plot. All they got was a confession of one of the accused members of Iraqi Baʿth on a tape (Seale, McConville, 1990, p. 355). President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad suggested the Arab League should investigate the Iraqi allegations, but President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn refused (Seale and McConville, 1990, p. 355).

It is hard to tell whether President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad actually planned to topple the Baʿth regime, but it is clear that President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn destroyed any chance of unity and rapprochement between Iraq and Syria. President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad kept denying President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's claims and described him as the one who served the interests of the "imperial powers". Wayne White – the United States diplomat who worked with the State Department's intelligence arm as Iraq Analyst in 1979 – said that he arrived just in time to cover the ruthless Summer 1979 purge of the Iraqi al-Ba'th Party during which President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn seized full control of the Regional Command and shunted aside long time senior associate, President Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr. Ṣaddām Ḥusayn based his purge on a self-contrived "Syrian plot", said White, to take over the Iraqi Ba'th, executing a large number of Regional Command colleagues for alleged participation in this "plot". White added, "those killed simply wanted (along with Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr) to repair relations between the two [Ba'athi] regimes" (Email interview, 03 July 2015). Various jolts to Iraqi-Syrian relations followed during 1979-1980, such as the Iraqi seizure of the Syrian Embassy in Baghdad

to expose all the weapons stored there to support the "plot" (most of the weapons were probably planted by [Saddam's] henchmen (White, Email interview, 3 July 2015).

Baram told the researcher that the only reason President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn orchestrated the *al-Khold* Scenario was that unity with Syria was President Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr's only tool in hand to regain the power he had gradually lost to his potent Deputy and his followers inside the party. Baram postulates that both President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and President Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr would have had Ṣaddām Ḥusayn hanged. He was dangerous, Baram continues, there was no room left for a third leader in the unified country, and the least position he could have got was to become a head of a security apparatus such as the intelligence services. This post, Baram argues, might have given him enough power to kill both President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and President Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr (Telephone interview, 15 May 2016). Syro-Iraqi relations remained tense in 1979. One year later, in September 1980, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn waged a war against Iran, which contibuted to Syro-Iraqi hostile relations because of Syria's support of Iran in the war.

Conclusion

Systemic constraints did shape politics in the MENA region after the creation of contemporary Iraq and Syria. The politics between Britain and France put pressure on the two sides to have a full sovereignty over the making of foreign policy. In addition, the British intervention in Iraq during WWII and the Vichy government in Syria were significant elements of Syro-Iraqi disengagement. Also, the Cold War briefly determined Syro-Iraqi relations during the monarchical era in Iraq.

Nevertheless, geopolitical realities, which are essentially the product of the colonial period and the growing ideology of pan-Arabism, had a significant influence on Syro-Iraqi relations. For instance, King Fayṣal of Iraq used pan-Arabism to pursue domination over Syria. The King might have had pan-Arab commitments, but the main purpose of utilising it was to seek hegemony over the Levant because of its strategic position. Syria would have given him access to the external world, and control over the Aleppo-Mosul trade route, which would help him build his newly established state. He then tried to utilise pan-Arabism during the Syrian revolution 1925-1927 to encourage the French to crown him as King Syria. His death in 1933 did not stop other Iraqi officials seeking control over Syria. Although there was a short period of diversion of focus to the Gulf region during King Ghazī's reign, during World War II, the premiership of Nūrī as-Saʿīd proposed a federation in the Fertile Crescent region, under the banner of pan-Arabism, making this

ideology a tool of regional domination. The Syrians rejected it precisely because they viewed it as a tool of regional hegemony. Thus, they signed the Arab League charter. The establishment of the Arab League finally legitimised the Westphalian state system in the Arab World.

The Cold War seems to have had a minor influence in shaping Syro-Iraqi relations as both were at that time considered revolutionary countries who opposed the United States' new imperialism in the area. The politics between those two super powers, the United States and the USSR constrained the foreign policy behaviour of most, if not all, of the MENA states. Iraq was a pro-Western country in the region before the 1958 revolution, Syria adopted 'positive neutrality' and sometimes supported the Soviets. Yet as soon as the monarchy was removed from power in 1958, Iraq became anti-Western. Although Syria and Iraq were members of the Non-Aligned Movement (established in 1955 during the Bandung summit), it was clear that the interest of those revolutionary regimes converged with the interests of the USSR.

Because regime legitimacy was linked to pan-Arabism, this ideology determined the domestic politics of the two countries, and the two countries competed over the same tools of regime legitimacy. Unlike Kienle (1990), this study argues that pan-Arabism had a secondary role in shaping Syro-Iraqi hostility. It was always about regime legitimacy but it was characterised by romanticising pan-Arabism. When the Baʿth party came to power in the two countries in 1963, ideology became the touchstone of their foreign policy. The two regimes initiated unity negotiations to establish a United Arab country along with Egypt, but when these tripartite negotiations failed, and they entered their bilateral negotiations hoping to create unity, disunity within the party occurred. This split immediately spilled-over to the state level. This rivalry materialised when the Arabs lost the 1967 war. After the war, the Iraqi Baʿthists came to power again via a military coup in 1968. At that moment, the same party ruled the two regimes in Syria and Iraq. Thus, they began their competition over the same tool of regime legitimacy, and that was pan-Arabism (Barnett, 1998). The party, therefore, became a source of rivalry for power. Each claimed to be the legitimate representative of the party. But, when in 1970 Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad became the President of Syria, the competition over the party's leadership between the two regimes ceased for a short time. Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad adopted rather a pragmatic foreign policy with Iraq.

However, while the ideological war between the two regimes ceased after al-Asad came to power, geopolitics continued to determine the conflict between Syria and Iraq. This brief stability

soon ended when Iraq nationalised the Iraqi Petroleum Company in 1972. Syria demanded double the tariffs for the oil transferred through its territories via the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline.

The tension between the two Arab regimes escalated in the aftermath of the 1973 war. The toxic inter-relation between geopolitics and ideology made détente between the two countries difficult to achieve. Although Iraq was unaware of plans for war, it sent several Iraqi units to defend Damascus. However, as soon as Syria and Egypt agreed to a cease-fire, the Iraqi government pulled back its army. Clearly, the Iraqi regime was unhappy about the ceasefire. However, Syria was still in danger. The Syrian regime requested the Iraqi army to return to its previous positions in Damascus, but the Iraqi government demanded a resumption of the war.

The geopolitics-ideology nexus had the same implications in the case of the Syrian foreign policy regarding Iran-Iraq relations during the Shah's time. The Iraqi regime signed the Algiers accord with Iran in December 1975 to share the navigation rights of the Shatt al-Arab. The Syrian government accused the Iraqi regime of selling Khuzestan to the Shah and compromising pan-Arabism for the sake of the regime's interests. The Algiers Accord was followed by the Euphrates water crisis between the two countries. The Ṭabqa Lake became full while the level of the river reached its lowest levels inside Iraq. The Iraqi regime retaliated by closing the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline from its side. The hostility between the two nations went far beyond verbal clashes. Iraq was concerned about Syrian regional behaviour, specifically in Lebanon.

As soon as Syria intervened in Lebanon in 1976, it scored a political victory at the Arab order level, which was a political loss for Iraq (Kienle, 1990). Iraq had to react to undermine Syria regionally. It sponsored Abu Niẓāl's organisation, the Palestinian anti-Syrian Baʿth organisation that was based in Baghdad, to carry out sabotage inside Syria and attack Syrian embassies in Rome and Islamabad in October 1976.

When Israel and Egypt signed the peace agreement in 1979, Iraq declared its readiness to become reconciled with Syria. After a series of meetings and intense negotiations, the two countries signed a Joint National Action to prepare for the unification process. But, just as unity was to be reached, in July 1979, relations between the two Arab countries deteriorated again, as President Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr was forced to resign and his Deputy Ṣaddām Ḥusayn became the President. The latter claimed that the Syrian regime planned to topple the Iraqi regime, and to install a pro-Syrian government. The Syrian government denied the accusations, but this did not change the reality on the ground. Thus, the fourth unity attempt of al-Bakr-Asad failed.

In sum, geopolitics and power struggles continuously determined hostile Syro-Iraqi relations. Although the same pan-Arab party ruled the two regimes, their ideological similarity became a source of menace instead. Both regimes ended up competing over the legitimacy and the leadership of the Baʿth party. In addition, hostile Syro-Iraqi relations entered yet another noxious era once the two giants, Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn were in power. Because the personal predisposition of leaders matter in Middle East politics (Ehteshami and Hunnebusch, 2014, 2016), the arrival of those two strong leaders in power added the personal element to the bilateral relations of those two Arab countries. This became obvious during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988).

CHAPTER FOUR: SYRIA-IRAQ RELATIONS DURING THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR 1980-1988

The aftermath of 1979

It took the new president of Iraq just one year after he took power to wage war against Iran. The Iran-Iraq War institutionalised Syrian and Iraqi enmity. Although the focus of the war was in the Persian Gulf and Syria was not directly involved, it became clear in the first days of the war that the Syrians were not supporting the Iraqis in the conflict. In fact, Syria began to support Iran, politically and militarily. Syria helped Iran politically in depicting the war as an Iran-Iraq war, not as an Arab-Persian war as Iraq depicted it. Syria also supported Iran militarily by signing arms contracts on its behalf because the latter was subject to international sanctions after the Islamic revolution in 1979. Syria succeeded in convincing the USSR to allow Eastern European countries such as Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia to sell weapons and ammunitions to Iran. Iran paid for the weapons in cash to Syria and it received them in Latakia port and transferred them by airplane into Iran (Khaddām, 2010, p. 60).

"Geo-Political positions had a major impact on the conception of foreign policy roles"… because it defines "orientations towards neighbours (friend or enemy)" (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2016, p. 242). Both Syria and Iraq had different security orientations. Similarly to King Ghazī's understanding, Iraq's security sphere became concentrated in the Gulf region after the Iraqi Baʿth Congress party of 1974. On the other hand, Syria's security sphere had focused on the Mediterranean region since the early days of the establishment of the state of Israel. Thus, given their geopolitical proximity, the two had entirely different views on Iran. Iraq not only openly viewed Iran as a threat to its territorial integrity but also a threat to its regional ambitions. Syria, however, viewed Iran as a strategic ally against Israel and also against Iraq. When the unity negotiations of 1979 collapsed, Syria was again abandoned in Lebanon and its conflict with Israel. Not only that, Iraq became a source of grave threat to the Syrian regime. Thus, President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad was pleased to see the Shah's regime replaced by the anti-American and anti-Israel regime in 1979. Syria immediately sought to capitalise on the revolution in Iran as an attempt to achieve parity with Israel but also with Iraq. In addition, both had frequently argued over the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline, and over the Euphrates' waters. Although this conflict never reached a conventional confrontation, both regimes used subversive measures against one another, both

domestically and regionally, and also supported the opposition to the rival regime (Eppel, 1993, p. 181).

Countries act externally for internal purposes (Schweller, 2006; Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2016). Because of the convergence of the legitimacy of Arab regimes with their commitment to pan-Arabism (Barnett, 1998; Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2016), the Iran-Iraq war was another opportunity for both regimes to compete over both the Baʿth and pan-Arab leadership. As the legitimacy of the Iraqi regime was at stake internally because of the war, it had to utilise pan-Arabism. This strategy allowed it to claim legitimacy in the country and also to justify its persecution of the domestic opposition, mainly the Kurds and the Shiʿa. Similarly, the Syrian regime mobilised pan-Arabism to undermine its domestic rivals, mainly the Islamists and to gain financial support from GCC countries to help its devastated economy (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 1997). States also act internally for external purposes and to achieve a regional balance of power (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2016; Schweller, 2006). Both Iraq and Syria followed this inside-out strategy during the war. Iraq used pan-Arabism to achieve a balance of power in the region against Syria and Iran. As the war effort of the Iraqi regime faltered, it began to portray the war as Arabs vs. Persians and Islam vs. infidels (*kuffār*), to gain the support and the sympathy of the Arab and Muslim world, and in order to delegitimise the Iranian cause (MECS 1980-1981, p. 579). Thus, the Syrian regime was pleased to see the Iraqi regime in trouble as the war not only weakened the Iraqi threats to Syria but also strengthened the Syrian position in Lebanon.

The role of idiosyncratic variables also influences the shape of the foreign policy behaviour of states, (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2016), especially in situations and conditions that Post, Walker, Winter (2003) and Margaret Hermann (1976) discuss, such as the degree of charisma, time of crisis, and the organisational structure of the foreign policy institutions (see pp. 22-24). When Presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn came to power through bloodless coup d'états (1970, 1979 respectively), both Syria and Iraq "gained strong rulers with regional ambitions" (Eppel, 1993, p. 181). They made sure to establish stable regimes by establishing dictatorship in both countries. Both presidents managed to gain an absolute authority in their country and to dominate the process of decision-making. Both presidents succeeded in establishing their "Presidential monarchy" (a term used by Hinnebusch, 2000), which allowed them to administer with absolute authority. Although the Baʿth party operated under both presidents, both marginalised the party. Thus, the shape of politics became personalised.

Nevertheless, the two still needed the party to exercise power. Both needed the rubber stamp of approval of the party for their decisions. They made sure to attend meetings of the party. The difference was that the military faction of the party under President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad ruled in Syria, whereas the civilian wing was headed by President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, who made sure to detach the military institution from the party to some extent and keep it professional, as President Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr did before. As Amatzia Baram put it, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn depicted himself as "the Comrade, the man of a political party" (Telephone interview, 15 May 2016).

Both presidents had already somewhat re-ajusted their focus from pan-Arabism to Syrian nationalism and Iraqi nationalism, towards what Baram terms 'territorial nationalism' (1990), presumably because pan-Arabism was a foreign policy burden. President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad had already revealed to Henry Kissinger in 1973 that Syria could not lead the Arab world unless it regained its lost territories, the natural Syria (Baram, 1990, p. 434). In April 1975 during his speech at the Syrian Baʿth Regional Congress, he re-asserted that advocating for the unity of the Levant did not contradict pan-Arabism. For him, the search for a larger Arab state synchronised with the notion of a Greater Syria. Because "of its geographic position at the heart of the Arab East and astride a land without a historical tradition of statehood, national identity focused on a larger Arab nation rather than the contemporary Syrian state, which has long been regarded as a creation of imperialism" (Hinnebusch, 1997, p. 59). In 1984, the Baʿth regime rival, the Syrian Social National Party, SSNP, *al-ḥizb al-sūrī al-qawmī al-ʾijtimāʿī*, which called for the unity of the Levant declared, "There is no contradiction between their [SSNP] ideology and the ideology of the Baʿth regime in Syria" (Baram, 1990, p. 434).

President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn lost hope in Arab unity too when he was left alone in the Iran-Iraq war. He normalised Iraq's relations with Egypt by signing arm contracts despite the latter's peace agreement with Israel. A few days before invading Iran, he asserted, "The Iraqis are now of the opinion that Arab unity can only take place after a clear demarcation of borders between all countries…. The question of linking unity to the removal of boundaries is no longer acceptable to the present Arab mentality…. The Arab reality is the Arabs are now 22 states" (Long, 2004, p. 14).

The Foundations of the Syro-Iranian alliance

Before discussing Syro-Iraqi relations during the Iran-Iraq war, we need to explain the Syro-Iranian alliance during the war. Geography has always had played a major part in forming Syria's foreign policy behaviour (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 1997; Khaddām, 2010). The lack of natural borders and absence of strategic depth made Syria vulnerable to any aggression. Thus, it always sought to form alliances "to prevent its isolation and its ambition to acquire a deterrent and to approach power parity with Israel" (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 1997, p. 58). For example, Syria became isolated after the Camp David accord. It came under an Israeli threat. As it lost Egypt as an ally against Israel, the country became almost defenceless (Seale and McConville, 1990, p. 312). Israel was no longer worried about its western borders with Egypt (Khaddām, 2010, p. 53). Its troops were mostly stationed along the borders with Syria after the accord. Syria, therefore, accepted the Iraqi offer to enter unity negotiations in 1978 with enthusiasm despite the lack of a clear vision of how unity would be achieved. The failure of the unity talks, however, put the country under greater pressure. Just as after the 1968 revolution, Iraq became a threat again to the Syrian regime. This time was even more dangerous. Thus, it had to establish a regional alliance not only to confront Israel, but Iraq as well, and in both cases, Iran was the preferred option.

Syro-Iranian diplomatic relations remained at a low level before the 1979 revolution. Before the Islamic revolution, Syria regarded the Shah's regime as a pro-imperial regime (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 1997, p. 87). It also opposed Iranian control over Greater and Lesser Tunbs and the Abu Musa islands in the Persian Gulf. It also considered Khuzestan as part of the Arab world (Goodarzi, 2006, p. 13). Hence it accused Iraq of selling it to Iran after the signature of the Algiers Accord in 1975.

However, in the early 1970s, Syrian attention in Iran "shifted away from a purely ideological animus towards a more calculating rationale based on considerations of power and balance, with the competing regime in Iraq on one hand and the broader regional interests on the other" (Agha and Khalidi, 1995, p. 2). Besides, the Shah himself at that time had improved his relations with pro-USSR regimes in the region, including Syria and Egypt, especially since the United States-USSR détente that was set up in the 1972 Moscow Summit displeased the Shah from siding with the United States in the region.

Historically, this Iranian-Arab alliance was formed in the Arab-Israel war of 1973. During the war, Iran provided medical assistance to the Arab troops by offering to treat wounded Arab

combatants, including Syrian soldiers. This brief détente was part of the Shah's reconciliation approach with the major Arab states, including Iraq, who had signed the Algiers Accord (Agha and Khalidi, 1995, p. 2). Consequently, President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad visited Tehran for the first time in December 1975. His four-day visit (28-31 December 1975) established low-level relations with Iran.

When the revolution occurred in Iran in 1979, the Syrian regime was the second state after the USSR to recognise it (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 1997, p. 89). It was pleased to see an anti-United States and anti-Israel regime installed in Tehran. In August 1979, the Syrian foreign minister, ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām visited Tehran. He stated in his memoirs that Syrian options were limited after July 1979. He added that the Camp David peace agreement and the failure of the rapprochement with Iraq broke the balance of power in the region and increased domestic pressures to resist the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights. These were all reasons to redirect Syrian foreign policy towards Iran and the USSR (Khaddām, 2010, p. 53).

One of the key factors that led Iranian and Syrian interests to merge was their mutual revolutionary foreign policy (Khaddām, 2010, p. 53). The new regime in Tehran completely changed the foreign policy course of the Shah's regime. As Ehteshami and Hinnebusch noted, "the most immediate precipitant roots of the alliance was the Islamic revolution, which brought a new 'anti-imperialist' elite to power and de-aligned Iran from its traditional partners, the US and Great Britain" (1997, p. 88). As a result, Iran and Syria represented the anti-imperialist trend in the region. For them, Israel is an illegitimate entity that had been established at the heart of the "Arab/Muslim" land. Thus, both supported the Palestinian cause and resistance in Palestine and Lebanon, which was where pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism/Shiʿism met (Khaddām, 2010, p. 51).

The Syrian regime wanted to capitalise on the Islamic revolution in the Lebanese context (Maddy-Weitzman, Skype interview, 4 August 2015). Lebanon had also been on the strategic map of Syria ever since the creation of Israel in 1948. As discussed in the previous chapter, President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad knew the importance of Lebanon and was ready to do what was required to keep the country away from Israel penetration. Knowing that the revolution would inevitably influence politics in Lebanon because of the Shīʿa population in the country, President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad carefully calculated the benefits of the alliance.

The Shiʿite community in Lebanon played a part in strengthening the Syro-Iranian partnership (Khaddām, 2010, p. 51). The Shiʿite political leader and religious scholar, Sayyed Mūsā aṣ-Ṣadr,

provided a strong channel connecting Syrian political elites with their counterparts in Iran, notably the prime minister, Mahdī Bāzrgān, the minister of foreign affairs, Ibrāhīm Yazdī, Muṣtaf Shāmrān, Ḥassan Ḥabībī, and Sādeq Ghotbzadeh. These five were all members of the Iran Liberation party in which Sayyed Mūsā aṣ-Ṣadr was its founder. Most importantly, this party included the Deputy Prime Minister and Imam Khomeini's special aid, Sadeq Tabtābā'ī, Mūsā aṣ-Ṣadr's nephew and the brother-in-law of the Imam himself (Sadeq Tabtābā'ī's sister was the wife of Imam Khomeini's son) (Khaddām, 2010, p. 51).

By that time, the resentment between Iraq and Iran was already established. Iraq saw the new Islamic regime in Iran as a source of menace to its hegemony over the Gulf, and to its terrritorial integrity (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 1997). A few months after the Iranian revolution, the Iran-Iraq war took place.

The Iran-Iraq War

The causes of the war could deemed to be geopolitical (Karsh, 1990), as the subject of the war was the navigation of the Shatt al-Arab and Iraq's demand for full implementation of the Algiers accord of 1975. Iraq claimed back the territories that were according to the agreement areas in the city of Kermanshah. The causes of the war also had an ideological dimension, a clash of ideas between the pan-Arabism of the Baʿth regime in Baghdad, and pan-Islam of the Islamic regime in Tehran. While Iran has its Aryan heritage and (mostly) Persian speakers, Iraq has its Arab tradition and (mostly) Arabic speakers (Potter and Sick, 2004). Officials from the Baʿth regime in Iraq argued that the war against Iran was a defensive war to repel the Iranian threat against Iraq. In an interview with Russia Today channel, the last Iraqi ambassador to Tehran of the Baʿth regime, Professor ʿAbd a-Sattār al-Rāwī said that the war was a defensive strategy to deter the Iranian threat to Iraq after the revolution. Al-Rāwī stated that the leaders of the Islamic revolution in Iran had taken an aggressive attitude towards the Baʿth regime in Iraq. He claimed that Iran started a propaganda war against Iraq, launched sabotage operations inside the country, and supported the Islamic opposition in the southern part of Iraq.

In his book, Major General Raʿad al-Ḥamdānī (2007), one of the top military officers during the Baʿth regime in Iraq, wrote that the war was a pre-emptive strike against Iran, as the political leadership believed that the Islamic regime in Iran threatened Iraq's territorial integrity. After the Islamic revolution had succeeded in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini adopted the slogan of exporting the

revolution to outside Iran. Because sixty percent of Iraq's population are Shīʿa, the Iraqi leadership felt threatened by the revolution and had to respond to these threats. As a result, the war occurred.

This section investigates Syro-Iraqi hostility during the war in three subsections. Because studies show that individuals may change their belief systems because of the environmental factors across time (Renshon, 2008), this chapter divides the study of the belief systems of presidents Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad during the different phases of the Iran-Iraq war. The first phase of the war, 1980-July 1982 during Iraq's offensive position, the second phase during Iraq's defensive position July 1982-January 1985, and the last phase between early 1985-August 1988 when Iraq returned to its offensive position. Also, according to the theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962) individuals change their cognition if, first, they "can change one or more of the attitudes, behaviour, beliefs, etc. so as to make the relationship between the two elements a consonant one", secondly when they receive new information or thirdly, to reduce the impact of their beliefs on their decisions (Hamza and Zakkariya, 2012, p. 158).

Thus, this study argues that the course of the war might have changed the beliefs of the two Presidents which might have eventually affected Syro-Iraqi relations. Hence, this study explains the belief systems of the two presidents in three separate periods in observe the change or stability of the cognitive beliefs of the two presidents during the eight years of the war.

The explanation of the belief systems of the two leaders will be attributed to the external events the two encountered. According to Holsti (1962), information about the external environment influences the process of decision-making. This does not mean that the pre-existing beliefs and images of the two leaders do not matter. Rather, the external environment and the beliefs and images together shape the individuals' behaviour (see Figure one, p. 20).

The first period September 1980 to July 1982

On 22 September 1980, Iraq invaded Iran. The war occurred when Syrian-Iraqi hostility was at its peak. The Syrian regime did not play an immediate, active part in the war. President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad refused to meet the Iranian envoy in September 1980 to discuss the war with him. In October 1980, Iraq cut its diplomatic relations with Syria. It accused it of supplying arms and sending 2000 military experts to Iran (Kienle, 1990, p. 159).

One month later, Iraqi opposition groups established the Democratic National Patriotic Front DNPF, *al-Jabha al-Waṭanīyya al-Qawmīyya wa-Dīmuqrāṭīyya*, and the National Democratic

Front NDF, *al-Jabha al-Waṭanīyya wa-Dīmuqrāṭīyya*, in Damascus. These two groups consisted of several opposition political parties including the Kurdish Patriotic Party (PUK), the Kurdish Democratic Party (PDK), the Socialist Party of Kurdistan, the Iraqi branch of the *Ikhwān*, the pro-Syrian Iraqi al-Baʿth party, the Call party *ḥizb al-Daʿwa*, and the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP). For its part, Iraq continued supporting Islamists inside Syria. Iraq mainly supported the Islamic Front (*al-Jamaʿa al-Islamīyyah*) that was founded in Damascus in October-November 1980, led by "'Adnan Sa'd al-Din, who was the leader of the Aleppo-based *mujahidun* ('strugglers'), and the 'military wing' of the Party of the Muslim Brothers (*al-Ikhwan*), led by 'Isam al- 'Attar" (Kienle, 1990, p. 159). Also, the presence of the Syrian army in the Biqaʿ Valley and Syria's unyielding support for the PLO increased the tension between Syria and Israel. It extended almost to the point of confrontation, especially during the battle of Zeḥla between the Syrian army and the LF. Syria deployed SAM missiles in the Valley in April 1981 as a response to the Israel attack on the Syrian forces, to prevent them from seizing the strategic Sannin Mountain near Zeḥla. The deployment of these missiles prevented Israel from keeping PLO in check, and it therefore threatened to bomb these rockets (Ben-Yehuda and Sandler, 2002, p. 40). This event would again become an opportunity for Syria and Iraq to compete over the ideational power of pan-Arabism.

The Arab Summits were the theatre in which Syria and Iraq competed over the leadership of pan-Arabism because they offered a platform for direct inter-Arab interaction. On 22 May 1981, the Tunis Summit was convened. Syria argued that the purpose of the SAMs deployed in the Biqaʿ was to protect the PLO and the Palestinians in Lebanon. The Iraqis saw the deployment of SAMs as no more than a "smokescreen," (MECS, 1981-82, p. 243), and a card to use in peace negotiations with Israel. Iraq's support to Syria came after the Summit. It stated that it would not react to the Israeli strike in Biqaʿ Valley, but it would not tolerate an Israeli attack against Syria (MECS, 1981-82, p. 243).

Iraq perhaps wanted to support Syria to prevent any possible Syro-Israeli rapprochement, which would undermine its pan-Arabism, as had happened in Egypt in 1978. Thus, it accused Syria of "moving towards an arrangement with the United States, which would in actual fact be a Syrian-Israeli-Egyptian deal at the expense of the Lebanese and the Palestinians, and would prejudge the future disposition of the Golan Heights", especially after President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad's talks with the United States' special envoy, Philip Habib (MECS, 1981-82, p. 243). It, therefore, announced that it would back Syria against any possible Israeli attack. The United States special envoy to the

region, Philip Habib, negotiated with the conflicting parties a de facto ceasefire and contained the crisis (www.state.gov).

On 7 June 1981, Israel attacked the Iraqi nuclear reactor (Tammuz). The attack came as a complete shock to the Iraqis. The Syrians found their opportunity to undermine Iraq. They criticised "Iraq's ill-preparedness" (MECS, 1980-81, p. 246). Iraq immediately called for a meeting at the Arab foreign ministry level in Baghdad. The Syrian government did not send its foreign Minister, ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām, but a low-level delegation (MECS, 1981-82, p. 247). The Arab Summit finally convened on 11 June for one day, and issued 11 resolutions, none of which concerned the attack on the Tammuz reactor (MECS, 1980-81, p. 247). The Summit, however, denounced the attack and expressed solidarity with Iraq, and requested the international community "to hold out against the Israeli extortion attempts" (MECS, 1980-81, p. 247).

The extent of Arab support for Iraq at the Summit was unclear. The Iraqis were disappointed, as revealed in President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's statement after the Summit. "In the present situation" he declared, "we do not expect more from the Arabs, Had we been in their place, we would have acted differently" (MECS, 1981-82, p. 248). The Iraqi opposition radio, Voice of Iraq, based in Damascus, broadcast that the incompetence of Baghdad's regime in the Summit allowed, "The Alien Zionist to disgrace Iraq unchallenged" (MECS, 1981-82, p. 247).

In December 1981, two major events took place that ended the short period of rapprochement between the two Baʿthī regimes after the SAM crisis. The first event was the bombing of the Iraqi embassy in Beirut on 15 December 1981, which was carried out by the *al-Daʿwa* party, the Iraqi Shiʿte party (Norton, 2007, p. 72) which was based in Damascus at that time. The attack left sixty dead and caused hundreds of injuries. The second event was the discovery of a bomb at the door *of al-Waṭan al-ʿArabī* newspaper, the pro-Iraqi newspaper in Paris on 19 December 1981. Iraq believed that a Syrian agent placed the bomb (Kienle, 1990, p. 156).

In 1982, the hostility between Syria and Iraq reached a point of no return. Domestic unrest inside Syria increased, especially after the unification of the *al-Jamaʿa al-Islamīyyah* faction in Aleppo led by ʿAdnan Saʿd al-Dīn with the Damascus faction led by ʿIsām al-ʿAttār. This incident came about after the assassination of Banān al-Ṭanṭāwī, the wife of al-ʿAttār in 1981, which the latter accused the government of her assassination (MECS, 1980-1981, p. 788). The Syrian regime cracked down brutally on the Islamists in Hama and on the rest of the country in February 1982.

Nearly 10,000 people were killed in the event, including a great number indiscriminately (Kienle, 1990, p. 160).

Eventually, in March 1982 Syria blocked the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline for the first time since the start of the war. Syria began to receive supplies of light oil from Iran. "Having been assured of Iranian oil supplies, Syria proceeded to shut down Iraq's oil pipeline to the sea, thereby inflicting upon the latter substantial economic hardship" (Brown, 1984, p. 78). The closure of the pipeline caused a financial crisis in Iraq. Syria continued to close the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline and claimed that Iraq had not enough oil to export because of Iran's strikes on the Kirkuk oil fields (Kienle, 1990, p. 163).

President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn regarded Syria's blocking of the pipeline as a *casus belli*, stating that, "Any economic damage is inseparable from the outcome of the war; instead of sending ten divisions to Iran they have closed the pipeline" (Interview with Al-Qabas, 29 April 1982). Iraq lost nearly US $6 billion at a time when it desperately needed cash to finance the war against Iran, so, it signed an agreement with Turkey for another pipeline to be completed in 1987 "with a capacity of 35 million tonnes a year" (Kienle, 1990, p. 164). In March 1982, Syria signed an agreement with Iran in which the latter guaranteed to supply Syria with 8.7 million tonnes of crude oil (MECS 1982-1983, p. 821) by sea through the Suez Canal. In May 1982, the Syrian army camped on the border with Iraq, possibly as a precautionary move after the closure of the pipeline. Iraq reacted by accusing the Syrians of violating Iraqi airspace, and killing Iraqi border guards (Kienle, 1990, p. 165).

In February 1982, Iraq announced that it would withdraw from Iranian territories, and conclude a peace agreement, but Iran rejected the call, and in the meantime, continued to achieve some military victories in the war front. In April-May 1982, Iraq launched "Operation Jerusalem" to re-capture Khorramshahr. This operation was unsuccessful, and the Iraqi army was driven from the town. Between 24 April-12 May, the Iranian army and the Revolutionary Guards drove "the Iraqi forces out of the Ahvaz-Susangerd area and secured a bridgehead on the west bank of the Karun River" (Karsh, 2002, p. 36). This operation was followed by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which would again create conditions for Syria and Iraq to undermine each other regionally.

On 4 June 1982, a Palestinian militant assassinated the Israeli ambassador to the UK, Shlomo Argov. A few days later, on 9 June, Israel destroyed Syria's SAM missiles in Lebanon. The Syrian regime was criticised by Libya, Egypt, and Iraq for not reacting against the presence of Israeli

troops in Lebanon. Egypt accused Syria of having made a deal with Israel that would likely move the Palestinians in Lebanon to Jordan, and Syria would regain the Golan Heights in return (MECS, 1981-1982, p. 249).

The Iraqis found this an opportunity to gain a more comprehensive Arab solidarity in its war with Iran. Thus, it immediately linked the situation in Lebanon with the Iran-Iraq war. The "treacherous collusion between Syria and Iran", the Iraqi media stated, "now being extended to the latter's Zionist ally," with the aim of "dismantling Lebanon" and "liquidating the Palestinian resistance" (MECS, 1981-1982, p. 248). The Syrians retaliated by accusing other Arab regimes of being pleased to see the PLO fighters being slaughtered and the Syrian government in trouble (MECS, 1981-1982, p. 249). The Syrian media described King Ḥusayn a spy and President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn as an agent (MECS, 1981-1982, p. 249).

Eventually, a ministerial conference took place in Tunis in 26-27 June 1982. It decided to set up a committee to deal with the crisis that would meet in Jeddah. The committee called for Lebanon's sovereignty and for supporting the PLO. The inter-Arab disengagement continued until the Fez Summit in September 1982. This period marks the end of the first phase of the war.

The belief systems of the Presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn

The purpose of this subsection of the thesis is to analyse Syro-Iraqi relations by studying the cognitive beliefs of presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and to demonstrate how these beliefs contributed to the process of shaping politics between the two countries. Since the two Presidents managed to establish their autocratic regimes with limited pluralism, one can make a strong case that the belief systems of those two leaders were the key drivers of the bilateral relations between the two countries (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2014, 2016).

The general assumption made here is that the two Presidents held different belief systems. Thus, Syria and Iraq had different foregin policy settings, which pulled them in different directions (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2014, 2016). The thesis selects a few speeches and interviews of both presidents Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad during Iraq's offensive operations against Iran in the early years of the war (September 1980-July 1982). The thesis uses VICS, profile+, developed by Walker, Schafer, and Young (1998) to obtain the Operational Code scores of the two Presidents during the time given. The data are automatically coded via the Profile+ online website https://profilerplus.org/. It also uses the Operational Code typology (A, B, C, DEF) developed by

Holsti (1977) and refined by Walker (1984) to investigate the operational Code typology of the two presidents and link it to the course of the bilateral relations between their countries.

The results

Table 2: The Operational Code score of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad (August 1980-July 1982)

	Belief System	Leader	
		Ṣaddām	Ḥāfez
P-1	Nature of the political universe	-0.04391	-0.04
P-2	Realization of political values	-0.12882	-0.134
P-3	Predictability of political future	0.1734	0.18
P-4	Control over historical development	0.83631	0.843
P-5	Role of chance	0.97	0.972
I-1	Direction of Strategy	0.10256	0.296
I-2	Tactical pursuit of goals	-0.01496	0.065
I-3	Risk orientation	0.26154	0.422
I-4	Timing of action and the flexibility of tactics		
	a. Cooperation/conflict	1.10256	1.296
	b. Words/deeds	0.67949	0.444
I-5	Utility of means		
	Punishment	0.19872	0.139
	Threat	0.05769	0.037
	Oppose	0.19231	0.176
	Appeal	0.38462	0.519
	Promise	0.02564	0.046
	Reward	0.14103	0.083

N= President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn (3 speeches, 4 interviews), President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad (3 speeches, 3 interviews)

Figure 3: The Operational code score of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad (August 1980-July 1982)
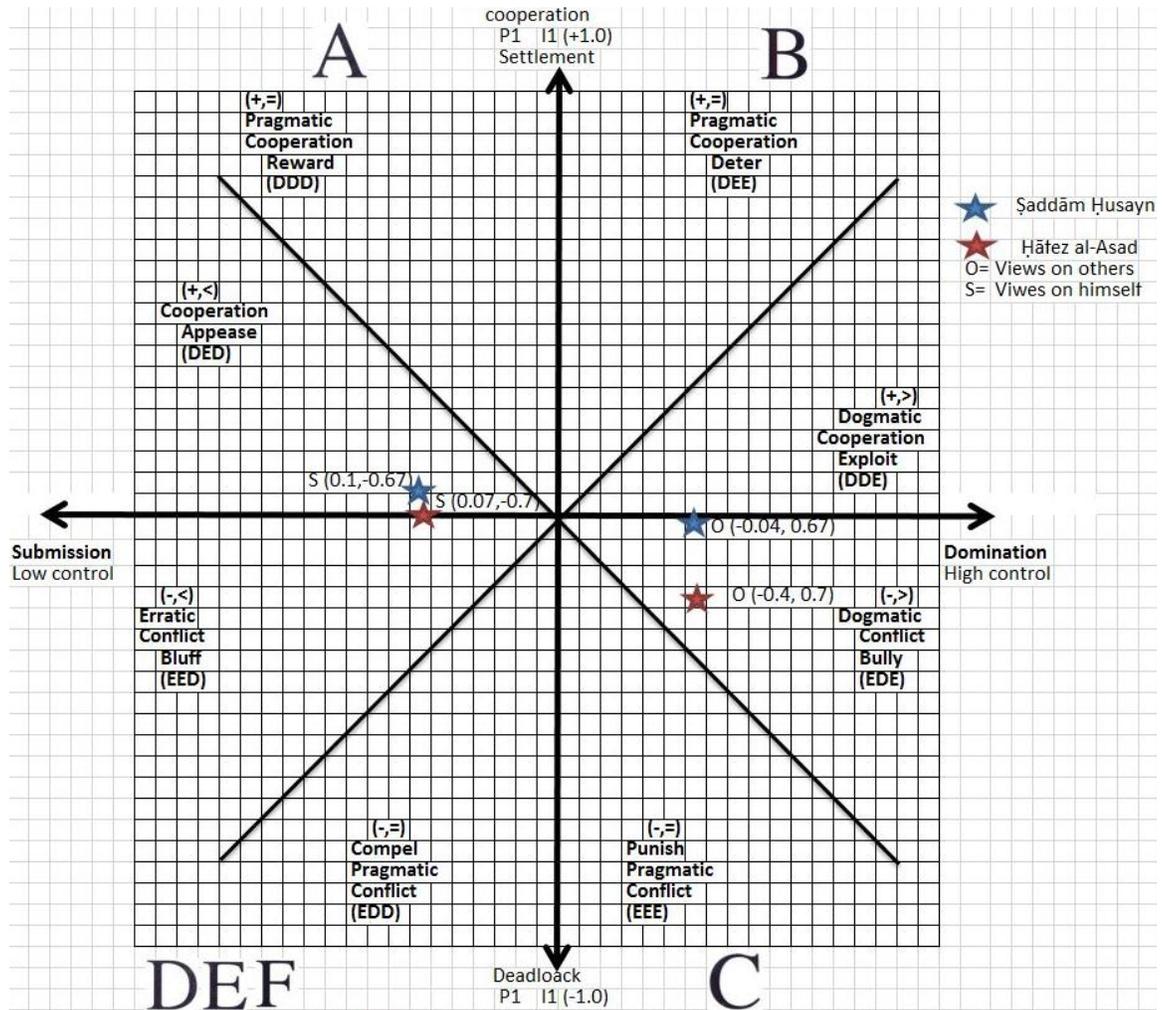
Discussion

1. Philosophical Beliefs

The first belief system, *the nature of the political universe* (P-1) is called the master belief. A leader's "belief systems about the nature of politics is shaped mainly by his orientation to other political actors… the most important of these are one's opponents". The way he or she views his opponents "exercises a subtle influence on many other philosophical and instrumental beliefs" (George, 1969, pp. 201-202). According to the scores of the two presidents at the time given period (September 1980-July 1982), both presidents believed that the nature of the political universe was

mixed between friendliness and hostility with a marginal tendency towards the negative side of the scale (see Table 2, p. 111).

The two presidents both believed in military power to achieve survival. For instance, their scores for the prospects for *realising fundamental values* (P-2) show that both of them were somewhat cynical in realising their values. This philosophical belief examines the degree of pessimism and optimism of the leader when conducting his or her foreign policy approach. "A leader who sees a friendly, positive world is going to be more optimistic about realising his fundamental values, and a leader who sees a hostile world of other actors trying to block the realisation of his objectives is going to be more pessimistic" (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 33). Accordingly, in the troubled region at that particular time, both presidents gave priority to security and safety (Ambassador Rugh, Telephone interview, 6 July 2015; Bengio, Skype interview, 15 May 2016).

With Iraq at war with Iran and growing Syrian tension with Israel in Lebanon, the two leaders could not be optimistic about improving Syro-Iraqi relations, particularly from the Syrian side. President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad was not confronting only the Israelis, but also the fundamentalists inside Syria.

For Syria, a rapprochement with Iraq would have meant the end of the alliance with Iran – because the shared enemy, Iraq, was one of the elements of their alliance – which would have undermined its position vis-à-vis Israel. For Iraq, Israel was hypothetically its rear ally against Syria, but pan-Arabism prevented such a scenario. This ideology was persistently a foreign policy constraint. Besides, the legitimacy of the Baʿth in both Iraq and Syria was based on its commitment to pan-Arabism and their opposition to the State of Israel.

In the philosophical belief *predictability of the political universe* (P-3), both Presidents could to some extent foresee the political future. According to this belief, if "the subject sees others engaging primarily in one or two categories of action, then he believes others' actions are more consistent and, therefore, more predictable" (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 34). (P-3) scores display that both presidents believed that their foes were engaging in few foreign policy actions, and according to Operational Code principles, the two had a fair ability to predict the future actions of their opponents during the first two years of the war. This score indicated that the leaders' attitude towards each other was ambivalent and predictably overwhelmed with hostility and suspicion accumulated over time. As Ambassador William Rugh has argued, both presidents were paranoid,

and their mutual suspicion was already profound, therefore the two presidents did not actively seek to improve their relations (Telephone interview, 6 July 2016).

The belief *control over historical development* (P-4), measures leaders' ability to control the shape of politics. If he or she talks more about others taking action in the political arena than him or herself, it means that he or she attributes the control of politics to others. The VICS calculates "a simple ratio of the number of self-attributions to the number of actions that self-attributes to others" (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 34). The scores of this belief show that both presidents Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad attributed the control of the politics to other actors in the political arena.

The Iraqi regime was too strong for President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad to have significant leverage. The latter never trusted Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and considered him as a high hazard to his regime (Khaddām, 2010). Ṣaddām Ḥusayn believed that Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad conspired against him and desired to see the Iraqi regime disappear. He never trusted him and used to call him the "yellow snake". In 1982, he addressed the Iraqi National Council (the Parliament) after the Syrian closure of the pipeline:

> "The Iraqi army was camping in Damascus after we stopped the Israeli attack on Syria, and we were prepared to attack the Israeli enemy, as it was exhausted at that time, and it was an opportunity to achieve a significant defeat over the Israeli army... but we were surprised that Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad issued orders the withdrawal of the Iraqi army, as he reached a cease fire agreement with the Israelis, and the Iraqi army withdrew with bitterness in all of us, as they [The Iraqi soldiers] were not given the opportunity to the occupier from the Arab land of Palestine.... I wanted to reveal to you all the tricks of this Syrian regime who abandoned the basic principles of honour and manhood." (Nashua news, YouTube video, 11 June 2013).

The fifth belief, *role of chance in human affairs and historical development* (P-5) is related to (P-3) and (P-4) beliefs. For instance, "the more predictable the political universe and the more self has control over events in the political universe, the lower is the role of chance" (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 33) in shaping human affairs and historical development and vice versa. Accordingly, because both Presidents scored a relatively low level of future predictability and attributed the control of history to others, they scored a very high degree of the role of chance in politics.

Presumably, the two believed in "accidental events" that would perhaps push them to achieve rapprochement between their countries, but the regional environment represented by the ongoing

war both in Iran and in Lebanon, and the competition over pan-Arabism and the leadership of the party continued to feed this mutual resentment.

2. Instrumental Beliefs

In the instrumental belief, the *direction of strategy* (I-1), President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's scores were mixed, indicating vacillation between cooperation and conflict as his strategy to deal with the external world during the first phase of the war. In 1811, Napoleon told the Russian Ambassador after Russia mobilised its army on the French border; "You know it is easy to start a war, but it is difficult to finish one". President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn started the war but was soon stuck in a quagmire as he miscalculated the Iranian response which was a "shock" for him (Murray and Woods, 2014, p. 138; Woods, Palkki, and Stout, 2011, p. 126) to the extent that if "he had to do it over again, he would not do it" (Ambassador Rugh, Telephone interview, 6 July 2015). Thus, he preferred to settle the conflict with Iran, and offered a ceasefire five times: in October 1980, June 1981, November 1981, April and June 1982.

World politics is not only about power maximisation, but it is also about prestige (Morgenthau, 1948; Schweller, 2011). Ṣaddām Ḥusayn sought an honourable ceasefire that would preserve his image as the hero of the Arab world. His peace proposals did not indicate submission but the wish to bring Iran to the negotiating table. "Ṣaddām presented himself as the Arab 'hero' fighting the Persian enemy", and he was not ready to lose face and his honour in the region where such values mattered highly, especially since such support legitimised his regime and undermined President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad's pan-Arab credentials (Ambassador Armanazi, Email interview, 2 August 2015).

Despite his miscalculation of the Iranian response, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn was pragmatic in the first phase of the war. Noticeably, this pragmatism came from Iraq's strong position as it still had the upper hand to carry out offensive attacks. Thus, he did not entirely cut all relations with Syria despite its attitude to Iraq. This allowed Iraq to transfer its oil through the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline from the early days of the war until the spring of 1982. Iraq's only option was to transfer oil to the global market via the Syrian territories since the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline with Turkey had not been built. Iraq also avoided using tankers in the Persian Gulf because of the risk of attack by Iran (Murray and Woods, 2014).

At the same time, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn continued putting pressure on President al-Asad's regime domestically and regionally. He persistently backed *al-Jamaʿa al-Islamīyyah* in Damascus

and the *Ikhwān* until President al-Asad crushed the rebellion in 1982. He also used the SAM crisis in Lebanon to discredit President al-Asad's pan-Arabism. He accused the latter of exploiting the PLO and the Palestinian cause in Lebanon to achieve peace with Israel. When Israel destroyed the SAM missiles in June 1982 in the Biqaʿ Valley, Iraq opposed the Israeli action and stated that it would not tolerate an Israeli attack against Syria, posturing pan-Arabism and possibly exploiting Syria's weakness.

President al-Asad, on the other hand, tended to use a more cooperative strategy than did President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. His position was weak both at the domestic and regional level during the first two years of the war. The economy had deteriorated; the Islamic rebellion placed the legitimacy of his regime at risk. In addition, the Lebanese front was in turmoil. All this forced him to opt for a cooperative strategy to achieve his political goals, primarily, preservation of his regime, as Bruce Maddy-Weitzman noted (Skype interview, 4 August 2015).

President al-Asad was not an impulsive man (Seale and McConville, 1990, p. 169), and his passive "wait and see" strategy was perhaps an attempt to buy time. He kept the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline open to support his country's deteriorating economy. In addition, he did not formally support Iran until he had made sure that Iran "could hold off an Iraqi victory before committing himself" (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 1997, p. 93). Once he realised Iran's strong position in the war, he blocked the pipeline, deliberately timing this action with Iran's offensive operation in Dezful Shush. A few days after the Iranian action, Syria signed an agreement with Iran for the supply of 8.7 million tonnes of crude oil. "2.7 million were to be part of a barter arrangement, and the rest [paid for] mostly in cash" (MECS 1982-83, p. 821).

Any Syrian settlement with Iraq would have been an expensive deal. With a war in progress, any Syrian reconciliation with Iraq would have meant upsetting the strategic alliance with Iran, and President al-Asad was not ready to take such a high risk especially as he always believed that Iraq's aim was to dominate Syria. Thus, the war offered him not only a strategic alliance with Iran but also the opportunity to weaken the Iraqi army. The delay in the direct cooperation with Iran might also have been due to Syria-Soviet relations. Soviet-Iran relations deteriorated after the revolution and the Communist party in the country (*ḥizb-i Tedeh-yi Iran*) was facing repression from the Islamic regime. This meant that Syria avoided angering Russia by establishing an immediate alliance with Iran, as they had both just signed a treaty of Amity and Cooperation in October 1980, which guaranteed the Soviet state's protection of Syria.

In the second instrumental belief, *intensity of tactics* (I-2), both Presidents believed that a mixture of aggressive and cooperative tactics was the best way to achieve their political goals. Their score close to the horizontal axis indicates that were de-escalating when others were escalating. Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's score is evenly balanced between "push to the limit" and "pursuit" strategy. While he understood the need for power maximisation, he also realised the need for relaxing pressure. This balance applied to his dealings with Syria. Although he maintained the transfer of Iraq's oil via the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline, he supported the *Ikhwān* in their rebellion against the Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad government.

Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad also demonstrated a balanced "push to the limit" and "pursuit" approach. His score of belief (I-2) indicates that he believed in using both cooperative and aggressive tactics to achieve his political goals. He did not block the Iraqi pipeline from the Syrian side despite the Iraqi cash support of the *Ikhwān* rebellion. He always followed a half-open door policy with all of Syria's adversaries, including the United States and Israel (Seale and McConville, 1990, p.345; Maddy-Weitzman, Skype interview, 4 August 2015). This half-open door policy also applied to Iraq. While he blamed Iraq for weakening Syria's position against Israel because of the unnecessary war, al-Asad declared that "the Arab interest, Arab issues and Arab hopes have no positive relationship to this war. Arab issues are absolutely not linked with this war" (Speech, 7 November, 1980 during the exercise conducted by a brigade of revolution youth fighters).

President al-Asad, in the meantime, allowed the transfer of Iraqi oil through Syrian territory. Such a strategy allowed Syria to cover the expenses of the war and kept the domestic economy stable. At the same time, it was reported that Syria provided military assistance to Iran (Kienle, 1990, p. 159) and offered support to the Iraqi opposition in Damascus. In October 1980, the Iraqi opposition parties, *al-Jabha al-Waṭanīyya al-Qawmīyya wa-Dīmuqrāṭīyya,* and *al-Jabha al-Watanīyya wa-Dīmuqrāṭīyya* were established in Damascus. These two fronts included almost all of the Iraqi opposition such as the Kurdish political parties, the Iraqi *Ikhwān*, the pro-Syria Iraqi Baʿth party and several other movements, such as the Shīʿa party *ḥizb al-Daʿwa* and the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP). In addition, the Iraqi opposition radio, Voice of Iraq, was based in Damascus and played a major role in mobilising the opposition against President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's regime from outside the country. Hence, al-Asad's actions matched his rhetoric.

In the *risk orientation* belief (I-3), President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's score indicates that he was fairly keen to take foreign policy risks in the first two years of the war. Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, on the other hand,

scored a high level of risk acceptance because of his lack of military and political means to achieve his goals, thus, and according to Operational Code principles, both were inclined to take risks. Ṣaddām Ḥusayn had a wider selection of choices in his foreign policy than the Syrian President. The latter, on the other hand, had fewer choices of action and was more prone to take risks in his foreign policy. Such risks, however, did not include jettisoning the Iran alliance, and President al-Asad maintained his support of Iran as part of his strategy to achieve parity with Israel. The Syrian regime considered the Iraqi government and Israel as potential foes. Thus, it was pleased to see Iraq facing difficulties, which allowed Syria to focus more on Israel.

The belief *flexibility of actions:* Between cooperation and conflict (I-4a) and between *deeds and words* (I-4b) investigates how leaders manage "two kinds of risk, which help to interpret more specifically the subject's [leader's] risk orientation (I-3)". The first one balances the risk of domination by others against the danger associated with deadlock as an outcome. "The other one balances the risk of doing too much against the risk of not doing enough" (Schafer and Walker, 2011, p. 37). With both beliefs, the two presidents demonstrated considerable flexibility in the way they shifted between cooperative and aggressive actions. Both of them managed not to close the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline, but at the same time, they were supporting the opposition against one another until the course of the war changed from offensive to containment from the Iraqi side.

In the belief *utility of means* (I-5), both Presidents gave weight to passive cooperation as their best foreign policy strategy to achieve their desired goals. Ṣaddām Ḥusayn used appeasement tactics, as a form of influence over others, in his cooperative approach. In aggressive actions, his public utterances show resilience in the use of punishment as a cohesive action. This confirms his high flexibility in shifting between collaborative and conflictual strategies to achieve his political goals. Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad used the appeasement tactic as part of the very low degree of cooperation he exhibited. This cooperative approach never developed into to an active collaboration between the two nations. In aggressive actions, he endorsed the use of punishment and opposition as policy responses to achieve his political goals. Thus, mutual hostility and suspicion dominated Syro-Iraqi relations in the first two years of the war.

This relative difference in the instrumental beliefs between the two presidents did not change the general similarity of their Operational code typology. A close look at the quadrant of the two Presidents (Figure 3, p. 110) shows that the two had almost an identical Operational code typology. According to the location of self in quadrant A, both were dogmatic leaders and lacked sufficient

power to achieve their desired goals. Thus, they used the collaborative strategy in the form of appeasement (DED) to achieve their desired goals. Their leadership style location in quadrant A with a power distribution (+, <) with others indicates, according to Walker's propositions (see pp. 46-47), that both of them endorsed either a full settlement or a complete deadlock, but with no compromise, no grey area, and their last preferred scenario was to be dominated by others: settlement>deadlock>submission>domination.

The scores near the horizontal axis, however, showed their readiness to change their strategies. They were de-escalating when others were escalating, escalating when their foes were deescalating. Thus, hypothetically, both the Presidents could have changed his approach from appeasement (DED) to bluffing (EED). The two Presidents, at the same time, viewed others as dogmatic actors who use a conflictual foreign policy approach, represented in asymmetric form Bully (EDE), to achieve their foreign policy objectives. The location of others in quadrant C means that they found others desired domination>deadlock>settlement>submission scenarios to be the outcome of their interactions of Syria and Iraq. Accordingly, and although they viewed themselves as cooperative leaders, they mutually thought that others sought domination over their countries and wanted their regimes to disappear.

This argument is in contrast to Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (2014-2016), who argue that the two presidents had different predispostions thus, Syria and Iraq had different foreign policy behaviour. In fact, according to the VICS tenet, the content analysis of the utterances of the two rulers show that they actually had similar predispostions – yet represented by tough measures, including mistrust and the use of passive diplomacy, and even punishment to deal with their rivals. Thus, this study argues that, because of these hardline predispositions, Iraq and Syria had relatively similar foreign policy objectives represented by regional hegemony and leadership, and therefore the two countries ended up clashing with each other.

The second phase of the War, July 1982-January 1985: Iraq's defensive position

In the second half of 1982, Iraq became vulnerable both on the frontline against Iran and at the regional level. Iran began to drive Iraqi troops out of its territories and started offensive operations. In July, Iran launched "Ramaẓan Operation" to capture Basra, the third biggest city in Iraq. The latter declared that it would withdraw from all Iranian territories and announced a ceasefire as the

first step in forming a united front with Syria and Iran to confront Israel. The Iranian response was harsh; "the road to Jerusalem, al-Quds, passes through Karbala… war, war until victory" (Saleh, 2013, p. 55). The Iraqi army, however, continued its withdrawal from Iranian territories, hoping Iran would change its attitude. President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn gave a speech to announce the continuation of the withdrawal:

> Despite the fact that the Khomeini regime has responded negatively to the statement issued by the Revolution Command Council [RCC] on 10 June, the RCC has decided to continue to abide by the contents of this declaration. We have begun, and we will complete the withdrawal of our forces from inside Iranian towns and territory to the borders within at most [10] days from today. We will also continue our efforts with the bodies which undertook mediation to end the dispute and reach the just and honourable settlement which we have called for from the beginning (Baghdad Domestic Service 20 June, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 22 June 1982, p. E1).

The Syro-Iranian alliance became stronger in 1982, not just across political and economic lines, but extending to military cooperation. Iran offered to send militants to Lebanon to fight alongside the Syrians and the PLO against Israel and the Maronite Militia, the Lebanese Forces (LF). The Syrians accepted the Iranian offer. Iran sent 650 Revolutionary Guards *sepāh-e pāsdārān-e enqelāb-e eslāmi* to the Biqaʿ Valley in Baʿalbak (Mason, 1987, p. 208). These started training Lebanese Shīʿa youths who later became the party of God *ḥizballah* (Osoegawa, 2013, p. 33).

President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad justified his stand on Iran by claiming the importance of Iran's role in the Arab-Israel conflict and that Iraq had weakened the Arab position against Israel. "When Islamic revolutionary Iran raised the slogan of brotherhood with the Arabs, when Iran raised the slogan of struggle against [U.S.] imperialism, when Iran did all this and said: I am with you, Arabs, in your war against your enemy, because your cause is mine. At that time, the hangman of Iraq invaded Iran" Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad stated in a speech in 1982. In the same speech he continued:

> Brother citizens, the Shah of Iran was a friend and neighbour of the Iraqi ruler himself with this Shah, this ruler signed the Algiers agreement and considered it at that time a victory for Iraq. After this agreement, criticism of the Shah was forbidden in Iraq and the Shah was considered a dear neighbour and an intimate friend. When the Islamic revolution was successfully established in Iran and when Iran stood firmly at our side, the Iraqi ruler abrogated the Algiers agreement and said that this agreement is unjust for Iraq. When the revolution happened in Iran. When the revolution in Iran said: We are with you; Arabs, the Iraqi ruler invaded it. He now demands that all the Arabs go and fight with him against the Iranians in [their] own country as a punishment for them because of their support for us in our battle against Zionism and because they say that the cause of Jerusalem is their own

cause. That is what the Iraqi ruler has done (Speech, 7 March 1982 at rally held on the 19th anniversary of the 8 March revolution).

In late August 1982, the Israeli army achieved its goals in Lebanon. The PLO evacuated Beirut and left Tripoli in the north of the country, and Bashīr al-Jimayyel, the chief of the Lebanese Phalange Party *ḥizb al-Katā'ib al-Lubnānīya* and Israel's ally, was elected President of Lebanon. He "was expected to take office on 23 September and to seek the departure of Syria and the PLO from their positions in eastern and northern Lebanon" (MECS, 1982-1983, 137). The United States tried to make use of al-Jimayyel's election to sign a peace treaty with Israel, but al-Jimayyel refused to sign the agreement as he was trying to establish the legitimacy of Lebanon in the Arab world (MECS, 1982-83, p. 137).

The Fez II Summit 1982, and the triumph of Syria

On 6-9 September, the Fez II Summit took place to discuss the Lebanese crisis and the Iran-Iraq war. The Summit supported Iraq's position and condemned Iran's continuation of the war, but it did not come up with a substantial assistance package or a comprehensive Arab solidarity policy for Iraq because of Syria's position. During the sessions, President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn met and had a short talk, and promised to talk again during the Summit, but this never happened (MECS, 1982-83, p. 191). It is worth mentioning that this meeting was their first face-to-face meeting since the collapse of the unity negotiations between Iraq and Syria in 1979. As a result, Syro-Iraqi relations remained unchanged. To strengthen the partnership with Iran, President al-Asad sent a delegation to Tehran to assure his Iranian partners that his agreement with the Fez resolutions had not changed Syria's stand towards Iran in the war (MECS, 1982-83, p. 193).

At the Summit, the Lebanese government requested an end to the Arab Deterrence Forces' (ADF) mission in the country. In the final statement of the summit, the Arab League asked the Syrians to evacuate Lebanon through 'negotiations' with the Lebanese government. This resolution gave manoeuvring space to President al-Asad. The withdrawal from Lebanon was conditional on the end of the Israeli presence in the country (MECS, 1982-83, pp. 804-805). This scenario was made more likely after the assassination of Bashīr al-Jimayyel, who died when the headquarters of his political party in Achrafieh district in east Beirut was bombed. Amīn al-Jimayyel, Bashīr's brother, was elected President of Lebanon on 23 September 1982. In his speech

at the UN General Assembly, he made a clear distinction between Israeli and Syrian troops in Lebanon.

During 1983, al-Asad's regime supported politically Iran's offensive operations against Iraqi forces in the failed operation to capture Maysān in February, the failed attempt to capture Amara in April and the operation in Kurdistan in July in which Iranian troops succeeded in crossing the border, penetrating nearly 14.5 miles into the country. President al-Asad was accused of putting his personal interests ahead of his country's national interests. For the latter, the alliance with Iran was a strategic partnership. It kept the Iraqi army in check; it strengthened the Syrian position in Lebanon, and finally, Syria gained cash from Iran, "including a grant of $200 million to help Syria fight Israel" (Johnson, 2011, p. 99). Thus, he maintained his support for Iran's offensive operations against Iraq. In addition, the Syrian position in Lebanon in 1983 was robust because of the addition of Soviet weaponry, and the lack of sufficient Israeli and United States troops that would have been able to drive the Syrian army out of the country (MECS, 1983-84, p. 678). Most importantly, the United States did not push to the limit against the Syrian regime, because Syria had signed a "treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union", thus, any further push against the Syrian regime would have had severe consequences for the United States and Soviet Union tense relations (Rabinovich, 1985).

In May 1983, Lebanon and Israel reached a deal, which required Israeli troops to partially withdraw from Lebanon. Syria rejected the agreement and warned Amīn al-Jimayyel and his government against signing it (MECS, 1983-84, p. 688). Syria demanded a full Israeli withdrawal and denied a request from Philip Habib to evacuate the Iranian *Pasdārān* from the Biqaʿ Valley (MECS 1982-83, p. 813). In so doing, Syria indirectly scored some pan-Arab credit. As a result, Syria consistently received millions in cash from the GCC countries, but at the same time, they continued to send more aid to the Iraqis than to Syria. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia began to sell oil on behalf of Iraq, 120,000 bb/d, 200,000 bb/d respectively (Johnson, 2011, p. 98). Nevertheless, Iraq was not happy with the limited level of support it received from the GCC countries. President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn stated, "The war has entered its third year and no Arab… had an excuse not to help… Now there is enough time, even for someone riding a camel… he has time to get here and blunt his sword in the fight" (MECS, 1982-83, p. 583).

During this period, Syria was confident because of its stronghold in Lebanon and also because of the economic support it gained both from Iran and the GCC countries. Thus, it rejected all the

goodwill efforts of third parties to achieve rapprochement with Iraq. The USSR, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE sought to bring the Syrians and the Iraqis to the negotiating table, but all the attempts failed. It was reported that the Iraqi foreign minister and his Syrian counterpart met in Moscow in mid-1983, but the two failed to achieve any progress, because of Syria's unwillingness to achieve rapproachment with Iraq. Syria publicly announced that it would re-open the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline again once "the political reasons" for its closure were resolved, but this never happened. King Fahd of Saudi Arabia attempted to arrange a meeting between President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, but the latter rejected this move, as he became decisively committed to Iran (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 1997, p. 93). On 9-10 October of the same year, Shaykh Zāyyd bin Sultān, President of the UAE, visited both President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, in an attempt to solve Syro-Iraqi rivalry but this endeavour also failed (MECS 1983-84, p. 128). Simply, Syria did not want to lose Iran.

Direct diplomacy between Baghdad and Damascus took place as well to overcome their differences. In September of the same year, the foreign ministers of the two countries, Ṭāriq ʿAzīz and ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām met at the UN General Assembly's regular meeting in the presence of their Saudi and the Kuwait counterparts and discussed the possibility of re-opening the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline (MECS, 1983-84, p. 131). By this time, Iraq was relatively confident in the battlefield as in late 1983 France had supplied it with Super Etendard jets and Exocet anti-tank missiles. The French decision to arm Iraq followed the Iranian threat to block the Hormuz Straits (MECS, 1983-84, p. 131).

Iraq still needed the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline to sell its oil on the global market and cover the costs of the war; the oil transferred through Turkey, Jordan and Saudi Arabia did not raise enough revenue. At this point, the Syrians agreed to negotiate with Iraq again. The Syrians might have wanted to send a signal to Tehran that Syria was considering alternative options. Such "a gesture by Syria would have amounted to a significant economic setback to Iran's struggle against Iraq; it might have made possible the holding of the Arab Summit conference as scheduled; finally it would have apparently entailed significant amounts of financial aid for Syria from the UAE and perhaps from other [Persian] Gulf states" (MECS, 1984-85, p. 131). Syria perhaps wanted to show its fury concerning the Pasdārān's "irritating" activities in the Biqaʿ Valley (MECS, 1983-84, p. 135).

Syrian and Iraqi officials during this period avoided face-to-face meetings. President al-Asad and President Muʿamar al-Qadhdhāffī did not attend the Islamic Conference Organisation (ICO) in Casablanca on 16-19 January 1984, possibly to avoid meeting Yasser ʿArafāt after the deterioration of Syria-PLO relations due to the PLO-Jordan negotiations in 1983 (MECS, 1983-84, pp. 128-129). Another Summit of Arab foreign ministers took place in Baghdad on 14 March 1984, but Syria and Libya did not attend. The other Steadfastness and Confrontation Front states (Algeria, South Yemen), along with Tunisia and Lebanon, sent low-profile delegations instead. The final statement of the Summit was a call to implement the Joint Defence agreement of 1950. It also condemned Iranian offensive operations against Iraq and called for a peaceful, honourable, and just solution to the war (MECS, 1983-84, p. 133).

The spread of the war to the Gulf region

In February 1984, Iraq was facing major difficulties because of its continuous losses on the frontlines, so it changed its military tactics. It attempted to expand the patch of the war by putting the Gulf and the oil market at risk, hoping to involve the GCC states and the international community to end the war (MECS 1983-84, pp. 465-467). These operations started in early 1984 when Iraq attacked oil tankers and the terminals at Kharg Island (Karsh, 2002, pp. 12-16). Such a strategy transformed the war from a regional to an international war, as it jeopardised the global oil markets because it began to threaten navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. This Strait is a narrow water channel, linking the Persian Gulf, a semi-closed Gulf, to the Gulf of Oman. The Strait is one of the most significant waterways for international energy and connects the Gulf oil producers, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, and Iraq. Around 15.5 to 17 million barrels of oil pass through Hormuz each day, with two million barrels of refined oil and liquefied natural gas, which is almost 20 percent of the worldwide traded oil. Nearly 85 percent of oil exported goes to Japan, India, South Korea, North Korea and China. In addition, it is predicted that the future significance of the Strait will rise. For instance, statistics show that the use of oil and natural gas will increase. Therefore Iran's threats to block the Strait intensified this concern, and put global energy in danger. Oil prices increased on the global market by two per cent on the day following the threat (see Map 3, p. 123).

The offensive started with attacks on any tankers that approached Iranian ports. The Iranians responded by hitting tankers that approached the GCC states' ports, because of their support for Iraq, and reiterated its threat to block the Strait of Hormuz.

Map 3: The Strait of Hormuz

Source: Wikimedia Commons

The belief systems of the two Presidents during the second phase of the War: July 1982-January 1985

In this section, this study selected a number of public utterances (speeches and interviwes) the two targeted presidents delivered between July 1982 and early 1985, in order to measure their belief systems during this period.

The results

Table 3: The Operational code score of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad (July 1982-January 1985)

Belief System		Leader	
		Ṣaddām	Ḥāfez
P-1	Nature of the political universe	0.08	0
P-2	Realization of political values	-0.03	-0.134
P-3	Predictability of political future	0.17	0.142
P-4	Control over historical development	0.86	0.911
P-5	Role of chance	0.97705	0.987
I-1	Direction of Strategy	0.65	0.143
I-2	Tactical pursuit of goals	0.23	0.19
I-3	Risk orientation	0.48	0.143
I-4	Timing of action and the flexibility of tactics		
	a. Cooperation/conflict	1.65	1.143
	b. Words/deeds	0.61	0.429
I-5	Utility of means		
	Punishment	0.17	0
	Threat	0.00	0.071
	Oppose	0.00	0.357
	Appeal	0.57	0.286
	Promise	0.13	0.071
	Reward	0.13	0.214

N= President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn (2 speeches, 3 interviews), President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad (1 speeches, 2 interviews)

Figure 4: Typology of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad (July 1982-January 1985)
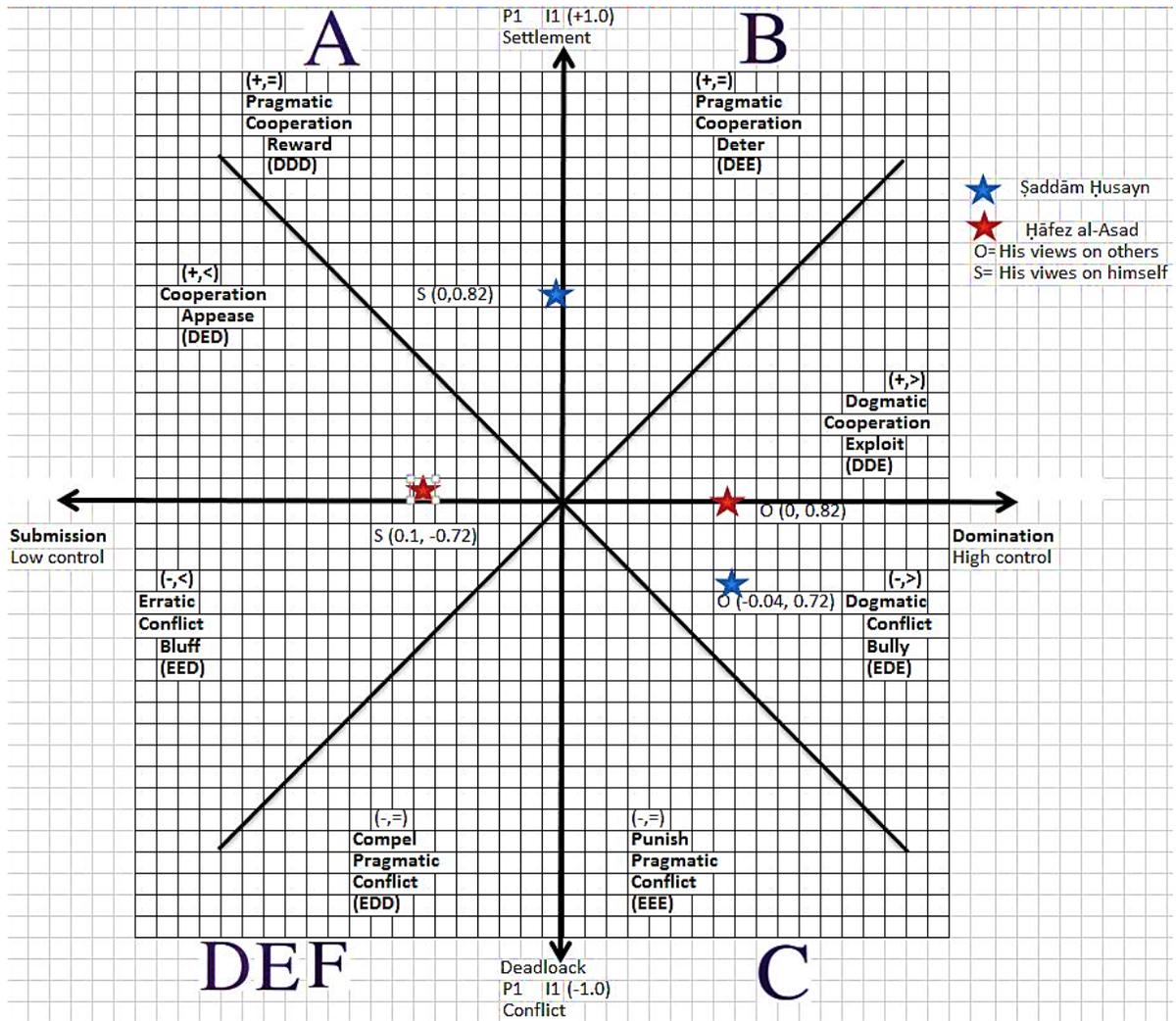
Discussion

1. Philosophical beliefs

In the second phase of the war, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn was consistent is his views about the *nature of the political universe* (P-1), that it is a somewhat hostile arena, with a marginal increase towards the positive side (friendliness), so did Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad. Both remained pessimistic about *realising*

his desired goals (P-2) and registered the low degree of *predictability of the political future* (P-3). Consequently, both continued to view other actors as the prime movers and controllers of *historical development* (P-4). Their belief of the *role of chance on human behaviour* (P-5) remained unchanged.

2. Instrumental beliefs

Both Presidents witnessed a change in their instrumental beliefs. Power seemed to have determined the demeanour of both Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad. When they were weak, they used their cooperative strategy, but when they were strong, they tended to escalate their conflictual strategy. Accordingly, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn showed a significant shift in his choice in the *direction of strategy* belief (I-1). Although he had displayed a mixture of cooperation and aggressive strategy in the first phase of the war (0.03), he adopted a high degree of cooperative strategy (0.65) to deal with others in the second period. This dramatic shift from passive to active cooperation reflected his weak position in the war. The course of the war had indeed changed Iraq's foreign policy behaviour. As the Iranian forces' position changed from defensive to offensive, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn desperately desired to end the war and also to achieve rapprochement with Syria. He twice proposed ceasefires with Iran, in June 1982 at the beginning of Iran's offensive, and in June 1983. His last attempt to end the war was to extend it into the Gulf region and damage the international oil trade, in the hope that the GCC countries and the superpowers would then intervene to stop the war. He also hoped that the GCC would stop supporting al-Asad's regime in Lebanon, which might constrain al-Asad and eventually push him to cooperate with Iraq, and put Iran into regional isolation.

When Ṣaddām Ḥusayn realised that the Iranians would continue to fight, he became willing to compromise with the Syrians. His public utterances showed an increase in positive tendencies. He adopted an active diplomacy to persuade Syria to open the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline and accepted the goodwill of the King of Saudi Arabia to meet Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, but the latter refused to meet him. The President of the UAE also attempted to bring both countries to the negotiating table; Syria rejected all these political attempts.

The public utterances of President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, on the other hand, displayed a decrease in positive expressions. His level of confidence was increased as his regime was under less domestic pressure after the crackdown on the Islamic rebellion. He decreased the level of his cooperative

foreign policy in the *direction of strategy* belief (I-1), reducing the cooperation element in his appeasement strategy and scoring a certain degree of conflictual strategy in the form of "oppose" as a *utility means* belief (I-5) showed (see Table 3, p. 124), to achieve his goals. This might also indicate why Syro-Iraqi relations did not improve. By brutally ending the insurgency, President al-Asad managed to secure his regime. In the Lebanese context, Syria's position was also secure. The Fez II resolution regarding Lebanon gave Syria ample space to manoeuvre. The lack of United States and Israeli forces in Lebanon to drive out the Syrian forces, and also the treaty of Friendship and Cooperation that contrained the United States policy towards Syria meant that the Lebanese government had to conduct negotiations with al-Asad's regime to pull its troops out of the country. Al-Asad used this situation as a political tool against Israel. He, therefore, rejected the May 1983 Lebanon-Israel agreement, which proposed a partial withdrawal of the Israeli army from Lebanon. Such action against Israel improved his pan-Arab credentials and sustained the flow of GCC money to Syria at a time when the Syrian economy was in difficulties. Such a high position in Lebanon made him confident enough not to achieve a rapprochement with Iraq, but to keep the status quo.

In the second instrumental belief, *intensity of tactics* (I-2), President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn focused on collaborative means (Reward, Promise, and Appease). He tried to persuade Iran to stop the war after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. He welcomed all the goodwill gestures by the GCC member states and the USSR to encourage negotiation with Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad to normalise the Syro-Iraqi relations. The latter, on the other hand, maintained a balance between "push to the limit" and "pursuit" tactics to achieve his goals. Although he met President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn in Fez II 6-9 September 1982 and promised to talk again, a few months later Syria, along with Libya – Iraq's second rival for the leadership of pan-Arabism – and Iran, convened a conference in Damascus, and all three were united in their desire to see the fall of the Iraqi regime.

This zigzagging approach took place again when the Syrian foreign minister considered a possible opening of the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline during his meeting with his Iraqi counterpart at the UN General Assembly in September 1983. It was a cunning move of President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad to sign new oil contracts with Iran. For the latter, opening the pipeline would have meant the certain loss of Iran as an ally against Israel. Therefore, he kept his balance strategy unaltered since it secured his position against Iraq and Israel.

In the *risk orientation* (I-3) belief, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn increased his level of risk acceptance. While his utterances show he registered a low degree of risk acceptance during the first phase of the war (0.2), in the second phase of the war, he scored a definite acceptance of risk (0.5). With fewer options at their disposal, individuals tend to take risks to achieve their goals. Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's only option now was to continue to fight Iran to save his regime. President al-Asad, on the other hand, scored a lower degree of risk acceptance in the second period of the war. Obviously, he had more options on the table at this time than he had in the first two years of the war. While he scored a definite score of risk acceptance (0.63) in the period 1980-1982, between the years 1982-1985, he scored a lower level of risk acceptance (0.14). The Syrian position was unyielding in the second period, both domestically and regionally which meant that President al-Asad was less prone to take risks to achieve rapprochement with Iraq.

In both the *importance of timing of actions*: between *cooperation and conflict* (I-4a) and between *word and deed* (I-4b) beliefs, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn again scored a definite degree of flexibility in shifting between collaboration and conflict, depending on the situation. His score slightly increased in the second phase of the war. President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad exhibited a higher degree of flexibility too. As discussed earlier, power determined their cooperation and non-cooperation. When one of them was escalating, the other was de-escalating, and vice versa.

In contrast to Ehteshami and Hinnebusch's (2014, 2016) argument concerning the idiosyncratic difference of the two rulers, the general Operational code typology shows that the two rulers had almost identical personal predispositions (see Figure 4, p. 125). Although the Operational code typology of the two presidents on *self* changed, their Operational code typology on *others* remained *idée fixe,* unchanged. The two presidents, at the same time, equally viewed others as dogmatic actors who use a conflictual foreign policy approach in an asymmetric form of Bullying (EDE) to achieve their foreign policy objectives. This score indicates that they believed that others wanted their regime to collapse. The location of others in quadrant C shows that they thought others desired domination>deadlock>settlement>submission scenarios to be the outcome of their interactions with Syria and Iraq (See Walker propositions, 2011, pp. 46-47). Accordingly, they continued their mutual resentment and hostility.

The results of the Operational code typology on self indicate that Ṣaddām Ḥusayn was pragmatic during the second phase of the war. His public utterances show that he endorsed a cooperative strategy in the form of Reward (DDD), and desired

settlement>deadlock>domination>submission to be the outcomes of his interaction with others. Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad's Operational code typology on self remained unchanged. He continued his passive cooperation in the form of appeasement (DED), and desired domination>settlement>submission>deadlock to be the outcomes of his interaction with others.

The third phase of the war, February 1985-August 1988

In the last three years of the war, Iraq was able to conduct some successful operations against Iran. For the first time since spring 1982, Iraq launched an offensive attack on the central front (Qasr-e-Shirin) on 28 January - early February 1985. This Iraqi relative success, however, did not alter relations between Syria and Iraq. The struggle for pan-Arabism between the two regimes continued. President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad maintained his backing for Iran in the war, using Iranian support for the Palestinian cause as the rationale to justify Syria's attitude and to gain cash from the GCC countries. "Syria was satisfied with the overall static nature of the Iraqi-Iranian war, which made it possible for Damascus to continue to juggle its support for Iran and demonstrate sensitivity to Arab entreaties to try to restrain the Iranians" (MECS, 1984-85, p. 110). Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, on the other hand, continued to claim that Iraq was the solid barrier for the Arab world against Iran, "the Yellow Danger" as he called it (MECS, 1984-85, p. 119).

Both regimes accused each other of working against the interests of the Arab world and looked for opportunities for mutual damage (MECS, 1984-85, p. 119). As part of its support for Iran, Syria continued to block the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline. Iraq tried to convince Syria to re-open this strategic pipeline, but all its attempts failed. It, therefore, filed a juridical complaint in OAPEC. In January 1985, the OAPEC Panel rejected Syria's claims that Iraq did not have enough oil to export and called on Syria to re-open the pipeline. The Syrians rejected OAPEC's intervention in this issue but shortly afterwards the Syrian government officially admitted that blocking the pipeline was a political decision, not a legal one (MECS, 1984-85, p. 120). The pipeline remained blocked.

During that time, Syria's role in the region was weakened after the Jordan-PLO rapprochement. In February 1985, Yāsser ʿArafāt and King Ḥusayn announced the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement, which eventually decreased Syria's pan-Arab credentials and increased those of Jordan. The Syrian regime attempted to delegitimise the PLO and to revive the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front to counter the Jordanian-Palestinian alliance, but all efforts to undermine the Jordan-PLO reconciliation failed. In May 1985, the Syrians instructed *Amal* militants in Beirut to

besiege the Palestinian camps, to put pressure on the PLO to stop the rapprochement with Jordan. This Syrian move angered the Arab regimes and Arab public opinion. The PLO asked for an urgent Summit to tackle the crisis. On 8-9 June, the Tunis Summit of Arab foreign ministers took place. Fārouq al-Sharaʿ, the Syrian foreign minister, in his speech stated that Syria had a guarantee that Iran did not intend to occupy Iraq or any other Arab territory (MECS, 1984-85, p. 120). As ʿArafāt stood up to give his speech, al-Sharaʿ walked out to show Syria's opposition to the Jordan-PLO rapprochement. In his speech, ʿArafāt blamed Syria for its activities against the organisation in the past and the present (MECS, 1984-85, p. 112).

During this time, the toxic nexus between pan-Arabism and geopolitics continued to shape Syro-Iraqi relations. The Jordan-PLO rapprochement resulted in Egypt returning to the Arab political fold after an extended period of isolation going back to the Egypt-Israel peace accord of 1979. After the rapprochement, Egypt, Iraq, the PLO and Jordan established an alliance to confront Syria, Iran, and Libya. In March 1985, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, King Ḥusayn, and President Mubārak met in Baghdad. This development was timed to coincide with the biggest Iranian operation against Iraq in the southern marshes and Iraq's renewal of the war in the cities (MECS, 1984-85, p. 460). The meeting was in response to Syria's argument that Iran did not intend to occupy Arab territories.

Jordan remained Iraq's main outlet to the external world for shipping oil and goods (Iraq used tankers to transfer its oil to the global market via Jordan (nearly 200,000 bbI/d). Iraq had full access to ʿAqaba port. The Historian Maddy-Weitzman in a skype interview told the researcher that during his visits to Eilat for summer vacations he witnessed three ships entering the port on the Israeli side; on the Jordanian side, 25 or more ships were waiting to unload "because of all the stuff going into Iraq" (Skype interview, 4 August 2015).

Egypt, on the other hand, offered goods, arms, and support for Iraq's position in the war internationally and regionally. It was also reported that the Iraqis during the war recruited Egyptian workers. Egypt wanted to break its Arab isolation after the peace accord with Israel. The Iraqi regime was pragmatic enough not to link rapprochement with Egypt with the peace agreement since it needed Arab support during the war and so turned a blind eye to the 1979 agreement. Although most of the tanks brought from Egypt were not serviceable, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn refused to terminate the contract with Egypt, as he wanted to normalise Iraqi-Egyptian relations (General

Nizār al-Khazrajī, the former the Chief of staff in Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war, interview with al-Arabi al-Jadid newspaper, 2014)

Iraq succeeded in exporting one million barrels of oil per day through Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Oil exports reached 1.5 million bbI/d when the second pipeline with Turkey was opened. Iraq's position in the war was also improved when it signed a deal with the US to buy 55 Bell helicopters and received satellite images of Iranian locations (MECS, 1984-85, p. 477).

Syria's economic difficulties meant that it could not pay Iran for the oil it imported and Iran stopped further exports to Syria. Iran pressed hard for payment especially after the Iraqi attack on Kharg Island, which caused them economic difficulties (MECS, 1984-85, p. 121). After negotiations between the two sides, Iran accepted Syria's offer to pay the debt in several instalments. In August 1985, the Islamic Consultative Assembly in Iran (*majlis*) approved the grant of six million tonnes of oil to Syria to be sold at a discount in a contract to be terminated on 20 March 1986. However, this agreement was annulled in December 1985 when Syria moved towards reconciliation with Jordan. The Syro-Jordan reconciliation was prompted by King Ḥusayn's visit to Damascus in late 1985. Iran was highly critical of Syria's intentions. The Syrian attitude toward Jordan at that time reflected "a realisation of the declining importance of the Lebanese arena, of its failure to contain the PLO and of the PLO's limited partnership with Jordan" (MECS, 1984-85, p. 652). Thus, the Iranians felt they had been tricked.

The problems faced by the Libya-Syria-Iran axis in 1985 also helped to tip the balance of power in Iraq's favour. On the Libyan side, President al-Qadhdhāfī was displeased about *Amal's* siege of the Palestinian camps. He managed to bring Iran on board after the Rafsanjānī-Jallud communique took place, which rejected the Syrian anti-Palestinian policies including the siege of the Palestinian camps in Beirut (MECS, 1984-1985, p. 121).

In a surprise move, King Ḥassan of Morocco called for an extraordinary Summit to be convened in Casablanca. His intention was to achieve Arab unity and cohesion, gain Syria's political support for Iraq in its war against Iran, strengthen the PLO-Jordan rapprochement, and end Egypt's suspension from the Arab League. On August 7-9, the Casablanca Summit took place. Syria, Libya, South Yemen, Algeria, Lebanon, and some other Arab countries sent low-level delegations. Many heads of states did not attend. Ṣaddām Ḥusayn sent his Deputy, ʿIzzat Ibrāhīm ad-Dūrī. Interestingly, the Summit discussed changing the Arab League's rules of procedure and the voting

mechanism from absolute consensus to a majority vote, to undermine Syria's support for Iran (MECS, 1984-85, p. 112).

The Summit reiterated the resolutions of previous Summits. It backed Iraq and condemned Iran for its insistence on continuing the war. The Summit, however, "focused on achieving a minimal consensus for its resolutions. Given the poor state of inter-Arab relations, the Summit's resolution was, not surprisingly, even more mixed and indeterminate than those of earlier Summits. Its prime concern had been not to make decisive resolutions but to impede further polarisation and save existing inter-Arab rifts" (MECS, 1984-85, p. 115).

The Iranian occupation of al-Faw

During the second week of February 1986, Iran seized control of the Iraqi town al-Faw in Basra province. This Iranian action put Syria in an embarrassing position in the Arab world. The action disproved Syria's past assurances to the Arab states of Iran's lack of interest in occupying Iraq or any other Arab territory. The Iraqis hoped that the Iranian occupation of al-Faw would gain it political support in the war, particularly from Syria and Libya, and lead to more funding from GCC states.

Iraq expected Syria to stop supporting Iran in the war after the occupation of al-Faw. Syria, along with Libya, however, maintained its anti-Iraq position. Syria's support for Iran "embittered Iraqi officials, who repeatedly reminded Damascus of its promises as well as the fact that Iraqi forces had come to Syria's rescue when it was in a critical military situation in the 1973 Yom Kippur war" (MECS, 1986, p. 383).

Supporting the al-Faw occupation demonstrated again the fallacy of the pan-Arabism of some Arab leaders. In addition, the occupation of al-Faw 'Gulfanised' the war. The GCC states, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, in particular, felt threatened (MECS, 1986, p. 95). Thus, they continued backing Iraq in the war not only financially and politically but also militarily. They regularly backed Iraq's violation of OPEC's production quotas and offered their ports (including access to the airspace of Bubiyan Island) and access to their hospitals. Iraq also received intelligence information including satellites images from the Saudi's American-made AWACS. Without this factor of geography, Iraq would not have received this extent of GCC support.

Syro-Iranian interdependency materialised once again when the Syrians and the Iraqis entered into rapprochement talks in May-June 1985. Apparently, Syria wanted to send a message to Iran,

which had recently cut its oil supplies. The Iranians seemed to have understood President al-Asad's signal. Losing Syrian political support in the war was the last thing Iran wanted. Thus, in June, the first oil shipment was sent to Syria after months of inactivity. By now, the Iran-Iraq war had entered its sixth year. After a series of discussions, a meeting was scheduled between the Syrian foreign minister and his Iraqi counterpart, but the Syrians cancelled it at the last moment.

In February 1986, the Iraqi director-general of security ʿAlī Ḥassan al-Majīd, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's brother, accused Syria of conducting espionage activities inside Iraq, including support for Syrian-trained Iranian groups, to carry out sabotage activities, and sponsoring other groups to collect information about the Iraqi-Saudi pipeline. In March 1986, a massive explosion occurred in Damascus, caused by a bomb connected to a refrigerator truck. The attack left several dead and nearly 200 injured. The Syrians accused Iraq of carrying out the attack, and then blamed Israel, then Iraq again (MECS, 1986, p. 603). Several other attacks occurred in Damascus and Aleppo, causing the death of nearly 150 people and injuring 150 more, and the Iraqi-backed Muslim Brotherhood was accused of carrying them out (MECS, 1986, p. 99).

The continued Iranian occupation of al-Faw created apprehension in the Gulf. As a result, in May 1986, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, along with Jordan and Algeria (because of its neutrality in the war), attempted to bring the Syrians and the Iraqis to the negotiating table (MECS, 1986, p. 98) as a first step towards ending the war. King Ḥusayn of Jordan visited Damascus and Baghdad two or three times in May. The Iraqis endorsed the move and showed readiness to make peace with Syria. Such a rapprochement would isolate Iran from the rest of the Arab world, which would have delegitimised Iran's cause and possibly turned the conflict into an Arab-Iranian war, which would have led to greater Arab support for the war, militarily and financially. In addition, it would lead to reopening the border between Syria and Iraq, and most importantly, it would open the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline, which would increase Iraq's oil-exporting capacity to the global market, and would prevent the need for multiple oil export routes (MECS, 1986, p. 99-100).

During the meetings, the Syrians insisted on reactivating the Joint National Action that had been agreed in 1979. The action called for the closest form of unity 'including complete military unification', as well as 'economic, political, and cultural unification" (Ma'oz, 1995, p. 153). The Syrians argued that re-activating the Joint National Action would stop the war (MECS, 1986, p. 99), possibility because of the economic benefits it would have gained from it. It was finally agreed that a meeting would take place between the Syrian foreign minister, Fārouq al-Sharaʿ and his

counterpart, the Iraqi foreign minister, Ṭāriq ʿAzīz, on 13 June 1986. However, Syria cancelled the meeting when it received the first Iranian oil shipments after months of stoppage. Soon after, the Iranian foreign minister, Muhammed ʿAlī Besheratī, met President al-Asad in Damascus and assured him that the Syro-Iranian alliance was a strategic one (MECS, 1986, p. 99).

In the light of these events, an ICO Summit took place in Kuwait City on 26-29 January 1986, in the absence of Iran. The ICO final statement demanded an immediate ceasefire from Iran. In March 1986, Syria once again was under pressure for backing Iran as the latter continued its offensive operations against Iraq, which resulted in the capture of Mawat on the road to Sulaimanyya in Iraqi Kurdistan. This time, Syria was ready to relax its hard-line attitude. Such a move would perhaps lead to GCC financial aid and would capitalise on President al-Asad's ideology of pan-Arabism by opposing Iranian intentions to occupy the Iraqi (Arab) territories.

Moreover, Syria faced difficulties in Lebanon. In February 1986, the Syrian intelligence headquarters in West Beirut was bombed, and a clash took place between Syrian "observers" and members of *ḥizballah*. In addition, the ceasefire in West Beirut, managed by Syria, expired on 18 February. Lebanese Sunni leaders, along with the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) officially asked the Syrian army to intervene in West Beirut to restore stability in the area (MECS, 1987, p. 644). On 22 February 1986, Syrian troops entered West Beirut. As a result, Syria became – for the moment - the dominant actor in Lebanon (MECS, 1987, p. 635).

This new arrangement in Lebanon damaged Syro-Iranian relations because of the Syrian prohibition of any military activity in the area by *ḥizballah*. On 24 February 1986, the Syrian army attacked the barracks of the *ḥizballah* party in West Beirut, which left 33 dead, as retaliation for the assassination of several Syrian military officials. This event displeased Iran. The consequent decline of the Syro-Iranian alliance in the Lebanese context caused Syria difficulties in maintaining its support for Iran in the war (MECS, 1987, p. 647). All this pushed the Syrians to consider achieving unity with Iraq.

Indeed, in September 1986, President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad called for unity with Iraq. The purpose was clearly economic. The Iraqi regime refused the call. It was sceptical about Syrian intentions and was afraid to be wrong-footed after the May-June reconciliation attempts. It believed that Syrian intentions were not genuine and that al-Asad's regime had repeatedly used them to obtain oil deals from Iran. In the same month, Iran focused on attacking Kuwaiti tankers as retaliation for that country's support for Iraq.

The continuation of the war and the danger it caused in the Gulf region, combined with the deterioration of the Syro-Iranian alliance in Lebanon, were all factors that changed the course of the war and paved the way for the Amman Summit. The war put the GCC states, mainly Kuwait, in a dangerous position. Iran conducted a series of sabotage activities inside Kuwait and threatened to shoot down airliners flying to Kuwait City (MECS, 1986, p. 120). For Iran, Kuwait was an enemy state because of its support for Iraq in the war. Thus, in December 1986, Kuwait asked Reagan's administration to protect its oil tankers from Iranian attacks. Eventually in March 1987, the United States launched its military operation "Ernest Will", and reflagged Kuwaiti tankers putting them under United States Navy protection.

Jafar meeting

In spring 1987, King Ḥusayn attempted to organise a meeting between Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad finally agreed to such a meeting "for the sake of the host" (Al-Qabas, 7 June 1986). On 27 April 1987, on his way home from Moscow, Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad met the Iraqi president in Jordan, in a remote desert air base in southern Jordan. Along with the two Presidents, King Ḥusayn and the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Prince ʿAbdallah were also present, but did not participate in the discussion (Baram, Telephone interview, 15 May 2016). The meeting lasted for 5-13 hours (MECS, 1987, p. 121). This was the second face-to-face meeting between the two Presidents since the failure of the 1979 rapprochement, when they briefly met on the sidelines of the Fez II Summit in September 1983. After a long discussion with no witnesses, the two presidents decided on a six-point programme: stopping all hostile propaganda; a meeting between the two prime ministers or senior officials; a discussion between oil and interior ministers; an exchange of political prisoners and another meeting between the heads of state at the next Arab Summit (Baram, unpublished work). Among other issues discussed was the reopening of the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline, closed since 1982, the Euphrates water level (Al-Qabas, 7 June 1986), and mutual cessation of support for each other's enemies (Radio Damascus, 26 August 1987).

As an *ex gracia* gesture, Syria blocked the Iraqi opposition conference in Damascus that was supposed to take place during this time. Following this Presidential meeting, another took place but at ministerial level between Fārouq al-Sharaʿ and Tāriq ʿAzīz in June in Moscow. However, the scenario of the 1986 agreement was once again raised in discussion. Syria demanded the

reactivation of the Joint National Action of 1978, but Iraq was sceptical about it and requested Syria to first "adopt a neutral position" in the war (MECS, 1987, p. 122).

Iraq was not ready for any form of unity with Syria. Egypt, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia participated with Jordan to bring Syria and Iraq together to end their mutual hostility. Nevertheless, the issues discussed between President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, and between Fārouq al-Sharaʿ and Tāriq ʿAzīz were not pursued seriously. Ultimately, because of the passive-cooperative diplomacy both utilised, the negotiations failed.

President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn certainly did not alter his perception of the divided Arab world. He simply did not trust President al-Asad's intentions. As a result, both states returned to their original positions. Syria continued to back the Iraqi opposition in the country. It also kept supporting Iran in the war and receiving discounted crude oil despite the deterioration of their relationship after the Syrian attack on the *ḥizballah* barracks.

In mid-April, Iran and Syria signed an agreement, which allowed the latter to receive 260,000 tonnes of crude oil as part of the contract that was signed in 1986 under Syria's debt repayment conditions. A second agreement was signed between the two sides in May, according to which Syria would receive one million tonnes of crude oil, 25% of it at a discount (MECS, 1987, p. 123). Following that, in 28 July a Syrian MiG-21 jet violated Iraqi airspace and was shot down by Iraqi anti-craft guns (MECS, 1987, p. 647). Shortly after that, the Iraqis sent a memorandum to the Secretary General of the Arab League condemning Syrian violation of its air sovereignty. The Syrians, for their part, criticised the shooting down of the jet, arguing that the pilot has mistakenly entered Iraqi airspace (MECS, 1986-87, p. 122).

On 31 July 1986, clashes took place between Iranian pilgrims and Saudi police officers in the Muslim holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. This was followed by attacks on the Saudi and the Kuwaiti embassies in Tehran (MECS 1987, p. 126). As a result, Saudi Arabia called for an ICO Summit. Iran was blamed for supporting terrorism and subversion inside Saudi Arabia. President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn tried to capitalise on this event to delegitimise Iran in the Islamic world. He condemned the attack saying, "Even when the Iranian rulers say that they have a religion, it is not the Islamic one" (MECS, 1986-87, p. 126). President al-Asad attempted to contain the crisis and expressed his regret to King Fahd. At the same time, he avoided any public statement concerning Iran, and sent his foreign minister, Fārouq al-Sharaʿ, to Tehran to discuss the crisis with Iranian officials (MECS, 1987, p. 646).

Following the ICO Summit, two emergency Ministerial Arab Summits took place at the Arab League headquarters in Tunis. The first Summit took place on 23 August. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait proposed a resolution to cut Arab diplomatic ties with Tehran. Syria, Libya, Algeria, the UAE, and Oman opposed the resolution. Fārouq al-Sharaʿ stated that such an act would establish a foreign presence in the region (MECS, 1987, p. 127). The Summit ended with no unified Arab action taken against Iran, which created anxiety in Saudi Arabia. This was revealed in Radio Riyadh's comment: "the goal of Arab unity, for which the Arab League was founded, is merely a dream…" (MECS, 1987, p. 127). However, it was decided to leave the emergency session open and to resume the Summit in September, to decide about the future of Arab-Iran relations (MECS, 1986-87, p. 127).

To please the Saudis, Iraq bombed Iranian oil facilities. Eventually on 20 September, the Arab foreign ministers met again at the Arab League headquarters in Tunis. This coincided with the Iranians attacking Saudi tankers in the Gulf. The final communique of the Summit called for an Arab Summit in Amman in November 1987 to examine the Iran-Iraq war and its threat to the Gulf region (MECS, 1987, p. 127).

The Amman Summit and beyond

Arab leaders met in Amman on 8-11 November 1987 mainly to discuss the Iran-Iraq war. President al-Asad reluctantly agreed to take part, partially to preserve his regime's internal legitimacy. Secondly, the Iranian operation to capture Basra put the legitimacy of the pan-Arab Baʿth regime under threat. Syria continuously argued that its support for Iran was based on its commitment to confront and end the Israeli "occupation of Palestine". Thus, President al-Asad was "aware that Syria's Arab nationalist credentials would be severely damaged by complicity in the fall of an Arab city to Iran" and therefore, "warned Iran that the alliance would be in jeopardy if it persisted in its assault on Basra" (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 1997, p. 96).

Such reconciliation, however, would also have boosted Syria's domestic and regional position. It would have supported the Syrian economy, which was facing great difficulties, due to heavy military expenditure as it attempted to achieve a balance of power with Israel, to maintain its intervention in Lebanon, and to deal with corruption and its economic crisis (MECS, 1987). Thus, President al-Asad wanted to make peace with Iraq using the Joint National Action of 1978, which might be achieved at the Amman Summit.

Another reason for al-Asad's participation at the Amman Summit could have been Syria's need for an Arab alliance to support an Arab-Iranian rapprochement (MECS, 1987, p. 129). The Iranian threat to the Gulf States and the Mecca crisis provided a strong reason for Arabs to reconsider the future of Arab-Iran relations. Syria was well aware of this fact and made sure that it could influence the outcome of the summit in a way that would protect its alliance with Iran.

The Summit decided: "(1) To condemn and reject the continuation of Iran's occupation of Arab territory in Iraq given the fact this constitutes a flagrant aggression against the sovereignty of an Arab League member state and an encroachment of its territorial safety. (2) To show complete solidarity with Iraq and stand alongside it in its legitimate defence of its territory and sovereignty. (3) To express the Arab countries' readiness to implement their obligations toward Iraq and among themselves by the Arab League Charter and the Treaty of Joint Defense, and Economic Cooperation among Arab League states. (4) To support Security Council Resolution 598 and fully back efforts to implement it in its entirety in a manner leading to the resolution of all aspects of the dispute" (MECS, 1987, p. 145).

At the Summit, the two presidents met again, this time in the presence of King Ḥusayn and seven other Arab leaders, and after a "frank and direct" exchange of views they reached an agreement, the full details of which were not disclosed (Radio Amman 9 November, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 10 November, pp. 16-17). In addition to the Syrian endorsement of the Summit's resolution, this created the impression that a Syro-Iraqi rapprochement was, indeed, on its way. However, the Syrians seemed to have been playing another game against Iraq. Immediately following the Summit, the Syrian foreign ministry was quick to assure Iran that nothing has changed and that the old flame was still burning. Foreign Minister Fārouq al-Sharaʿ declared that Syria was surprised by the text read at the concluding session of the Summit by the League Secretary General, Chādlī Klībī, because the latter omitted the Syrian reservation. Syria, he declared, does not support the Summit's resolution that condemns Iran. "Iran", al-Sharaʿ declared, "was a victim of [Iraqi] aggression", and is by no means "an enemy of the Arabs". An official spokesperson for the ministry added; "Syria has emphasised…its strong relations with …Iran… [and] its desire for this relationship to continue in a steady manner. Syria considers its ties with Iran to be a powerful asset for Syria, the Arab nations and Iran". (Radio Damascus, 12 November, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 13 November 1987, p. 53)

The Iraqi reaction was unexpected. Instead of lashing out at Syria in the usual manner, the Iraqi Foreign Minister Ṭāriq ʿAzīz sounded optimistic, promising to "continue and further develop the dialogue" (BBC, 30 November 1987). Three weeks later, however, he defined Syro-Iraqi relations as "illegitimate, illegal and doomed", stemming from "negative motives" (Radio of Phalanges, 5 December FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 7 December 1987). The Iraqi Oil Minister declared that Iraq had dropped the idea of transferring its oil through Syria and they "have no intention of reconsidering that decision" (al-Sharq al-Awsat, 8 December, FBIS-Daily Report, 7 December 1987).

In late December, Syria's Deputy President ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām and the Foreign Minister Fārouq al-Sharaʿ embarked on a mediation effort in the Gulf. Syrian sources leaked to the Arab Press that this mediation was intended to convince Iran to stop all preparations for its next military offensive and to agree to a ceasefire (AP from Manama, quoting the Saudi News Agency, 31 December 1987). Soon after, however, the Iraqis learnt that the Syrian mediation effort was not aimed at putting an end to the war, or preventing the offensive, but rather at improving relations between the GCC countries and Iran. In return for their efforts to get the rich Gulf States off the Iranian hook, Syria could hope for generous financial rewards. Iraq's reaction, this time, was more offensive. They soon sent a high-level delegation to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to warn them against collaborating with Syria (Radio Baghdad, 21 January. FBIS, Daily Report, 22 January 1988, p. 28). The Syrian response was no less aggressive. Iraq, al-Baʿth newspaper wrote, had betrayed the Palestinian cause and this and other controversial issues were the main cause of disagreement between Damascus and Baghdad (al-Baʿth, 28 January, FBIS-Daily Report, 29 January 1988, p. 54)

Iran also launched the Karbala operation 1/2/3/4/5/6, which referred to the battle of Karbala between Muslim factions in 680 AD. It sent waves of soldiers to capture Basra and detach it from the rest of Iraq. However, the operation failed. By February 1988, Iran was unable to recruit the soldiers it needed for major new offensives in the south and the general mood on the Iranian side in the southern front was that of sheer gloom. "At that point, Iraq stood to lose nothing by reverting to the pre-Jafar pattern of relations with Damascus: it had all the proof it wanted that Damascus remained on Iran's side even when Baghdad was most accommodating, and the Gulf Arabs most generous" (Baram, unpublished work).

The spread of the war to the Gulf region eventually led Iran to end a war that had lasted for eight years. In July 1988, the United States Navy mistakenly shot down an Iranian plane (flight number 655) that was flying from Tehran to Dubai. The attack caused the death of all 290 passengers. Afterwards, Ayatollah Imam Khomeini took the decision to cease hostilities with Iraq and apply UNSCR 589.

Role of personality beliefs of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad February 1985-August 1988

This section analyses the operational code of the two rulers during the last phase of the Iran-Iraq war, to investigate Syro-Iraqi hostile relations. Because the two presidents continued their strong position in power, the resemblance of their personal predispositions, represented by much mistrust, dogma, passive diplomacy and risk-taking, determined Syro-Iraqi hostility.

The Results

Table 4: The Operational code score of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad (February 1985-August 1988)

	Belief System	Leader	
		Ṣaddām	Ḥāfez
P-1	Nature of the political universe	0.10	0.13
P-2	Realization of political values	-0.04	0.02
P-3	Predictability of political future	0.18	0.17
P-4	Control over historical development	0.85	0.80
P-5	Role of chance	0.97187	0.966
I-1	Direction of Strategy	0.22	0.42
I-2	Tactical pursuit of goals	0.04	0.24
I-3	Risk orientation	0.31	0.34
	Timing of action and the flexibility of tactics		
I-4	a. Cooperation/conflict	1.22	1.42
	b. Words/deeds	0.61	0.66
	Utility of means		
	Punishment	0.16	0.09
	Threat	0.1	0
I-5	Oppose	0.13	0.2
	Appeal	0.43	0.45
	Promise	0.04	0.02
	Reward	0.14	0.24

N= President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn (3 speeches, 3 interviews), President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad (4 speeches, 1 interviews)

Figure 5: Typology of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad (February 1985-August 1988)
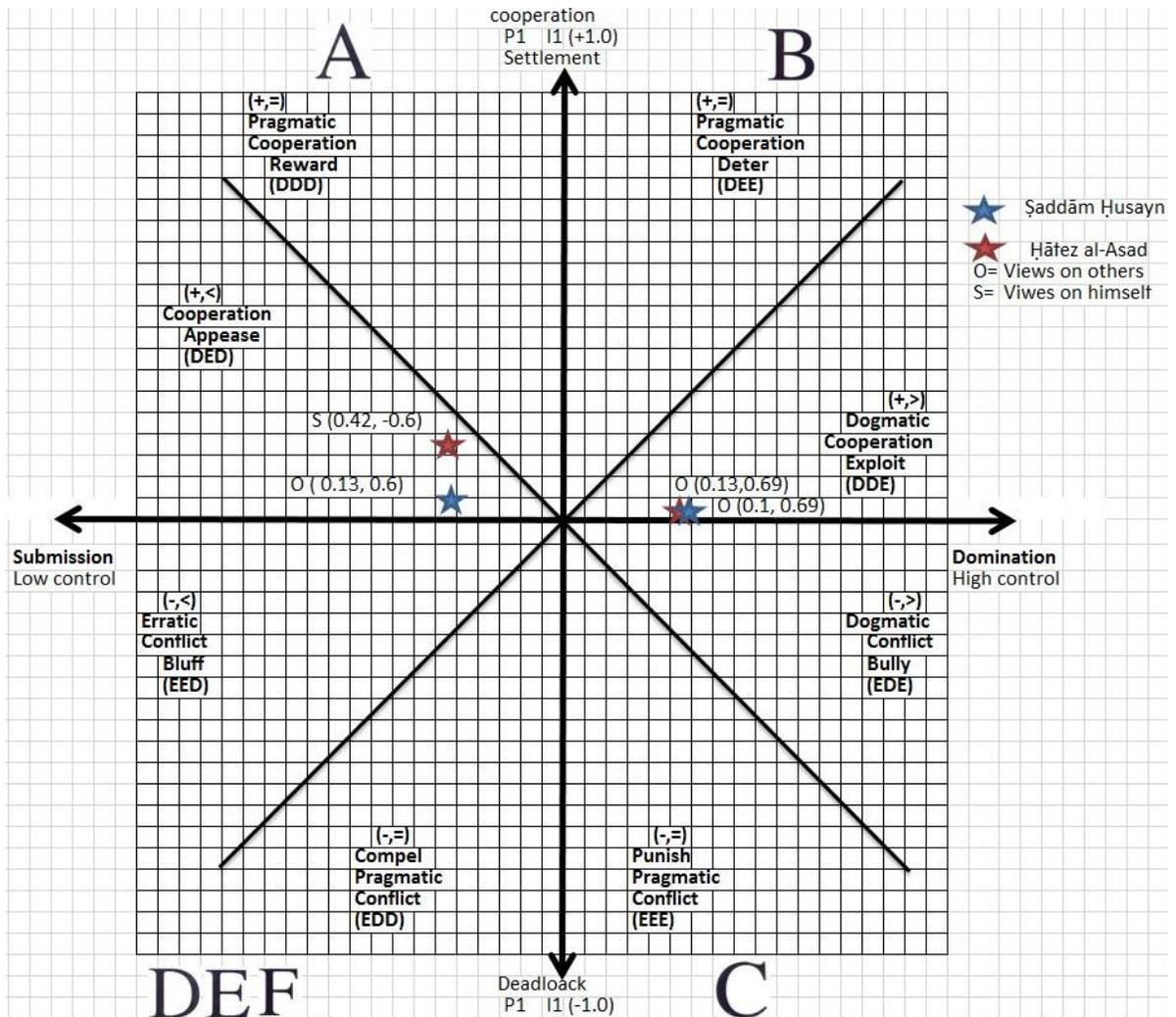
Discussion

1. Philosophical beliefs

Power again seems to have had a significant role in shaping the foreign policy of both President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad. There was a persistent inverse proportionality between the power they had and their level of cooperation. Across the three phases of the war, the Operational code scores show that the more compelling they were, the less cooperative they became, and the less powerful they were, the more cooperative they became in their foreign policy behaviour.

According to the VICS table (Table 4, p. 132) and the quadrant of the two presidents (Figure 4, p. 141), President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn maintained his philosophical beliefs unchanged. His scores of *the nature of the political universe* (P-1), *realisation of political values* (P-2), *the predictability of future political* (P-3), *control over the historical development* (P-4), and *the role of change* (P-5), remained nearly unchanged.

President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, on the other hand, marginally changed his views of *nature of the political universe* (P-1), from a mix of hostility and friendliness (0.0) to slightly friendly arena (0.13). He also decreased his pessimistic degree in *realising his political values* (P-2) belief. *The predictability of future political* (P-3), *control over the historical development* (P-4), and *the role of change* (P-5), registered a marginal change. Both scored a low degree of political predictability, low self-control over the shape of the history and high level of chance in their foreign policy course.

President al-Asad was relatively weak at the regional level during the third phase of the war. His public utterances show that his foreign policy discourse was thus more collaborative than it was during the first phase of the war. First, the continuation of Iran's offensive operations to capture Basra embarrassed him in the Arab world and confounded the reasons for his anti-Iraq stand. Second, the PLO-Jordan rapprochement in 1985 constrained Syria's pan-Arab claims and increased those of Jordan. This issue isolated Syria in the Arab sphere. One can argue that some of the Syrians rejected President al-Asad's pro-Iran position, but the brutality of his regime in dealing with opposition and the legacy of the Hama Massacre in 1982 made it extremely to oppose the government's policies; one could not survive in the opposition in Syria (Maddy-Weitzman, Skype interview, 4 August 2015). Therefore, pro-Iraq voices were mute, and no one dared to challenge the Syrian regime's anti-Iraq stand in the war.

Third, the siege of the Palestinian camps soured Syria's relations with Libya and brought Egypt back into the Arab sphere again after the years of isolation since 1979. The Libyans were unhappy

with the siege of the Palestinian camps in Beirut by the pro-Syrian *Amal* movement. The Tunis Summit was convened to discuss the siege of the Palestinian camps.

Fourth, the Iraq-Jordan-Egypt axis was established to confront the Libya-Iran-Syria axis that was already facing some challenges, especially after the *Amal* siege of PLO camps. King Ḥusayn visited Damascus as a goodwill gesture, to achieve a rapprochement between Syria and Iraq, a step that displeased Iran. Fifth, Syria's inability to pay its debts for Iranian oil and the clashes between Syrian troops and *ḥizballah* militants increased tension between Tehran and Damascus. Syria suffered from economic challenges. Iran's attitude hardened after the Iraqi attack on Kharg Island, which caused economic problems and added to the economic sanctions that were imposed on Iran after the revolution (Khaddām, 2010, pp. 79-80).

However, in May-June 1985, Iran resumed its oil shipments to Syria immediately after Syria had cancelled a meeting with Iraqi officials. In August 1985, Iran granted Syria a discount of 6 million tonnes of oil. The Iraqis believed that the Syrian rapprochement attempts were half-hearted and used merely to obtain oil contracts from Iran. All of this led President al-Asad to de-escalate his foreign policy strategy and lower the tone of his rhetoric in the third phase of the war.

2. Instrumental Beliefs

In *the direction of strategy* (I-1) belief, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn decreased his cooperative plan in the third phase of the war. His public utterances showed the increased confidence of his regime in fighting the Iranians. Iraq had finally achieved parity with Iran regarding counter-offensive and defensive operations, unlike the first and the second phases of the war. In addition, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's regional position was stronger than in the second phase of the war. The spread of the war into the Gulf strengthened his regime, with the support of the GCC states. This support was at the military, political, and economic level. The danger of the war in the Gulf, however, created anxiety among the GCC countries. Several Arab countries put considerable pressure on President al-Asad to come to terms with President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. All the GCC countries wanted was an end to the war, which jeopardised the Gulf and increased the danger of a possible western invasion of the Gulf region.

In the case of President al-Asad, the VICS table (Table 4, p. 140) shows that he increased his cooperative strategy. As his position in the region became weaker compared to the period 1982-

1985, his rhetoric became more collaborative. Syria, as mentioned earlier, faced several challenges that weakened its regional role, such as the continuation of the Iranian control over al-Faw and its offensive strike on Basra city, the PLO-Jordan rapprochement, the pro-Syrian *Amal* siege of the Palestinian camps, which exacerbated Syria's relations with Libya, the calamitous economy, and the establishment of the Iraq-Jordan-Egypt axis. All of this led President al-Asad to de-escalate his foreign policy strategy and lower his rhetorical tone.

Accordingly, in the second instrumental belief, *intensity of tactics* (I-2), President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn decreased his cooperative tactics in the third phase of the war and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad somewhat increased them (from 0.19 to 0.24, see table 3, p. 124, and table 4 p.140). Nevertheless, the two presidents remained passive in their cooperation efforts in foreign policy in general, and with one another too. After the occupation of al-Faw, Syro-Iraqi efforts to restore their relations stalled. While President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad insisted on reactivating the Joint National Action of 1978, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn disagreed. The latter banned any agreement with Syria unless it cut its relations with Iran.

In *the risk orientation* (I-3) belief, President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad registered a high degree of risk acceptance but not enough to cut ties with Iran. When leaders lack the tools to manoeuvre and compromise because they have fewer options in the table, they usually take risks to meet their desired objectives (Walker, 1977, 1983). Because Syria faced difficulties in Lebanon and with the Iranians and was under Arab pressure because of Iran's occupation of al-Faw and its continuous efforts to capture Basra and a sluggish domestic economy, President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad was prone to take more risks than President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, who was in a more commanding position despite the Iranian occupation of al-Faw in the south, and the Kurdish area in the north near the city of Sulaimanyya. The French Mirage jets, SSM, and the modified Scud missiles that reached Tehran, were powerful tools President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn used during the war, making him confident enough not to take political risks. Indeed, he tended to be more confident in his public statements than during the second phase of the war. Therefore, Iraq was not as pressured as Syria and was not willing to take the risk to reactivate the Joint National Action of 1978, which the Syrians proposed in their talks with the Iraqis during this time. As for President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, he was prone to take risks, but not at the expense of losing Iran as his critical ally in the region. Losing Iran would have been an expensive business for Syria. It would have meant weakening President al-Asad's regime in its confrontation with Israel in the west, and putting it at the mercy of Iraq in the east.

In *the importance of timing of actions and flexibility of actions*, between *cooperation and conflict* (I-4a) and between *words and deeds* (1-4b) beliefs, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn scored a high degree of flexibility, shifting from cooperative to hostile tactics. President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad also registered a high degree of flexibility: the transition from accommodating to hostile tactics. Both also scored a high level of flexibility between words and deeds.

The utility of means (I-5) belief shows, however, that the negotiations between the two countries were no more than passive cooperation, which never helped to achieve reconciliation between the two regimes. As mentioned earlier, both refused genuine attempts at settlement. On the other hand, both used a high degree of hostile tactics, and both were conducting sabotage activities against one another, more on the Syrian side given its support for Iran in the war.

However, this marginal variance in the philosophical and the instrumental beliefs of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President al-Asad did not change the resemblance of the Operational code typology of the two in the third phase of the Iran-Iraq war. The Operational code typology on others (see Figure 5, p. 141) displays that the two leaders equally shared the same view of others as being dogmatic actors who used a passive, cooperative foreign policy strategy in the form of Exploitation (DDE). Thus, both believed that others desired settlement>domination>deadlock>submission with them (see Walker propositions, 2011, pp. 46-47). With regard to the Operational code typology on self, the public utterances of the two leaders indicate that they were dogmatic in their foreign policy and endorsed appeasement (DED) as their cooperative, albeit passive, strategy to achieve their goals. Accordingly, both had the same desire to make settlement>deadlock>submission>domination with others.

To sum up, both leaders were consistant in their personal predispositions. A closer look at the quadrant displayed the scores of the two leaders on others on the horizontal axis. The scores near the horizontal axis show their readiness to change their strategies. They were de-escalating when others were escalating, and escalating when their foes were de-escalating. Thus, hypothetically, both presidents might have changed their manoeuvring from appeasement (DED) to bluffing (EED) if others were de-escalating and to appeasement (DED) if others were escalating, and so on.

Conclusion

While the United States and the USSR were competing over the MENA region during the Iran-Iraq war, they seem to have had a limited impact on the shape of Syria and Iraq bilateral relations especially after 1970. This study argues, however, that geopolitics, the belief systems of both Presidents President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President al-Asad and, to a lesser extent, pan-Arabism, formed Syro-Iraqi relations during the Iraq-Iraq war.

More specifically, this study claims that geopolitics played a determining role in shaping the Syro-Iraqi hostility. As Kautilya argues, a neighbour's direct neighbour is always a foe, and the direct neighbour of the neighbour is a potential ally (Kautilya in Rangarajan, 1992). Iraq's security focus was toward the Gulf during the war, Syria's towards the Mediterranean Sea. When Iran aimed to spread the Islamic revolution beyond its borders, Iraq was most likely to be targeted first, not only geopolitically, since it shared a border of over 1500 kilometres, but also because 60% of Iraq's population were Shīʿa. Thus, the Iraqi regime considered Iran a potential danger that threatened the integrity of the country. For Syria, Iran was a different story. President al-Asad's primary concerns were to prevent Iraqi domination over Syria, and to achieve parity with Israel; in both cases, Iran was its ally

The Kirkuk-Banias pipeline was a constant issue in Syro-Iraqi relations during the war. During the first two years of the war, and although Syrian-Iraqi hostility was at a peak, the two countries managed to adopt a pragmatic course with one another. Iraq did cut its diplomatic relations with Syria in October 1980, but it kept the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline open. Bengio gives the credit to the Iraqi regime for keeping the pipeline open (MECS, 1982-1983). The Syrian government also did not take part in the war straightaway. However, at the same time, it supported Iraqi opposition groups and provided them with a haven in the country. It also continued to allow the flow of Iraqi oil via the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline.

Nevertheless, because of the continuation of the tension between Syria and Iraq after the bombing of the Iraqi embassy in Beirut, the bombing of the *al-Waṭan al-ʿArabī* newspaper in Paris and unrest inside Syria, in March 1982, the Syrian regime finally closed the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline from its side. Giving the important role this pipeline played in Iraq's economy, this closure would mark Syrian-Iraqi relations for years to come. President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn saw Syria's blocking of the pipeline as a *casus belli* as Iraq lost nearly $6 billion from its oil revenue at a time when it desperately needed cash to finance the war against Iran. It, therefore, signed an agreement with Turkey to construct another pipeline parallel to the old one (built in 1976) to be completed

only in 1987. Yet, Iraq was still desperate to transfer its oil via the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline, to support its war economy as the land transport of oil through Turkey, Jordan and Saudi Arabia did not raise enough revenue.

Syria followed tactical strategies to buy time while they kept Iranian support in Lebanon and appeased the Iraqis from time to time. Iraq became Syria's "chess piece" to promote its domestic economy and achieve a balance of power with Israel.

In the third phase of the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq was able to conduct operations against Iran for the first time since spring 1982. With the continuation of the closure of the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline for no legal or legitimate reason, Iraq filed a complaint at OAPEC. The latter set up a judicial committee to investigate the issue. In January 1985, the Panel rejected Syria's claims that Iraq did not have enough oil to export and called on Syria to re-open the pipeline. The Syrians rejected the report and OAPEC's authority to intervene in this issue but soon after they officially admitted that blocking the pipeline was a political decision, not a legal one. When presidents Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad met in Jafar on 27 April 1987, the two agreed to suspend their propaganda war, convene a meeting between the two prime ministers or senior officials, a discussion between oil and interior ministers, an exchange of political prisoners and another meeting between the head of states at the next Arab Summit. Among the issues discussed was the reopening of the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline. However, the negotiations got nowhere. The pipeline was never opened.

Ideology did not determine Syro-Iraqi relations as Kienle (1990) argues. Syro-Iraqi relations was determined by the competition over the leadership of pan-Arabism instead. The mutual hostility of the two countries was over the tools of power consolidation and regional legitimacy, namely, the leadership of pan-Arabism. Because the two regimes were ideologically similar to each other, the weakness of one of them repeatedly, inescapably strengthened the other. In Sluglett's words "the ideological purity of the one [Syria or Iraq] is defined at least partly in terms of the ideological impurity of the other" (2000). Thus, power struggles determined Syro-Iraq rivalry, but through idealising pan-Arabism.

This competition took the form of discrediting the Arabism of its rival and promoting itself as the legitimate leader of the Arab world. Iraq depicted the Iran-Iraq war as a conflict between the Arab race and the Iranian race. It portrayed itself as the eastern guard of the Arab homeland. Syria, on the other hand, used the Islamic republic's anti-Israel narrative to justify its stand against Iraq in the war.

Several events took place during the Iran-Iraq war in which Iraq and Syria tried to undermine the pan-Arabism of the other. The first event was the Syrian deployment of SAM missiles in the Biqaʿ Valley in April 1982. The second event was when Israel attacked the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Tammuz on 7 June 1981. The third event was Israel's invasion of Lebanon. The fourth event was when the Mecca incident took place in July 1986, which Iraq attempted to capitalise on. It therefore bombed Iranian oil facilities to please Saudi Arabia and to gain Arab solidarity. Syria, on the other hand, urged tcontainment of the crisis.

The other driver of Syro-Iraqi hostile relations was the resemblance of the personal predispositions of presidents Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. Because the two 'giant' leaders had a complete monopoly of the processes of decision-making, their personal predispositions directly influenced the foreign policy of their states (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2014, 2016). Ehteshami and Hinnebusch argue that the two rulers had different predispositions, and therefore, Syria and Iraq had different foreign policy behaviour. Yet, the VICS shows that the two presidents had relatively similar personal, yet reckless predispositions, represented by mistrusting others, risk-taking, and living in the world of dogma, and that was what determined Syro-Iraqi acrimony.

The Operational code typology displays that two had the same belief systems, which, as this thesis argues, made Syro-Iraqi reconciliation hard to occur. Furthermore, a close look at the quadrant of the two presidents (Figure 3, p. 110; Figure 4, p. 125), show that they had the same views about world politics (philosophical beliefs). They saw others as dogmatic actors who use a conflictual foreign policy approach, represented in the asymmetric theme of Bully (EDE) to achieve their foreign policy objectives. The location of others in quadrant C means that they found others desired domination>deadlock>settlement>submission to be the outcome of their interactions with Syria and Iraq (see Walker propositions in pp. 46-47). Accordingly, they thought that others sought domination over their countries and to see their regimes vanish.

During the last phase of the war, the two changed their opinion of others in equal measure. They began to see others as cooperative, but dogmatic actors, who preferred to use passive, collaborative strategies in the form of Exploitation (DDE) to meet their interests (Figure 5, p. 141). Thus, both believed that others desired to achieve settlement>domination> deadlock>submission> with them. The scores near the horizontal axis showed their readiness to change their strategies. They were deliberately de-escalating when others were escalating, and vice versa. Thus, hypothetically, both

of the Presidents might have changed his approach from appeasement (DED) to bluffing (EED) if other were de-escalating, and to appeasement (DED) if others were escalating, and so on.

Concerning their behaviour (instrumental beliefs), President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn exhibited almost indistinguishable behaviour during the war. The self quadrant was located in A quadrant. This reveals that the two presidents viewed themselves as dogmatic, but cooperative leaders who lacked sufficient power to achieve their desired goals. Thus, they used a passive collaborative strategy in the form of appeasement (DED) to achieve their desired goals. Both of them endorsed either a full settlement or a complete deadlock, but with no compromise, no grey areas. According to Walker's propositions (see pp. 46-47), both preferred settlement>deadlock>submission>domination to be the outcomes of their relations with others. Nevertheless, the scores near the horizontal axis showed their readiness to change their strategies. Thus, hypothetically, both of the Presidents might have changed their approach from appeasement (DED) to bluffing (EED) and to appeasement (DED).

The self-typology (quadrant) had an exceptional variation in the case of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. The latter registered cooperative and active in the form of reward (DDD) during the second phase of the war (1982-1985). Obviously, he had to use all means to get out of the quagmire of the war. Nevertheless, it takes two to tango. President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad kept using passive cooperation as his best strategy to achieve his goals.

To sum up, Syro-Iraqi relations during the Iran-Iraq war was driven by their competition over the leadership of pan-Arabism, geopolitical realities, and dogma and mistrust between President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad.

CHAPTER FIVE: SYRO-IRAQI RELATIONS DURING THE KUWAIT CRISIS 1990-1991: CONTINUITY OR DISCONTINUITY?

Iraq's Domestic Politics after the Iran-Iraq War

The foreign policy of states can hardly be explained without taking into account the internal dynamics of states (Snyder; 1991; Rose, 1998; Schweller, 1998; Zakaria, 1999; Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2016). The Baʿth regime in Iraq faced domestic and regional challenges in the post Iran-Iraq war period. First, the social fabric of Iraqi society was damaged. Anfal operations against the Kurds and the gassing of the town of Halabja did not weaken the Kurdish refusal to accept the legitimacy of the central government over Kurdistan. Besides, Shiʿa resentment steadily increased because of Baʿth repression via the secret police, assassinations, and large-scale murder.

Second, the Iraqi economy was greatly damaged by the war. "While [Saddam] claimed victory in the war, his adventure had left a heavily indebted state with a physical infrastructure in great need of repair" (Moore and Parker, 2007). Foreign debt reached to $80 billion in 1988 and the regime halted construction projects. It had to transfer workers, about 20 percent, from the industrial and agricultural sector and employ them in the army (Moore and Parker, 2007).

The third challenge President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn faced, perhaps the most serious one, was the one million armed men, the Iraqi army itself. As al-Jabar points out, the army became the main source of menace to the survival of the Baʿth and its project of Iraqi patriotism, *waṭanīyya* (al-Jabar, 1991, pp. 32-33). The Tikrītī officers (around 2000) who had kinship ties with the President could have done little to keep his regime in power. Besides, the regime was unable to feed the entire army as the food stores were becoming empty (al-Jabar, 1991, p. 35). Therefore, the President was forced to demobilise nearly 350,000 soldiers including the first Special Army Unit, one of the eight Army Corps that was established in 1986, while the rest of the army was kept busy in reconstruction projects across the country (MECS, 1989, p. 387).

Because the primary goal of all Arab governments is regime survival (David, 1991), President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn had to use every means available to save his regime in a damaged country after the war. He waged mini battles inside the country against his domestic foes, and in Iraqi Kurdistan and in Lebanon to keep the army busy (al-Jabar, 1991, p. 33). As the war came to end, he began

to use Iraqi nationalism, *waṭanīyya*, to mask internal instability and justify his regime's oppression of the opposition (al-Jabbar, 1991), mainly the Communist Party (ICP), Kurdistan Democrat Party (PDK), Patriotic Democratic Party (PUK), *al-Daʿwa* party and several other political parties. These political parties found some safety in the mountains of Kurdistan, and in Syria. With the latter being geographically accessible, and being a solemn foe of Iraq, the Iraqi opposition operated actively in Damascus to topple the Iraqi regime and in March 1989 agreed on a "joint action charter". President Masʿoud Bārzānī, who led the Kurdish organisations (currently President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 2005-present), personally revealed it to the press at that time (MECS, 1989, pp. 638-639).

In addition, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn supported General Michel ʿAwn in Lebanon, for no strategic purpose but to undermine Syria. "The Iraqi involvement in Lebanon", said Ambassador William Rugh "was not an issue of national interest, it was a way to poke the Syrians". "Given its location in the back of Syria", Ambassador William Rugh added, "If you take up on something in Lebanon, you irritate the Syrians and put them on the defensive". (Telephone Interview, 6 July 2015). Politically, the Iraqi regime dealt with General Michel ʿAwn as the head of a legitimate government. It also demanded ending the "subversive, criminal Syrian role in Lebanon" (Interview with Deputy Prime Minister Ṭāha Yasīn Ramaẓān in al-Anba, 9 October, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 12 October 1988, p. 29). Iraq also accused Syria of carrying out Israel's instructions in the "partition and fragmenting" of Lebanon (INA, 11 December, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 13 December 1988, p. 22). Militarily, it provided General Michel ʿAwn and his followers with weaponry including surface-to-surface missiles transferred to Lebanon through the port of ʿAqaba, Jordan (New York Times, 23 July 1989).

The Iraqi regime also adopted economic liberalisation, *infitāḥ*. The problem was, however, that *infitāḥ* was rapid and extreme. "Whereas Egypt's widely publicised [infitah] policy resulted in the privatisation of exactly two factories over a period of 15 years, in a single year the Iraqi government sold 70 large factories in construction materials and mineral extraction, food processing and light manufacturing to the private sector." (Chaudhry quoted in Moore and Parker, 2007).

At the regional level, Iraq founded the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) in 1989 along with Egypt, Jordan and North Yemen, to overcome Iraq's economic challenges. The ACC was yet another socio-economic organisational tool the regime used to fix its economy. It offered an

economic stimulus to the country, to reconstruct the country in the post-war period. Along with its economic benefits, it offered a platform for Egypt and Iraq to manage their fundamental differences over regional issues, mainly the Arab-Israeli conflict. "In return for extending its support in the way of surplus weaponry and more than two million workers [in Iraq], Egypt was able to break down the walls of inter-Arab isolation which had been built up around it as punishment for concluding a contractual peace with Israel" (Maddy-Weitzman, 1991, p. 2).

The "Arab governments worked daily and strenuously to maintain political stability and quickly found that they could harness Arab nationalism for the cause", they "desired the social approval and prestige that came from being associated with Arabism because it could help bolster political stability and infuse their regimes with the social purpose and legitimacy unavailable from domestic foundations" (Barnett, 1998, p. 37). President Ṣaddām's promotion of *waṭanīyya* did not entirely rule out Iraq's pan-Arabism *qaūmmīyya*. He sought "new means of creating tensions in which nationalism could thrive while reaffirming his devotion to pan-Arabism and the Arab nation" (Sluglett and Sluglett, 1990). In any case, he still needed to mobilise this ideational power to gain support and sympathy from the Arab countries, particularly the GCC countries. By representing himself as the guard of the eastern gate of the Arab world against Iran, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn now expected to be rewarded by the Arab rich countries.

With annual revenues of no more than $40 billion, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn demanded Kuwait and Saudi Arabia waive the Iraqi debts (al-Jabar, 1991, p. 32). Iraq faced massive economic devastation. First, its foreign reserves declined, the Iranian attacks on the oil fields in Basra "caused oil revenue to fall dramatically, from $29 billion in 1980 to $9 billion in 1982 and to $7 billion in 1983". The country also had to pay nearly $60 billion for reconstruction projects (Sluglett and Sluglett, 1990). These debts reached about $50 billion to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia alone, and about $25 billion to OECD countries (Sluglett and Sluglett, 1990).

The situation in Iraq continued to deteriorate for President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and his regime. He became incapable of delivering his earlier construction promises he made to his the Iraqi people. Most of the reconstruction projects were stopped, and the prices of products and food soared because of the unplanned *infitaḥ* (al-Jabar, 1991). Consequently, as Hitler did before when he blamed the Jews for the deterioration of Germany's economy, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn blamed the Gulf countries "the rich south" for the mess in Iraq. The Iraqi media started to use aggressive language against the GCC countries and accused them of supporting the "global imperialism" of

the United States. Shortly after, the government of Kuwait announced that its assistance to Iraq during the war had been loans and not grants. President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn "was outraged when Kuwait announced that it would continue to carry those amounts as debts on its books," (Ambassador Murphy, Email Interview, 12 July 2015). The president awaited his moment, to begin his adventure and seek revenge on Kuwait.

As soon as the PLO and Jordan requested an urgent Summit to deal with the first Palestinian *intifāẓa* (1987-1993) and the migration of Soviet Jews to Israel, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn found his opportunity to play the pan-Arab card and to send a clear message to Kuwait. An ACC meeting took place in Amman on 23-24 February 1990. In his speech, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn expressed hostility in his speech towards Israel and the United States. He blamed the GCC countries for the presence of the American Navy in the Gulf. He went on:

> "Kuwait no longer being the target of the Iranian aggression, the Arabian Gulf states, including Iraq, and even the entire Arabs would have liked the Americans to declare their intention to withdraw their fleets…how can we explain the Americans' support and backing for Jewish immigration to the occupied Arab territories, except that the United States does not want peace as it claims" (Blaisdell, 2011, p. 211).

President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn forgot that it was his decision to invade Iran that established the presence of American forces in the Gulf region (Ajami, 1990, p. 1). His statement provoked President Ḥusnī Mubārak so much that the latter walked out of the meeting. His message was clear; if the Gulf countries allow the United States presence in the area, it would eventually dominate the region, and that was something the Iraqi regime would not tolerate. By saying so, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn presented Iraq as the alternative power to replace the United States in the Gulf, something that the Baʿth regime had sought to achieve since the Baʿth party conference in 1974.

A tripartite meeting was set up between King Ḥusayn of Jordan, President Ḥusnī Mubārak, and President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. The meeting was intense as the latter raised the issue of the $30 billion debts to be cancelled by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and requested from them an additional $30 billion. Otherwise, Iraq would adopt deterrent measures. President Ḥusnī Mubārak replied: "your demands are unjustifiable, irrational, and it would lead to a catastrophe." (http://www.moqatel.com/openshare/).

Baghdad Summit

To overcome these economic challenges, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn played his pan-Arab card. He turned the city of al-Faw into a pan-Arab symbol. He called it the city of Sacrifice and the Gate of the Great Victory *Madīnat al-Fīdaʿ wa Bawabat al-Nāṣer al-ʿAghīm*. A special Iraqi-Arab committee was set up to reconstruct the city and he called on all the Arab countries to donate money to the project, so "every Arab can feel he has participated in one way or another in the reconstruction of Faw" (MECS, 1989, pp. 375-376).

Regionally, and with the continuation of (Russian) Jewish immigration to Israel, the Iraqi regime called for an Arab Summit. Hoping to grasp the leadership of the Arab nation, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn proposed to host the Summit in Iraq. He believed that hosting the Summit in Baghdad would promote Iraq's pre-eminence in the Arab world and would enhance his standing, too (MECS, 1990, p. 137). As mentioned earlier, Arab Summits were unique platforms for Arab leaders to exercise power, gain regional legitimacy, and to undermine their rivals. Among the Presidents invited to the Summit was President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad. Iraq had earlier declared its readiness to be reconciled with Syria (President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn to al-Bayan, 1 May, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 3 May 1990, p. 31). Foreign Minister Ṭāriq ʿAzīz also declared that Iraq had unilaterally stopped its anti-Syrian propaganda, and emphasised that Syro-Iraqi relations should not to be a separate item from the other Summit's topics (Manama WAKH, 3 May, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 4 May 1990, p. 16).

President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad refused to attend the Summit in Baghdad, to foil Iraq's utilisation of pan-Arabism. He declared that he would not attend the Summit because of its pre-arranged venue and agenda, saying, "Syria will not participate in the Arab Summit if it is held in Baghdad and its agenda continues to be confined to the two declared topics"… "the Soviet Jewish emigration to the occupied territories and the current hostile campaign against Iraq" (Paris Radio Monte Carlo, 3 May, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 4 May 1990, p. 29). He also told the media "the gap between Iraq and Syria was still wide" (MECS, 1992, p. 138). The Syrian foreign minister Fārouq al-Sharaʿ confirmed the Syrian stand at the Summit. "The Iraqis", he stated, "were trying to exploit the Summit by insisting that it address the Western campaign against Iraq, something that Syria and others had faced for years" (MECS, 1990, p. 138).

As discussed earlier, both regimes wanted to use pan-Arabism for their own sake. Both had their own version of pan-Arabism that served their personal interests. As Epple puts it, there were

two themes of pan-Arabist ideology; pan-Arabism Ṣaddām's way, and pan-Arabism but al-Asad's way. The two regimes, Eppel adds, ended up competing over the same tool of regime legitimacy. Therefore, the clash between the two was unavoidable (Telephone interview, 15 August 2015).

Saudi Arabia and Egypt were not supportive of the idea of holding a Summit since Iraq would increase its anti-Israel and anti-United States rhetoric, which would undermine Egypt and Saudi Arabia's relations with the United States. They finally agreed to take part in the Summit, perhaps to make sure they controlled, or at least be part of any regional arrangement against Israel. President Mubārak went to Damascus to encourage President al-Asad to consider the Summit as an opportunity to achieve a rapprochement with Iraq, something that President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn suggested to President Ḥusnī Mubārak in a telephone call. President Ḥusnī Mubārak's visit to Damascus was, in fact, the first of its kind since President as-Sādāt's visit in November 1977 (MECS, 1990, p. 138). Nonetheless, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn appeared to have little appetite to completely normalise his relations with Syria. "After the end of the Iraq-Iran war Ṣaddām entered a phase of 'triumphalism' and seemed personally and politically vindicated and therefore more inclined to flex his muscles at al-Asad rather than reconcile with him," according to Ambassador Ghayth Armanazi (Email Interview, 2 August 2015).

Just as he had adopted a pragmatic approach with the Shah in 1975, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn offered to normalise Iraq's relations with Iran in 1990. It was just two years since the two countries ended one of the longest and bloodiest wars in recent times. AFP broadcasted that President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn had proposed direct talks with his Iranian counterpart Hāshimī Rafsanjānī, suggesting that "the two leaders could work towards a friendly settlement" and discuss a final solution to the Iran-Iraq war "outside the framework of the United Nations" (Paris AFP, 8, May, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 8 May 1990, p. 39).

To make sure he sustained his country's alliance with Syria, President Hāshimī Rafsanjānī told Syrian officials about the contents of the letter as soon as he received it from President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn (Paris Radio Monte Carlo, 10 May, FBIS-Daily Report, 10 May 1990, p. 24), as a sign of their alliance in the Lebanese context. One day later, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn received his ally, General Michel ʿAwn in Baghdad (Paris AFP, 8, May, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 8 May 1990, p. 39).

The Summit finally convened in Baghdad on 28 May 1990. Remarkably, President Muʿamar al-Qadhdhāfī participated after nearly two decades of boycotting such summits. Equally important

was the attendance of a united Yemen delegation headed by President ʿAlī ʿAbdallah Ṣāliḥ, following the unification of YAR and PDRY (MECS, 1990, p. 140). Syria and Lebanon did not participate. The President of Algeria, the King of Morocco, and the Sultan of Oman did not attend, but they did send delegates.

Iran was fully aware of the importance of the Arab Summits in shaping regional politics. It needed to weaken Iraq's regional role and promote Syria. On the same day of the Baghdad Summit, an editorial in *Abrar*, described as a hard-line newspaper (New York Times, 1990), published an article entitled "Arab Summit: Saddam's Grab for Prestige". The article strongly attacked Iraqi claims to be the touch-base of pan-Arabism, and endorsed Syria:

> "Currently, the only one who has been steadfast is Syria, which is considered the adversary of [the occupied Jerusalem] regime and which, in its own opinion, has always supported the aspirations of Palestine. If this link in the chain of steadfastness is broken, the repression in the occupied areas will be accelerated" (Tehran ABRAR, 28 May, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 12 June 1990, p. 54).

As president of the Summit, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn made the opening address. He was highly antagonistic in his speech about Israel and the United States. He declared he would use weapons of mass destruction against Israel if the latter used them against any Arab country and showed no concessions to liberate Palestine. "If Israel", he declared, "attacks and strikes, we will strike back powerfully… and "if it uses weapons of mass destruction against our nation", he continues "we will use against it [Israel] the weapons of mass destruction in our possession" (Baghdad Domestic Service, 28 May, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 29 May 1990, p. 5). He had previously threatened to burn half of Israel if the latter attacked Iraq in a meeting with a few of his generals in April 1990 (http://www.moqatel.com/openshare/flash.html). With Syria absent, Iraq managed to demand "consensual resolutions backing Iraq against Western and Israeli threats" (Maddy-Weitzman, 1993, p. 37). Unlike the PLO and the Jordanians, the Egyptians and the Saudis were unhappy about President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's aggressive language and his endorsement of a military option against Israel.

Perhaps the most noteworthy statement of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn was the one he made on the last day of the summit, when he indirectly insisted that Kuwait and the UAE had disregarded OPEC regulations by exporting oil more than the maximum limit allowed. "We reached", he

asserted, "a point where we can no longer withstand pressure" (MECS, 1990, p. 141). The statement was alarming, but there was no hint of a future Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The Invasion of Kuwait: The disorder of the regional Arab order

The tension between Iraq and Kuwait soon escalated after the Baghdad Summit. In late June 1990, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn sent a letter to the Amir of Kuwait Shaykh Jābr al-Ṣubāḥ demanding that Kuwait cancel the Iraqi debts. A few weeks later, on 15 July 1990, the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister and foreign minister Ṭāriq ʿAzīz sent a cable to the Arab League in which he accused the Kuwaiti government of stealing Iraqi oil from wells on the Iraqi-Kuwait border and for implementing the agenda of the "imperial" powers against Iraq. The cable also accused the country, along with the UAE, of exporting more oil than the limit allowed by OPEC regulations. Following that, the Iraqi regime deployed a few military units on the border with Kuwait and carried out some military exercises. This rapid development eventually raised concerns of a possible Iraqi military attack. King Fahd, President Ḥusnī Mubārak, and President ʿAlī ʿAbdallah Ṣāliḥ called President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn by telephone. The latter assured them Iraq did not intend to invade Kuwait and that the military activities in the borders were only routine training exercises.

The Arab countries attempted meditation to settle the dispute. Saudi Arabia and Egypt set up a meeting between the two conflicting parties to be held on 30 July 1990 in Jeddah. The Iraqi delegation was headed by the Deputy President ʿIzzat Ibrāhīm ad-Dūrī, and the Kuwait delegation was led by Crown Prince Shaykh Saʿad al-ʿAbdallah al-Sabāh. The meeting apparently was the last chance for peace. Shaykh Saʿad informed ʿIzzat ad-Dūrī that the oil wells mentioned in the Iraqi cable to the Arab League were Kuwaiti wells, and they were inside Kuwait territories by approximately 5 km (Wafāī Dīyab, 1991. p. 18). He asserted that while Kuwait was pumping 12,000 bbl/d to the global market, Iraq was pumping much more, nearly 600,000 bbl/d (Dīyab, 1991. p. 18). He stated that the Iraqis demanded billions of dollars as compensation for their economic losses, and the cancellation the Iraqi debts of the Iran-Iraq war. However, ʿIzzat ad-Dūrī avoided answering his questions, and refused to discuss the 1963 border agreement in which Iraq recognised Warbah, Bubiyan, Failaka, Kubbar and ʿAuhan islands as Kuwaiti islands (Dīyab, 1991. pp. 18-19).

Apparently, the decision to invade Kuwait had already been taken before the meeting. The next day, 1 August 1990, Deputy President ʿIzzat Ibrāhīm ad-Dūrī returned to Baghdad. The editorial

of *al-Thawrah* daily newspaper, the mouthpiece of the Iraqi regime reported, "It is difficult and impossible to realise any breakthrough in [the] meeting and to solve the pending questions" (Al-Thawrah, 1 August, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 2 August 1990, p. 25). A day after, (2 August 1990), Iraqi forces crossed the border and invaded. "Just eight hours ago", said Shaykh Saʿad, "we [him and ad-Dūrī] were talking to each other, while he [ad-Dūrī] was thinking and planning to kill me after the invasion" (Dīyab, 1991. p. 20).

Thus, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn – somewhat unexpectedly – began yet another adventure, from which Iraq would not recover for decades. He did not wait too long to use aggression again against his neighbours. It was less than two years since the end of the Iran-Iraq war. With a weak Arab regional order, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's self-depiction as the indispensable leader of the Arabs led him to deal with Kuwait by coercive means. "Ṣaddām," Ambassador Murphy asserted, "was arrogant about Iraq's standing in the Arab World and resented any challenges to his leadership" (Email Interview, 12 July 2015).

The President, who depicted himself as the protector of the eastern gate of the Arab homeland during the Iran-Iraq war decided "to collect what he saw as the fair wages of the work he had done" (Ajami, 1990). Perhaps a significant reason why he invaded Kuwait was his perceived victory over Iran,, suggested Ambassador Ghayth Armanazi (Email Interview, 2 August 2015). Besides, the fact that "no Iraqi leader ever reconciled himself to the loss of Kuwait at the hands of the British after World War I", President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn "needed the money to be gained through control of Kuwait's oil" (Ambassador Murphy, Email Interview, 12 July 2015).

Adding insult to injury, he justified the occupation of Kuwait as an attempt to wipe out the colonial borders (Al-Ra'y, 10 September, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 10 September 1990, pp. 19-20). Perhaps he had forgotten that it was Great Britain that had established his country 69 years earlier at the Cairo Conference in 1921. He had previously declared that the Arab reality is that they are divided into 22 states (Long, 2004, p. 31). A decade later he contradicted himself. On 28 August 1990, he formally annexed Kuwait to Iraq as its 19th province under the pretext of Arab unity, and renamed it 'Kaẓima City'.

Moreover, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn claimed he was supporting a popular coup d'état again the ruling family carried out by some Kuwaitis. On the eve of the invasion, Baghdad radio commented; "The unique leadership in Iraq has responded to the appeal made by the zealous sons of Kuwait to provide support to avert any possibility that someone from the outside might be tempted to

interfere in Kuwait's affairs and the fate of its revolution. The Revolution Command Council [RCC] decided to respond to the request of the Provisional Free Kuwait Government, to cooperate with it on this basis, and to firmly confront any foreign interference that will expose Kuwait's security and people to any danger or harm". Baghdad radio continued, "The RCC's response to the request of the Provisional Free Kuwait Government is an expression of the pan-Arab and historical course laid down and underscored by Iraq under the leadership of the hero of victory and peace leader President [Ṣaddām Ḥusayn] for the Arab nation's dignity and loftiness" (Radio Baghdad, 2 August, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 2 August 1990, p. 28).

The invasion broke the taboo of pan-Arabism of 'no Arab aggression against another Arab state'. President al-Asad immediately put the Syrian army on a state of high alert and telephoned King Fahd and President Mubārak to arrange an urgent Arab Summit (Paris Radio Monte Carlo 3 August, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 3 August, 1990, p. 43). In addition, Syria was one of the first Arab countries to call for an immediate and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. "Al-Asad, I suspect," said Ambassador Murphy, "was delighted to poke [President] Ṣaddām in the eye" (Email interview, 12 July 2015). The mouthpiece of the Syrian regime's *al-Baʿth* newspaper in Damascus wrote "[Saddam's] new move had given the foreigners a new pretext to concentrate their military presence especially following the new reckless step to detain foreign nationals and scatter them all over Iraq in the most sensitive areas" (Baʿth 19 August, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 20 August 1990, p. 40).

The Kuwait crisis profoundly shocked the Arab regional order. For decades to come, "the subjugation and attempted incorporation of Kuwait as Iraq's 19th province, will be a dividing line in modern Arab history", declared King Ḥassan of Morocco (quoted in Maddy-Weitzman, 1993, p. 33). It did not take long for the international community to condemn the Iraqi invasion. A few hours after the invasion, the United States and the Kuwaiti delegation requested an urgent Security Council meeting in New York. The Council subsequently passed Resolution 660 that condemned Iraq for its act and demanded a complete and unconditional withdrawal of its forces from Kuwait.

The Arab League's reaction to the invasion, however, was slow. It took them one day to pass a resolution to condemn the Iraqi aggression. President al-Asad discussed arranging a Summit with King Fahd and President Mubārak (Damascus Domestic Service, 2 August, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 3 August 1990, p. 43). On 3 August, the Arab foreign ministers met in

Cairo and issued resolution 3036, which condemned the invasion and called for an "Arab solution" to this Arab problem.

Yet, the Arab ministers of foreign affairs were divided about calling for a joint Arab force against Iraq despite the Syrian push for it. As a result, the GCC states issued a separate statement endorsing a United States-sponsored international intervention. For the first time in the history of the Arab political system, a foreign army was called to intervene militarily in Arab affairs, and not any foreign country, but the United States, Israel's closest ally, under international cover. Thus, the Syrian regime blamed Iraq for the presence of American forces in the area and for the disorder of the region (al-Baʿth, August 2, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 2 August 1990, p. 41). The Kuwaitis argued that since all Arab countries are members of the UN and because the Arab League is committed to implementing UN resolutions, there should be no problem in welcoming an international intervention to end the Iraqi invasion. This GCC resolution allowed Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to request that the United States send troops to the region.

President Mubārak was very concerned about the delay in issuing such a resolution. "The Security Council outran us [the Arabs] as if the issue [the invasion of Kuwait] is not an Arab issue, as if the Arabs are a dead body, who are unwilling to do anything," he said (Dīyab, 1991. p. 26). Having received personal assurances from President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn he would not attack Kuwait, he felt insulted and humiliated by the invasion (Maddy-Weitzman, 1991, p. 7). Thus, he made sure to end the invasion by any means. It was just 18 months earlier that Iraq and Egypt "had institutionalised their wartime anti-Iranian alliance through the formation, together with Jordan and the Yemeni Arab Republic, of the Arab Cooperation Council" the ACC (MECS, 1991, p. 133).

On 10 August 1990, the heads of the Arab states met in Cairo for an emergency Summit. The Summit issued resolution 195, which endorsed resolution 3036 that was previously taken by the Arab foreign ministers on 3 August 1990. Nevertheless, it reversed "a key component of 3036 (rejection any 'foreign intervention') by approving measures taken by Saudi Arabia and the other [Gulf States] in the "implementation of the right of legitimate defence" (Long, 2004, p. 38). The resolution authorised dispatching Arab forces to Saudi Arabia to support the United States-led forces to defend its territory and regional security against "foreign aggression" (Damascus Domestic Services, 11 August, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 14 August 1990, p. 5). It also approved "UN resolutions 660, 661, and 662, which called for Iraq's withdrawal, imposed sanctions, and declared null and void Iraq's annexation of Kuwait" (Long, 2004, p. 26).

Yet the voting on the resolution revealed the deep division among the Arabs states over the Iraqi invasion. The Arab political system was never weaker than it was after the invasion. "There is no doubt that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait proved to be a watershed in Arab affairs; pan-Arabism was dealt a body blow from which it has never recovered," said Ambassador Ghayth Armanazi (Email interview, 2 August 2015). The countries that voted for it were Syria, Egypt, the GCC States, Lebanon, Morocco, Djibouti, and Somalia. Meanwhile, Jordan, Mauritania and Sudan approved it with reservations; Algeria and Yemen abstained; Tunisia was absent; Iraq, Libya, and the PLO rejected it (Maddy-Weitzman, 1993, p. 39; Long, 2004, p. 26).

President Mubārak wasted no time in dispatching forces to Saudi Arabia. The first of what would rise to 30,000 Egyptian troops began arriving on 11 August, Syria sent 17,000, Morocco followed shortly afterwards with a symbolic contingent of between 1,000-1,200 troops, Kuwait, 3,000-5,000, Saudi Arabia 45,000 (MECS, 1990, p. 155)

It also took President George H. W. Bush a few days to deploy the United States forces in Saudi Arabia to protect the Kingdom from possible Iraqi aggression. On 6 August 1990, the United States had declared its operation "the Shield of the Desert" to defend Saudi Arabia. With the failure of all diplomatic efforts with the regime in Baghdad to end the occupation, the United States changed the status of its troops from defensive to offensive. The name of the military operation became "Operation Desert Storm".

President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn yet again miscalculated the international mood. "He thought he would get away with it, he thought the United States was weak, and had no interest in confronting him" (Ambassador Rugh, Telephone interview, 6 July 2015). He believed that the United States would not be able to oppose him. Earlier at the ACC Summit in February 1990, he stated that "all strong men have their Achilles' heel ... We saw that the [U.S.] as a superpower departed Lebanon immediately when some Marines were killed [in 1983] ... The United States ... has displayed signs of fatigue, frustration, and hesitation when committing aggression on other people's rights" (Long, 2004, p. 16). He might also have "believed that the [US] would not attack Iraq for fear of heavy casualties. He might have also viewed the internal debate in the US as a sign of weakness characteristic of democratic regimes" or perhaps he "expected the Allied coalition to break up from within before 15 January because of lack of resolve or internal conflicts" (MECS, 1991, p. 419).

President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn met the United States Ambassador to Iraq Catherine Glaspie, shortly before the invasion, on 25 July 1990, who told him that the United States has "no opinion on your Arab-Arab conflicts, such as your dispute with Kuwait. Secretary Baker has directed me to emphasise the instruction, first given to Iraq in the 1960s, that the Kuwait issue is not associated with America," the transcript stated.

Amatzia Baram later met with Catherine Glaspie. She told Baram that at that time, "we had no leverage to threaten Ṣaddām ... we assumed that he would take some few miles on the border where the oil wells are, but we never thought he would invade Kuwait city and annexe it to Iraq" (Baram, Telephone interview, 15 May 2016). President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn thought that the United States had given him the green light to invade Kuwait. Therefore, he claimed that the United States had betrayed him after the invasion. He constantly repeated his famous phrase, 'and betrayers have betrayed' "*wa qad ghadara al-ghādyrun*". None of these scenarios occurred. The United States reacted ruthlessly.

Iraq attempted to gain Syria's support. It requested the establishment of a unified front between Baghdad and Damascus against "Arab foes". It also asked to re-open the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline. The Syrians rejected the Iraqi calls (Eppel, 1993; Kienle, 1990), and President al-Asad's call for an immediate Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait was "out of the question" (al-Quds al-'Arabi, 29 August, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 4 September 1990, p. 40). "We [Syria]", declared President al-Asad, "are committed to Arab Summits' resolutions and the United Nations Security Council resolutions because it is regrettable that the Iraqi Regime should use force to subdue others" (President al-Asad to al-Akhbar, 11 August, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 11 August 1990, p. 57).

During this time, the Deputy President of Syria ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām was on an official visit to Tehran (15-17 August). The parties discussed the Kuwait crisis. They shared similar concerns about the regional crisis and agreed that Iraq should withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally. "We [Syria and Iran]", Khaddām stated, have jointly evaluated the situation and reached a common understanding of this danger", and "our viewpoints were identical... we asserted that Iraqi troops must withdraw from Kuwait" (Damascus Domestic Service, 19 August, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 20 August 1990, p. 37).

Syria gained significant political and economic leverage out of the Iraqi invasion. First, the economic advantages of Syria's participation in the United States-led coalition against Iraq were

considerable. Saudi Arabia granted Syria $1 billion during the crisis alone at a time when the total budgetary of the country was $5.52 billion (Kienle, 1994, p. 387). The war also increased oil prices from $18 per barrel to $26 per barrel, which boosted the Syrian treasury. With the growth of the volume of oil extracted, Syrian oil revenues rose from $1.25 billion to $2.4 billion (Kienle, 1994, p. 388). Also, "the European community [now the European Union] released grants and loans worth $190 million that had been frozen in 1986 after a British court concluded that Syria was involved in the aborted attack against an Israeli passenger plane" (Kienle, 1994, p. 388).

Second, given the geopolitics of Iraq and Syria, an Iraqi success in Kuwait would have meant a re-arrangement of the balance of power in the region in Iraq's favour and would further isolate Syria, "endangering the status and survival of [Asad's] regime and perhaps that of Syria in general" (Eppel, 1993, p. 184). Thus, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn gave President al-Asad the best gift ever when he annexed Kuwait to Iraq. It discredited the pan-Arabism of Iraq, and it also proved his previous views of the regime. The Syrian President declared:

> The Iraq invasion of Kuwait had demonstrated that Iraq's role is removed from the confrontation with Israel, the center basic danger to the Arabs. The invasion proves the Iraqi regime's continued role in provoking foreign disputes [meaning the Iran-Iraq war] that do not aim to confront the basic conflict [the Arab-Israel conflict]", and that the invasion aimed to seize their [the GCC countries] resources which he [President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn] wants to place at the disposal of personal glory (To al-Akhbar, 11 August, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 11 August, 1990, p. 57).

Third, via his cooperation with the United States-led coalition, President al-Asad hoped to negotiate with Israel about the Golan Heights, and for Syria to be removed from the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism (Long, 2004, p. 38). Also, the "American rise to dominate [the world order], precipitated by the collapse of the USSR, obliged Syria to try to improve relations with Washington, so as to enable Syria to continue playing a role in the emergent new world order with minimal ideological and political concessions" (MECS, 1991, pp. 670-671). Indeed, President George H. W. Bush and President al-Asad met in a Geneva Summit in November 1990 to discuss the Arab-Israeli conflict, perhaps the first of such a meeting for decades.

Fourth, Syria was finally free in Lebanon without fear from President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, who became politically and militarily weak in the region. As Ambassador Ghayth Armanazi puts it, "al-Asad was the obvious winner from the Kuwait crisis; his position in Lebanon was reinforced, and he was being courted internationally as the indispensable player in the process underway for

a general Middle Eastern peace. Ṣaddām, on the other hand, became a sharply weak political actor" (Email interview 2 August 2015).

Fifth, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait brought Syria to the centre of Arab politics. It ended its isolation in the Arab sphere. Syrian relations with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the rest of the GCC states improved after years of rupture. In Ambassador Ghayth Armanazi words, "in addition to the opportunity that joining the alliance would provide for getting back at his arch-rival, al-Asad calculated that such a move could work to his advantage from the perspective of gaining new and relevant regional and international 'friends' at a time when the traditional ally, the USSR, was visibly in decline" (Email interview, 2 August, 2015). Indeed, Fārouq al-Sharaʿ, the Syrian foreign minister visited Cairo on 3 August to attend the ministerial meeting of the Arab League to discuss the Kuwait crisis and announced Syria's condemnation of the Iraqi aggression over Kuwait.

Having little manpower and military capabilities, the Kuwaitis sought Syria's support against Iraq. They formally asked President al-Asad to intervene to put an end to the Iraqi occupation (Radio Monte Carlo, 3 August, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 3 August 1990, p. 62). Hence, "not surprisingly, from the beginning of the crisis his regime [al-Asad regime] supported all relevant UN resolutions, including Resolution 678, which authorised the use of force against Iraq" (Kienle, 1994, p. 385). In November 1990, it deployed an armed division consisting of 17,000 soldiers in Saudi Arabia primarily to defend the Kingdom from any possible Iraqi invasion, with the possibility that the division might participate in the liberation of Kuwait (Kienle, 1994, p. 385). During this time, King Ḥassan II of Morocco called for another extraordinary Summit to find an Arab solution to the crisis and prevent war but Syria and Egypt opposed the idea (Paris, Radio Monte Carlo, 15 November, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 16 November 1990, p. 1).

Given Syria's traditional posture as the standard-bearer of pan-Arabism and its resistance to American pre-eminence in the region, its participation made the anti-Iraq coalition more than a club of conservative, pro-Western regimes. Nevertheless, "Syria's suspicion of Iraq and hostility had been growing over the years, and by the time Ṣaddām invaded Kuwait, al-Asad saw an opportunity to join the other Arab states to oppose the invasion. He did not see it as supporting the United States; he viewed it as supporting the other Arab states which almost unified them in opposing Ṣaddām" said Ambassador William Rugh (Telephone Interview, July 6, 2015). The Americans understood this. Therefore, they wanted Syria on board against President Ṣaddām

Ḥusayn. Thus, the arrival of Syrian troops was particularly significant in political terms, and Syria's participation delegitimised Iraq's claims of pan-Arabism.

As Iran pushed for an Islamic solution to the Kuwait crisis, the United States hoped that Syria could stop any possible Iraqi-Iranian reconciliation. On 22 September President al-Asad and a "50-member high-ranking delegation visited Iran. During the negotiations over the issue of foreign troops in Saudi Arabia, President Hāshimī Rafsanjānī demanded "the immediate departure of the foreign forces from the Persian Gulf region and said that the solution to the crisis must be carried out by the countries of the area" (London Keyhan, 27 September, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 11 October, 1990, p. 62).

Syria wanted an active Iranian intervention against Iraq, and asked Iran to send forces to Saudi Arabia, "to defend the sacred sites". Syria, however, "had gone to such an extreme because the Islamic Republic cannot accept all the enemies of its enemy (Iraq) as friends all at once", wrote an analyst (London Keyhan, 27 September, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 11 October, 1990, p. 63). Iran's position was clear; "it did not accept any commitment to Iraq" (London Keyhan, 27 September, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 11 October 1990, p. 63) and the withdrawal of the Iraqi troops from Kuwait was unconditional. The Syrians were the bridge between the allied forces and Iran, and assured the latter that the presence of the allied forces in the region would not pose any threat to the Iranian regime.

President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn continued to reject Arab and international calls to withdraw from Kuwait. He compared his occupation of Kuwait to Israel's occupation of Palestine, and Syria's occupation of Lebanon. He would withdraw from Kuwait, he announced, on condition that Syria and Israel also withdrew hoping that he could, therefore, garner Arab support around him. Ironically, his invasion of Kuwait and al-Asad's decision to ally himself with the American-led coalition opposing Ṣaddām strengthened Syria's hold on Lebanon and allowed al-Asad the freedom to deal decisively with the remaining challenge to his authority in Beirut then led by General ʿAwn (Ambassador Armanazi, Email interview, 2 August 2015). This is because the Kuwait crisis "decisively eroded international obstacles to a general Syrian advance in Lebanon" (MECS, 1990, p. 525).

When all diplomatic efforts failed to find an Arab solution to this Arab problem, Syria joined the Arab-Western coalition armies to drive the Iraqi army from Kuwait. Syrian officials declared that the military's first mission was defensive, to protect Saudi Arabia from any possible Iraqi

attack. Nevertheless, they did not rule out the possibility of participation in liberating Kuwait (Kienle, 1994, p. 385). Nevertheless, President al-Asad claimed to his public that the Syrian army was under the supervision of the Saudi Army, in order not to depict himself as working with the United States against Iraq, an issue that might weaken his pan-Arab credentials inside Syria.

On 3 January 1991, a quadripartite meeting took place at Misrata airfield in Libya between President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, President Ḥusnī Mubārak, President ʿUmar al-Bashīr of Sudan and President Muʿamar al-Qadhdhāfī. Two days later, on 5 January, the foreign ministers of Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia met in Riyadh and issued a joint statement consisting of five points. The first, "welcoming international efforts toward a 'complete and unconditional implementation' of UN and Arab resolutions on the crisis", and regarding the upcoming meeting on 9 January between US Secretary of State James Bakr and Iraqi Foreign Minister [Tariq 'Aziz] as the 'one last chance' to do so peaceably. Second, "rejecting any settlement based on a partial withdrawal from Kuwait or on rewarding the aggressor". Third, "affirming that Iraq would bear 'full responsibility' if war were to break out". Fourth, "denouncing Iraq's attempt to 'exploit the question of Palestine to justify its invasion of Kuwait", while expressing a desire to intensify the quest, once the Gulf crisis was resolved, for a settlement "to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on Israeli withdrawal" from the occupied territories and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Fifth, "welcoming a December 1990 GCC Summit statement regarding its desire to deepen coordination among the GCC countries, on the one hand, and Egypt and Syria, on the other" (MECS, 1991, pp. 135-136).

The Syrian regime faced some domestic condemnation for its stand in the Kuwait crisis. It was reported that a few demonstrations took place inside the country condemning the President's stand in the Crisis. "For many Syrians, it was unacceptable to participate in a war against another Arab country, particularly against Iraq, whose President appeared to be the one Arab leader standing up to Israeli intransigence. Not that Syrians ignored the brutal nature of his [Saddam] regime, but as many of them put it, he was, at least, an Arab tyrant" (Kienle, 1994, p. 386).

There were also reports that the Syrian government arrested 80 Syrian writers and artists who wrote a letter condemning the Syrian cooperation with the United States-led coalition, but the government denied these allegations (MECS, 1991, 669). Also, Iraqi radio broadcast the Muslim Brotherhood's (*Ikhwān*) statement that was published in Amman-Jordan, which called for the overthrow of the Syrian regime because of its plot against Iraq "and its siding with the enemies of Iraq and the Arab people" (MECS, 1991, p. 669).

Several diplomatic efforts were taken to convince Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, all failed. Among those efforts was President al-Asad's letter (12 January) to President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn - two days before the deadline for the withdrawal, according to UN Security Council resolution of 568. The Syrian President wrote:

> "Mr President [Ṣaddām Husayn]: The current difficult, complicated, and dangerous situation in the Arab homeland was caused by Iraq's entry to Kuwait, its forcible annexation of Kuwait, and its elimination of the presence of Kuwait as an independent state and a member of the Arab League and the United Nations. We believe that this is an illegitimate act on the part of Iraq and one which it had no right to carry out, even from [an] unilateral point of view. This is because the method of force and violence is not a sound and appropriate means to achieve unity. It is rather an obstruction of any move toward unity. Therefore, let Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait be a prelude to the creation of a new atmosphere in which the serious dangers will evaporate and in which we will stand in one rank and as one force in the face of everything threatening our land, interests, dignity, and fate. Some may claim that Iraq will be the target of an attack even if it withdraws from Kuwait. I would like to stress in this regard our unequivocal brotherly pledge that if such an event were to occur after a withdrawal from Kuwait, Syria would stand with all its moral and material capabilities at the side of Iraq in one trench, and we will fight together with all our strength and fortitude until victory is achieved" (Damascus Domestic Service, 12 January, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 14 January 1991, p. 93).

President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn rejected the call, and replied:

> "I had never imagined, Mr. President, that you were under the same illusion as Husni [Mubarak] and the others, when they imagined that we demand a surety for our heroic, patient army or for our dear people, to protect us inside Iraq from the aggression of the aggressors in exchange for a token of humiliation which we would offer, God forbid. And despite the fact that the dear Syrian Army is the nation's army when it has faith, we assure you that the army of faith in Iraq is capable of protecting its land, honour, and virtue as well as the nation's honour. No other army beside the faithful Iraqi Army will be able to battle [fight] the gathering of the infidels unless it has faith in the same principles in which the Iraqi Army believes and unless its faith is heightened in mind and spirit to the level obtained by the Iraqi Army" (Baghdad Domestic Service, 13 January, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 14 January, 1991, p. 40).

The Syrians, therefore, reaffirmed their stand against Iraq. They also had to make sure that their presence was Kuwait was under the UN umbrella not that of the United States. The Syrian Minister of Information, Moḥamed Salmān in an interview said that "Syria stands fully behind the resolutions of the UN Security Council and the decisions of the Arab Summit in Cairo last August,

which demands Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait" (Hamburg DPA, 23 January, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 24 January, 1991, p. 50). On 7 February 1991, foreign minister Fārouq al-Sharaʿ held a press conference in which he said that "the Syrian army is now in Saudi Arabia to defend it, and it is under the Saudi leadership, and under the King Fahd leadership... and the cease-fire will not occur unless the Iraqi troops unconditionally withdraw from Kuwait" (http://www.moqatel.com/openshare/flash.html). One day later, the Minister of Defence, Muṣṭafa Ṭlās spoke to a newspaper and confirmed that the main goal of the Syrian army was to defend Saudi Arabia, where the holy sites are (http://www.moqatel.com/openshare/flash.html).

On 17 January 1991, the coalition began its airstrike campaign against Iraq. As the war developed, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn played his last card, attacking Israel to mobilise the Arab street. As Robert Jervis noted, the "legitimacy, popularity, and sometimes even survival" of the Arab regimes "depended on whether they were viewed as adhering to the norms of Arabism; Arab leaders expended considerable energy conveying the image that they were genuine disciples of Arab nationalism" (cited in Barnett, 1998, p. 9). On 18 January 1991, a few Iraqi Scud missiles hit Tel Aviv, but they did not do any significant damage. The United States warned Israel that the Iraqis wanted to widen the war, and to portray it as an Arab-American/Israeli war. Israel did not retaliate.

Syrian officials used the media to discredit the pan-Arabism of Iraq. Israel received generous economic and military aid from the West after the Iraqi attacks, while the Palestinian uprising was pushed to the sidelines, the Syrian media said. The Syrian newspaper *Tishrin* stated, "The Iraqi regime will not deceive Arabs by firing a few missiles against occupied Palestine," and "such a game will not liberate land nor restore displaced people to its soil. The only target of such a game is to expand the scale of the fire and to involve the Arab nation at the wrong time and place. The game is an Israeli demand which serves the enemy's interest at this particular time more than ever" (MECS, 1991, p. 676).

As soon as the airstrikes started against Iraq, in order to gain sympathy, the Iraqi regime accused the United States of bombing civilians and religious sites. President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn began to call for jihad. He appealed to the Muslim world to come and "save Iraq and its holy places from the aggression of the infidels" (MECS, 1991, p. 420). The Iraqi regime even sought to gain Iran's support to intervene to protect the holy shrines in Najaf and Karbala'. The Iranian government sent a delegation to both cities to investigate the Iraqi claims. As soon as the delegation arrived, it

disproved the Iraqi story (MECS, 1991, p. 420). However, Iran accepted to host 140 Iraqi planes, to protect them from airstrikes, but they never returned them to Iraq.

As the airstrikes intensified, Iraq began to burn the Kuwaiti oil wells (from 22 January 1991), which created massive clouds of smoke in the sky, which slowed down the airstrikes (http://articles.baltimoresun.com/). In addition, Iraqi troops opened the Kuwait oil pipelines and let massive amounts of oil flow into the Gulf "to foil an anticipated Allied sea landing" (MECS, 1991, p. 421). The regime faced international condemnation for doing so, but it announced that it had a "legitimate right to self-defence" (MECS, 1991, p. 421).

Having lost the chance to continue his adventure, on 26 February, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn ordered his army to withdraw from Kuwait, leaving Kuwait destroyed. In his withdrawal statement, he said:

> "Despite this, we have to recall what has to be recalled and say part—a principal part—of what should be said. We start by saying that on this day, our valiant Armed Forces will complete their withdrawal from Kuwait. And, on this day, our fight against aggression and the ranks of infidelity … the ugly coalition comprising 30 counties, which officially entered the war against us under the leadership of the United States of America—our fight against them would have lasted from the first month of this year" ..." O valiant Iraqi men, O glorious Iraqi women. Kuwait is part of your country and was carved from it in the past. Circumstances today have willed that it [remain] in the state in which it will remain after the withdrawal of our struggling forces from it. It hurts you that this should happen. We rejoiced on the day when it was decided that Kuwait should be one of the main gates for deterring the plot and for defending all Iraq from the plotters. We say that we will remember Kuwait on the great day of the call, on the days that followed it, and in documents and events, some of which date back 70 years. The Iraqis will remember and will not forget that on 8 August 1990 Kuwait became part of Iraq legally, constitutionally, and actually. They remember and will not forget that it remained throughout this period from 8 August 1990 until last night. when withdrawal began, and today we will complete the withdrawal of our forces, God willing. Today certain circumstances made the Iraqi Army withdraw as a result of the ramifications which we mentioned, including the combined aggression by 30 countries. Their repugnant siege has been led in evil and aggression by the machine and the criminal entity of America and its major allies" (Baghdad Domestic Service, 26 February, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 26 February 1991, pp.-15-16)

With the Kurds and the Shiʿa rising against the Iraqi regime, Syria began to think of a post Ṣaddām Ḥusayn Iraq. Any regional cooperation to replace Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's regime, however, would have been expensive for Syria. Furthermore, the Syrians feared an American domination

over Iraq, the rise of fundamentalism with Iran's intervention, or the disintegration of Iraq with the Turkish intervention (Mosul vilayet) (Baram, unpublished work). Syria considered two options: liquidate and assassinate President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, or support the Iraqi opposition to take over the country. The two options were hard to achieve (a) because of the high security around the President, and (b) the fact that the opposition was divided within itself (Baram, unpublished work).

By March, the Iraqi regime managed to re-take control of the situation inside Iraq. It cracked down brutally on the Kurdish rebellion in the north and the Shiʿa *intifāẓa* in the south. The Syrian Foreign Minister, Fārouq al-Sharaʿ announced that Iraq accepted a complete withdrawal from Kuwait, not for the sake of its people but "to safeguard the regime and save face" but affirmed that Syria, "under all circumstances is concerned for the unity of Iraq and the integrity of its territory, as well as safeguarding the future of the fraternal Iraq people" (Damascus Domestic Service, 26 February, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 27 February 1991, p. 48). As the situation inside Iraq gradually calmed, Syrian propaganda against the Iraqi regime decreased. "Apparently, Syria considered Ṣaddām's remaining in power unthreatening and preferable to any other alternative once the war was over" (MECS, p. 677), to avoid an American presence in the area, and to prevent the disintegration of the country.

Syro-Iraqi relations did not witness any change after the Kuwait crisis until the UN adopted the the Oil-for-Food Programme (OIP), in 1995. Two years later, formal trade between Syria and Iraq was reactivatied. Syria began to send goods to Iraq for oil. The Kirkuk-Banias pipeline had been damaged by the 1990-1991 war.

President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and al-Asad belief systems during the Kuwait crisis: Consistency or Inconsistency?

This section analyses Syro-Iraqi hostility during the Kuwait crisis by analysing the personal predispositions of Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and al-Asad. This section argues that with the continuation of Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and al-Asad's totalitarian regimes, the resemblance of their personal predispositions, represented by mistrust of others, adopting passive diplomacy, risk-taking, determined Syro-Iraqi hostility.

The Results

Table 5: The Operational code score of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad (September 1990- February 1991)

Belief System		Leader	
		Ṣaddām	**Ḥāfeẓ**
P-1	Nature of the political universe	0.07692	0.211
P-2	Realization of political values	-0.0612	0.077
P-3	Predictability of political future	0.21985	0.172
P-4	Control over historical development	0.87419	0.761
P-5	Role of chance	0.97234	0.959
I-1	Direction of Strategy	0.24138	0.313
I-2	Tactical pursuit of goals	0.02874	0.119
I-3	Risk orientation	0.44138	0.409
I-4	Timing of action and the flexibility of tactics		
	a. Cooperation/conflict	1.24138	1.313
	b. Words/deeds	0.31034	0.448
I-5	Utility of means		
	Punishment	0.12069	0.104
	Threat	0.03448	0.015
	Oppose	0.22414	0.224
	Appeal	0.53448	0.507
	Promise	0.05172	0.03
	Reward	0.03448	0.119

N= President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn (8 speeches, 6 interviews), President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad (3 speeches)

Figure 6: Typology of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad (September 1990-February 1991)
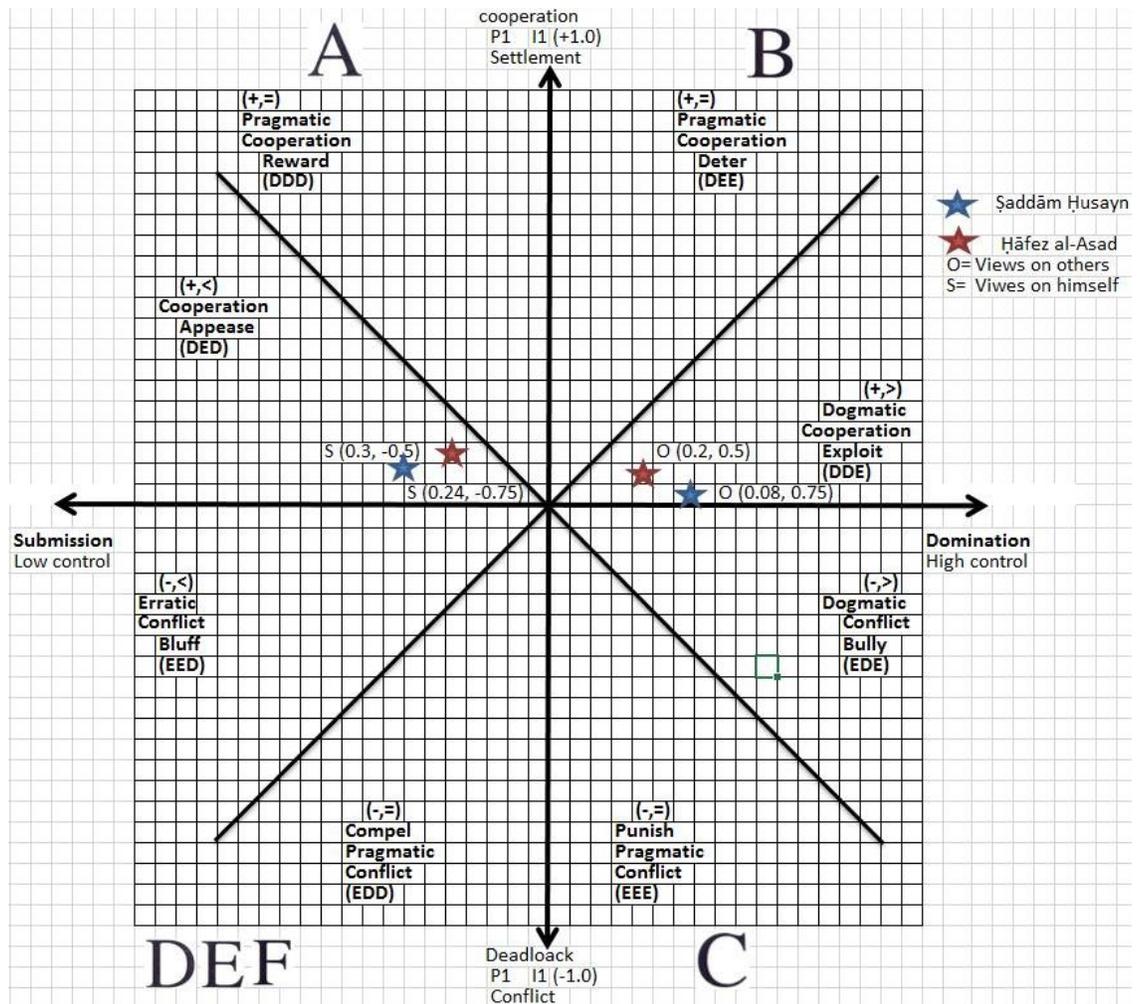
Discussion

1. Philosophical Beliefs

President al-Asad's and President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's belief systems remained almost unchanged in the Kuwait crisis as they were in the third phase of the Iran-Iraq war, including their two master beliefs, the nature of the political universe and direction of strategy I-1. President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn kept his views of *the nature of world politics* (P-1) as being a weakly cooperative arena, with a

marginal decline towards the negative side from (0.1) to (0.08). Similarly, President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad retained his scores on the political universe of being also an inadequately cooperative arena, with a slight increase towards the positive (friendliness) side, from (0.13) to (0.20). In *the realisation of fundamental values* (P-2), both Presidents also kept their weak degree of optimism in realising their values and objectives. Besides, both remained weak in *the predictability of future political* (P-3). Consequently, their score of self-control over, *the historical developments* (P-4) remained low, and their view of the *role of chance* in changing the course of politics (P-5) continued to be significant.

2. Instrumental Beliefs

In the *direction of strategy*, (I-1) President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn slightly increased his degree of passive cooperation, from 0.22 to 0.24. Having miscalculated the United States response and the Arab response, he was hoping to settle the crisis not peacefully, but respectably. Once again, world politics is not only about power maximisation; it is also about prestige (Morgenthau, 1948: Schweller, 2011). States seek prestige to acquire the so called power of attraction, in order to achieve influence on other states in the system. Thus, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn was not willing to withdraw from Kuwait humiliated. His Operational code typology on self displays that he saw the distribution of power between him and others in the form of (+, >), which reflects the fact that he did prefer settlement>domination>deadlock>submission> to be the outcomes of his interaction with other actors. This means, according to Walker's propositions (see Walker propositions p. 46-47), that he preferred to settle the conflict, but he was not willing to submit.

Thus, on 15 February 1990, the RCC issued a statement declaring a conditional withdrawal from Kuwait and demanding Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza, and the withdrawal of the United States and the "other countries participating in the aggression", and all the countries in the region "to withdraw all the forces from the Middle East region and Arabian Gulf region" (Baghdad Domestic Service, 15 February, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 15 February, 1991, p. 18). The next day, the *Washington Post* reported, "President Bush dismissed the proposal as a 'cruel hoax' and challenged Iraqis to stop the 'bloodshed' by overthrowing President [Saddam Hussein]" (Washington Post, 16 February 1991).

In the *direction of strategy* belief (I-1), President al-Asad slightly decreased his passive and weak cooperation strategy from 0.4 to 0.3. This relatively high score of cooperation, however,

indicates that he was indeed in favour of a peaceful settlement of the Kuwait crisis. Although he immediately condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and dispatched Syrian troops, two divisions, to near the Saudi border with Kuwait after the Cairo Summit on 10 August 1990, he hoped to achieve a peaceful settlement to the crisis in particular and to regional security in general. Although he denounced the Iraqi regime, he feared an American or an Iranian dominated Iraq in the post-Kuwait crisis period. He also feared the rise of fundamentalism in Iraq, which might encourage the Islamists in Syria to revolt against his regime again. Perhaps he also feared the disintegration of Iraq, which would encourage the Kurds in Syria to seek autonomy (Baram, Unpublished work). Indeed, when the Iraqi regime cracked down on the Kurds and the Shiʿa and regained control over Iraq in 1991, the Syrian regime was pleased that President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn remained in power (MECS, p. 677).

In the instrumental belief, *intensity of tactics* (I-2), President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn believed in the effectiveness of mixed cooperative and conflictual tactics to achieve his goals. President al-Asad, however, weakly believed in the usefulness of cooperative tactics to achieve his objectives.

In *the risk orientation* (I-3) belief, both presidents scored a definite degree of risk acceptance. Having ordered the invasion, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn had to risk it all in the battle: was he hoping for a "something", perhaps divine intervention? Such belief is revealed in the Islamic and apocalyptic rhetoric he used during the crisis (Bengio, 1998), while the public utterances of President al-Asad showed that was more inclined to take risks. Although he feared a post-Baʿth Iraq, and domestic resentment, he took the risk and participated in the United States-led campaign against Iraq hoping to regain the Golan Heights and achieve peace with Israel.

In the belief *flexibility of actions*: between *cooperation and conflict* (I-4a), and between *deeds and words* (I-4b), the two presidents demonstrated substantial flexibility in the way they shifted between cooperative and aggressive actions. In the belief: *the utility means* (I-5), both presidents strategically used passive cooperation as their best foreign policy strategy to achieve their desired goals. President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn was inclined to use appeasement in his cooperative strategy. In aggressive actions, his public utterances showed that he was inclined to use a passive conflictual strategy in the asymmetric form 'oppose' as his cohesive action. (See table 5, p. 171)

The general trend of the belief systems of the two presidents was almost the same during the Kuwait Crisis. According to their Operational code typology, the two kept their dogmatic leadership style. Although both of them used cooperative strategy in their foreign policy, it was

passive cooperative strategy in the asymmetric form of appeasement (DED) (see Figure 6, p. 172). In addition, both viewed others as dogmatic players who used passive cooperation in the form of Exploitation (DDE) to achieve their desired goals.

The score of others' Operational code typology (quadrant) was near the horizontal axis, which according to Walker's propositions (pp. 46-47), indicates that both presidents were purposely escalating when the other was de-escalating, and vice versa. Such a shift of policy response of those two Presidents was, however, a tactical strategy to achieve survival. Although the two regimes never waged war against each another, they used a mixture of tactics including subversion, a media war, supporting the opposition of the opponent, and direct and indirect negotiations with one another. The Iraqi regime, for example, sought to bring the Syrian regime onside first during the Baghdad Summit in May 1990 (Manama WAKH, 3 May, FBIS-Daily Report, Near East & South Asia, 4 May 1990, p. 16), and after the invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 (Eppel, 1993; Kienle, 1990). Having finally had the opportunity to weaken the Iraqi regime regionally, the Syrian regime rejected such overtures.

Conclusion

Systemic constraints contributed to the shape of the foreign policy behaviour of the MENA states. These countries continued their arms dependency on the outside world. Such systemic constraints, however, were not directly related to Syro-Iraqi relations during the Kuwait crisis. Even before the Kuwait crisis, the United States-USSR competition over the MENA had a little influence on the shape of Syro-Iraqi relations as both regimes supported the Eastern Bloc and depended on Soviet military weapons. It was always geopolitics, the competition over the ideational power of pan-Arabism and the resemblance of the belief systems of President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn that shaped Syro-Iraqi hostile relations.

Unlike in the Iran-Iraq war, geopolitics did not play a direct role in shaping politics between those two countries during the Kuwait crisis. Iraq had not recuperated from the Syrian closure of the Kirkuk-Banias oil pipeline in 1982. The closure of this pipeline, as already mentioned, caused Iraq a significant economic loss at a time it desperately needed cash, primarily to continue the construction projects it started before and during the Iran-Iraq war. Besides, as the war came to an end, the regime was under pressure to deliver on previous promises to its people and rebuild the country. However, with the closure of the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline, (the Haditha-Haifa pipeline

closed in 1948) the Iraqi regime could only transport its oil via the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline with a capacity of nearly 70 bbI/d million to the Mediterranean Sea but only in the last stages of the Iran-Iraq war in 1987. Also, it managed to transfer its oil in the south, but with limited capacity "to around 0.8" million bbI/d, including the Rumaila-Faw sector, and also transfer it via large crude carriers to al-Bakr and Khor al-Amaya ports (Jassim and Al-Gailani, 2006, p. 331).

Thus, this study argues that the economic difficulties in which the closure of the Kirkuk Banias played a great role, subsequently led to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Had Syria unblocked the Kirkuk pipeline, Iraq would have managed to transfer its oil to the global market and so avoided the damage in its economy. None of these routes satisfied the Iraqi regime's need for cash. Besides, the Iraqi pipeline in Saudi Arabia IPSA (capacity 1.65 million bbl/d) was only opened in January 1990, and "following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Saudi Arabia closed it" (Jassim and al-Gailani, 2006, p. 331).

Thus, the Iraqi regime became paranoid as it began losing its power inside the country. These conditions obliged Iraq to ask for foreign loans during the war and to urge Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to consider such financial assistance as grants. This tight link between geopolitics and finance was a sufficient motivation for Iraq to cautiously indicate its willingness to consider normalising relations with Syria. The latter, however, rejected any forms of rapprochement.

Ideologically, because the two regimes were so similar to each other (Sluglett 2000; Eppel 1993, 1999), their competition continued over the same ideational power of pan-Arabism, not for the sake of this ideology itself as Kienle (1990) claimed, but to achieve regional balance and most importantly to achieve internal legitimacy and regime survival. While the Iraqi regime attempted to utilise the Baghdad Summit of May 1990 for its own sake, the Syrian regime refused to attend, in order to undermine Iraqi influence. With Syria absent, however, Iraq managed to gain "consensual resolutions" to back its efforts against Western and Israeli threats (Maddy-Weitzman, 1993, p. 37).

When the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait took place, it claimed to have erased the colonial borders and to have achieved a real dream of Arab unity. The Syrian regime utterly rejected the invasion and demanded a complete and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. The Syrians declared that the Iraqi invasion weakened the Arab position in the Arab-Israel conflict, and had given the United States the pretext to intervene militarily in the region.

The Syrian regime, however, was delighted to poke its traditional enemy in the eye. The invasion of Kuwait restored the Syrian position in the region after a long period of isolation since the early 1980s. In addition, the invasion of Kuwait had finally vindicated the earlier Syrian claims that the Iraqi regime was the source of instability in the region (Maddy-Weitzman, Skype interview, 4 August 2015). When the Iraqi regime attacked Israel with Scud missiles in an attempt to increase the morale of the masses and the army, and the country's pan-Arab credentials, Syria discredited the Iraqi claims and argued that Israel would gain more military support from the West after the attack.

The other dynamic of Syria-Iraq relations was the resemblance of the belief systems of the President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, represented by dogmatism, mistrust of others, risk taking, and the exhibition of a passive cooperative strategy in their foreign policy. Unlike Ehteshami and Hinnebusch's argument (2014, 2016), the two presidents were too similar to each other. Both were authoritarian rulers. Both desired to transform their countries into powerful regional actors. Being direct neighbours, they were destined to clash with each other to achieve their goals. Thus, there was an inverse proportionality between the two regimes. The strength of one of them at the regional level meant the weakness of the other. As a result, it was almost impossible to bring those two Presidents to an agreement as they both rejected the other's quest for control and domination.

The content analysis of their public utterances shows that both had similar belief systems with marginal variances during the crisis. Both had the same belief of *the nature of political universe* being weakly cooperative with a marginal variation from time to time, (P-1). Although President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn used "punishment" against Kuwait, his public utterances during the crisis show that he adopted a passive *cooperation strategy* (I-1) after the invasion. Because he realised he had less *control over the crisis*, as his (P-4) indicated, he scored a low degree of *predictability of the future political* (P-3), and low level of confidence to *realise his fundamental goals*, (P-2). Accordingly, he scored a high degree of *the role of chance* in human affairs and history development (P-5).

Equally, President al-Asad desired a peaceful solution to the crisis. His public utterances showed he viewed the political universe as a somewhat friendly arena. Nevertheless, he remained cynical, arguably because he believed the crisis would only be solved by war. Thus, he scored a low degree of optimism in *realising his fundamental goals* (P-2), but at the same time, his score

of *predictability of political future* (P-3) showed that he was reasonably skilful in predicting the political future. He continued to attribute *control over historical development* (P-4) to others. Accordingly, he scored a high *level of chance in human affairs and history development*, (P-5)

In the instrumental belief, *intensity of tactics* (I-2), President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn applied mixed tactics (cooperative and conflictual) to achieve his goals. President al-Asad, on the other hand, was somewhat inclined to more cooperative tactics instead. In the *risk orientation* (I-3) belief, both Presidents scored a definite degree of risk acceptance. Concerning the belief *flexibility of timing action*, shifting between *cooperation and conflict* (I-4a), and between *deeds and words* (I-4b) the two Presidents showed considerable flexibility to shift between cooperative and aggressive actions. In the belief: *utility means* (I-5), both Presidents gave weight yet again to passive cooperation as their best foreign policy strategy to achieve their desired goals.

This minor difference of the belief systems between the two presidents did not change the resemblance of their Operational code typology. Both Presidents equally viewed others as dogmatic actors who use passive cooperation in the asymmetric form of exploitation (DDE), as the location of others located in quadrant B. The two Presidents evenly endorsed a passive, cooperative strategy in the shape of appeasement (DED) to achieve their foreign policy objectives.

In sum, a rapprochement did not occur between Syria and Iraq during the Kuwait crisis because of the competition of the two Baʿthi regimes over the ideational power of the party's pan-Arabism, the geopolitical realities, and the similarity of the personal predispositions of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad – represented by dogmatism and mistrust of others, risk-taking, and adopting passive cooperation as a strategy in their foreign policy behaviour.

CONCLUSION

Regime survival (David, 1991) and the politics of great powers (Waltz, 1979; Walt, 1987: Mearsheimer, 2001; Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 2016) have, to a certain extent, affected the politics in the region. Nonetheless, the empirical and experimental tests this study ran in this thesis showed that the rivalry over ideational power of pan-Arabism, the geopolitical realities, and the resemblance of the belief systems of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad shaped the hostility between Syria and Iraq during the historical period this study covered in this study.

More specifically, the study concludes that, in contrast to Kienle (1990), pan-Arabism did not *determine* but *shaped* the politics between the two countries. The politics between the two countries was consistently over power and regime consolidation, but within a pan-Arab, ideological framework, and by romanticising the latter. This supports Mufti's argument (1996) who argued that regime stability and power consolidation shaped the unity attempts between those two countries. For instance, during the French Mandate, the First King of Iraq, King Fayṣal (1921-1933) utilised pan-Arabism in an attempt to influence Syria. Controlling the Levant would have given the King access to the external world via the Mediterranean, and control over the important Aleppo-Mosul trade route. King Fayṣal's death in 1933 temporarily cooled the Iraqi desire to rule the Levant.

During World War II, premier Nūrī as-Saʿīd proposed the unity of the Fertile Crescent region but the Syrians rejected it. Although as-Saʿīd's proposal could be seen as a powerful pan-Arab project, the Syrians viewed it as an Iraqi attempt to dominate their territory. They preferred the nation-state model and therefore endorsed the Arab League system. Iraq had no choice but to sign the charter of the Arab League States (ALS) in 1945. It did not desire to be isolated by the new regional order, so decided to be part of it instead. Thus, although as-Saʿīd's idealisation of pan-Arabism failed, this ideology was the main channel of interaction between the two countries at that time. By signing the Arab League charter, the Arabs finally agreed to legalise the colonial-made borders of the Arab World.

When the Arab Baʿth Party (*ḥizb Baʿth al-Arabī*) was founded in 1947 in Syria, it added yet another source of resentment between the two countries. Hypothetically, "the ascendancy in the 1960s of [Ba'athist] regimes in both Baghdad and Damascus should have arrested any process of progressive estrangement. In practice, the ideological similarity not only failed to generate

rapprochement but indeed added yet another source of friction" (Baram, 1986, p. 125). The dispute over power and the leadership of the party started almost immediately after the party took power in both countries in 1963. For instance, when the tripartite (unity) negotiations between Syria, Iraq and Egypt collapsed in 1963, the two regimes in Syria and Iraq initiated bilateral negotiations to create a united Arab state. By that time the party was already split into several factions in both countries. Those factions were not ideologically different from one another. They still advocated Arab unity, freedom, and socialism. Nevertheless, a power struggle within the party and between civilian and military members over the leadership of the party increased the party's division.

This split within the party extended to the state level. In 1968, the Baʿthists came to power again in Iraq, after their dismissal in 1963 following the collapses of the unity negotiations. The Baʿthī regime in Iraq immediately became a menace to the Syrian regime. Although both states advocated for pan-Arabism publically, both in private were highly divided. Such division was not ideological, but the party at that point became more of a national party than a supranational one. It became a tool of power consolidation. Thus, the two regimes became very similar to one another, and therefore, ended up competing over the same instruments of control for domestic legitimacy and also for delegitimising their regional adversaries.

The Syrian Baʿthists waged propaganda against the Iraqi regime to delegitimise it. The Iraqi regime had stronger political and financial power than the Syrian regime. Thus, it claimed the leadership of the party, claiming it represented the true Baʿth ideology, especially after it welcomed the traditional leaders of the party, including the founder ʿAflaq. The Syrian Baʿthist regime, however, proudly considered Syria as the historic headquarters of the party.

The two regimes constantly discredited the pan-Arabist credentials of the other. For example, when Iraq signed the Algiers' accord with Iran in 1975, the Syrian government accused the Iraqi regime of 'selling Khuzestan to the Shah' and compromising pan-Arabism for the sake of the regime's interests. This animosity between Syria and Iraq stopped after as-Sādāt's visit to Jerusalem in 1977. This event created new regional conditions, which led Syria and Iraq to launch a unity project; in fact, this was the fourth attempt to unify the two countries since the establishment of the contemporary MENA following the end of WWI. As soon as Israel and Egypt signed the peace agreement in 1979, Iraq declared its full readiness to reconcile with Syria. Iraq pushed for full-scale unity. Syria, on the other hand, suggested a partial integration. Syria's lack of material capabilities would have given (Iraq) political and military pre-eminence in the united

country. Thus, it sought to preserve some form of sovereignty. Accordingly, the Syrian regime was unwilling to consider a comprehensive unity at the party level as well as at the army level.

While the unity negotiations were still ongoing between the two countries, in July 1979, President Aḥmad Ḥassan al-Bakr was forced to resign and his Deputy, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, became President. The latter claimed that the Syrian regime planned to topple the Iraqi regime, and install a pro-Syrian government instead. The Syrian government denied the accusations, but this did not change the reality on the ground. The fourth true unity attempt of al-Bakr-Asad failed. There was clearly a power struggle between Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and his followers and the Syrian Baʿthists that led to the collapse of unity negotiations.

The two regimes continued trying to disprove each other's pan-Arabist claims throughout the eight years of the Iran-Iraq war. The SAM crisis in Biqaʿ Vally, the bombing of the Iraqi reactor, *Amal's* siege of PLO camps in Lebanon, the Iranian occupation of al-Faw and its offensive operations to capture Basra and the Mecca accident are examples of series of events in which they undermined each other's pan-Arabism.

The Jafar meeting of 1987 appeared to be a promising event to finally achieve a rapprochement. However, as argued earlier, there was an inverse relationship between the two regimes. The weakness of one of them repeatedly, inescapably strengthened the other.

At the end of the Cold War in 1989, the MENA countries hoped that the superpowers' competition over them would also end. However, systemic constraints still contributed to the shape of the foreign policy behaviour of the MENA states. These countries continued to buy the West's weapons, thus demonstrating their continued dependency on the outside world. However, geopolitics and the competition over the ideational power of pan-Arabism and the belief systems of President al-Asad and Ṣaddām Ḥusayn remained the actual dynamics of Syro-Iraqi relation during the Kuwait crisis.

During the Kuwait crisis, the two regimes continued their old game of competition over the ideational power of pan-Arabism, to consolidate power and achieve regional balance. As argued before, because the two regimes were so similar to each other, their competition over the same ideational power of pan-Arabism was inevitable. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait took place; the Iraqi regime claimed to have erased the colonial borders and to have finally reached the dream of Arab unity. This argument had a positive echo in the Arab street in some of the Arab countries, such as among the Palestinians.

The invasion re-arranged the regional balance in favour of the Syrian regime as it discredited the pan-Arabism of the Iraqi government and proved Syrian's previous views of the regime in Iraq of being the source of regional instability. Thus, latter demanded a complete and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. It also found the crisis an opportunity to weaken Iraq and discredit its pan-Arab credentials.

"A neighbouring king is…designed as 'the enemy' (Kautilya in Rangarajan, 1987, p. 542). This study argues that geopolitical realities determined Syria and Iraq's hostility. Geopolitical positions determined Syria and Iraq's security concerns. For example, because Syria did not share a border with Iran, it could afford to adopt an ideological approach to the latter, but a pragmatic approach to Israel. Similarly, the Iraqi Baʿthi regime adopted an ideological approach in the Arab-Israel conflict because it does not share a border with Israel. In addition, the Syrian regime saw Lebanon as within their sphere of influence, because Syria lacked strategic depth (Hinnebusch, 2016), while the Iraqi regime viewed the Persian Gulf as their area of influence to access the external world (Ehteshami, Nommeman, Tripp, 1991). As a result, geopolitics stretched the two regimes in two opposite directions (Ehteshami, 2015).

When the 1973 war took place, the Iraqi regime was displeased for not being informed about it. Nevertheless, it sent a few units to defend Damascus at a critical time. As soon as Syria and Egypt agreed to a cease-fire, the Iraqi government pulled back its army. The Syrian regime asked the Iraqi army to return to its previous positions in Damascus, but the Iraqi government demanded that the war be restarted. The price was high. Clearly, the Iraqi regime was unhappy about the ceasefire. Opposing the state of Israel provided the Arab regimes with internal legitimacy, including Iraq.

Only three years earlier, when al-Asad became the President of Syria in 1970, the two countries normalised their bilateral relations. This brief solidarity between Syria and Iraq soon collapsed when Iraq nationalised the Iraqi Petroleum Company in 1972. The Syrian regime demanded double the tariffs for the oil transferred through the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline. The Iraqi government protested, but paid up because it had no other choice. To break Syria's monopoly over oil transfer, the Vice President, *a-Sayyed a-Nāʾib* (Ṣaddām Ḥusayn) personally sponsored negotiations with Turkey to construct a Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline.

The installation of the pan-Arab regime in Iraq threatened the Shah's interests in the Gulf region. Thus, the latter sought to weaken the Iraqi government by supporting the Kurdish

revolution in Iraqi Kurdistan. The consecutive victories of the Kurdish fighters (*Peshmerga*) over the Iraqi army reached such a level that Iraq had to decide between losing Kurdistan in the north or sharing navigation in Shatt al-Arab with the Shah of Iran. The Deputy President, *a-Sayyed a-Nā'ib* chose the latter options and signed the Algiers accord with the Shah in December 1975.

The crisis over the Euphrates' waters followed the Algiers event. While the Tabqa Lake was full, in Iraq the level of the river reached its lowest levels. The tension between the two countries developed from a media war to a threat of aggression. Iraq reacted by closing the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline from its side.

During the Iran-Iraq war, geopolitics significantly influenced Syro-Iraqi relations. While Syria viewed the Iranian revolution as an opportunity to confront Israel and Iraq, Iraq saw it as a threat to its territorial integrity. Iran aimed to spread the Islamic revolution beyond its borders, and Iraq was most likely to be targeted first, not only geopolitically, since it shared a border of over 1500 kilometres, but also because 60% of Iraq's population were Shīʿa. The two regimes continued to support the rival's opposition and sponsor subversive activities against each other.

As soon as the Syrian regime obtained Iranian oil in 1982, it closed the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 1997). This event created a serious tention between the two countries. Iraqi saw it as act of war. Iraq lost millions of US dollar at a time it urgently needed capital to finance its war against Iran. The Syrian regime put its army on alert status on the border with Iraq to defer any possible Iraqi attack. The Iraqis did not react directly. They chose to continue their support for the Islamists in Syria and for Abu Niẓāl's organisation. It also signed an agreement with Turkey for building another pipeline next to the old one to be completed only in 1987.

While geopolitics played a determining role in shaping Syro-Iraqi relations during the 1980s, it played a secondary role in shaping these relations during the Kuwait crisis 1990-1991. In other words, it was not the subject of their bilateral ties. It is true that although any Iraqi success in Kuwait would have brought disadvantages for Syria, the geopolitical subjects of Syro-Iraqi relations represented by the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline and the Water of the Euphrates were not the dynamics of bilateral ties of those two Arab countries.

Iraq up to that time had not recovered from the repercussions of Syria's closure of the Kirkuk-Banias oil pipeline in 1982. The closure of this pipeline caused Iraq significant economic losses at a time it desperately needed money, to continue the construction projects it started before and during the Iran-Iraq war and to deliver on its previous promises to its people and rebuild the

country after the war. Thus, the Iraqi government was paranoid as it began to lose power and legitimacy inside the country. In addition, the Iraqi government was furious when Kuwait declared that the financial aid given to the Iraqi regime was loans. Thus, this tight-interlink between geopolitics and economy was an ample incentive for Iraq to try to achieve a rapprochement with the Syrian regime, hoping the latter would open the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline.

This economic devastation, arguably, led eventually to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Had Syria unblocked the Kirkuk pipeline, Iraq would have managed to transfer its oil to the global market and avoided the damage to its economy. None of these routes satisfied the Iraqi regime's needs. Besides, the Iraqi pipeline in Saudi Arabia IPSA (capacity 1.65 Million bbl/d) was only opened in January 1990, and "following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Saudi Arabia closed it" (Saad Z. Jassim and Mohammad al-Gailani, 2006, p. 331). Thus, geopolitics did determine Syro-Iraqi hostility but not directly. In other words, it was not the immediate subject of their disengagement during the crisis.

The other dynamic of Syro-Iraqi relations was the relative resemblance of the belief systems of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad. The arrival of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad in power added the personal element to Syro-Iraqi toxic relations, which only ceased after the death of President al-Asad in 2000. Modern Syria and Iraq had never had giant leaders like those two leaders who furiously competed against each other for the leadership of the region. This is not to say that there was no personal resentment among the politicians of those two countries before President al-Asad and President Ḥusayn. Rather, previous politicians did not enjoy the power and monopoly of control over the processes of decision-making those two leaders had. Thus, the personal predispositions of those two rulers effected Syro-Iraqi relations more than any time in the past.

Those two leaders wanted to transform their countries into powerful regional actors. From 1970, President al-Asad turned Syria into an active player at the regional level. The Syrian defense expenditure jumped from $221 million in 1970 to $4.04 billion in 1980 (IISS, 1970, 1980, pp. 42-48 and pp. 40-44 respectively). At this time Ṣaddām Ḥusayn was Deputy President. The latter was a powerful politician. He also believed in power maximisation. Thus, the Iraqi defense expenditure rose from nearly $425 million to $2.67 billion in 1980 under his supervision (IISS, 1970, 1980). He also adopted a rather pragmatic approach to solving the challenges that faced the regime at that

time both at the domestic level and also at the regional scale. He managed to sign the Declaration of Autonomy with the Kurds in 1970 in Kurdistan.

In addition, both rulers belonged to the minority sects in their countries, and were more or less the same age. They also had their rural lower class roots. Also, both believed in one-man rule and an authoritarian system of government with limited pluralism. Thus, as soon as the two came to power, they established their *Sultanistic* rule (a term used by Weber) where fear and reward drove loyalty. Although the two presidents subscribed to pan-Arabism, each of them used it for their personal interests, not the interests of the Arabs (Eppel, Telephone interview, 15 August 2015). Both were equally inclined to use force against their domestic foes. President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn used the power of the party to establish his reign, President al-Asad utilised the military instead. Furthermore, like his predecessor, al-Bakr, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, kept the military outside political affairs. He portrayed himself as the man of the party, the comrade (Baram, Telephone interview, 15 May 2016). The military was kept professional, but its loyalty was still to the regime. President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn managed to buy the loyalty of the military officers either by fear or reward. The regime also had other para-military militia protecting it. President al-Asad, on the other hand, turned the party into a military institution. The civilian wing became powerless under his presidency. Eventually, both men completely controlled the party. They both, however, needed the seal of approval of the party, thus they did not completely abandon it (Baram, Telephone interview, 15 May 2016; Eppel, Telephone interview, 15 August 2015, Bengio, Skype interview, 15 May 2016).

Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (2014, 2016) argue that the two presidents had quite different personal predispositions. Yet, according to VICS principles, the two rulers had similar personal predispostions – represented by tough measures, including mistrust and using passive diplomacy, and even punishment to deal with their rivals, and that's what made the two countries unable to achieve rapprochement. For instance, both presidents were dogmatic leaders with regional ambitions. They were also pessimistic leaders, relatively unskilled in predicting the political future and paranoid. Therefore, their chief concern was to boost their country's military power. They equally believed their foes wanted their regime to vanish. They also adopted passive cooperation tactics in their foreign policy (see Figure 3, 110; Figure 4, 125; Figure 5, 141 and Figure 6, p. 172). The two remained consistent in their belief systems throughout time, which explains the

consistency of Syro-Iraqi hostility. This supports the cognitive dissonance theory of Festinger (1962) which suggests that individuals remain consistent in their beliefs under any circumestances.

More specifically, during the eight year-long Iran-Iraq war, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad repeatedly scored nearly the same Operational code results, especially their philosophical beliefs. Table two, three, and four (p. 109, p. 124, p. 140 respectively) shows this premise. For instance, the scores of the nature of the political universe (P-1) indicate that both leaders believed that the world was a mixed arena between friendliness and hostility. President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President al-Asad scored (-0.4, -0.4) in the first phase of the war, and (0.08, 0.0) in the second period respectively. Both marginally and equally changed their views about the nature of global politics toward the positive side of the scale in the third phase of the war (0.10, 0.13). These scores tell us that both presidents not only shared similar views about the political universe, when they marginally changed this master belief, the extent of the change was similar.

Both presidents were equally cynical in *realising their political objectives* too. They evenly registered negative scores in (P-2), with marginal differences especially in the second phase of the war as President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn scored a lower score. Nevertheless, this negative rating of (P-2) shows that both of them distrusted others. Thus, they gave priority to security and safety against their foes (Ambassador Rugh, Telephone interview, 6 July 2015; Bengio, Skype interview, 15 May 2016).

President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President al-Asad shared the same score *of predictability of future politics belief* (P-3). During the three phases of the Iran-Iraq war, they equally and consistently scored a modest degree of political predictability skill. They also were (0.17, 0.18) in the first period, and (0.17, 0.14) in the second phase of the war, and (0.18, 0.17) in the third phase of the war respectively. Thus, their hostile and suspicious attitude towards each other was ambivalent.

Both presidents were also consistent in scoring the same degrees of the belief *control over the historical development* (P-4). During the three phases of the war they scored; (0.83, 0.84), (0.86, 0.91) and (0.85, 0.80) respectively. These scores confirm that the two presidents held paranoid tendencies and mistrust of others as they equally attributed much of the control of politics to others (80%). The two were also consistent in registering similar scores for *the role of chance* belief (P-5) during the three phases of the war: (0.97, 0.97), 0.97, 0.98) and (0.97, 0.98) respectively.

Concerning the instrumental belief *direction of strategy* (I-1) and the *intensity of the tactics* (I-2), both President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President al-Asad scored relatively the same degree of cooperative strategy in their foreign policy approach during the Iran-Iraq war. A close study of the tables mentioned previously, show both of them scored high degrees of cooperative, but passive, strategy. The belief *utility of means* (I-5) shows that appeasement was their desirable strategy to follow in foreign policy. Noticeably, though, President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn scored degrees of punishment as a tool of foreign policy that were higher than President al-Asad (see I-5 belief in Table 2, p. 103; Table 3, p. 116; and Table 4, p. 132).

With regard to *risk orientation* (I-3) belief, both presidents have scored relatively different degrees of risk acceptance. The two presidents scored (0.26, 0.42) in the first phase, (0.48, 0.14) in the second phase and (0.31, 0.34) in the third phase of the war, respectively. However, both scored relatively high degrees of risk acceptance. The reason for this difference is that power constantly determined the behaviour of the two presidents. For instance, when they were weak, they used their cooperative strategy, but when they were strong, they tended to escalate their conflictual strategy. For example, Iraq was in a vulnerable position during the second half of the war as the Iranian forces' position changed from defensive to offensive – so President Ḥusayn desired to end the war and also to achieve rapprochement with Syria. Thus, his public utterances showed an increase in positive tendencies. He adopted an active diplomacy to persuade Syria to open the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline and accepted the goodwill of the King of Saudi Arabia to meet Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, but the latter refused to meet him.

President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad, on the other hand, displayed a decrease in the positive expressions during the second phase of the war, because he came under less domestic pressure after cracking down on the Islamic rebellion, and making sure Syria received oil concessions from Iran. Therefore his public utterances noticeably showed a high level of confidence.

The two presidents equally scored high degrees of flexibility in tactics, both in *cooperation and conflict tactics* (I-4a) and in *word and deed* tactics (I-4b). With regards to (I-4a), President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President al-Asad scored (1.1, 1.2) in the first phase of the war, (1.65, 1.14) in the second phase and (1.22, 1.42) in the third phase.

In the Kuwait crisis, the belief systems of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President al-Asad did not change dramatically. They maintained their views of the political universe as being a weakly friendly arena (P-1), thus, their mutual resentment arguably continued. They scored (0.1, 0.2)

respectively. The two, however, had relatively different scores of *realising their goals* (P-2). They scored (-0.06, 0.07). They had similar scores in the *predictability of future* belief (P-3), (0.2, 0.17), control over *historical development* (P-4), (0.87, 0.76), and in *the role of chance* (P-5), (0.97, 0.95).

Concerning their instrumental belief during the crisis both scored a high degree of passive cooperation as their preferred foreign policy approach. Although both had equally scored a relatively low passive, cooperative approach, (0.24, and 0.3) in the direction of strategy (I-1) belief, the *utility of means* (I-5) shows that this cooperative strategy was a passive cooperation strategy in the form of appeasement. In the *tactic pursuit of goals* (I-3) belief, they had relatively different scores (0.02, 0.1). They maintained similar levels of risk acceptance (I-3), (0.44, 0.4), and high *flexibility* between *cooperation and conflict* (I-4a), (1, 1) and between *words and deeds* (0.3, 0.4).

This relative difference occurred occasionally and did not change the general operational code typology of the two presidents. For instance, both presidents had self-image in quadrant A. This indicates that both presidents were dogmatic leaders who lacked sufficient power to achieve their desired goals. Thus, each used the passive, cooperative strategy in the form of appeasement (DED), with an exception in the case of President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn whose quadrant in the second phase of the Iran-Iraq war showed his endorsement for *active* cooperation strategy in the form of Reward (DDD).

The self Operational code typology also indicates that both of them endorsed either a full settlement or a complete deadlock with their foes, but no compromise, no grey areas. For instance, as others were located in quadrant B, C, both presidents equally viewed others as dogmatic actors who use bullying (EDE) and exploitation (DDE) to achieve their goals (see Figures 3, p. 110, Figure 4, p. 125, Figure 5, p. 141, and Figure 6, p. 172).

The scores near the horizontal axis showed their readiness to change their strategies. Both tended to de-escalate when others were escalating and escalate when others were de-escalating. Thus, the strength of one of them meant the weakness of the other. Just like the ideology of pan-Arabism, the feebleness of one increased the influence of the other. Such a relationship constantly prevented any form of understanding between Syria and Iraq.

To conclude, this thesis has discussed the theory of complex realism of Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (2014, 2016) in the case of Syro-Iraqi relations during the Iran-Iraq war and the Kuwait crisis. It has contributed to the theory by modifying it through adding the Operational code approach (Developed by Leites 1951, 1953, extended by George 1967, 1969, modified by Walker,

1977, 1983) explanation to this theory's tenet. This thesis has also contributed to the sparse literature on Syro-Iraqi relations through an original work explicitly analysing the relations between the two counties since the creation of the contemporary MENA after the WWI, with an emphasis on the period in which President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and President Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad were in power. This study is also the first of its kind to numerically compare the belief systems of the two presidents, which contributed to the field of personality studies.

This thesis does not claim to have covered all the theoretical and the contextual assumptions regarding international relations of the MENA region and of Syro-Iraqi relations. Nevertheless, it opens new doors for further research concerning the MENA especially after the regime change in Iraq in 2003, which replaced the dynamics between Syria and Iraq with a narrower ideology represented by sectarianism: Sunni vs Shiʿa. This thesis also opens doors for further studies on the role of geopolitics concerning contemporary Syria and Iraq as the colonial-made borders demonstrate their inability to contain the emerging phenomenon of sectarian affiliation, and because of the existence of a Kurdish minority in both countries who also strive to establish their nation-state, and in so doing, challenge the current international colonial-made borders.

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Ambassador Rugh was a U.S. Foreign Service Officer 1964-1995 and had nine diplomatic assignments in the Arab world, that included ambassador to Yemen 1984-87, and to the United Arab Emirates 1992-95, as well as Deputy Chief of Mission in Syria 1981-84.

Wayne White, Email interview, 3 July 2015

Wayne White is a Policy Expert with Washington's Middle East Policy Council. He was formerly the Deputy Director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research's Office of Analysis for the Near East and South Asia (INR/NESA) and senior regional analyst. He also served as Principal Iraq analyst and head of INR/NESA's Iraq team.

Professor Amatzia Baram, Telephone interview, 15 May 2016

Amatzia Baram is Professor Emeritus at the Department of the History of the Middle East and Director of the Centre for Iraq Studies at the University of Haifa, Israel.

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Bruce Maddy-Weitzman is an associate Professor, Deptartment of Middle Eastern and African History, and Senior Research Fellow, The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies,Tel Aviv University.

Michael Eppel, Telephone interview, 15 August 2015

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Ofra Bengio is professor emerita at the department of history of the Middle East and Africa and senior Research Associate at the Moshe Dayan Center, Tel Aviv University.

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Radio Baghdad

Hamburg DPA, 23 January

Damascus Domestic Service

Radio Amman Radio Damascus

Radio of Phalanges,

Radio Baghdad,

Paris Radio Monte Carlo

Baghdad Domestic Service

Manama WAKH

BBC

Newspapers

Al-Baʿth, Syria

Al -Quds al-'Arabi, London

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APPENDIX

The Reliability of the Operational Code Construct across Sources and Audiences: The Case of Saddam Hussein during his time in office 1979-2003

This paper investigates whether leaders' operational code change with the change of the sources of their utterances, speeches and interviews, private and public, or across different audiences. This test applies this in the case of the ex-Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein. This test gives a particular focus on beliefs, the nature of the political universe P-1, the control over historical development P-4, and the direction of strategy I-1, because they are used to identify the typology operational code of leaders (Holsti, 1977; remodified by Walker, 1983). This paper will only be using the operational code typology when a statistical difference of Saddam Hussein operational code occurs.

The results
The Variation in the Sources: Interviews vs. Speeches

The null *hypothesis 1* in this article is that no difference exists in the operational code of Hussein obtained across the different sources. The findings in table 1 show a statistical difference in almost all of Hussein's philosophical beliefs, including his master belief, the nature of the political Universe P-1. The mean score of the P-1 in the case of the speeches was (.0442) which indicates that Hussein viewed the world as mixed between hostile and friendly actors. In his interviews, he scored +0.16, which indicates that he perceived the world more positively that he did in his speeches.

In the belief regarding control over history (P-4), Hussein's mean score was that others had 90 percent control over the development the history, and that he only had 10 percent of control over it. While in his interviewed-based scores he showed a higher level of his self-control over history, up to 22 percent, and that others controlled 78 percent of the control over historical development.

Table 1: comparison between the speeches and the interviews of Saddam

Index	Speeches (Mean)*	Interviews (Mean)**	F	Sig. ***
P-1	.0442	.1629	4.251	.049
P-4	.89	0.79	18.320	.000
I-1	.4567	.3365	1.035	.318
I-2	.2025	.1018	2.230	.147
*n= 12 (speeches) **n=16 (interviews) *** one-way ANOVA where 95% is the degree of confidence				

The findings show that Hussein's operational codes changeed across the sources. Interestingly, the statistically significant change in the belief system of Hussein only occurred in his philosophical beliefs and kept his behaviour (instrumental beliefs) unchanged. Therefore, the question is whether

such changes as occurred in Hussein's operational code matter since his strategic and tactical approaches to the course of action remained consistent? In another words, does the statistically significant differences in Hussein's philosophical beliefs across the sources make a difference in the substantive interpretation of his operational code? I investigate this question using the operational code typology (A, B, C, DEF). The results of Hussein's operational code registered no significant change in his type across sources. He kept his views of others as dogmatic Type C actors that use Exploit (DDE) and Bully (EDE) tactics to achieve their interests and of himself as an erratic Type A leader who uses Appease (DED) and Bluff (EED) tactics to achieve his desired goals. This means that the type of sources does not affect the general interpretation of Hussein's operational code. See figure 1 page 3.

As a result, the null hypothesis that belief systems do not change with the change of the sources is rejected. This supports the thesis that changes might take place in VICS scores across the sources, but they do not affect the general inclination of leaders' belief systems (MARFLEET, 2000).

Figure 1: Hussein's typology: Speeches vs Interviews
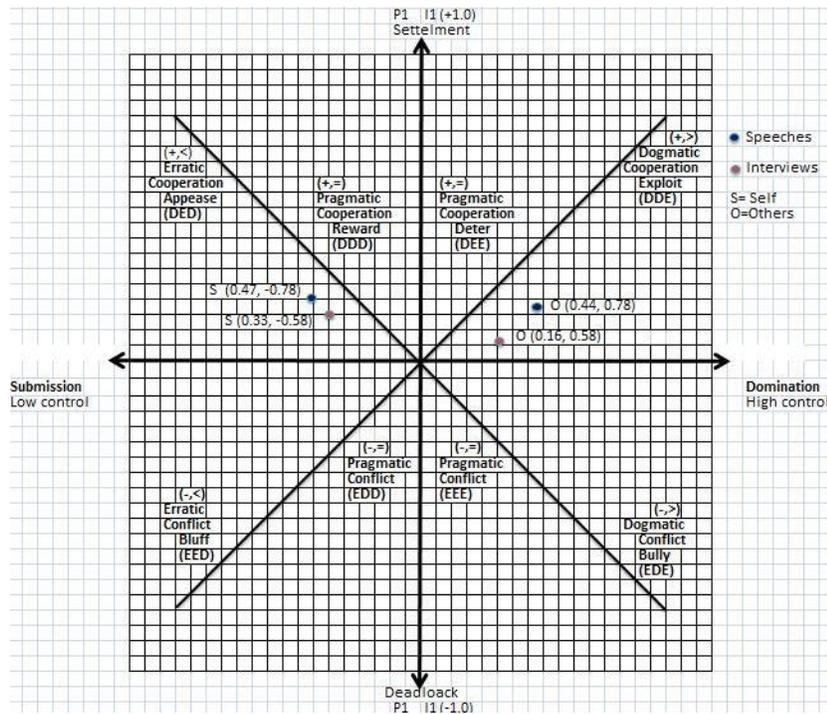
The inspection of the changes of Saddam Hussein across the private and public utterances.
The second issue that this research attempts to investigate is whether a significant difference in the operational code of Hussein occurs across his public and private utterances. This research uses the private tapes obtained by the National Defence University to run the statistical t- test. The research apply particularly in the two master beliefs in this test. The results show that there is not a statistical difference on Saddam's perspective of the nature of the political universe P-1, and the direction of strategy I-1.

The Variance across the private and public Utterances.

Index	Private Utterances (Mean)*	Public Utterances (Mean)**	F	Sig. ***
P-1	.05	. 41	4.418	0.059
I-1	.09	.25	3.897	0.074
*n= 6 (Private) **n=7 (interviews) *** one-way ANOVA where 95% is the degree of confidence				

The inspection of the changes of Saddam Hussein with the change of the Audience Targeted: Iraqis, Arab Street in Arab World, non-Arab foreign audiences.

The third question that this research attempts to answer is whether a significant difference in the operational code of Hussein occurs across the audiences targeted. I will first measure the operational code of Hussein when he was targeting the Iraqis and the non-Arab foreign audiences. I will also examine the change in his operational code between the Iraqi audiences and the non-Iraqi Arab audiences. Then I will examine the change in his operational code between the non-Iraqi Arab audiences and non-Arab foreign audiences.

To do that, I rely on the interviews of Saddam Hussein that he gave to different media stations across the world. I have randomly selected interviews he gave to the Arab media and treated them as the ones when Hussein was targeting his non-Iraqi Arab audiences. I also selected interviews of him with the non-Arab foreign media and treated them as the ones when Hussein targeted his non-Arab foreign audiences. In the case of the Iraqi audiences, Hussein had rarely given interviews to the Iraqi media. Therefore, I treated his speeches in Figure 1 as the source of his utterances that targeted the Iraqis.

Iraqi local audiences (Speeches) vs foreign non-Arab audiences (interviews with foreign media)
The null hypothesis 2 I make here is that Hussein's operational code did not change with the change of the audiences targeted, i.e., the Iraqi locals vs. the non-Arab foreign audiences. The results of table 2 indicate that Hussein's interview scores did differ significantly from his speech scores. Similar to the variation occurred in the case of the sources in the previous section of the article, nearly all of Hussein beliefs (philosophical beliefs) did vary across the Iraqi speeches and the interviews with foreign audiences, but he kept his behaviour (instrumental beliefs) unchanged. The overall pattern in Table 2 is virtually identical to the one in Table 1 when Hussein's interviews before Arab audiences are dropped. Looking the typology I developed for this matter, Hussein kept his views of others as dogmatic Type C actors and himself as an erratic Type A leader in both cases; when he targeted the Iraqi local audiences and the non-Arab foreign audiences. See figure 2.

Table 2: A comparison of Hussein's operational code with respect to audiences targeted: Iraqi audiences vs. foreign audiences

Index	Speeches (Mean)*	foreign interviews (Mean)**	F	Sig. ***
P-1	.0442	.1080	1.245	.278

P-4	.8942	.7960	10.49	<mark>.004</mark>
I-1	.4567	.2820	1.379	.254
I-2	.2025	.0800	1.966	.176
*n= 12 (speeches) **n=10 (interviews with foreign non-Arab TVs and newspapers) *** one-way ANOVA where 95% is the degree of confidence				

Figure 2: Hussein's typology across different audiences: Iraqi local audiences vs Foreign non-Arab audiences Arabs audiences.
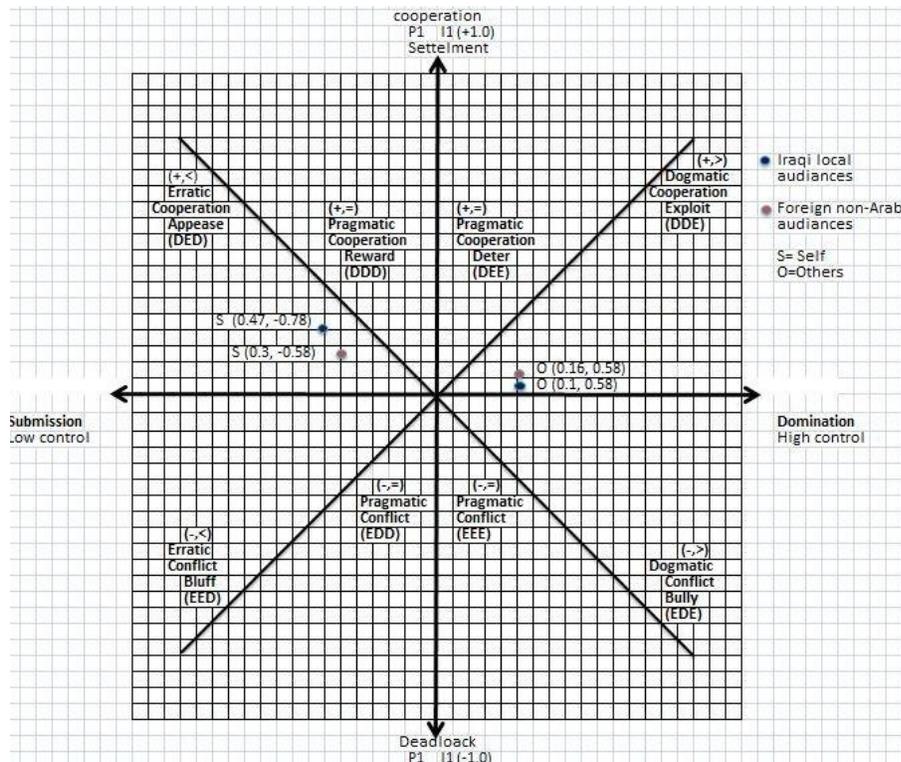
Iraqi audiences (Speeches) vs non-Iraqi Arab audiences (interviews with Arab Media)

The null hypothesis 3 I make here is that Hussein's operational code did not change in the case of the Iraqis and the Arab audiences. The scores obtained from the comparison between the Iraqi audiences and the Arab audiences operational codes show a statistical difference of Hussein's operational codes across all of his philosophical beliefs, including the master belief the nature of the political universe, which was not the case with the aggregated foreign audiences. In the statements that targeted the Iraqi locals, Hussein's scores tended to be more hostile. For instance, his score indicate that he viewed the political nature of the world P-1 as mixed between friendly and hostile (mean=0.04), while his score of P-1 when he targeted his Arab audiences was somehow friendly (mean=0.27). His scores in belief of the historical development (P-4) was lower than the ones he scored when he was talking to his Iraqi audiences (See table 3). Again, however, these statistically significant changes across audiences did not change Saddam's operational code type.

Table 3: A comparison of Hussein's operational code with respect to audiences targeted: Iraqi local audiences vs. non-Iraqi Arab audiences

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Index	Speeches (Mean)*	Arab interviews (Mean)**	F	Sig. ***
P-1	.0442	.2683	7.38	.015
P-4	.8942	.7683	3	.000
I-1	.4567	.4000	27.2	.773
I-2	.2025	.1267	60	.504
			.086	
			.467	
*n= 12 (speeches) **n=6 (interviews with Arab TVs and newspapers) *** one-way ANOVA where 95% is the degree of confidence				

I run Hussein's typology substantive interpretation tool to investigate whether the change which occurred in his operational code had moved his typology from one quadrant to another. Figure 3 show that in both cases of the two different audiences; Iraqi local audiences and the non-Iraqi Arab audiences Hussein remained his self-image as leader Type C and others-images as being dogmatic actors Type A. Therefore, the null hypothesis 3 in rejected. Hussein kept his general trend of beliefs across the Iraqi and the non-Iraqi Arab audiences

Figure 4: Hussein's typology across different audiences: Iraqi local audiences vs non-Iraqi Arab audiences.
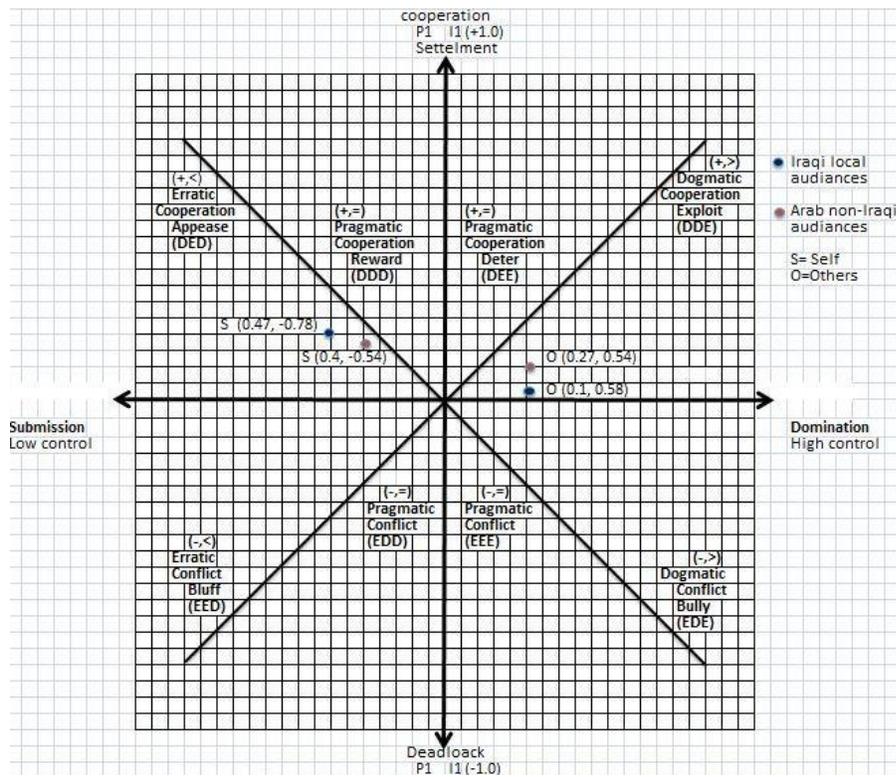
Non-Arab Foreign audiences vs non-Iraqi Arab interviews

The *null hypothesis 4* I make in this research is that no change exists in Hussein's operational code across the Arab and foreign audiences. The results in table 4 show that Hussein did change his the master belief the nature of political universe (P-1). Hussein adopted a more hostile approach concerning foreign policy when he was talking to the foreign non-Arab media, particularly his scores which shown a statistical difference. Hussein mean score in P-1 when he was talking to foreign street was 0.10, while it increased to 0.27 when he was talking to the Arab street.

I again inspect this change of Hussein's operational code scores in his typology. The results in figure 4 show that Saddam Hussein remained consistent in his beliefs. He kept his passive cooperative foreign policy and his image of the other did not change. He kept viewing others and dogmatic actors who use exploitation as their foreign policy approach to achieve their goals. See figure 4

Obviously, Hussein's pan-Arabism foreign policy approach leads one to assume that he would tend to adopt hostile views more than his operational code when he was targeting foreign audiences, as he was relentlessly attempting to gain the support of the Arab street, both for the sake of power consolidation inside, and to achieve regional hegemony and Arab leadership outside.

Table 4: A comparison of Hussein's operational code with respect to audiences targeted: Arab audiences vs. foreign audiences

Index	foreign interviews (Mean)*	Arab interviews (Mean)**	F	Sig. ***
P-1	.1080	.2683	5.182	.039
P-4	.7960	.7683	.468	.505
I-1	.2820	.4000	2.153	.164
I-2	.0800	.1267	1.389	.258
*n= 10 (interviews with foreign non-Arab TVs and Newspapers) **n=6 (interviews with Arab TVs and Newspapers) *** one-way ANOVA where 95% is the degree of confidence				

Figure 4: Hussein's typology across different audiences: Foreign non-Arab audiences vs non-Iraqi Arabs audiences.
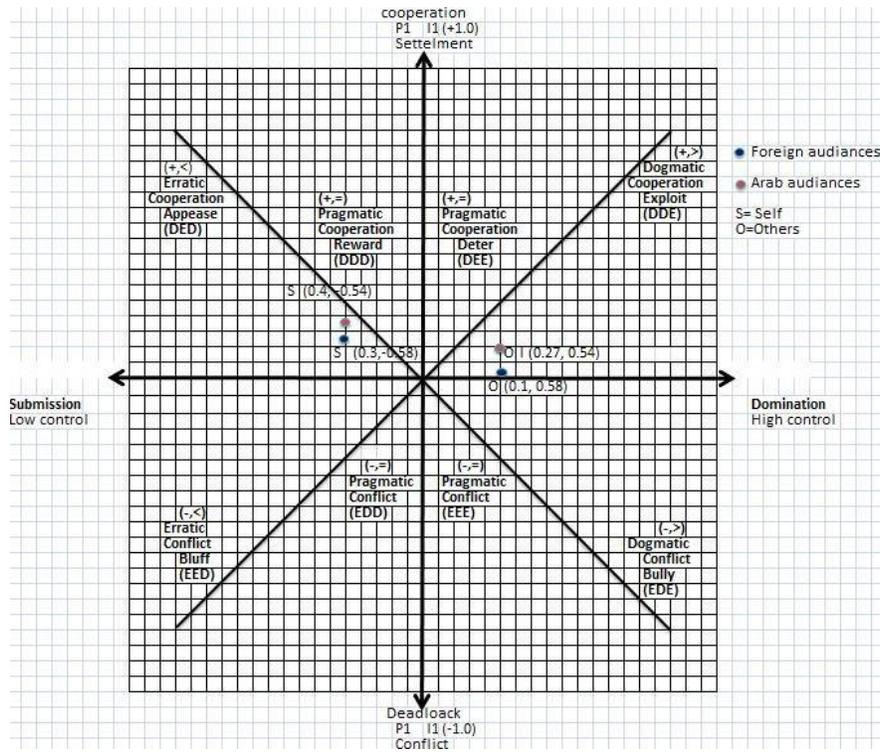
Conclusion

The clear-cut finding of this research is that the belief systems remained the same across the different sources of utterances used across the different audiences targeted. As this article confirmed, the reliability of the operational code is not affected by the variation of the sources used in the VICS. It might still be preferred to use the public speeches (WALKER *et al*, 2003, p. 223, RENSHON, 2009, p. 562), but the fact is that using interviews and speeches, private and public utterances will give the same results of the general belief systems of the leaders.

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