

RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ IN THE POST-COLD WAR
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ASLIHAN ANLAR

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Science

(Prof. Dr. Sencer Ayata)
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ceylan Tokluođlu)
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

(Assist. Prof. Dr. Oktay F. Tanrısever)
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members (first name belongs to the chairperson of the jury and the second name belongs to supervisor)

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunıřık (METU, IR) _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Oktay F. Tanrısever (METU, IR) _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Havva Kk (HU, IR) _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

Aslıhan Anlar

M.Sc., Eurasian Studies

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Oktay F. Tanrısever

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The aim of this thesis is to examine the nature of Russian foreign policy towards Iraq in the post-Soviet era. This thesis argues that the Russian foreign policy towards Iraq in the post-Soviet era has been primarily determined by Russia's self-interests which are mainly defined in economic terms. The thesis follows the realist approach to international relations. It also emphasizes the importance of economic factors in foreign policy making process.

The thesis consists of five chapters: In Chapter 1, the thesis is introduced. Chapter 2 explains the Soviet-Iraqi relations from a historical perspective. This is followed by Chapter 3 where Russian foreign policy towards Iraq under Boris Yeltsin is examined. Next, Chapter 4 discusses the Russian foreign policy towards Iraq under Vladimir Putin. Then, Chapter 5 assesses the economic factors, socio-political factors and international factors affecting Russian foreign policy makers in the post-Soviet era. The last chapter concludes the thesis.

Keywords: The Russian Federation, Iraq, the United States of America, war, economic interest

ÖZ

SOĞUK SAVAŞ SONRASI DÖNEMDE RUSYA’NIN IRAK’A YÖNELİK DIŞ
POLİTİKASI

Anlar, Aslıhan

Yüksek Lisans, Avrasya Çalışmaları

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Bu tezin amacı Sovyet sonrası dönemde Rusya’nın Irak’a yönelik dış politikasını incelemektir. Bu tez Rusya Federasyonu’nun Irak’a yönelik dış politikasını etkileyen temel faktörün Rusya’nın ekonomik çıkarlar temelinde tanımlanan öz çıkarları olduğunu savunmaktadır. Bu tezde, inceleme yapılırken realist teorinin uluslararası ilişkilere yaklaşımından yararlanılmıştır. Realist teori ekonominin dış politika yapım sürecine etkisini de vurgulamaktadır.

Bu tez beş bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölümde tez tanıtılmaktadır. İkinci bölümde tarihsel bir bakış açısı ile Sovyet-İrak ilişkileri aktarılmaktadır. Onu takip eden üçüncü bölümde Boris Yeltsin dönemi Rusya ve Irak ilişkileri incelenmektedir. Dördüncü bölümde Vladimir Putin’in Irak’a yönelik dış politikası ele alınmıştır. Beşinci bölümde ise Sovyet sonrası dönemde Rus liderlerin Irak’a yönelik dış politikalarını oluştururken etkilendikleri ekonomik, sosyo politik ve uluslararası faktörler tartışılmıştır. Son bölüm tezi sonuçlandırmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rusya Federasyonu, Irak, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, savaş, ekonomik çıkar

To My Parents and To My Companion

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Central and Southwest Asia



Map 1: Central and Southwest Asia

Source: <http://www.eduplace.com>

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to explain Russia's foreign policy towards Iraq since 1991. The thesis focuses on the factors affecting the relationship between the two countries in three periods; 1991-1996; 1996-1999 and 2000-2005. These three periods are determined according to certain changes in the foreign policy of the Russian Federation towards Iraq. Before the main chapters, the relations between the Soviet Union and Iraq is explained as a historical background.

The collapse of the Soviet Union is the most important event in the 20th century which led to the transformation of international system from bipolar world order to unipolar world order, and this event mainly affected the relations of the Russian Federation, her foreign policy making and her interests.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there occurred some groups, each of which claimed the superiority of different interests. According to Mike Bowker and Cameron Ross, there were three groups trying to affect the foreign policy-making process: "Liberal Westernisers and International Institutionalists under the title of Reformers; State realists and Eurasianists under the title of Centrists and National Patriotic expansionists as nationalists"¹. Ilya Prizel also categorized these groups as Liberal Atlanticist, Conservatives and Centrists.² He mentioned the transformation of Russian foreign policy from Atlanticism to Centrism after explaining the views mentioned above. Yeltsin and Kozyrev's foreign policy was firstly based on the belief of the superiority of economic determinants and necessity of joining "the ranks of civilized nations", Kozyrev saw that the path to reach these goals required complete cooperation with the West, and foreign ministry neglected other areas.

¹ John Berryman, "Russian Foreign Policy: An Overview", *Russia After the Cold War*, Mike Bowker and Cameron Ross (eds.), New York: Longman, Pearson Education Limited, 2000, p.338.

² Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia and Ukraine*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp.239-299.

Before 1993, Russia was still far from achieving a consensus. Westernizer's foreign policy was eroded and foreign policy was transformed into a centrist policy position. This position supported the full integration into the international system but according to the position, Russian interests should also be defended even if they contradicted the interests of the West or the United States. Finally, Ilya Prizel argued that Primakov's policy reflected the centrists' view. Robert Donaldson and Joseph Noguee, expressed that "Primakov allied himself with the 'pragmatic nationalist' and 'Eurasianists' viewpoints."³ Primakov generally underlined the fact that Russia was a great power and she remained like that. They continued by claiming that "Russia does not have permanent enemies but it does have permanent interests".⁴ Robert Donaldson and Joseph Noguee also expressed that the Russian political elite supported Primakov's ideas and policy. Despite this, Yeltsin replaced him with Igor Ivanov in September 1998.

After Primakov era, Putin came to power in January 2000. One of the most common properties, stated by many authors about Putin's foreign policy was multi polarity. Lev Klepatskii argued that Putin chose to conduct a foreign policy; giving importance to multi polarity even if there was not a uniform view on what multi polarity was referring to.⁵ Boris Kagarlitsky, director of Institute for Globalization Studies, expressed another important feature of Putin's foreign policy, asserting that

Except priorities related to the community of the former Soviet Union, the Russian government does not have a clear set of priorities of fixed goals. Even within this region, its priorities were very shaky, uncertain. Outside of this sphere, foreign policy depends on commercial interests.⁶

Bobo Lo claimed that Putin assigned emphasis to the economic priorities, seeing the first, direct linkage between an active foreign policy and the domestic socio-economic transformation and prosperity; and the second, the interrelationship

³ Robert Donaldson and Joseph Noguee, *The Foreign Policy Russia Changing Systems and Enduring Interests*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2002, p. 131

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Lev Klepatskii, "The New Russia and the New World Order", *Russia Between East and West Russian Foreign Policy on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century*, Gabriel Gorodetsky, London: Frank Cass Publishers, pp. 3-12.

⁶ Interview with Boris Kagarlitsky, Moscow, 15.06.2005

between geo-economics and geopolitics.⁷ He also expressed that “notwithstanding the raised profile of economic priorities, most of the big foreign policy issues continue to be security and geopolitics”⁸ Bobo Lo stated that global developments took place after 9/11 events affected the Russian external economic policy and had an effect of accelerating the economization of Russian foreign policy.⁹

Ludmilla Selezneva made a general assessment of Russian foreign policy in the post-cold war era. She expressed that during the first years of the Russian Federation, foreign policy was dominated by liberal ideology. Then, Russia, lacking economic assistance, faced the severe economic crisis and other international problems.¹⁰ Konstantin Kosachev and Anders Aslund claimed that “the 1990s discredited democracy and liberal economy in Russia. The West made a big mistake by not supporting (sufficiently) Russia.”¹¹ Under the effect of these factors, nationalistic ideology started to influence the foreign policy making. Ludmilla Selezneva called Primakov’s foreign policy as ‘policy of alternatives’.¹² She added that Putin’s policy was European oriented and was based on pragmatism; moreover economic effectiveness was one of its priorities.¹³ She commented that foreign policy was de-ideologized, expressing that foreign policy was turned into “a more pragmatic policy, based on the criteria of economic efficiency.”¹⁴ In sum, three basic features are expressed on Putin’s foreign policy:

⁷ Bobo Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003, pp. 51-53.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

¹⁰ Ludmilla Selezneva, “Post-Soviet Foreign Policy: Between Doctrine and Pragmatism”, *Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy*, Rick Fawn (ed.), London, Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, p. 13-17.

¹¹ Konstantin Kosachev and Anders Aslund, “Russian Foreign Policy: A New Stage of Development”, 02.11.2002.
<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/events/index.cfm?fa=eventDetail&id=828&&prog=zru>, accessed on 20.12.2005.

¹² Selezneva, *op.cit.*, p. 15.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 11-19.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

multipolarity, importance given to Near Abroad region and economization of Russian foreign policy.

In terms of the relationship between Russia and Iraq, Tareq Y. Ismael and Andrei Kreutz evaluated Russian foreign policy as a non-ideological one but it was based on economic and strategic interests. They expressed that “Russia wants to be seen as peacemaker and factor of stability in the region¹⁵ and to work in accordance with and in the framework of the broad international consensus.”¹⁶

Mark N. Katz stated that Russia was in search of proving that Russia was a great power but she was ignored. He expressed that prestige and economic profit were the most important two goals.¹⁷ To reach these goals, Putin attempted to exploit interstate rivalries. In general, he considered that Putin was able to exploit rivalries to make money for Russia, but he was not successful in enhancing country’s prestige.¹⁸ In Iraq issue, Putin tried to seize upon the rivalry between Iraq and the United States and the rivalry between Europe and the United States; but he could not succeed in guaranteeing Russia’s economic interests in Iraq and could not prevent the fact that the United States ignored his opposition to the invasion before March 2003 and his economic interests in Iraq after the invasion.¹⁹

Nikolai Zlobin stated that numerous domestic and foreign factors influenced Russia’s policy toward Iraq. He expressed that Russia in general continued to emphasize the national security and territorial integrity despite Putin’s stress on economic issues. Russia had some problems in forming her position toward the United States. He also claimed Russian elite’s desire to gain back the USSR’s power and he asserted that “a disagreement with the United States over Iraq and Iran

¹⁵ E. Satanovskii, “Rossiiskaia politika v otnoshenii Irana i Blizhnego Vostoka”, *Blizhnii Vostok i Soviennost*, Issue 6, 1999, p. 181 in Tareq Y. Ismael and Andrei Kreutz, “Russian-Iraqi Relations: A Historical and Political Analysis”, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Fall 2001, Vol 23, Issue 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Mark N. Katz, “Exploiting Rivalries for Prestige and Profit An Assessment of Putin’s Foreign Policy Approach”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 52, No. 3, May/June 2005, p.25.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-30.

produces feelings of self respect in both the Russian elite and the people”.²⁰ He added that Russia did not create a coherent foreign policy concept, and Iraq case clearly demonstrated this. At the end, Nikolai Zlobin expressed that “the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq showed that Russia is unable independently to safeguard its own security or maintain stability in the Eurasia”²¹ and in coming years Russia would give attention to the Commonwealth of Independent State. Although he expressed the economic importance of Iraq, he stated that Russia perceived the Iraq war as a threat for her security.

Robert Freedman, however claimed that Russia got profit from the war in Iraq. Firstly, oil prices rose and then he wrote off part of Iraq’s debts and in turn Iraq became open for Russian companies. She achieved one of his economic aims in Iraq, “increasing business dealings with Iraq (...) despite Moscow’s being banned by the United States from the first round of Iraqi reconstruction contracts.”²² He thought that Russia would play a role in post-Saddam Iraqi oil market and evaluated this development as an achievement.

This thesis argues that Russian foreign policy towards Iraq has been primarily determined by Russia’s self-interests which are mainly defined in economic terms, rather than political and military terms. This thesis evaluated the Russia’s foreign policy towards Iraq with the basic parameters of the realist perspective. According to the realists, state interests are the only legitimate basis for state action.²³ James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff referring to Morgenthau, asserted that statesmen thought and acted in terms of interest defined as power.²⁴ First reasons of statesmen’s efforts to enhance the power was explained by James E. Dougherty

²⁰ Nikolai Zlobin, “Iraq in the Context of Post-Soviet Foreign Policy”, *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Spring 2004, p. 88.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

²² Robert Freedman, “Russia- A Partner for the US in the Post-Saddam Middle East?”, *Strategic Insights*, Vol. 3, Issue 4, April 2004.

²³ Barry B. Hughes, *Continuity and Change in World Politics: Competing Perspectives*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997, p.76.

²⁴ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 4. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 4 in James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 2. ed., Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1971, p.76.

and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff referring to Spykman, to assure their survival, states “must make the preservation or improvement of their power position a principal objective of their foreign policy.”²⁵ James E. Dougherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff asserted that once the nation-state’s survival was assured, it might pursue lesser interests. Barry B. Hughes also categorized state interests as the core interests and instrumental interests.²⁶ He defined that “Core interests of the state flow from its desire to preserve its essence: territorial boundaries, population, government and sovereignty”.²⁷ According to Barry B. Hughes, instrumental interests were related to the power, stating that “If a state has or enhances its power, it can get a maximum interest from all events”.²⁸ Christopher Hill also claimed that there were four important components of power: identity, prosperity, security and prestige.²⁹ As it was seen, realists emphasized not only the importance of security, but also economy, identity and prestige issues as components of power.

James E. Dougherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff states on policies which pursued to defend instrumental interests, expressing that “in Morgenthau’s view, domestic and international politics can be reduced to one of three basic types: ‘a political policy that seeks either to keep power, to increase power or to demonstrate power.’”³⁰ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff further defined them as a policy to preserve the status-quo, to achieve imperialistic expansion or to gain prestige.³¹

The state which adopted the status-quo policy tried to prevent international changes which “caused fundamental shifts in the international distribution of power.”³²

²⁵ Nicholas J. Spykman, *America’s Strategy in World Politics: the United States and the Balance of Power*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1942), p. 7 in *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

²⁶ Hughes, *op.cit.*, p. 77.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

²⁹ Christopher Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p.132.

³⁰ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 4. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 36 in Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

Imperialism policy indicated to overthrow the status-quo to achieve new distribution of power.³³ The objective of the state which adopted the policy of prestige was to “impress other nations with the power one’s own nations actually possesses, or with the power it believes, or wants the other nations to believe it possesses.”³⁴

Russian leaders tried to preserve Russia’s power by considering her self-interests in Iraq. Russia’s policy makers have conducted status-quo policies, prestige policies and supported possible changes time to time under the influence of numerous factors, ranging from economic interests, influence of elite and public opinion to the relations with Western countries to defend Russia’s self-interests.

The thesis’ argument is also supported by the views of Robert Gilpin. His analyses on the importance of economic interests in modern times are also used to explain the changes in Russian foreign policy. He expressed in his book in which he tried to explore the factors affecting changes of international system, he concluded that in modern times economic constraints and opportunities became the significant factors affecting the determination of foreign policy.³⁵ He expressed, referring to “new economic historians”³⁶, that if a change in international system creates a more efficient situation in distribution of wealth and power for an actor, any development leading this change can create an incentive for that actor to desire a change or vice versa.³⁷ In this context when Russian leaders accepted a possible change as an instrument to enhance their economic interest in Iraq, this was an incentive to conduct policies, to leading a change not in international system but in international implementations related to relations between Russia and Iraq (for example lifting of the sanctions). But, if Russian leaders foresaw a change as a

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

³⁴ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 4. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 70 in *Ibid.*.

³⁵ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 68.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 72

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 73

factor of threatening Russia's economic interests (for example American invasion of Iraq); they preferred to maintain status-quo.

The sources are used in this thesis are generally books and articles. Articles of the Current Digest of the Soviet Press are used to form the core part of Yeltsin period, especially Primakov's era. Radio Free Europe, some newspapers and other internet sources are followed to reach current events and comments about them, especially about the United States' attack against Iraq. The web site of the United Nations is used to reach the United Nations Security Council Resolutions. The information, gathered during the field research and in-depth interviews between 5th and 25th of June 2005 in Moscow are all used.

In this framework, after the first chapter in which thesis will be introduced; in the second chapter, the main points of Russian-Iraqi relations in Soviet era will be discussed, as a historical background. The Soviet era will be tackled in four sub-chapters and categorized the 60-year period according to important events and period concerning the Middle East and Iraq with Russian leaders' changing foreign policies concepts toward them. In this framework, the Iraq-Iran war, the Gulf war and the Soviet Union's position during the war will be told.

In the third chapter, the developments in Russian-Iraqi relations between 1991 and 1999 will be discussed. This period will be categorized according to dynamics in relations. Firstly, Yeltsin's principles affecting Russian foreign policy will be evaluated. Then the period between 1992 and 1995 under foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev will be mentioned. During this term, Russia conducted a pro-Western foreign policy. After a while, Kozyrev changed this policy but during this term, relations were not close. Then the period between 1996 and 1999 under foreign minister Yevgeny Primakov will be described. During this term, Russia pursued a strict policy towards to the West and relations between Iraq and the Russian Federation are closer. This term will be categorized under two sub-chapters, first sub-chapter will state the period between 1996-1998 during which Primakov pursued a friendly relation with Iraq and relations with the Western countries became cooler. Then the second sub-chapter will evaluate the period during 1998 in which Russia contradicted with the West because of the United States/the United Kingdom attack to Iraq.

In the fourth chapter, firstly, Putin's principles affecting his foreign policy will be discussed. Then Russian foreign policy toward Iraq during 2000-2003 until the beginning of the American invasion of Iraq will be evaluated. In this term Putin tried to strengthen close ties with Iraq. Russia's close relations with the United States which were established after 9/11 did not change the Russia's relations with Iraq. Then, in the third subchapter, the American invasion of Iraq was assessed. Then Putin's policy during the Iraq war will be evaluated. Putin's policy during the Iraqi war seemed to be contradictory. First, Russia was trying to prevent the occupation and made cooperation with Germany and France. On the other hand, he signaled Washington that she would not oppose to the Security Council resolution on the use of force against Iraq if Russia's interests in Iraq were defended. After the capture of Baghdad and Saddam Hussein, he tried to improve relations with the United States of America.

In the fifth chapter, the factors affecting Russian foreign policy making towards Iraq will be tackled. These factors will be assessed under three subchapters: economic factors, socio-political factors and international factors. In the first subchapter economic factors will be evaluated. After, socio-political factors will be assessed. Under this subchapter, effects of foreign policy perception, economic relations between Iraqi and Russian leaders, public opinion and elite's opinion on foreign policy formation will be studied. Lastly, international factors will be tackled. Under this headline, effects of the relations with Europe and the United States and international organizations will be evaluated.

CHAPTER 2

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ

In this chapter, first Stalin and Khrushchev's period will be tackled together under the title of "The Soviet Foreign Policy towards Iraq until Brezhnev" because the Soviet influence was limited and there were not so close relations between two countries during these leaders' periods. The following sub-chapter will evaluate the relations during Brezhnev era. Then, the Soviet policy toward Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war will be evaluated. After this chapter, Gorbachev's new thinking policy, the Gulf War and Soviet Union's position and policy will be tackled.

2.1. THE SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ UNTIL BREZHNEV

The Soviet Union started to establish diplomatic relations with several Arab states, including Iraq in September 1944. Close relations were established with Iraq, however could not continue because of the general characteristics of Stalin's foreign policy towards the Middle East.

According to Stalin, the world was divided into two camps: anti-Communist and Communist ones, and the main concern and aim of Stalin was maintaining security against the West and the United States. He saw "the newly formed Arab League (whose leaders chose to remain neutral) as an instrument of British imperialism."¹ Robert Freedman stated that "Soviet policy toward the Middle East under Stalin was unproductive, if not counterproductive, and Russian influence was at low ebb in the region."² In this context, the Arabs were of little interest to Stalin.

¹ Robert O. Freedman, *Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975, p. 10.

² *Ibid.*

In Khrushchev era, the Soviet Union was transformed from a continental power into a world power. Khrushchev believed that “The Soviet Union was ready to compete with the United States in every sphere and in every part of the world.”¹ So he replaced his predecessor’s foreign policy focusing on security concerns with a more attractive foreign policy.

His approach related to the Middle East was also different from Stalin’s one. According to Khrushchev, “the world was divided into three main zones or blocs—the socialist bloc, the capitalist bloc and the Third World, which he hoped to win over to Communism through political support and large doses of economic and military aid.”² The struggle of the Third World nations against the West for political independence would inevitably lead to weaken Western influence and provide Moscow with many opportunities for manipulation.

Khrushchev concentrated his efforts on the countries which had political independence and neutralist policy, including Iraq. However, on the 24th of February 1955, Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Pakistan signed the Baghdad Pact under a British umbrella as an anti-Soviet alliance.³ Because of this pact, Soviet-Iraq relations was broken off until 1958. On the 14th of July 1958, a coup headed by Abd-al Karim Qasim toppled the monarchy in Iraq and a new government came to power. On the 16th of July, the Soviet Union recognized the Iraqi republic.⁴ Contrary to his predecessor’s policy, Qasim’s foreign policy was based on positive neutrality and the Soviet Union could develop relations with Iraq.

However, Moscow was cautious to develop her relations with Baghdad for fear of a possible intervention by the Western countries against Iraq.⁵ After a while, the Soviet Union could be certain about that the Western countries did not invade Iraq

¹ Talal Nizameddin, *Russia and The Middle East: Towards A New Foreign Policy*, London: Hurst & Company Publishers., 1999, p. 20.

² Freedman, *op. cit.*,p. 10.

³ Nizameddin, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁴ Oles M. Smolansky, *The Soviet Union and The Arab East Under Khrushchev*, Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1974, p.104

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.105.

and he began to improve relations with Baghdad.⁶ In 1958, Iraq and the Soviet Union signed numerous commercial, military, economic and technical agreements. On the 24th of March 1959, Iraq officially announced its withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact. From 1958/1959, the Soviet Union extended huge economic and military aid to Iraq.⁷ However, the relations between Iraq and the Soviet Union began to cool in 1960s because of three reasons: Qasim's growing hostility towards the Iraqi Communist party, military efforts of Baghdad government towards Kurds and the improvement in Moscow's relations with Egypt.

The Qasim regime was overthrown on the 8th of February 1963 by the Ba'th party under the leadership of Abd-al Salam Arif. But this new Ba'th regime was worse than the Qasim's rule. Executions of communists continued, the Iraqi army launched an attack on the Kurds after deadlock of government's negotiations with Kurds. Unlike before, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union condemned officially mass reprisals and bloody terror in Iraq⁸ and curtailed her economic assistance. Iraqi response was also critical. Relations between the two countries came to a halt during the period of Ba'th rule.

The Soviet Union's attitude toward this Ba'th regime was exceptional because the Ba'th regime did not join any pro-Western bloc and had a policy of non-alignment. Soviet government could tolerate the Ba'th regime's harsh policy toward the Communists as the Soviet Union did in other countries. Main reasons behind such a Soviet policy were first, "relatively low priority the Soviet Union ascribed to ties with developing Iraq"⁹ and second, that the Soviet solidarity with the Iraqi Communist party were of crucial importance in demonstrating "Moscow's devotion to Marxism-Leninism (...)"¹⁰ However, in November 1963, relations between two countries began to improve because General Abd-as/al Salam Arif,

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.107.

⁷ Haim Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968-1988 In the Shadow of the Iraq-Iran Conflict*, Boulder: Lynne Rienne Publishers, 1992, p. 3.

⁸ Charles B. McLane, *Soviet-Middle East Relations*, London: Central Asian Research Center, 1973, p. 56.

⁹ Shemesh, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

new president who came to power with a military junta, tried to develop Iraq's relations with the Soviet Union by stopping the war against Kurds and halting persecution against Communists.¹¹ Although Khrushchev succeeded to acquire what the Soviet Union demanded from Iraqi leaders, the Communist Party deposed him in October 1964 because of other external and internal issues.

Khrushchev period was evaluated by Robert Freedman as “ (...) the Soviet position in the Middle East was far better than it had been at the time of Stalin's death, (...) yet it was far from a position of dominance or even preponderance of power. (...)”¹² According to Oles M. Slomansky, one of the main Soviet faults was that

Khrushchev overestimated Moscow's capacity to influence the recipients of his aid programs and underestimated the Arab affinity for factionalism and strife. (...) In ensuing years the Kremlin found itself confronting a number of problems and crises over which it had relatively little control. (...) Thus he could not be effective in interfering events thus the Soviet Union lost prestige and influence¹³

Iraq was one of the countries where Soviet influence had risen fastest, but even in this country, the Soviet Union's influence remained clearly limited.¹⁴ In fact, in Iraq case the main reason of the poor relations between two countries was that Khrushchev did not give importance to the relations with this country.

2.2. THE SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ UNDER BREZHNEV

After Khrushchev, Brezhnev appeared to have decided to concentrate Soviet energy and source on the Middle East.¹⁵ Talal Nizameddin also expressed that Brezhnev and Kosygin “dealt only with countries which were either highly reliable or highly strategic. Iraq (...) was placed at the top of both categories.”¹⁶ According to Robert Freedman, the new international circumstances affected

¹¹ McLeane, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

¹² Freedman, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹³ Smolansky, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

¹⁴ Freedman, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁶ Nizameddin, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

policy-makers while they were forming this new policy.¹⁷ Brezhnev and Kosygin reached the conclusion that in Latin America, Western Europe and in South and Southeast Asia, the Soviet Union could not be more influential because Latin America, Western Europe had vital importance for the United States and South and Southeast Asia were important for China. Moreover, the United States was dealing with Vietnam in 1965, China diverted her attention to the Vietnam War and so-called Cultural Revolution. The issues of these countries prevented them from competition with Russia.

Under these circumstances, the Soviet Union decided on official framework of her policies towards the Third World such as “support for ‘anti-imperialist’ countries with ‘socialist orientation’”¹⁸. Moreover, Brezhnev made crucial changes with regard to the nature of the relations.¹⁹ One of the most important changes was the increasing importance given to economic factors.²⁰ The Soviet Union gave a large amount of military and economic aids to Iraq which “was able to pay for the Soviet Union’s supplies with hard currency or with oil. (...).”²¹ Despite all these points, the trade between the Soviet Union and Iraq was not so high when it was compared with trade with Iran and the United Arab Republic. Moreover, oil trade between two countries was also important; the Soviet Union imported tons of Iraqi oil till 1973.

Another important difference was Soviet policy towards to the Communist parties of the Middle East countries. Brezhnev and Kosygin “no longer entertained much hope that any of the Communist parties of the region seize power, (...) began to emphasize the importance of good relations with the nationalist leaders of the Middle East (...).”²² According to Oles M. Smolansky and Betty Smolansky, “to the Kremlin, state to state (Iraq-the Soviet Union) relations were more important

¹⁷ Freedman, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

¹⁸ Nizameddin, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Shemesh, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

²² Freedman, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-20.

than the fate of a Third World communist party.”²³ Especially after the seizure of the power by the Ba’th party in 1968; the state of the Iraqi Communist Party was not very different, Soviet-Iraqi relations deteriorated but significantly, there was no break between Moscow and Baghdad.²⁴

Soviet-Iraqi relations again met with difficulties during 1965-1966 because of the Iraqi government’s policies toward the Kurdish minority and the Iraqi Communist Party. The USSR constantly backed Kurdish demands for national autonomy within the borders of Iraq²⁵ and desired more freedom and a place in Iraqi political arena for ICP. These issues created problems in the relations because according to the Soviet Union, Iraq had low priority, compared with Egypt and Syria. For this reason, according to the Soviet Union “a domestic policy geared Soviet interest was a precondition for establishing close ties with Iraq.”²⁶ In contrary, for Iraq, the Soviet Union was important because of the Soviet Union’s attitude toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, Moscow’s criticism of Iraq’s internal politics and support to Iraqi Communist Party and Kurds and the supply of military hardware.²⁷ Iraq also tried to propel Baghdad into a position of regional leadership in Middle East therefore Iraq needed Soviet support.²⁸

In 1971, a new international dynamic started to affect Russian-Iraqi relations. Enver Sadat, president of Egypt, dismissed all his officials who associated with Moscow. Despite this, the Soviet Union endeavored to preserve its links with Egypt but Egypt’s further choices towards to the United States prompted Moscow to improve relations with Baghdad. In June 1971, Deputy Prime Minister of the Soviet Union Novikov visited Iraq. This visit symbolized a qualitative change in Soviet -Iraq relations. At the end of the June 1971, “the Soviet Union recognized the ‘progressiveness of the socio-economic transformations taking place in Iraq and

²³ Oles M. Smolansky and Bettie M. Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq The Soviet Quest for Influence*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991, p. 140.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 139-140.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

²⁶ Shemesh, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁸ Smolonsky, *op. cit.*, p.16.

(...) the leading role of the Ba'th Party"²⁹ On 15th of November 1971, Saddam Hussein came to the Soviet Union and he requested strategic alliance explicitly. On the 9th of April 1972, Bekr and Kosygin, foreign ministers of two countries signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and Iraq. The first article of the treaty expressed "unbreakable friendship" between Moscow and Baghdad and referred to respect for sovereignty and noninterference in internal affairs.³⁰ The accord also provided comprehensive cooperation in the political, economic, cultural and 'other' fields.

From the Soviet perspective the Treaty was one of the components of her policy against "imperialism" and for "social progress".³¹ This treaty also strengthened her position in the Persian Gulf. "Politically (...) Iraq emerged, by this treaty, as a staunch opponent of imperialism, colonialism and Zionism, a line which corresponded with the Soviet position."³² This treaty however had some possible dangers for the Soviet Union. First, by signing treaty the Soviet Union seemed to leave Kurds. Secondly, Iraq which strengthened with the treaty would attack or be more aggressive towards to Iran.³³ Iraq's continued disputes with Iran were the principal reason for Iraq to sign the treaty.³⁴ Second factor that compelled Iraq to sign the treaty was the objective of Ba'th government to nationalize its oil industry so it needed to strengthen its international position.

At that time, the relations between two countries was at top level. In late 1973, however, Kremlin started to face with some new problems related to Iraq. In spring 1973, Saddam clearly announced Iraq's willingness to deviate from her pro-Soviet orientation and improve relations with the West.³⁵ In these years Iraq tried to diversify her relations, by this way to lessen its dependence on the Soviet Union.

²⁹ Shemesh, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

³² Smolansky and Smolansky, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

³³ Freedman, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

³⁴ Shemesh, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 111

Iraq restored its relationship with West Germany and Britain and trade with Western countries increased.

Arab oil embargo and quadrupling of petroleum prices provided the Arab countries with vast sums of hard currency, this enabled Baghdad to buy Western technology instead of Soviet ones even though formers were more expensive. Starting from 1973, Iraq's foreign trade was made mostly with Western countries and it started to have different commercial partners.

Besides these economic developments, on the 12th of June 1975, Saddam Hussein announced his new strategies in foreign policy, changing principles of January 1947. Among 1947 principles, Iraq had given special importance to the Soviet Union. However in 1975, Saddam Hussein described the Soviet Union merely as one of the great powers and insisted that Iraq had to try to maintain a balance in its ties with the Soviet Union, Western Europe (in practice France) and China.³⁶ Iraq's new position was explained "as a result of the normalization of relations between Baghdad and Tehran, of the successful completion of the war against the Kurds, and of growing economic independence from the Soviet Union (...)."³⁷ Iraq– the Soviet Union relations deteriorated especially after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Iraq became anxious because the Soviet Union used the Soviet-Afghan Treaty as a pretext of her invasion and Saddam Hussein announced that the Soviet invasion was 'an unjustifiable, erroneous behavior'.³⁸

In contrary, Saddam Hussein defined Soviet-Iraqi relations a "real friendship" and the Iraqi media used terms of "friendly relations", "balanced relations" or "cooperation" but no reference to strategic partnership. The Soviet Union responded moderately because she tried to avoid further deterioration in relations. Iraq was important as a counter-balance to Iran. Moreover arms sales to Baghdad provided Moscow with hard currency.³⁹

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

³⁷ Smolansky and Smolansky, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

³⁸ Shemesh, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p 172.

Despite the Soviet Union's economic relations, it was possible to say that during second half of 1970s, the Soviet effect was waned not only in Iraq but also in almost all Arab allies. After more than 25 years of active political, economic and military involvement in the Arab world, "in his speech to the 26th Party Congress in February 1981, Brezhnev singled out, of all his present Arab allies, the Palestine as a country of 'Socialist orientation'". The Soviet Union failed to enhance her prestige, to reach her economic and strategic goals in the region.

According to Adeed Dawisha, there were some basic reasons of Soviet failures: Firstly, the Soviet Union in mid-1950s and 1960s supported nationalist and Islamic tendencies in the Middle East to stand Western imperialism but in 1970s, these forces became as potent hostile against Soviet interests.⁴⁰ Secondly, "Soviet leaders committed several mistakes in their dealings with local states, which were due to a lack of understandings of indigenous attitudes, customs and rivalries."⁴¹ Third reason was changes in Arab world; revolutionary and nationalist leaders in the 1950s and 1960s were replaced by pragmatic or moderate leaders.⁴² In this term, a new international dynamic took place and started to affect relations.

2.3. THE SOVIET UNION AND THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

In March 1975, Shah and Saddam signed the Algerian agreement on Shatt-all Arab and Kurdish problems. After the Algerian agreement, Iraq-Iran relations improved but in 1979, Shah was overthrown and Khomeini came to power, the revolution and the regime change occurred in Iran. These events led the deterioration in relations of Iran with the United States and Iraq. The latter would like to take the advantage of the deterioration of relationship between Iran and the United States.

On the 17th of September 1980, the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council declared Shat al-Arab to be a national river under Iraqi sovereignty. On the 22nd of September 1980, Iraqi forces invaded Iran. Saddam Hussein also aimed to overthrow of Khomeini regime and to be an effective and dominant power in the Middle East.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

At the beginning, the Soviet Union kept her cool attitude towards Iraq. During September 1980, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz visited Moscow but during the negotiations, Kremlin showed her anger and resentment. In fact, there were also additional factors behind the Soviet Union's attitude toward Iraq. According to Roderic Pitty, "on the top of his repression of the Iraqi Communist Party, Hussein's adventurous foreign policy indicated to Soviet leaders that under his leadership Iraq was unlikely to become again a reliable ally of the Soviet Union."⁴³ Therefore, Kremlin rejected Taha Yasin Ramadan's requests for Soviet assistance. However, the Soviet Union did not condemn Iraq but adopted neutral stand and called both sides to put an end to the war.

In fact, this war was a dilemma for the Soviet Union. These two countries had big importance to the Soviet Union. In the point of view of the Soviet Union, this conflict was weakening independence of both of the countries and providing a pretext for the United States intervention in the region.⁴⁴ "In longer run, Moscow was concerned about the collapse of either the Tehran and the Baghdad regimes and the uncertainty that could result in a region so near to the Soviet Union's borders".⁴⁵ Kremlin also concerned that this war compelled Iran to normalize its relations with Washington.

Iran's cool attitude and the United States contacts with Baghdad in mid-April 1981⁴⁶ impelled the Soviet Union to improve relations with Iraq. In May 1981, Iranian troops mounted their first major counter offensive and in June 1981, Israel attacked reactor Tammuz near Baghdad. The Soviet Union used these attacks as a pretext to show her willingness to strengthen her relationship with Iraq.

In the summer of 1982, Iranian troops expelled the Iraqis from the most of the territory occupied during the conflict. On the 10th of June 1982, Iraq declared cease-fire unilaterally and withdrew to the international border. On the other hand,

⁴³ Roderic Pitty, "Soviet Perception of Iraq", *Middle East Report*, No. 151, March-April 1988, p. 25.

⁴⁴ Fred Halliday, "Current Soviet Policy and the Middle East: A Report", *MERIP Reports*, No. 111, January 1983, p. 22.

⁴⁵ Fred Halliday, "The USSR and the Gulf War Moscow's Growing Concern", *MERIP Middle East Report*, No, 148, p. 10.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Iran began to attack the Iraqi territory. In the summer and fall of 1982, the Soviet Union re-supplied Iraq with military equipment.⁴⁷ This change can also be explained by the emergence of legal ground for the Soviet Union. Iraq was in a defensive position and the Friendship Treaty obliged Moscow to help Iraq.

After the capture of an important Iraqi area in February 1984 by Iran, Iraq used chemical weapons against to this country. The Soviet Union ignored and did not condemn. In April 1984, Tehran complained to the United Nations Security Council about Iraq's use of chemical weapons but he got only the result of the resolution saying that "the Security Council had decisively condemned the use of chemical weapons"⁴⁸, they did not condemn Iraq explicitly.

After Ramadan's visit to the Soviet Union, Saddam Hussein used "excellent state", "at their best" words for relations with Moscow and "he claimed (...) that Iraq was grateful to the Soviets for their military support."⁴⁹ Despite this, tanker war led a problem in relations. In January 1984, Moscow adopted a restrained attitude towards to "tanker war" which erupted in the Gulf in January 1984⁵⁰ because he concerned about that the United States used this war as a pretext to augment her military presence. According to Haim Shemesh, Iraq welcomed increased the United States military presence as long as it was aimed at protecting the flow of oil from the Arab Gulf states.⁵¹ In November 1984, as a conclusion of Tariq Aziz's talks with Reagan, Baghdad and Washington resumed relationship.⁵² On the other hand, by June 1984, Iran tried to ameliorate relations with the Soviet Union.⁵³ All these renewed relations did not overshadow the primacy of the Soviet Union in the Iraq's foreign policy.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

⁴⁸ Iurii Kharlanov, *Pravda*, April 3, 1984 in Smolansky and Smolansky, *op.cit.*, p. 243.

⁴⁹ Saddam Hussein's interview with *al-Anba'* (Kuwait), May 20, 1984/*DR*, May 22, 1984 in Shemesh, *op.cit.*, p. 193.

⁵⁰ Smolansky and Smolansky, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

⁵¹ Shemesh, *op.cit.*, p. 195.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

As a marking pattern of this period, both Iraq and the Soviet Union were trying to improve relations with the rivalries of each other. Oles M. Smolansky expressed these quadruple relations as:

While making an intensive effort to augment Soviet support in the war against Iran, Iraq continued to maintain a neutral position on the Soviet-United States rivalry and aspired to develop relations with the United States. The Soviet Union, (...) maintained its military and political support for Iraq in the war against Iran at the level had been fixed in 1983-1984, while preserving the option of improving relations with Iran.⁵⁴

In addition to her efforts to improve relations with Iran, Kremlin thought that Iran was responsible for the ongoing war and for providing Washington with new opportunities to increase military presence in the Persian Gulf.⁵⁵ In November, Iran- the Soviet Union relations deteriorated because the United States secret arm deliveries to Iran (Irangate affair) revealed while it was known that the United States executed an embargo against Iran since 1979.⁵⁶ The Soviet Union condemned the United States and Iraq condemned both the United States and Iran.

In April 1987, the Soviet-Iraqi treaty was extended. According to article 12 of this treaty, after 15 years, its period was concluded but it was extended automatically in case any of the parts requested an end.⁵⁷ This was important for Baghdad because Tehran's threat became real but not to alienate the United States, Iraq preferred not to pronounce. For the Soviet Union, it was important because this treaty was evaluated as a prestigious achievement, it meant Baghdad's return to a pro-Soviet policy on formal framework and it was also an example for other Third World states. However, she did not pronounce because she did not want to estrange Iran.

Despite the Soviet Union-Iraq bilateral relations, in the international arena, the Soviet Union's decisions enraged Iraqi leadership. United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution on the 20th of July 1987, ordering an immediate cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war.⁵⁸ Iran attacked the resolution as biased toward Iraq, but did not

⁵⁴ Smolonsky and Smolansky, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Shemesh, *op.cit.*, p. 201.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁵⁸ Smolansky and Smolansky, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

reject it explicitly.⁵⁹ In the contrary, Iraq hoped some sanctions to be implemented to Iran because of Iran's rejection to the resolution but the Soviet Union did not support sanctions. Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz labeled the Soviet Union "an obstacle to the United Nations peace efforts"⁶⁰

On the 18th of July 1988, Iran accepted the United Nations Security Council Resolution 598. On the 20th of August 1988, the cease-fire went into effect. The Soviet reaction to these events was predictably positive but cautious.⁶¹ There were advantages and disadvantages of this cease-fire for the Soviet Union. Iraq was still looking to Moscow for military aid; the reconstruction of Iraq's economy could facilitate the re-payments of its debt to the Soviet Union and by the end of the war, the United States would reduce substantially its military presence around the Gulf.⁶²

This war formed a big dilemma for Gorbachev. The Soviet Union sought to be in a position affecting both Iran and Iraq and tried to remain a big power in the Middle East. According to Fred Halliday, "beyond the words, there is little that Russia can do to influence events."⁶³ Moreover, the Iran-Iraq war corresponded to the interesting transition era in Soviet political life and policies followed during this era showed the marks of new thinking.

2.4. THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GULF WAR

When Gorbachev came to power, the situation of the Soviet Union was not brilliant and was not very successful in foreign policy. Economic situation of the Soviet Union was so dire and deteriorated and she could not afford her subsidies to regional conflicts and countries.

⁵⁹ Shemesh, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

⁶⁰ Warren Richley, *Christian Science Monitor*, December 4, 1987 in Smolansky and Smolansky, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

⁶² Shemesh, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-217.

⁶³ Halliday, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

After Gorbachev came to power in March 1985, he evaluated the situation of the Soviet Union and the international system. He changed Soviet thinking in the foreign policy and formed a new approach for international relations: “New Thinking.” Jeff Checkel summarized the changes of Gorbachev in the Soviet thinking, saying that

Gorbachev’s revised basic assumptions include followings:

- An official view of the international system that stressed its interdependent nature and the advent of global problems.
- A goal structure for Soviet policy that emphasized the dominance of no class over class values and interests.
- An image of capitalism that openly questioned the Leninist orthodoxy concerning its inherent aggressiveness and militarism.⁶⁴

Especially the new international system, economic relations and the Soviet Union’s position compared with the United States forced him to change basic assumptions. One of the most striking innovations in the Gorbachev’s concept was the acceptance that the Soviet Union was no longer a superpower equal to the United States and “there is no need to win the global competition with the United States.”⁶⁵ New thinkers criticized cold war competition with the Washington and found the predecessors’ threat definitions exaggerated. Richard Hermann used the term of ‘threat deflator’ for new thinkers.⁶⁶ They tried to de-ideologize the foreign policy and to leave to pursue the zero-sum policies.⁶⁷

After coming to power, Gorbachev also changed the Soviet Union’s foreign policy towards the Third World. He took Soviet armed forces out of the regional conflicts and to remove super powers from regional conflicts. New thinkers’ term of “reasonable defense sufficiency” and armament “imited to the defense of the Soviet Union” was accompanied with the rejection of use of arms as a political means.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Jeff Checkel, “Ideas, Institutions and the Gorbachev Foreign Policy Revolution”, *World Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 2, January 1993, p. 281.

⁶⁵ Galia Golan, *Moscow and The Middle East New Thinking on Regional Conflict*, New York: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992, p. 4.

⁶⁶ Richard Herrmann, ‘Soviet Behavior in Regional Conflicts: Old Questions, New Strategies and Important Lessons’, *World Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 3, April 1992, p. 462.

⁶⁷ Golan, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

In this framework, Gorbachev firstly followed foreign policy against Iraq which was convenient to his new Third World policy. However, a new dynamic, another war, waged by Saddam Hussein took place and affected relations. On the 2nd of August 1990, Saddam invaded Kuwait and on the 28th of August declared that Kuwait was the part of Iraqi territory. This invasion attracted the attention of the world.

When Saddam invaded Kuwait, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze preferred to support international community and criticized this invasion. But this choice did not have full support from the internal political circles. There were many groups and opinions in Moscow and according to Mike Bowker, the reason of Soviet inconsistent policy towards to the crisis was the effect of this internal struggle.⁶⁹

Despite different groups in literature, there were three basic views in the Moscow. The first group was new thinkers⁷⁰ or pro-perestroika camp⁷¹. New thinkers were most vocal in their condemnation of the Iraqi action and most supportive of the use of military forces to reverse it.⁷²

The second group was old thinkers⁷³ or conservative circles. Old thinkers argued that the United States was interested in cheap oil and getting a dominant role in the post-cold war era rather than a movement based on moral principles and believed that Soviet interest could be best preserved through adopting a position independent of Washington.⁷⁴

Third group was Arabists led by Yevgeny Primakov. According to Mike Bowker, “Primakov agreed with many concerns of the ‘old thinkers’ (...) and he certainly did not support Iraq’s expansionism; but opposed to use of force to reverse it.”⁷⁵ He

⁶⁹ Mike Bowker, *Russian Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War*, Aldershot, Brookfield: Dartmouth and Ashgate, 1997, p.144.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Golan, *op. cit.*, p. 57

⁷² Bowker, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

concerned for any instability in the region and tried to avoid further deteriorating of relations with Iraq.⁷⁶ Many of these Middle East specialists viewed supporting use of force as a disloyalty to Moscow's long-time ally in the Arab world.⁷⁷

Despite all this debate, Kremlin continued to support the international community, supported the United Nations Security Council Resolution No 660 and criticized the Iraqi invasion. The Resolution, the United Nations Security Council accepted on the 2nd of August, demanded "immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops, and the complete restoration and maintenance of the sovereignty, national independence and territorial integrity of Kuwait".⁷⁸ Both Gorbachev and Shevardnadze preferred to back the United States initiative and the United Nations. They both perceived this invasion as a "challenge to the post-cold war order".⁷⁹ On the 3rd of August, Secretary of State James Baker and Edward Shevardnadze signed a joint declaration condemning Iraq. On the 6th of August, Moscow also agreed to economic sanctions against Baghdad.

Shevardnadze also announced his support on revival of the United Nations Security Council's Military Committee and he offered the Soviet contribution.⁸⁰ The Soviet Union supported the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on 'the use of force to maintain sanctions (Resolution 665) on the 25th of August and the resolution on the use of all necessary means to eject Iraq (Resolution 678) on the 29th of November."⁸¹ Despite this support in the Security Council, Moscow refused to participate in an international armed force. Therefore Shevardnadze had to correct his statements. Moreover, Gorbachev sent Yevgeny Primakov to Iraq with his special envoy for diplomatic efforts to solve the issue.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Golan, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁷⁸ *The United Nations Security Council Resolution 660*, <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/575/10/IMG/NR057510.pdf?OpenElement>, accessed on 14. 07.2005.

⁷⁹ Bowker, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

⁸⁰ Carol R. Savietz, "Moscow and the Gulf War: The Policies of a Collapsing Superpower", *Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1991 A Retrospective*, Gabriel Gorodeysky (ed.), London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1994, p. 200.

⁸¹ Bowker, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

In his first visit to Baghdad, Primakov tried to persuade Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally but Saddam refused and expressed that Iraq could withdraw under certain circumstances. On this occasion, Primakov started to visit the Western capitals but in the middle of his visits, “Shevardnadze (...) informed his American guest that the Soviet Foreign Ministry did not support Primakov’s position.”⁸² In this circumstances, Primakov received a frosty welcome in Washington.⁸³ Moreover, on the 14th of October, Iraqi News Agency announced that ‘Kuwait was and would continue to be Iraqi land forever’.⁸⁴

During Primakov’s diplomatic efforts, Bush decided that economic sanctions was not enough and instead of it, military force should be used and by late November, he persuaded Gorbachev. The United Nations Security Council Resolutions 678 would be carried out on the 29th of November but it was postponed to the 15th of January. Despite all diplomatic efforts of the United Nations General Secretary Perez de Cuellar, French Foreign Minister Rolan Dumas, Gorbachev; Saddam Hussein refused to withdraw. On the 16th of January, the Desert Storm Operation began with air strikes.

In Moscow, under the effects of pressures for peace, Gorbachev announced that he sent Yevgeny Primakov to Baghdad as a special envoy before the onset of the ground offensive. Galia Golan interpreted this effort as “The cease-fire initiative represented the supreme effort by the besieged Soviet leader to placate the demands of the conservative forces in Moscow, primarily his military, without seriously damaging relations with Washington.”⁸⁵ The Soviet Union’s prestige also enhanced, if this peace initiative reached a cease-fire between coalition forces and Iraq.

This time Primakov succeeded in preparing a peace proposal in which “Iraq accepted complete and unconditional withdrawal in three weeks, as in the

⁸² Michael R. Beschloss and Strobe Talbott (1993), *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the Cold War*, Little Brown and Co., London, p. 274 in Bowker, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh (1993), *The Gulf Conflict, 1990-1991*, Faber, London, pp. 203-211 in *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Golan, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.

Resolution 660. In return, it was agreed that all Resolutions on Iraq would be lifted and territorial integrity would be guaranteed.”⁸⁶ But Bush put his counter proposal that gave no opportunity for Bessmertnykh to get peace as a response of this proposal. Ground offensive started on the 24th of February 1991. On the 27th of February, the United States President Bush announced that Kuwait liberated, Tariq Aziz informed the United Nations Security Council that Iraq would accept the twelve relevant Resolutions.⁸⁷ On the 28th of February, Iraq announced a cease-fire and agreed to a meeting of the military commanders to arrange terms.⁸⁸

During the war, Gorbachev’s policy fluctuated under the effect of many factors affecting him and the transition process in the Soviet Union. But the Soviet Union lost her prestige because of his policy. After the end of the Gulf war, the Soviet Union continued to fluctuate and could not form a coherent policy. The Soviet Union’s official response to ground offensive was regret because the Soviet Union asserted that Iraq accepted the United Nations Security Council Resolution 660 and differences between coalition and Iraq were not so much.⁸⁹ However, Gorbachev changed his position after a while and supported the “coalition’s demands for full adherence to all twelve United Nations resolutions.”⁹⁰

After the war, the Soviet Union tried to compensate for her failure during the war and to improve her relations with the international community. Moscow backed the United Nations cease-fire terms and maintained economic sanctions against Baghdad.⁹¹

The policy, implemented by Gorbachev during the war was called as a ‘minimax strategy’ that he sought to maintain “the maximum amount of influence in Iraq while doing just enough to maintain cooperation with the United States and the

⁸⁶ Bowker, op. cit., pp. 144-145.

⁸⁷ Richard H. Jacobs, “A chronology of the Gulf War”, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 13, Issue 1/2, Winter/Spring 1991, p. 164.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Bowker, op. cit., p. 157.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

Arab members of anti-Iraqi coalition”⁹² but this policy did not succeed. Robert Freedman expressed the Soviet failure and the United States’ success as

When the war ended, the United States emerged as the dominant foreign power in the Middle East and the military guarantor of the wealthy Arab oil states of the Gulf Cooperation Council while the Soviet Union was marginalized in the region except for its continuing ties with Iran and some residual influence in Iraq.⁹³

There were also different thoughts regarding the outcome of the Gulf war: Those who favored a return to pre-Gorbachev policies saw the crisis as the victory of American military hawks.⁹⁴ For the military among these “old thinkers” the Iraqi defeat meant differently. “This defeat was either the result of backward (Iraqi) forces using good (Soviet) arms or not fighting at all, or else the demonstration of a technology gap.”⁹⁵ It was also an issue related to the prestige of the Soviet military forces.

There were also different views regarding the outcome of the Gulf war. For example Rubinstein approached optimistically and expressed that:

The Gulf Crisis (...) has been a boon to Moscow. Gorbachev has already reaped an impressive harvest: a further improvement in relations with the United States, (...), an enhanced role for the UN Security Council, (...), a restoration of diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia (...). By his actions, Gorbachev has astutely positioned himself for a greater role not only just in the Gulf Region but also in the eventual management of an Arab-Israeli, Israeli-Palestinian settlement.⁹⁶

In fact “as the Gulf war was ending, Gorbachev was apparently aware of the damage of his inconsistencies might have caused in Washington (-the Soviet Union relations)”⁹⁷ and “in the Middle East, the Soviet relations with some other Arab

⁹² Robert Freedman, “Moscow and the Middle East since the Collapse of the Soviet Union. A Preliminary Analysis”, *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, Roger E. Kanet and Alexander Kozhemiakin (eds.), London and New York: Macmillan Press and St. Martin Press Inc., 1997, p.126-127.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁹⁴ Golan, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁹⁵ For example, Soviet Air Force chief Lt.-Gen. Malikov, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 14 March 1991 in *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

countries of the anti-Iraq coalition got better because of the Soviet policies against Iraq during the Gulf war”⁹⁸ but Moscow’s prestige in the region was damaged.

The Soviet Union tried to influence events in the Middle East for nearly 46 years and diplomatic relationship between the Soviet Union and Iraq was established in 1945. In this period, the Soviet Union established close ties with this country but she could not be influential as in the East and Central Europe. By the time, the US influence extended to the region, Iraq was seen as the last castle in the Middle East. In Gorbachev era, Soviet influence in Iraq almost waned. However, the 1972 friendship treaty and historical ties with this country affected some political groups in the Russian Federation but the economic and commercial ties became increasingly effective factors in foreign policy decisions.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

CHAPTER 3

RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ UNDER YELTSIN

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Yeltsin came to power. In this period, the relations were shaped under the general framework of the Russian Federation's foreign policy. Yeltsin and his reformist team developed new principles that directed Russian foreign policy in the new era. Therefore, these new principles are the subject of the first sub-chapter.

After the explanation of the new principles in the second sub-chapter the relations between Russian Federation and Iraq in the period of 1991- 1995, during which Russia gave priority to the Western countries rather than relations with the Middle East, including Iraq will be assessed. The relations in the period of 1996 and 1999, shaped by the effect of Primakov and his foreign policy understanding, with an emphasis on the Eurasian countries more than the Western countries will be evaluated in the following sub-chapter. The third sub-chapter will review the relations in 1996 and 1997. In the fourth sub-chapter, the relations during the American operation in Iraq in 1998 will be assessed.

3.1. PRINCIPLES OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER YELTSIN

Yeltsin's foreign policy was based on his predecessor's foreign policy principles. Yelena Melkumian, from the Moscow State University, expressed that essential features of Russian foreign policy were based on the changes, occurring in the Gorbachev period.¹ There were some features similar to properties of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union in Gorbachev era. One of the most important features in Russian foreign policy was the Russian Federation's limitations. The Russian

¹ Interview with Yelena Melkumin, Moscow, 20.06.2005.

Federation, in the beginning of 1990s had a very weak economy and domestic problems. William E. Ferry and Roger E. Kanet also expressed that “Domestic politics and internal factors have limited the scope of policy options available to Russian policy makers. Efforts to restructure the Russian economy have reduced the resources available to the government to conduct foreign policy.”¹ John Berryman agreed with William E. Ferry and Roger Kanet and he argued that

Notwithstanding nuclear capability, the obvious limits which Russia’s much reduced geopolitical, military and economic attributes have placed on her international role have raised questions concerning Russia’s insistent claims to be recognized as a great power.²

This dilemma between the limitations of the Russian Federation and her desire to be recognized as a great power affected foreign policy making process.

Besides Russia’s economic limitations, another feature was the acceptance of the multi-level foreign policy approach. Foreign policy-makers accepted this approach to cope with the hegemonic superiority of the United States. John Berryman also expressed that Russia used her strategy of a multi-dimensional foreign policy as a means “to secure the leverage to counter balance the hegemonic power of the United States”³. William E. Ferry and Roger Kanet, under the multi-level foreign policy approach, categorized three regions according to their importance.⁴ First region was the Near Abroad. Yelena Melkumian expressed that the priority of the Russian Federation in 1990s became the relations with ex-Soviet republics because it was sphere of national interest of Russia.⁵ William E. Ferry and Roger Kanet also classified East Central Europe and the West, as well as North-East Asia as of secondary importance for the Russian foreign policy.⁶ Relations with the West had

¹ William E. Ferry and Roger Kanet, “Towards the Future: Emerging Trends in Russian Foreign Policy”, *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, Roger Kanet and Alexander V. Kozhemiakin (eds.), Hampshire and New York: Macmillan Press, St. Martin’s Press, 1997, pp. 192-193.

² John Berryman, “Russian Foreign Policy: An Overview”, *Russia After the Cold War*, Mike Bowker and Cameron Ross (eds.), New York: Longman, Pearson Education Limited, 2000, p.337.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ William E. Ferry and Roger Kanet, *op. cit.*, p.193.

⁵ Interview with Yelena Melkumin, Moscow, 20.06.2005.

⁶ Ferry and Kanet, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

a special importance for Russia since Gorbachev period. In the first years of the Russian Federation, to get financial resources for economic reforms Yeltsin followed a Western-oriented policy. Boris Kagarlitsky, director of Institute for Globalization Studies defined this policy, arguing that

Russian Foreign policy actually had a sort of a history of 1991 and the vision was typical of the first years of Yeltsin. They were absolutely certain. We lost the cold war and the most important thing was to please the winner and what please the winner? And that was basically the logic behind the quite lot of major Russian concessions, some were unilateral and some of them were even not asked by the West. They were just trying to understand what the West would like to have to get from them, what they will appreciate and let's delivered. In fact by the late 1990s it became clear that American foreign policy was not reacting so they thought that Russia gave everything it can but was not given anything return. The only symbolic reward was that Russia was allowed to join the G-8 but joining the G-8 was suddenly discussed as the lack of real weight within the G-8. (...)

That changed this situation when Primakov became foreign minister. (...) Primakov, without directly opposing to America, European Union or any particular specific power in the West, was trying to cooperate with important non-Western countries, to work together and to formulate certain specific priorities and defend common interests, common goals vis-à-vis the United States, in lesser extent vis-à-vis the European Union.⁷

William E. Ferry and Roger Kanet expressed the least important regions as Asia, the Middle East and most of the Third World and they stated that the aim of the Russian foreign policy in these areas was to get economic benefit.⁸

Another important feature of Russian foreign policy was that pragmatism and economic concerns enhanced their effects on foreign policy makers although military and security concerns were still important in some areas. William E. Ferry and Roger Kanet defined this feature as “a shift from an ideologically to a pragmatically based foreign policy”⁹. They also added that “More decisions are now made according to a cost-benefit analysis that emphasizes concrete benefits to be gained by Russia in pursuing a particular line of policy.”¹⁰ However, they also expressed the problem of lack of “conceptual framework with which mould a coherent set of foreign policy priorities. The de-ideologization of foreign policy

⁷ Interview with Boris Kagarlitsky, Moscow, 15.06.2005.

⁸ William E. Ferry and Roger Kanet, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

decisions left policy-makers with no clear alternative vision.”¹¹ Because in this period Russia tried to define her national identity, statehood and national interests and this led not to form a coherent foreign policy strategies.

Another feature of Russian foreign policy, many authors expressed, was that there were numerous factors and groups affecting Russian foreign policy making. According to Ilan Berman, “Russian foreign policy is the sum of global ambition and domestic instability.”¹² Berryman also stated that

Russia is involved in a ‘double-struggle’ to develop a new polity, state structure and economy. In these circumstances foreign policy is a contested area, not just subject to the normal clash of domestic politics but also forming the focal point of a wider debate about the very nature, identity and values of the new Russia.¹³

There were many foreign policy opinion groups. According to Berryman, there were three groups trying to affect the foreign policy-making process: “Liberal Westernisers and International Institutionalists under the title of Reformers; State realists and Eurasianists under the title of Centrists and National Patriotic expansionists as Nationalists”¹⁴. Reformers were pro-Western groups and favoured close relations with the West and supported to be member of international organizations. Centrists supported that Russia should pursue her national interest even if these interest confronted with the West’s interests and wanted that Russia should be like a bridge connecting Europe and Asia. They were also categorized as Atlanticist and Eurasianists.¹⁵ Berryman expressed that there were different views among the groups called the Nationalists and said that some of them sought an alliance of Slavic states; others wished to see the revival of the Soviet Union and others envisaged Russia becoming the centre of a great empire.¹⁶ The debate of

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

¹² Ilan Berman, “Russia and the Middle East Vacuum”, *IASPS Research Papers in Strategy*, , June 2001, No. 12, p. 3.

¹³ Berryman, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.338.

¹⁵ Nicolai Petro and Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Russian Foreign Policy from Empire to Nation-State*, New York: Longman, 1997, p. 98.

¹⁶ Berryman, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

these groups affected foreign-policy making and led shifts and fluctuations in foreign policy.

All of these factors also shaped the Russia's regional politics and foreign policy towards the Middle East. On this subject, Roland Dannreuther said that

Post-Soviet Russia has no major ideological components in her foreign policy towards the Middle East, has more limited and pragmatic ambitions, than was the case before because there is a debate about the identity of Russian state and the need for Russia to re-assert it as 'great power status' and its weakness.¹⁷

In this general framework, the strategic importance of Moscow's former allies in the Middle East fell¹⁸. However, Meliha Altunşik also expressed that "Russia (...) was struggling to continue, as much as possible, its hegemony in these areas."¹⁹ It was also said that Russia's regional priorities shifted to the Central Asia and her rivals in this region, Turkey and Iran. Yelena Melkumina evaluated Russian policy such as

At that time, the policy in the Middle East was not so active because it is very difficult for the country to create new principles and new approaches to the foreign policy. The most important was the relationship with the West and the ex-Soviet republics.²⁰

Robert Freedman also claimed that Russia's first priority in the region was Turkey and Iran; the second was the Persian Gulf (Iran, Iraq and the Gulf Cooperation countries), and the third was the Arab-Israeli zone composed of Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians.²¹

In this period, Iraq was not among the countries which Russia gave first priority. Iraq was also under pressure of the international community because of the Gulf war. In Moscow there was growing enthusiasm for establishing relations with the West. So in this first period of Yeltsin, relations with Iraq did not develop.

¹⁷ Roland Dannreuther, "Is Russia Returning to the Middle East", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 29, Issue 3, 1998, pp. 350-351.

¹⁸ Petro and Rubinstein, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

¹⁹ Meliha Altunşik, "Roundtable Discussion: The Turkey-Iran-Russia Triangle", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, Spring 2000, p.189.

²⁰ Interview with Yelena Melkumin, Moscow, 20.06.2005.

²¹ Robert O. Freedman, "Russian Policy toward the Middle East under Yeltsin and Putin", *Jerusalem Letter*, No. 461, 02.09.2001.

3.2. PRO-WESTERNISM AND RUSSIA'S RELATIONS WITH IRAQ (1992-1995)

During the first years of the Russian Federation, Russian relations with Iraq did not develop. Russian policy makers did not give importance to Iraq. Alexandre Shumulin, Director of the Center for the Greater Middle East Conflicts, stated that “Kremlin mostly ignored this region and every body recognized this policy as a right one”.²² However, in terms of the relations with Iraq, there were also many influential groups, claiming the necessity of different policies. Robert Freedman expressed one of the critical voices, saying that “the issue of Russian-Iraqi relations was not only an issue of Russian foreign policy; it was also an issue of Russian domestic politics with hard-line critics of Yeltsin”²³. First, he underlined the Duma (the Russian parliament's lower house) factor. Both before and after 1993, the Duma was very critical of Yeltsin's policies. According to Robert Freedman, “during the period 1993-1999, as the Duma moved steadily to the right, Yeltsin took an increasingly harder line in Russian foreign policy, especially toward the ‘Near Abroad’ and the Middle East”²⁴ Under strong Duma criticism. Yeltsin replaced his foreign minister Kozyrev with Primakov in 1996.

Robert Freedman also said that there were some pro-Iraqi groups that supported lifting sanctions because of economic interests. He also underlined that there were also another group who “asserted that not only would a unilateral lifting of the embargo seriously damage the United States-Russian relations (...) but it would also alienate the oil-rich states of the Gulf Cooperation Council”²⁵ and they supported Kozyrev's policies.

In the region, under the effects of these groups since 1992, there have been two versions of Russian policy: One version, described by Oded Eran was “a reluctant

²² Interview with Alexandre Shumilin, Moscow, 09.06.2005.

²³ Robert O. Freedman, “Moscow and the Middle East since the Collapse of the Soviet Union: A Preliminary Analysis”, *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, Roger E. Kanet and Alexander V. Kozhemiakin (eds.), London and New York: Macmillan Press Ltd. And St. Martin Press Inc., 1997, p. 146.

²⁴ Freedman, “Russian Policy toward the Middle East...”.

²⁵ Freedman, “Moscow and the Middle East...”, p. 147.

support for American policies” and its opponent underlined the need for more vigorous international behavior.²⁶

In 1992, Russia was clearly tending to support the strict policy of the United States and the West against Iraq. Moscow sent two warships to help in the blockade to impose sanctions against Iraq.²⁷ About Kozyrev’s policy, Roland Dannreuther expressed that

Kozyrev was determined to demonstrate Russia’s repudiation of traditional Soviet policy toward the Middle East (...), referring to Russia’s support of the United Nations policy towards Iraq as the litmus test of Russia’s stand on the ‘civilized democratic side of the barricade’.²⁸

However Yelena Melkumin explained Russia’s policy from a different perspective and argued that Russia attempt to balance her foreign policy in the Middle East. She had good relations not only with Arab countries but also with the Gulf countries, with which she had no relations at all in the Soviet period.²⁹ After a while Moscow changed its foreign policy towards the region.

In 1993, under the effect of criticism of some elite groups and the parliamentary opposition, Russia modified her policy and formulated a new strategic concept. This foreign policy concept contained “more assertive foreign policy orientation.”³⁰ It underlined to defend Russia’s great power status. National interest should be pursued even if they contradicted with the West’s interests.³¹

In addition to this new concept, Yeltsin also reformulated Russia’s Iraqi policy and tried to improve the relations. He firstly changed his position on the policy of the United States and the West towards Iraq and he criticized the United States

²⁶ Oded Eran, “Russia in the Middle East: The Yeltsin Era and Beyond”, *Russia between East and West Russian Foreign Policy on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century*, Gabriel Gorodetsky (ed.), London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, p. 163.

²⁷ Freedman, “Moscow and the Middle East...”, p. 147.

²⁸ Andrei Kozyrev, “Transfiguration of kafkaesque Metamorphosis?”, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 20 August 1992 in Dannreuther, *op.cit.*, p. 348.

²⁹ Interview with Yelena Melkumin, Moscow, 20.06.2005.

³⁰ Dannreuther, *op.cit.*, p. 348.

³¹ *Ibid.*

renewed bombing of Iraq.³² After that, he sent envoys to Baghdad to cultivate good relations with Iraq.

The first envoy to Iraq was sent in February 1993, under the head of Igor Melichov, deputy director of the Middle East Department of the Foreign Ministry.³³ Igor Melichov reportedly expressed that the goal of his visit was to strengthen and promote Russian-Iraqi ties.³⁴ Melichov's superior in the Foreign Ministry, Viktor Posuvaliuk, also stated that Russia could not ignore 'the potential for Russian-Iraqi cooperation'³⁵ while reiterated Russia's support for the United Nations sanctions. According to Robert Freedman, in this period Yeltsin followed a policy similar to Gorbachev's "minimax strategy".³⁶ He was seeking to maintain the maximum influence in Iraq while he tried to alienate neither the Gulf Cooperation Council states nor the United States.³⁷

In the case of the United States bombing of Iraq case in 1993, for example Russian foreign minister announced Russia's support to the United States. In June 1993, following the unsuccessful Iraqi attempt to assassinate former President George Bush who was visiting Kuwait, the United States again bombed Iraq.³⁸ Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev supported the United States' attack. Washington had told Moscow in advance³⁹ and they said that "We cannot consider hunting presidents even former ones, to be normal. Tolerating this would be tantamount to endorsing a policy of state terrorism."⁴⁰ In the same month, however, there took place meeting

³² Freedman, "Moscow and the Middle East...", p. 147.

³³ Serhat Erkmen, "SSCB'nin Yıkılması Ertesinde Moskova-Bağdat İlişkileri", *Stratejik Analiz*, No. 27, Temmuz 2002, p. 65.

³⁴ Freedman, "Moscow and the Middle East...", p. 148.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Freedman, "Russian Policy toward the Middle East...".

³⁹ *Izvestia*, June 29 1993 (*CDSP*, Vol. 45, No. 26, (1993), p. 13) in *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

of the deputy foreign ministers of Russia and Iraq and this was the first official meeting.⁴¹

Moreover, Yeltsin tried to establish economic relations with Iraq. In August 1993, Yeltsin dispatched an economic delegation headed by Oleg Davydov, deputy Minister of the Ministry for External Economic Relations, to Baghdad.⁴² During this meeting, they decided that Russia had the right to continue the bids, gained during the Soviet era.⁴³

After the September 1993 crisis between the Parliament and Yeltsin and his success, he seemed to be more independent from the Duma in decisions about foreign policy. Russia and Kuwait signed a defense treaty and “the treaty was clear rebuff to Iraqi refuse to recognize Kuwait’s independence and border, and to Iraq’s supporters in Moscow.”⁴⁴

In 1994, Yeltsin seemed to change his mind and made gestures towards Iraq. The official Russian position on sanctions against Iraq also began to change. By 1994, the Russian government began to call for the lifting of sanctions even though Yeltsin was unwilling to damage relations with the United States.⁴⁵ Sergei Lavrov started to argue about these sanctions during the United Nations Security Council sessions.⁴⁶ Yeltsin also used this issue to bargain with Saddam.

In October 1994, a crisis erupted between the United States and Iraq because Saddam Hussein again moved his army towards Kuwait. During this crisis, Yeltsin sought to exploit the situation by sending Kozyrev. He tried to persuade Saddam Hussein to pull back his troops and recognize Kuwait’s border and sovereignty; in

⁴¹ A.Agarkov, “Rossiisko-Irachiie otnosheniia no novom etapie razvitiia sotrudnichestva: problemy i perspektivy”, *Vostok i Rossiia no rubieze XXI veka* (Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moskva, 1998), p. 216 in Tareg Y. Ismael and Andrei Kreultz, “Russian-Iraqi Relations: A Historical and Political Analysis”, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Fall 2001, Vol 23, Issue 4.

⁴² Freedman, “Moscow and the Middle East...”, p. 148.

⁴³ Erkmen, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁴⁴ Freedman, “Moscow and the Middle East...”, p. 149.

⁴⁵ Robert Freedman, “Russia’s Middle East Ambitions”, *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 3, September 1998.

⁴⁶ Erkmen, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

return, he offered the gradual lifting of sanctions.⁴⁷ However, he could not be successful and the stretched relationship between Iraq and the United States - Gulf Cooperation Council states put Yeltsin into a difficult position to pursue the minimax strategy.

In November 1994, however, Moscow announced that “it was ready to resume arms supplies to Iraq once the United Nations sanctions were lifted⁴⁸ and to provide technical training to Iraqi officers in the field of communications.”⁴⁹ On the 6th of December, Tariq Aziz visited Moscow. During this visit, Russia’s Foreign Ministry underlined that Russia’s close relations with Iraq would not be at the expense of other Gulf States and Russia could not take a side.⁵⁰

Following Tariq Aziz’s visit, in January 1995, an Iraqi parliamentary delegation visited Russia and was received by Prime Minister Chernomyrdin.⁵¹ According to Talal Nizameddin, Iraq hoped that it could use the historical links with Russia to influence the Security Council.⁵² It seemed that Moscow did what Iraq hoped. In February, Deputy Foreign Minister Posuvaliuk warned the United Nations Security Council to respond to Iraq’s positive steps.⁵³ Kozyrev expressed that “he regretted that certain members of the United Nations Security Council supported ‘use of the sanctions and though pressure without applying political methods.’”⁵⁴ Talal Nizameddin also stated that the Russian leadership both began to express the importance of relationship between Iraq and Russia and Kozyrev tried to be careful

⁴⁷ Freedman, “Moscow and the Middle East...”, p. 150.

⁴⁸ Adel Darwish, *The Independent*, 19 December 1994, *FBIS (Central Asia)*, FBIS-Sov-94-243, 19 December 1994, p. 11 in Talal Nizameddin, *Russia and the Middle East: Towards a New Foreign Policy*, London: Hurst & Company, 1999, p. 203.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Freedman, “Moscow and the Middle East...”, p. 149.

⁵² Nizameddin, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁵³ Freedman, “Moscow and the Middle East...”, p. 149.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

about not sending a signal to the Iraqi regime, which could be interpreted as a green light for further acts of aggression.⁵⁵

Besides this visits and meetings, in May 1995, the Duma adopted a resolution calling for the removal of the oil embargo against Iraq.⁵⁶ However, the resolution was not binding for the Russian authorities and had rather symbolic importance. In this period, Iraq offered many facilities to Russian companies to get Russia's support and many economic agreements were signed between the two countries.⁵⁷

Despite all these developments, Russia's influence in Iraq diminished in the period of 1992-1995. For example, the pro-Moscow lobby lost power; pro-Italy, pro-Germany and pro-France lobbies replaced it. Besides, because of the insufficiency of Russian technology, Iraq was unwilling to side with Russia. Still Russia's capability of supporting Iraq in the international platform and especially in the United Nations Security Council was an attractive feature of Russia.⁵⁸

Iraq was important for Russia because of many factors like her concern about Russia's Muslim population and Iraq's strategic position as one of the nearest Arab countries to the Russian border. Iraq also had important natural resources reserves. Moreover, one of the most important reasons of the Yeltsin's decision to improve relations was that the United States, its allies and pro-Western Arab oil-producing countries disappointed Russia.⁵⁹

In sum, during this term, Russia tried to preserve her good relations with the West, the United States and their allies in the Middle East because she had an expectation of economic aid and support in international arena. But after a while, Yeltsin thought that Russia could establish good relations with Iraq simultaneously, could get some benefits from this relation and maximize its influence with all sides. However, it was a dilemma for Russia. While she was upgrading her relations with

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

⁵⁶ Gawdat Baghdad, "The Iraqi Crisis in the New Millennium: The Prospects," *Asian Affairs*, Vol. XXXI, Part 2, June 2000, p. 15 in Ismael and Kreultz, *op. cit.*

⁵⁷ Erkmen, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Iraq, she thought that it would also negatively affect her relationship not only with the United States but also other Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia.⁶⁰ Freedman also evaluated Russia's policy in this term as:

Moscow seems to have returned to the old strategy of trying to maximize influence with all sides. (...) Moscow hoped to use the lifting of sanctions against Iraq and to gain payments of Iraq's billions of dollars of debts. How successful this policy will turn out to be remains to be seen. For the time being however Russia's policy towards Iraq seems to have alienated all of GCC states with the possible exception of Kuwait.⁶¹

It seemed that Russian policy-makers decided on the insufficiency and possible failure of this policy; therefore, in 1996, Yeltsin replaced foreign minister Kozyrev with Primakov, an old Soviet Middle East specialist.

3.3. EURASIANISM AND RUSSIA'S RELATIONS WITH IRAQ (1996-1998)

When Primakov became Russia's foreign minister in January 1996, the situation in Kremlin was not very brilliant and there were grave problems. Yeltsin was seriously ill and during the 1996 elections, he faced serious heart surgery. This affected Russians gravely to find them with another incapacitated leader.⁶² Moreover, during 1998 economic crisis, Yeltsin lost the support of big business; they had serious problems and the crisis showed the weakness of Yeltsin. There occurred a power vacuum in the Kremlin, and it was filled by the parliament and the government not by the President.⁶³ Leadership also had to face the fact that Russia was losing the war in Chechnya, was a very weak state⁶⁴ and had many problems with the Western Europe countries because of the Kosovo-Serbian war in 1998.

⁶⁰ Nizameddin, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

⁶¹ Freedman, "Moscow and the Middle East...", p. 151.

⁶² Alexei Avtonomov, "The President and Parliament in Contemporary Russia", *Russia After the Cold War*, Mike Bowker and Cameron Ross (eds.), New York: Longman, Pearson Education Limited, 2000, p. 61.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁶⁴ Freedman, "Russia and The Middle ...", *op. cit.*

Under these circumstances, Primakov was expected to put his imprint as a Middle East specialist on Russian foreign policy. Boris Kagarlitsky summarized Primakov's foreign policy expressing that

Primakov had a vision which was very interesting one, which was never formulated or developed in a very set of clear ideas but you can reconstruct it. What they did was first, (they accepted the fact that) "Russia is not a super power any more, we must accept this reality but Russia is still a major player which can increase its importance if it reoriented from dealing with the West to dealing with the other second rate players, like China, India, Brazil and Arab countries in the Middle East. They did something in the style of the famous non-alignment movement of the 1950s and 1960s; without directly opposing to America, European Union or any particular specific power in the West. They were trying to collaborate with important non-Western countries, work together and to formulate certain specific priorities and defend common interests, common goals vis-à-vis the United States, in lesser extent vis-à-vis the European Union.

Primakov attempted to reassert Russia's influence and power in the Middle East. He generally expressed that Russia's policy was not anti-American but "rather one in which Russia seeks to 'diversify its approach', and that the Arab world will have a considerable place in his foreign policy".⁶⁵ According to Ilan Berman, Primakov, in fact wanted to promote "Moscow as an alternative to Washington in Middle East affairs".⁶⁶ He considered Iraq as one of the most important countries. Russian foreign policy makers preferred to follow an alternative policy and to improve relations with Iraq. In this term, Russia paid attention to all events in Iraq and regarding Iraq.

Among these events, first, on the 3rd September 1996, American missiles launched against military targets in Southern Iraq on the eve of the events in Northern Iraq. The Russian government issued a statement describing American action as disproportionate and unacceptable: "The military actions in and around Iraq must be stopped. Russia insistently urged all parties to abandon the logic of force and to embark on the path of a political settlement of the crisis situation that has arisen."⁶⁷ Kommersant-Daily expressed that Clinton's bombardment of Iraq was also a slap

⁶⁵ "Russia's New Middle East Policy", *MERIA Journal*, No. 6, June 1997.

⁶⁶ Berman, *op. cit.*, p.8.

⁶⁷ Dmitry Gornostayev and Aleksandr Reutov, "Second Strike Against Iraq Confirms that US Thinks It Can Do As It Pleases", *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, September 5, 1996, p. 1 in "Moscow Condemns US Strikes Against Iraq", *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. 48, No. 36, 1996, pp. 7-8.

in the face of Primakov because it was also expressed that Washington ignored Moscow's opinion as a partner.⁶⁸

On the 10th of November, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and Yevgeny Primakov held talks. During these negotiations, "Primakov advised the immediate implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution No 986 which authorizes Iraq to export limited amounts of oil to pay for food and medical supplies."⁶⁹ But after the meeting, Primakov stated that "Moscow does not intend to undertake any sort of mediation at the present time."⁷⁰ This showed that fluctuations in Russian foreign policy towards Iraq continued even under the ministry of Primakov.

Besides these events on the 11th of December, Sergei Shoigu visited Baghdad regarding the oil problem.⁷¹ According to Krill Dybsky, "to all appearances, it was at that critical moment the country's leadership finally decided to 'take (the problem) into its own hands' by sending Sergei Shoigu to hold talks with the Baghdad regime."⁷² As he expressed, Russia tried to avoid being excluded from the Iraqi oil market in the post sanctions period; therefore, during the embargo period, Russia tried to protect its ties with Iraq and to grant some easiness to Russian oil companies after the sanctions were lifted. In the framework of the oil for food programme, it was seen that the sanction regime started to be eased.

In March 1997, Russia secured the \$3.8 billion contract with Iraq for the development of the West Kurna field once the sanctions had lifted.⁷³ Lukoil signed

⁶⁸ "Tomahawk Blow To Russia's Interests", *Kommersant-Daily*, September 4, 1996, pp. 1-4 in "Moscow Condemns US Strikes Against Iraq", *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. 48, No. 36, 1996, p. 7.

⁶⁹ Vladimir Barinov, "Russian Foreign Minister Advises Old Comrade to Comply With All UN Security Council Resolutions", *Sevodnya*, November 11, 1996, p. 1 in "Moscow is satisfied with Iraqi Authorities' Position", *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. 48, No. 45, 1996, p. 22.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Krill Dybsky, "Oil and Money Will Flow to Russia Through Iraqi Pipeline", *Sevodnya*, December 11, 1996, p. 3 in "Middle East- Iraq", *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. 48, No. 50, 1996, p. 25.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Dannreuther, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

a 23-year contract giving it a 68.5% interest with the other Russian oil companies Zarubezhneft and Mashinoimport, acquiring 2.25% each. Iya Motzkobili argued that Russian companies' efforts intensified because the phase of two of the United Nations' "Oil for Food" program began and he expressed the Western complaints on the issue saying that "Russia is capturing ever-larger amounts of Iraqi oil thanks to Foreign Minister Primakov's excellent relations with both the Iraqi political leadership and major figures in the Russian oil sector."⁷⁴ However the companies did not report any activity in the field because the required equipment was not brought since it would violate the United Nations sanction regime.⁷⁵

Duma also supported Primakov's initiatives on the Iraqi oil issue. On the 4th of June 1997, deputies to the State Duma passed a law "On Measures to Develop Cooperation with the Republic of Iraq".⁷⁶ According to the law, Russia would stop budget funds to maintain the international sanctions; Russian state institutions, individuals and legal entities would resume their commercial ties with Iraq, and Russian government was allowed to initiate collecting Iraq's debt to Russia.⁷⁷ The law, however, was needed to be approved by the Federation Council and the President but according to Dmitry Chernogorsky, President and the government appeared to favor a gradual lifting of sanctions as oil-for-food programme.⁷⁸

In international arena, Primakov tried to erode sanctions with the help of France and China. According to Serhat Erkmen, by their efforts, the United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1134 was not only a more moderate decision but also it did not imply firmer sanctions.⁷⁹ In the following months, Russian officials lobbied directly for easing of sanctions and a positive conclusion of the United

⁷⁴ Iya Motzkobili, "Russian Companies Like Iraqi Oil", *Kommersant-Daily*, August 13, 1997, p. 4 in "Middle East-Iraq", *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. 49, No. 32, 1997, p. 22.

⁷⁵ Florance C. Fee, "Russia and Iraq: The Question of the Russian Oil Contracts", *Middle East Economic Survey*, Vol. 56, No. 14, 07.04.2003.

⁷⁶ Dmitry Chernogorsky, "Law Passed on Cooperation with Iraq", *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 5 June 1997, p. 2 in "Middle East- Iraq", *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. 49, No. 23, 1997, p. 17.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷⁹ Erkmen, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

Nations' examination of Iraqi weapons of Mass Destruction programmes.⁸⁰ However, Saddam Hussein's problems with the West made these lobbies ineffective.

On the 29th of October 1997, a dispute between the United States and Iraq had arisen again. Saddam Hussein ordered the American members of the United Nations arms inspection team to leave Iraq in a week. To avoid any attack by the United States, Primakov held meetings and even Yeltsin negotiated with Tariq Aziz in Moscow. On the 19th of November, Russia and Iraq announced the Joint Russian-Iraqi Statement.⁸¹ On the 20th of November 1997, Primakov held a meeting with the members of the United Nations Security Council.⁸² During the meeting, the permanent members accepted that Iraq fulfilled all relevant resolution of the UN Security Council completely.⁸³ On the same day, Baghdad confirmed its consent to the return of all the members of the United Nations' special commission monitoring the disarmament of that country to Iraq⁸⁴ and a possible attack by the United States was prevented. This success of Primakov had many consequences. Primakov evaluated this event expressing that

I believe that this is a great success for Russian diplomacy, one that is recognized by absolutely everyone. At those talks, we insisted that Iraq fulfill all the resolutions. We expect that Iraq will make a decision today, without any exceptions, on return of the inspectors to the country (...). Russia achieved this. It was achieved without the use of force and without a show of force; it was achieved through diplomatic means.⁸⁵

Dmitry Gornostayev expressed another aspect of the collision stating that

Washington has now been forced to content itself with a secondary role in a play, the script for which it had tried to write itself. (...) In the end, the White House had to go along with the Kremlin's policy, something that has not

⁸⁰ Berman, *op. cit.*, p.8.

⁸¹ Dmitry Gornostayev, "Russia Succeeds in Averting a New War in the Persian Gulf", *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, November 21, 1997, pp. 1-4 in "Primakov Credited With Averting New Gulf War", *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. 49, No. 47, 1997, p.1.

⁸² Freedman, "Russia's Middle East" *op. cit.*

⁸³ Irina Denisova, "The World Opposes War", *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, November 21, 1997, p. 4 in "Primakov Credited With Averting New Gulf War", *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. 49, No. 47, 1997, p.1.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

happened for a very long time. (...) There is no doubt that this has strengthened Russia's prestige as an influential power not only throughout the Middle East.⁸⁶

On the other hand, Stanislav Kondrashov, on the effect of this success on Russia in the long run, mentioning that:

Russia's success is now being tested everyday- both for authenticity and for longevity. (...) Movement forward or backward depends on it to a far lesser extent than it does on Washington and Baghdad. (...) One small thing remains: to see whether this diplomatic virtue will triumph or will be punished.⁸⁷

This was the last victory of Primakov in relations with Iraq. This also gave him a wrong impression about both the relations with Iraq and the relations with the United States. He started to see Russia's power and influence more significant than it was. This impression pushed Primakov to directly confront with the United States for the sake of Iraq.

3.4. RUSSIA AND THE DESERT FOX OPERATION OF THE UNITED STATES IN IRAQ (1998-1999)

In 1998, Saddam Hussein tried to follow a hard line policy toward the United Nations. In this situation Clinton developed a negative approach related to Iraq. Primakov and Yeltsin continued to support Iraq and they preferred to pursue a policy that was more controversial to prevent an American-led coalition attack.

In January 1998, Saddam began to violate the agreement reached with Primakov by preventing arm inspectors from entering his palaces and other sites where chemical and biological activities were suspected.⁸⁸ Then, the United States and Britain massed their military forces in the Persian Gulf and their plan for an attack on Iraq became apparent; upon this, Russia started her second diplomatic effort.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Gornostayev, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁸⁷ Stanislav Kondrashov, *Izvestia*, November 26, 1997, p. 3 in "Primakov Credited With Averting New Gulf War", *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. 49, No. 47, 1997, p. 6.

⁸⁸ Robert Freedman, "Russia and the Middle East: The Primakov Era", *MERIA Journal*, Vol. 2, No.2, May 1998.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

On the 28th of January, Viktor Posuvalyuk went to Iraq, was received by Saddam Hussein and gave him a personal message from Boris Yeltsin.⁹⁰ It was known that in the message, Yeltsin requested that “Iraq must lift moratorium on the activity of the United Nations Special Commission and fulfill the recommendations of the Security Council and commission itself must increase its effectiveness.”⁹¹ In that time, Russia failed to achieve the easy success as in 1997. According to Konstantin Eggert, Saddam Hussein used Russia as a tool to achieve his goals and left Moscow in a difficult position: “Before the eyes of the entire world, a country that aspires to the title of a great power is literally begging Saddam Hussein to agree to fulfill a United Nations resolution for which it did not vote.”⁹² He also criticized Primakov stating that

He was unable to foresee Iraq’s actions, underestimated the Americans’ resolution and miscalculated the position of France which is leaning toward supporting the hard line of the US and Great Britain. Finally he did not take into account the changes over the past several months in the psychological atmosphere in the Persian Gulf, where people are tired of Baghdad’s unpredictability.⁹³

During this crisis, on the 3rd of February, Primakov approved the draft of a resolution on Iraq and Duma adopted the resolution.⁹⁴ According to Dmitry Gornostayev the Resolution criticized the United States and Britain, saying that

(The Resolution) condemns the trend toward the use of force in events involving Iraq, emphasizes the need to resolve the crisis in the region by peaceful means and it notes the impermissibility of using military methods of pressure, especially tactical nuclear weapons, against Iraq.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ “Placing Hope in Russian Diplomacy”, *Rossiiskkiye Vesti*, January 30, 1998, pp. 1-2 in “Moscow Maneuvers to Avert US Strike Against Iraq”, *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Vol. 50, No. 5, 1998, p.1.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Konstantin Eggert, “Baghdad Publicly Humiliates Russia, which Did All it Could to Save Iraq From Devastation.”, *Izvestia*, February 4, 1998, pp. 1-3 in “Moscow Maneuvers to Avert US Strike Against Iraq”, *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Vol. 50, No. 5, 1998, p.4.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Dmitry Gornostayev, “Clinton Might Run into a New World War- with that Warning Boris Yeltsin Intends to Avert Missile Strikes Against Iraq”, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, February 5, 1998, p. 1 in “Moscow Maneuvers to Avert US Strike Against Iraq”, *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Vol. 50, No. 52, 1998, p.6.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Yeltsin made an announcement and expressed that “by his actions, he (Clinton) might run right into a new world war. He’s making too much noise. You have to be careful with such weapons. And you can never say ‘we’ll throw planes and bombs at you’. That’s not quite like Clinton.”⁹⁶ On the 5th of February, however, President’s Press Secretary blamed American reporters and their traditional grasp of the Russian language.⁹⁷

In March 1998, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister- Posuvalyuk returned to Moscow. He compared Iraq’s situation with the situation in the early 1990s and expressed the necessity of lifting sanctions.⁹⁸ At the same time, the crisis seemed to be resolved. Roland Dannreuther said that the crisis was resolved and Russian diplomacy was highly influential in resolving it.⁹⁹ In November 1998, in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, it was written that Iraqi leader announced his will to resume cooperation with international community and his decision on the issue that the Commission on Iraqi disarmament returned to Baghdad. On this issue, Alexandr Reutov said that “once again Saddam Hussein was able to use America’s military might to reinforce his own authority at home and, at the same time, to mock the US.”¹⁰⁰ In Washington, however, a reporter asked Clinton whether he ordered a strike against Iraq even “if Russia says ‘нет’ (no)”; Clinton answered him, expressing that the United States would attack despite Russian opposition.¹⁰¹

On the 16-17th of December, the United States started operation “Desert Fox” against Iraq.¹⁰² On the 17th of December, President Boris Yeltsin mentioned that

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹⁷ William M. Arkin, “Me and World War III”, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 54, Issue 3, May/June 1998, p. 73.

⁹⁸ Dannreuther, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

¹⁰⁰ Alexandr Reutov, “Iraqi Crisis Resolved for Now”, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, November 17, 1998, p. 1 in “Hussein Mocks Clinton Again”, *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Vol. 50, No. 46, 1998, p.22.

¹⁰¹ Russell Watson, Bill Powell, Melinda Liu, Gregory L. Vistica, Gregory Beals, “Yeltsin’s War Games”, *Newsweek*, Vol. 131, No. 8, 23.02.1998.

¹⁰² “Saddam’ı Vurdular”, *Hürriyet*, 17 Aralık 1998.
<http://arsiv.hurriyetim.com.tr/hur/turk/98/12/17/dunya/00dun.htm>, accessed on 27.01.2006.

this attack violated the United Nations charter and called the United States and Britain to "put an immediate end to the military actions, show restraint and prudence, and not allow a further escalation of the conflict."¹⁰³ Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov called for "an immediate halt to the United States air raids and for the United Nations chief inspector Richard Butler to be replaced as he bears personal responsibility for the air strikes against Iraq."¹⁰⁴ On the 22nd of December, the attack against Iraq ended. After the announcement of the end to the bombing of Iraq, Yeltsin again described this strike as "unlawful".

There were different comments, in the Russian press about Primakov's policies during this operation. Sergei Karaganov, chairman of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, claimed that Primakov did not defend Russia's own interest and asked whether Primakov's policy, Duma and political class's decision on withdrawing from the sanctions was rational or not.¹⁰⁵ He also underlined the Iraqi regime's harsh policy towards its own people (he used the word genocide) and the possibility that Iraq would not pay her debts even if sanctions were lifted, and he argued that to oppose the United States' dangerous actions and to pursue the interests of one's own country and people were different policies.¹⁰⁶

On the other hand Aleksei Konstantinovich Pushkov, member of the presidium of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, also expressed that he did not agree to oppose the United States especially for the sake of Iraq but he also underlined that the United States ignored Russia on many problems and that Russia should define its position, especially on the most important problems in Central Asia, he mentioned "(Otherwise) the new world system will be shaped without us and in that system, we (despite our size) will play the role of a "quantite negligeable"- a

¹⁰³ "International Reactions to US Strikes on Iraq", 17.12.1998".
<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/846607/posts>, accessed on 27.01.2006.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Sergei Karganov, "The Enemy, Foreign and Domestic", *Moskovskiye Novosti*, No. 50, December 20-27, 1998 in "US-UK Strikes on Iraq End, Russia's Stand Evaluated", *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Vol. 50, No. 52, 1998, p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

country that can be ignored.”¹⁰⁷ Mikhail Ivanov tried to explain the reasons of Russia’s “overwhelming negative reaction” by stating that

First (...) the reasons for Russia’s indignation were not out of some special love for Saddam Hussein but because of the US’s obvious attempt to offset the system of international relations. (...)
Secondly Clinton deliberately ignored Moscow’s position. (...)
Third it can happen to Iraq, who is the next? (...) What is our (Russia’s) guarantee that Russia won’t be punished the same way (because of her weapons and nuclear potential)?¹⁰⁸

Alain Gresh also described the aim of Russia’s attempt, albeit failed, to break the American monopoly on the United Nations Special Commission by increasing her own experts, participating in the flight surveillance of Iraqi territory.¹⁰⁹ Alain Gresh also underlined that Iraqi leaders deliberately maneuvered to draw Moscow to their side and he expressed that the share of Russian companies in Iraqi market during oil-for-food agreements and Russia’s granted rights in al-Qurnah oil filed were the rewards of Russia for her efforts in international arena.¹¹⁰

The problem with the Primakov’s policy was his miscalculation of Russia’s ability to intervene to the region. Oksana Antonenko also argued that “(...) Russia discovered that it (...) is no longer perceived as a major regional power. Many states understand that Russia is desperately trying to obtain great power status symbols while being unwilling to provide funds to support its influence.”¹¹¹ Oded Eran expressed this problem such as:

Primakov’s prediction for trumpeting an imminent Russian come back to the Middle East and his fondness for making hollow statement, disregarding the fact that Russian ability to influence political developments in the area had sunk to its lowest ebb since the mid-1950s, didn’t enhance Moscow’s regional statute. Neither intense diplomatic activity nor even Primakov’s personal skills at statesmanship could have transformed Russia’s current

¹⁰⁷ Aleksei Konstantinovich Pushkov, “Between Greatness and Impotence”, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, December 23, 1998, p. 3 in “US-UK Strikes on Iraq End, Russia’s Stand Evaluated”, *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Vol. 50, No. 52, 1998, p. 8 and p. 20.

¹⁰⁸ Mikhail Ivanov, “The Way Things Should Not Be”, *Russian Life*, Vol. 42, No. 2, February/March 1999, p. 64.

¹⁰⁹ Alain Gresh, “Russia’s Return to the Middle East”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Autumn 1998, p. 71.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Oksana Antonenko, “Russia’s Military Involvement in the Middle East”, *MERIA Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 5, No. 1, March 2001.

predicament. Adapting an Arab proverb: Primakov's tongue was by far longer than his hands.¹¹²

Primakov's policy was more attractive than the Kozyrev's. Many analysts evaluated that the aim of his policy was to prove the great powerness of Russia. In addition to this factor, his concerns about Iraq's Soviet era debt and Russian oil companies' rights in Iraqi oil market should not be ignored. Russia's foreign policy decision maker's policies were targeting to defend self-interests, mostly were considering prosperity. Primakov's policy also could be analysed as policies aiming both to gain prestige and to defend economic interests. Both Kozyrev and Primakov, as in the Gilpin's explanation of change in international system, tried to have sanctions regime in Iraq lifted because of this change created a more efficient situation in distribution of wealth and power. During the US operation in 1998, it can be said that Primakov tried to prevent this operation and to maintain status-quo. However, it should be said that neither Kozyrev's nor Primakov's policies could enhance Russia's prestige or could answer Russia's economic interests. To follow a close policy with Iraq or not, did not answer the purpose of the Russian foreign policy.

In September 1998, Igor Ivanov was appointed to foreign minister instead of Primakov. According to Boris Kagarlitsky, in his term till Putin presidency, he was floating between policies reversing Primakov's decisions and policies following these decisions.¹¹³ After Putin came to power, policy makers tried to re-arrange the foreign policy.

¹¹² Eran, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

¹¹³ Interview with Boris Kagarlitsky, Moscow, 15.06.2005.

CHAPTER 4

RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ UNDER PUTIN

When Putin came to power, he reformulated foreign policy of the Russian Federation. For this reasons Putin's principles are the subject of the first sub-chapter. In the second subchapter, it will be evaluated the relations between the Russian Federation and Iraq in the period of 2000 and 2003. After the explanation of the relations, because of the important effects of the American invasion of Iraq on relations, the American invasion of Iraq will be assessed in the third sub-chapter. In the following sub-chapter, Putin's policy towards Iraq in the period of 2003 and 2005 will be evaluated.

4.1. PRINCIPLES OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER PUTIN

The principles of Putin's foreign policy can be best understood by evaluating the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, announced in 2000 although Bobo Lo claimed that it was drafted mostly during Yeltsin's final year in power.¹ Aleksei Meshkov, referring to the 2000 Foreign Policy Concept, expressed the importance of both Euro-Atlantic and Asian views for Putin, but he pointed out that Putin gave importance to the multi polarity in foreign policy making.² Aleksei Meshkov defined the multi polar world vision as the cooperation between diverse

¹ Bobo Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003, p. 52.

² Aleksei Meshkov, "Topical Aspects of Russia's Foreign Policy", *International Affairs: A Russian Journal of World Politics, Diplomacy & International Relations*, Vol. 48, Issue 3, 2002.

power centers instead of rivalry.³ It seemed a balance-of-power policy, which include to avoid challenging to any power.

Another feature of Putin's foreign policy was the multi-dimensional foreign policy. Robert Legvold expressed that Putin endeavored to establish relations simultaneously with China, Japan, the United States, Iran, Iraq, India and Cuba – “all pursued without contemplating tradeoffs that such diversity will necessitate.”⁴ Bobo Lo also reiterated that Putin tried to expand Moscow's foreign policy options.⁵ Efforts to establish multi-dimensional ties were the continuing instrument to overcome the hegemonic dominance of the United States.

Additional to the importance given to multipolarity and multi-dimensional ties, one of the most important points, expressed commonly about Putin's foreign policy was the “uncertainties”. Margot Light expressed the reason of this uncertainty as a “difficulty of conceptualizing foreign policy without the aid of a pervasive ideology and (...) non-existence of consensus on foreign policy”.⁶ Lydmilla Selezneva confirmed that foreign policy was de-ideologized.⁷

Another property of Putin's policy was importance he gave to economy and pragmatism. Lydmilla Selezneva mentioned that foreign policy was turned into “a more pragmatic policy, based on the criteria of economic efficiency.”⁸ She added that Putin's policy was European oriented and was based on pragmatism; moreover economic effectiveness was one of its priorities.⁹ Robert Legvold also confirmed that most important properties of Putin's foreign policy were importance of economy and pragmatism. He added a third priority: importance of relations with

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Robert Legvold, “Russia's Unformed Foreign Policy”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 80, Issue 5, Sep/Oct. 2001.

⁵ Lo, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

⁶ Margot Light, “In Search of an Identity: Russian Foreign Policy and the End of Ideology”, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 19, Issue 3, September 2003, pp. 53-54.

⁷ Ludmilla Selezneva, “Post-Soviet Foreign Policy: Between Doctrine and Pragmatism”, *Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy*, Rick Fawn (ed.), London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, pp. 13-17.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11-19.

the Near Abroad countries.¹⁰ Boris Kagarlitsky, director Institute for Globalization Studies, also underlined the importance of the Commonwealth of Independent States but he mentioned that Russian leadership did not develop any long-term strategy concerning these countries.¹¹

After 9/11 events in the United States of America, Putin reformulate his foreign policy and supported the United States in the war against terrorism. 9/11 events opened the way of cooperation with the West against the common security threats as terrorism. According to Alex Pravda, this change was not revolutionary change but Putin's "post-September steps reflect a remarkable radicalization of features discernible in Putin's earlier policies."¹² Putin's policies after 9/11 events seemed to be invigorated forms of his policies before it.

Putin turned Russia's foreign policy into a more deliberate one and tried to avoid entering into unwinnable battles. Olga Vlasova, from Ekspert magazine, expressed on this issue that Putin tried to avoid confronting anybody, not only the USA because Russia did not have enough power.¹³ Alexander Shumilin, director of the Center for the Greater Middle East Conflicts, however commented on Putin's policy stating that "what is trying to Putin is to divide economics from politics. Politically Russia is with the West; economically he is trying to get some benefits in developing traditional relations. This is specific priority of the Russian policy."¹⁴ This was result of Putin's pragmatic approach for the sake of enhancing economic interests of Russia.

Especially 9/11 events, importance given to economic issues increased. Bobo Lo said on the effect of 9/11 that "The sequence of global developments since 9/11 centered in the primarily of international security issues should have had the effect of accelerating the economization of Russian foreign policy."¹⁵ He claimed that in

¹⁰ Legvold, *op. cit.*

¹¹ Interview with Boris Kagarlitsky, Moscow, 15.06.2005.

¹² Alex Pravda, "Putin's Foreign Policy after 11 September: Radical or Revolutionary?", *Russia Between East and West*. Gabriel Gorodetsky (ed.), London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, p.39-40.

¹³ Interview with Olga Vlasova, Moscow, 16.06.2005.

¹⁴ Interview with Alexandre Shumilin, Moscow, 09.06.2005.

¹⁵ Lo, *op.cit.*, p. 121.

the Soviet and the Tsarist times, economy had a very low priority when compared with security and geopolitics. Similarly after the cold war, foreign policy of the Russian Federation in Yeltsin period maintained economy in the second-class status.¹⁶ Putin assigned emphasis to the economic priorities, seeing the first, direct linkage between an active foreign policy and the domestic socio-economic transformation and prosperity and the second, the interrelationship between geo-economics and geopolitics.¹⁷

Janusz Bugajski expressed another point about the economization of Russian foreign policy, claiming that “Putin views economic relations as an especially valuable means of gaining political influence.”¹⁸ He added that close connections between the Kremlin and large Russian companies were found and foreign and economic policies were closely coordinated.¹⁹

In addition to deliberate policies concerning to security issues and importance given to economic issues, Timofei Bordachev, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Russia in Global Affairs also expressed another property about Putin’s policy, mentioning that

Policy of reliance on only energy policy. Because I do not think that Mr. Putin sees any other resources of Russia beyond energy. For him energy is absolute power and absolute importance. His policy is very personal if we take the example of Ukraine in last year when Russia was fighting against one of the candidates which is now president of Ukraine only because Mr. Putin thought that he is American ancient (American-sided) not because of political considerations or important reflections of a strategic vision but it was very very personalized attitude. So I would say that Mr. Putin’s foreign policy is much more personally motivated than it was in times of Yeltsin or in times of Gorbachev. Many people work to use Yeltsin for having personnel relations. But if you look, you see that Putin is relying on personnel relations much more than Yeltsin did.²⁰

Putin’s policies had specific features as multipolarity, pragmatism or economization. But it is possible to say that Putin mostly followed policies to

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 51-53.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁹ Janusz Bugajski, “Russia’s New Europe”, *The National Interest*, Issue 74, Winter 2003/2004, p.86.

²⁰ Interview with Timofei Bordachev, Moscow, 17.06.2005.

increase Russia's power by advancing economic interests, instead of policies focused on enhancing prestige.

The relations with the Middle East were shaped under this general framework. Putin gave importance to relations with Middle Eastern countries. According to Yelena Melkumian, from the Moscow State University, "In the beginning of our century, some new features in the relationship with the Arab countries could be seen. It may be connected with this terrorism threat. (...) Russia is trying to be more active in Arab countries."²¹ She also assessed Putin's policy toward the Middle East, expressing that

Some points characterize Putin's policy. Firstly, it is very practical policy, aimed at some practical goals as to receive investment from the Middle East countries, to develop economic cooperation. Other very important point is to be active member of the Middle East conflict resolution. I think that Russian leadership considers that they cannot be as active as the United States. At the same time, they don't want to lose position of Russia in this region, they want an active role in this region but the most important consideration of the Russian leadership are the practical goals of the policy because if you look for the concept of Russian foreign policy which adopted in the beginning of 2000, the time that Putin became a president. You will see that in this concept Russian policy the practical goals of the foreign policy are of the center of the Russian strategy in general.²²

Alexander Shumulin also expressed the improvement of the relations with the Middle Eastern countries after 9/11 but he added Putin's first priority in the region was Israel, second priority was the moderate countries and the third priority was all the others countries.²³ Oded Eran also claimed that Putin's main targets relating to this region were economic interests and regional stability.²⁴ These general objectives were the main goals which determined the relations with Iraq.

4.2. PRAGMATISM IN RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ (2000-2003)

When Putin came to power, he largely followed the same direction with his predecessor's policy towards Iraq and preserve close relations so much that in 2000 Saddam Hussein elevated Iraqi-Russian relations to the rank of strategic

²¹ Interview with Yelena Melkumin, Moscow, 20.06.2005.

²² Interview with Yelena Melkumin, Moscow, 20.06.2005.

²³ Interview with Alexandre Shumilin, Moscow, 09.06.2005.

²⁴ Oded Eran, "Russia in the Middle East: The Yeltsin Era and Beyond", *Russia Between East and West*. Gabriel Gorodetsky (ed.), London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, p.166-167.

partnership.²⁵ He inherited three main goals from the Yeltsin era and these were the main determining factors of this term's policies:

- a. To regain the more than 7\$ billion dollars owed to Russia by the regime of Saddam Hussein
- b. To assist in the pursuit of major Russian business interests in Iraq, especially for Moscow's oil companies: interests that could be developed once the UN sanctions against Iraq were lifted.
- c. To secure a partial and full lifting of the sanctions"²⁶

So, this stage was shaped by the two important factors: Economic sanctions and Russian efforts to lift the sanctions in the United Nations Security Council, and Russia's desire to preserve their close relations with a so-called Soviet era ally.

In the United Nations Security Council meeting, however, Putin preferred not to use his veto power against the Resolution No 1284. Robert Freedman analysed the Resolution as follow:

The resolution no 1284 set up a new UN inspection agency, the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), to replace UNSCOM and demanded from Iraq "unrestricted access and provision of information" and it allows UNMOVIC teams "immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to any and all areas, facilitates, equipment records, and means of transport they wish to inspect". The resolution also reiterated Iraq's obligation to repatriate all Kuwaiti and third country nationals whom it held, and requested the UN secretary general to report to the council every four months on Iraq's compliance with this part of the resolution. The resolution also held (...) removal of the ceiling on the amounts of oil Iraq could sell and possible increases in the amounts of oil, spare parts and equipment to be imported, (...) and the sanctions on the import of civilian goods to Iraq would be suspended for a 120-day period that would be renewable.²⁷

Despite the disappointment of Iraq, a few days after the resolution passed, Iraq agreed to go ahead with a \$419 million deal with the Russian firm Technoprom Export to resume construction of a large power station, which had been interrupted by the invasion of Kuwait and the sanction regime.²⁸

²⁵ *Mezhdunarodnie otnosheniia no Blizhnem i Srednem Vostoke u Politika Rossiia* (Moscow: Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences), p. 41 in Tareg Y. Ismael and Andrei Kreultz, "Russian-Iraqi Relations: A Historical and Political Analysis", *Arab Studies Quarterly*; Fall 2001, Vol 23, Issue 4. p. 98.

²⁶ Robert O. Freedman, "Putin and the Middle East", *Demokratizatsiya*, 2002, p.514.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 515.

²⁸ "Russia, Iraq Sign Deal On Power Plant", *Washington Times*, 22 December 1999 in *Ibid.*, p. 516.

In June 2000, Iraqi Prime Minister Tariq Aziz visited Russia to hold a meeting on the issue of lifting of sanctions and the Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Ivanov expressed him that “Russia continued to apply maximum pressure for the quickest end and then the permanent lifting of international sanctions against Iraq.”²⁹ Russian deputies, however, stressed the importance of the mission of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.³⁰ Russia was also influential on the selection of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission’s chairman and under her effect, Hans Blix was selected as the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission’s chairman and this was seen as a little victory in Russia.³¹

Despite this victory, in February 2001, when the American and British air forces bombed Iraq again, president Putin supported Iraq and criticized two countries. On the 22nd of February 2001, the Duma approved a resolution calling on President Putin just to seek a United Nations decision to lift the sanctions regime against Iraq, but rejected the original proposal that called on Putin to unilaterally lift the sanctions on Iraq in response to bombardment.³²

In April 2001, Iraqi vice president Taha Yasin Ramadan visited Moscow again but could get only a promise from Putin to work for lifting the sanctions.³³ In this stage, Putin and Russian representatives worked on this subject but tried to avoid using veto power.

Saddam Hussein seemed to be disappointed about all these inconclusive developments after the February attacks, he had threatened to cancel contracts already signed with Russian oil companies unless they began work.³⁴ Despite this tense development, in the first ten months of 2001, Russia signed contracts worth

²⁹ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, July 2000, p. 59 in Ismael and Kreutz, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Freedman, *op. cit.*, p. 516.

³² Ismael and Kreutz., *op. cit.*, p. 99.

³³ Alexander Rentov, “Vladimir Putin Didn’t Withdraw from Sanctions Regime”, *Kommersant*, 19 April 2001, CDSP 53, No. 16, p. 17 in Freedman, *op. cit.*, p. 517.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

more than 1.85\$ billion with Iraq and this country accounted for more than 60 percent of Russia's entire trade in the Arab world.³⁵

In this period, Putin clearly followed a similar policy towards Iraq with Primakov. It is possible to express that there was continuity both in political aims and in political instruments in the pursuit of their interests in Iraq.

However, after 9/11, 2001 attack, a new stage opened for the Russian Federation-the United States of America relations. Good relations with the United States became one of the main priorities. However, Putin could not continue this cooperative policy on Iraq case. Even after 9/11 events, Putin also continued to develop critical attitude towards the Iraq policy of the USA.³⁶ On the 17th of December 2001, Putin warned the United States on the issue of attacking Iraq and said "So far I have no confirmation, no evidence that Iraq is financing the terrorists that we are fighting against."³⁷ Hasan Köni and Sinan Oğan, however, expressed that "in January 2002, Russian prime minister rejected the desire of the Iraqi foreign minister to negotiate. By this way Russia seemed to sacrifice (Iraq), his one of the most important allies"³⁸ for his new relations with the United States. But after a while, the American-Russian Federation friendship process disappointed Russia and Putin re-evaluated Russia's relations with the USA. This also affected relations with Iraq.

Iraqi government also tried to affect Russia. According to the Interfax new agency's report on the 5th of April 2002, the Iraqi Oil Ministry had invited the

³⁵ Interfax, quoting Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Saltanov, *Moscow Times*, 27 November 2001 in *Ibid.*, p. 518.

³⁶ Putin's this policy was also seen as a part of general position of international community towards the US Iraqi policies. The US introduced "dual containment" policy towards Iraq and Iran in 1993, aiming at isolating both states. In these years, 'dual containment' policy was criticised because of negative humanitarian, political and security consequences of the UN sanctions regime which was a tool of this containment policy. "As far as Iraqi policy is concerned, (...) more and more countries both inside and outside the region have been challenging sanctions". Meliha Altunışık, "The Breakdown of the Post-Gulf War Middle East Order?", *Perceptions Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 6, Number 2, June-August 2001, p. 51.

³⁷ Andrew Gowers, Robert Cottrell and Andrew Jack, "Putin Warns US against Extending War on Terror", *Financial Times*, 17 December 2001 in *Ibid.*, p. 518.

³⁸ Hasan Köni and Sinan Oğan, "11 Eylül'ün Yıldönümünde Rusya: ABD ile Balayından "Şer Ekseni" ile Flörte...", *Stratejik Analiz*, No. 30, Ekim, 2002.

Russian company Zarubezhneft to develop a large field in southern Iraq with estimated reserves of 3.3 billion barrels and on the 2nd of April, ITAR-TASS reported that Iraqi Trade Minister Muhammad Mahdi Saleh had suggested that Iraq-Russia trade could increase to 40\$ billion.³⁹ In September 2002, Russia and Iraq signed 40\$- billion trade agreement, which include plans on cooperation in several sectors including oil, electric energy, and railroads.⁴⁰ But, this agreement was seen as a strategic attempt.⁴¹

At the end of 2002, the Iraqi leadership eliminated all ties with Lukoil and several other Russian companies while Iraqi ambassador to Russia Kunduf Abbas Khalaf declared that Russia remained as the major strategic partner of the Iraqi oil complex.⁴² In the same stage, it became clear that the Bush administration was preparing an invasion to Iraq. Saddam Hussein's this decision might be related to this possible threat and would like to affect Russia in favour of Iraq. It seemed that Saddam get what he hoped because upon the elimination of ties with Lukoil, Kremlin was criticized in Russia as "if the Kremlin was unable to protect the foreign policy interests of the country and its companies, then such a foreign policy was not a sensible one."⁴³ Nikolai Zlobin expressed that under these conditions, Putin could not support any military action against Iraq.⁴⁴

4.3. THE UNITED STATES- IRAQ WAR (2003-2005)

The United States invasion of Iraq was the last step of a process that has begun since the Gulf War in 1991. In this period, as it was mentioned above, the United States and the United Kingdom put Iraq under pressure and attacked several times. In early 2002, the Bush administration announced that it considered Iraq to be part

³⁹ Michael Rubin, "Russia-Iraq Trade Booming", *RFE/EL Report*, Vol. 5, No. 9, 12 April 2002. <http://www.rferl.org/reports/iraq-report/2002/04/9-120402.asp>, accessed on 17.11.2004.

⁴⁰ Gregory Feifer, "Russia: Proposed Economic Agreement With Iraq Raising Questions". [//www.rferl.org/features/2002/08/19082002152859.asp](http://www.rferl.org/features/2002/08/19082002152859.asp), accessed on 17.11.2004.

⁴¹ Köni and Oğan, *op. cit.*

⁴² Nikolai Zlobin, "Iraq in the Context of Post-Soviet Foreign Policy", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Spring 2004, p.93.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

of an "axis of evil" and threaten for an invasion and desired a "regime change" in Iraq. On the 29th of January 2002, George Bush said that the United States "will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons."⁴⁵ In September 2002, it became clear that the United States administration was planning for an invasion. He stated in the opening of the United Nations General Assembly, "challenging the body to confront the 'grave and gathering danger' of Iraq or become irrelevant".⁴⁶ In October 2002, Congress adopted a joint resolution authorizing use of force against Iraq and gave authority to the president to take preemptive, unilateral military action against Iraq, when and how he supposed necessary.⁴⁷

George Bush firstly tried to get a United Nations Resolution. In November 2002, the United Nations Security Council approved the Resolution 1441. This resolution compelled tough new arms inspections on Iraq and defined "what constitutes a 'material breach.' Should Iraq violate the resolution, it faces 'serious consequences,' which the Security Council would determine."⁴⁸ However, he failed to get the second Resolution and President Bush announced that he was ready to attack Iraq, even without a United Nations mandate. Because the United Nations Security Council refused to endorse the United States-United Kingdom invasion and occupation of Iraq in March 2003, Washington and London hoped to ignore the United Nations and operate with a free hand in Iraq. It might be because according to the United States Secretary of State Colin Powell speech on 18 March, 30 states joined the "coalition of the willing" against the regime of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ "Iraq War Timeline", *American Friend Service Committee*. <http://www.afsc.org/iraq/guide/war-timeline.htm#topofpage>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

⁴⁶ "Iraq War Timeline", *American Friend Service Committee*. <http://www.afsc.org/iraq/guide/war-timeline.htm#topofpage>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

⁴⁷ "Iraq War Timeline", *American Friend Service Committee*. <http://www.afsc.org/iraq/guide/war-timeline.htm#topofpage>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

⁴⁸ "Iraq War Timeline", *American Freind Service Committee*. <http://www.afsc.org/iraq/guide/war-timeline.htm#topofpage>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

⁴⁹ "RFERL Reports", Kathleen Ridolfo (compiler), Vol. 6, No. 11, 20 March 2003. <http://www.rferl.org/reports/iraq-report/2003/03/11-200303.asp>, accessed on 13,02,2006.

On the 17th of March 2003, Great Britain's ambassador to the United Nations said the diplomatic process on Iraq ended. President George W. Bush gave Saddam Hussein and his sons 48 hours to leave Iraq or face war.⁵⁰

On the 19th of March 2003, invasion of Iraq began when the United States launched Operation Iraqi Freedom and the initial air strike of the war, called “decapitation attack” targeted Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi leaders in Baghdad.⁵¹ On the 20th of March 2003, the United States launched a second round of air strikes against Baghdad and ground troops entered the country, crossing into southern Iraq from Kuwait.

On the 21st of March 2003, the major phase of the war began with heavy aerial attacks on Baghdad and other cities, publicized in advance by the Pentagon as an overwhelming barrage meant to instill “shock and awe.”⁵² On the 24th of March, troops marched within sixty miles of Baghdad and they encountered much stronger resistance from Iraqi soldiers and paramilitary fighters along the way, particularly in towns such as Nassiriya and Basra.⁵³ On the 9th of April, Baghdad fell and United States-led forces have entered to two presidential palaces.⁵⁴ In following days, the Kurdish fighters and the United States forces took control of the northern cities of Kirkuk and Mosul.

On the 1st of May, President Bush declared an end to major combat operations. On the 12th of May, a new civil administrator took over in Iraq. On the 22nd of May, United Nations Security Council adopted the Resolution number 1483, ending 13 years of economic sanctions on Iraq. The resolution stated that

All prohibitions related to trade with Iraq and the provision of financial or economic resources to Iraq established by resolution 661 (1990) and subsequent relevant resolutions, including resolution 778 (1992) of 2

⁵⁰ “Iraq War Timeline”, *American Friend Service Committee*. <http://www.afsc.org/iraq/guide/war-timeline.htm#topofpage>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

⁵¹ “Iraq War Timeline”, *American Friend Service Committee*. <http://www.afsc.org/iraq/guide/war-timeline.htm#topofpage>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

⁵² “Iraq War Timeline”, *American Friend Service Committee*. <http://www.afsc.org/iraq/guide/war-timeline.htm#topofpage>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

⁵³ “Iraq War Timeline”, *American Friend Service Committee*. <http://www.afsc.org/iraq/guide/war-timeline.htm#topofpage>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

⁵⁴ “RFERL Reports”, Kathleen Ridolfo (compiler), Vol. 6, No. 16, 7 April 2003. <http://www.rferl.org/reports/iraq-report/2003/04/16-070403.asp>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

October 1992 [related to the Compensation Fund on Iraq], shall no longer apply.⁵⁵

But the sale or supply of arms to Iraq remains prohibited.⁵⁶

After invasion, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) was formed and Paul Bremer became head of the CPA. In June 2004, the United States announced that it had “transferred sovereignty” to a newly-formed Interim Government.⁵⁷ On the 13th of July, Iraq's interim governing council, composed of 25 Iraqis appointed by U.S. and British officials, was inaugurated.⁵⁸ The council had power to name ministers and would help draw up a new constitution for the country⁵⁹ but Paul Bremer had the last word on Iraq affairs. Among these developments in Iraq, on the 21st of November, the United Nations was scheduled to terminate the oil-for-food program in Iraq.⁶⁰

On the 19th of August, suicide bombers exploded an explosives-packed cement truck outside the UN headquarters in Baghdad. Twenty-three people, including UN Special Representative Vieira de Mello died.⁶¹

On the 13th of December 2003, the coalition forces captured Saddam Hussein. On the 14th of December, Paul Bremer made the announcement at a press conference in Baghdad, saying that

Ladies and gentlemen, we got him. For decades, hundreds of thousands of you suffered at the hands of this cruel man. For decades, Saddam Hussein divided you citizens against each other. For decades, he threatened and attacked your neighbors. Those days are over forever.⁶²

⁵⁵ “RFERL Reports”, Kathleen Ridolfo (compiler), Vol. 6, No. 23, 23 March 2003. <http://www.rferl.org/reports/iraq-report/2003/05/23-230503.asp>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ “Occupation and Rule in Iraq”. <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/occupindex.htm>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

⁵⁸ “Iraq War Timeline”, *American Friend Service Committee*. <http://www.afsc.org/iraq/guide/war-timeline.htm#topofpage>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

⁵⁹ “Iraq War Timeline”, *American Friend Service Committee*. <http://www.afsc.org/iraq/guide/war-timeline.htm#topofpage>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

⁶⁰ “RFERL Reports”, Kathleen Ridolfo (compiler), Vol. 6, No. 48, 20 November 2003. <http://www.rferl.org/reports/iraq-report/2003/11/48-201103.asp>, accessed on 13.02.2006.

⁶¹ Kathleen Ridolfo, “War in Iraq, Iraq: Timeline 1991-2005”, <http://www.rferl.org/specials/iraqcrisis/iraq-timeline.asp>, accessed on 14.02.2006.

⁶² “RFERL Reports”, Kathleen Ridolfo (compiler), Vol. 6, No. 52, 15 December 2003. <http://www.rferl.org/reports/iraq-report/2003/12/52-151203.asp>, accessed on 14.02.2006.

This was the important turning point of the invasion.

In April 2004, the United States military forces surrounded militants at Al-Fallujah for more than three weeks to put down an anti-U.S. insurgency there.⁶³ On the 17th of May, a suicide car bomb in Baghdad killed the head of Iraq's Governing Council, Abd al-Zahra Uthman Muhammad.⁶⁴

On the 16th of June 2004, the independent commission investigating the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks issued a report stating that

There is no credible evidence to show that Saddam Hussein's regime collaborated with Al-Qaeda in its attacks on the U.S. While Iraqi officials met with an Al-Qaeda representative 10 years ago and has had other contacts, Hussein rebuffed his calls for cooperation.⁶⁵

This report was important because it directly showed that all pretexts which had been used by the United States to invade Iraq were invalid. The coalition forces could not find the weapon of mass destruction in Iraq, main rational for going to war.

On the 28 June 2004, the US-led coalition formally transferred sovereignty to Iraq.⁶⁶ The United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution No 1546. This resolution set out “the holding of direct democratic elections ‘if possible’ to a Transitional National Assembly, which would in turn be responsible for forming a transitional government and drafting a permanent constitution.”⁶⁷ This resolution also foresaw the formation of the Interim Government of Iraq, the dissolution of the Governing Council of Iraq and touched upon the United Nations Assistance

⁶³ Katleen Ridolfo, “War in Iraq, Iraq: Timeline 1991-2005”, <http://www.rferl.org/specials/iraqcrisis/iraq-timeline.asp>, accessed on 14.02.2006.

⁶⁴ Katleen Ridolfo, “War in Iraq, Iraq: Timeline 1991-2005”, <http://www.rferl.org/specials/iraqcrisis/iraq-timeline.asp>, accessed on 14.02.2006.

⁶⁵ Katleen Ridolfo, “War in Iraq, Iraq: Timeline 1991-2005”, <http://www.rferl.org/specials/iraqcrisis/iraq-timeline.asp>, accessed on 14.02.2006.

⁶⁶ “RFERL Reports”, Kathleen Ridolfo (compiler), Vol. 7, No. 24, 2 July 2004, <http://www.rferl.org/reports/iraq-report/2004/07/24-020704.asp>, accessed on 14.02.2006.

⁶⁷ Katleen Ridolfo, “War in Iraq, Iraq: Timeline 1991-2005”, <http://www.rferl.org/specials/iraqcrisis/iraq-timeline.asp>, accessed on 14.02.2006.

Mission (UNAMI).⁶⁸ On the 30th of June, it was announced that the war in Iraq had ended.

On the 12th of August, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution No. 1557, which established the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and reaffirmed that United Nations should play a leading role in assisting the Iraqi people.⁶⁹

On the 31st of January, 2005 nationwide elections were held to elect the Transitional National Assembly; on the 7th of April, president was elected; on the 28th of April, cabinet was approved and on 28th of August, the National Assembly sent the draft constitution to a referendum.⁷⁰

4.4. REALISM IN RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ (2003-2005)

The Iraq-the United States war was the most important factor affecting relations between 2003 and 2005. Russia did not support the United States attack against Iraq and tried to prevent it, but Putin also knew that Russia could not keep Bush administration from attacking and removing Saddam⁷¹ and did not want that this issue damaged Russia's partnership relations with the United States. Fred Weir, referring to Alexei Arbatov, expressed the dilemma Russia faced, mentioning that

Russia does not support the use of force but by casting our veto in the Security Council, we might appear to be a leader of an anti-American coalition. That could destroy everything we've gained in our relations with the United States in the past couple of years.⁷²

⁶⁸ *The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546*, 8 June 2004, <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/381/16/PDF/N0438116.pdf?OpenElement>, accessed on 20.10.2005.

⁶⁹ *The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1557*, 12 August 2004, <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/457/88/PDF/N0445788.pdf?OpenElement>, accessed on 20.12.2005.

⁷⁰ "Iraqi Vote 2005 Timeline", <http://www.rferl.org/specials/iraqelections/timeline/2005.asp>, accessed on 27.01.2006.

⁷¹ Paul Starobin, "Putin's High-Stake Chess Game", *Business Week*, Issue 3823, 3.10.2003, p. 34.

⁷² Fred Weir, "Russia Faces Tough Strategic Choice over Iraq", *Christian Science Monitor*, Vol. 95, Issue 61, 24.02.2003, p.8.

There are also opposite groups. For example Fred Weir continued as "Mr. Viktor Kremeniuk and others maintain that since the collapse of the USSR, Moscow has failed in its attempts to forge a full-scale partnership with Washington. 'The past two White House administrations have ignored the opportunity to tie Russia to the US, economically and politically', says Viktor Kremeniuk.

At the end, Putin preferred to cooperate with Germany and France as anti-war coalition and supported the French-German proposal to allow the United Nations inspectors to scour the country for four more months.

Russia tried to solve the Iraqi problem by diplomacy instead of the military ways. Firstly, Russia was not very strict and he might abstain in a possible and proper the United Nations Security Council resolution.⁷³ In February 2003, she started to change her position and Igor Ivanov pronounced “that Russia would use its veto in the United Nations Security Council to block measures that would open the way (...) to the use of force” in Iraq.⁷⁴ Russia tried to carry this problem to the international arena. First, Igor Ivanov put the problem on the agenda of the meeting between himself and the director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), El Baradei on the 15th of January. He met with the foreign minister of Italia, Franco Frattini.⁷⁵ On the 26th of February, Putin spoke on the telephone with Jiang Zemin and the two leaders confirmed their commitment to finding a peaceful resolution to the crisis on the basis of the existing the United Nations Security Council resolutions.⁷⁶ On the 26th of February, Schroeder came to Moscow and after the meeting between two presidents, Putin announced that “Russia, Germany, France and China continue to believe that a peaceful solution to the conflict can be found and this position ‘at least for now’ is shared by the majority of the United Nations Security Council.”⁷⁷ On the other hand, he underlined that “Finding a peaceful solution depends primarily on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.”⁷⁸ On the 1st of March, Igor Ivanov spoke on the telephone with the foreign ministers of several current nonpermanent members of the United Nations Security Council-

Therefore we have nothing to fear from any American backlash against us for supporting the French and German position on Iraq.” *Ibid.*

⁷³ Paul J. Saunders, “The US and Russia after Iraq”, *Policy Review*, June/July 2003, p.29.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Nazim Cafersoy, “Rusya Irak Krizinde Çıkarlarını Maksimize Etme Çabasında”, *Stratejik Analiz*, Vol. 3, No. 35, Mart 2003, p. 6.

⁷⁶ Victor Yasmann (compiler), “Iraq Crisis”, *RFE/RL Reports*, Vol. 4, No. 9, 4 March 2004. <http://www.rferl.org/reports/securitywatch/2003/03/9-040303.asp>, accessed on 17.11.2004.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Angola, Cameroon, Chile, Guinea, Mexico, Pakistan and Syria- to discuss the Iraqi situation.⁷⁹ Putin also expressed Russia's opposition to this war in every announcement related to this subject.

Putin did not want to support Bush administration because of numerous international and domestic reasons:

a) International Reasons: As expressed above, Germany and France also opposed the war. This firstly helped Russia to decide independently from the fear of being isolated as in Serbian-Kosovo war in 1998. Moreover, at the beginning of 2003, France and Germany made "a very determined effort to seduce Moscow into opposing the United States, including intense communications with Russian leaders."⁸⁰ Moreover, Yelena Melkumian expressed the importance of France and Germany for Russian Federation, (for example Germany was the main trade partner and investor in Russia) and stated that Russia tried to be close to the European Union and to balance the relationship with the United States.⁸¹ Timofei Bordachev also expressed that

Russian government did not have strong ground but there is a strong Iraqi lobby and Russian president was used by the French president and followed French and German line. I think that Condolizza Rice was right on saying 'Ignore Germany, forgive Russia and punish France'.⁸²

Another factor that "turned Russian irritation into opposition was that the Bush administration acted as if it did not need a Security Council resolution to go to war against Iraq."⁸³ Russia's right to veto in the United Nations Security Council was important because it was Russia's only remaining claim to be a global power.

b) Domestic reasons: Firstly, Putin did not want to be criticized as a poodle on Bush's leash.⁸⁴ In 2003, a parliamentary election; in 2004, presidential

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Saunders, *op. cit.* p. 29.

⁸¹ Interview with Yelena Melkumin, Moscow, 20.06.2005.

⁸² Interview with Timofei Bordachev, Moscow, 17.06.2005.

⁸³ Vladimir Brovkin, "Who is with Whom, The United States, the European Union and Russia on the eve of War in Iraq", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 11, Issue 2, Spring 2003, p. 216.

⁸⁴ Starobin, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

election were held and he was worried that the United Russia Party or Putin himself suffered from his attitude during this period. He also feared a backlash from Muslim countries on its southern rim as well as Russia's own Muslim people-10% of country's population. He was also worried about Russia's oil company contracts with Saddam and \$7- billion Soviet era debt. Moreover, Russian economy was very fragile to a possible instability of international oil prices; therefore, Putin was anxious that a post-Saddam Iraqi oil boom could depress global petroleum prices, harming her own industry and the government budget.⁸⁵ However, Paul Starobin claimed that Washington offered quiet assurances on Moscow's concerns about oil process, expressing that they shared the goal of price stability in energy markets.⁸⁶

Another factor is that Paul J. Saunder, referring to Sergei Karaganov, expressed that Russian intelligence service also mislead Russian leaders about Iraqis readiness and ability to resist to the United States forces, and Russian leaders and elites expected a long and a bloody war.⁸⁷

After the capture of Baghdad, however, Putin changed his expressions. On the 1st of April, it was reported that neither the official position articulated by president Putin and the Foreign Ministry nor the statements of some politicians celebrated the United States-led coalition's reported setbacks⁸⁸. However, on the 3rd of April, in an announcement to journalists, Putin emphasized the importance of the relations with the United States for Russia, stating that:

The United States is Russia's largest trading partner (...), Russia's economy is heavily dependent on the state of the hard-currency reserves are held in US dollars, and any drop in the value of the dollar would lead to direct losses for Russia. Moreover as the world's two leading nuclear powers, the United States and Russia share a special responsibility for maintaining peace and stability.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Sergei Karaganov, *Moscow News*, 23-29 April 2003 in Saunders, *op. cit.* p. 30.

⁸⁸ Victor Yasmann (compiler), "War in Iraq", *RFE/EL Report*, Vol. 4, No. 13, 1 April 2003. <http://www.rferl.org/reports/securitywatch/2003/04/13-010403.asp>, accessed on 17.11.2004.

⁸⁹ Victor Yasmann (compiler), "War in Iraq", *RFE/EL Report*, Vol. 4, No. 14, 9 April 2003. <http://www.rferl.org/reports/securitywatch/2003/04/14-090403.asp>, accessed on 17.11.2004.

On the 6th of April, the United States National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice arrived in Moscow and on the 7th of April, met with Putin and conveyed a message to Putin from Bush in which Bush expressed his desire for the further development of bilateral relations and she also had meetings with the Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and some other senior officials.

On the 22nd of May, in a message to George W. Bush, Putin stressed the Russia's readiness to advance cooperation along all lines as well as the fact that the United States- Russian partnership was really working for the benefit of global stability and security.⁹⁰ On the 4th of September, Defense Minister of Russia announced that "Russia might be open to contributing troops to a multinational force in Iraq in the near future"⁹¹ although this statement seemed to contradict a joint statement issued just hours before by Chirac and Schroeder. That joint statement rejected a Washington proposal about forming United Nations-mandated peacekeeping forces under the United States command.⁹² On the 27th of September, Putin went to New York and had meetings with G. W. Bush and during this meeting, it seemed that differences between Putin and Bush on Iraq were blurring or disappearing but "Putin continued to stress that the United Nations should play a central role in postwar Iraq, rather than role that the United States saw for the organization."⁹³ Russia wanted that the United Nations had a central role in this process, and the preservation of Iraqi territorial integrity and the self-determination of Iraqi people.⁹⁴

About the capture of Saddam, Putin made no direct comment but, according to Dmitri Litvinovich, the Russian president indirectly indicated that Washington had brought terrorism to Iraq and mentioned that "there were no internal terrorists in

⁹⁰ A. Bessmertnykh, "The Iraq War and Its Implications", *International Affairs: A Russian Journal*, No. 4, 2003.

⁹¹ "Foreign Policy", *RFE/EL Report*, Vol. 4, No. 36, 9 September 2003
<http://www.rferl.org/reports/securitywatch/2003/09/36-090903.asp>. accessed on 17.11.2004.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Sergei Borisov, "Russia: From Bush with Love", *Transitions Online*, 10.06.2003.

⁹⁴ Nazim Cafersoy, "Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanması Sürecinde Rusya", *Stratejik Analiz*, Vol. 4, No. 38, Haziran 2003, p. 70.

Iraq before the war”⁹⁵. Then he tried to balance between his criticism and maintaining ties with the United States and expressed that “we are not interested in the United States’ defeat in combat against international terrorism. We are partners in the war on terror.”⁹⁶ This expression was one of the most significant statements of Putin showing the change in his foreign policy towards the United States’ invasion of Iraq.

In this stage, the United States called for lifting the sanctions but Russia, which had sought for an end of sanctions regime for nearly 20 years, opposed.⁹⁷ Then, after some additional negotiations, Russia agreed with the United States-sponsored the United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1483. Freedman explained the factors pushing Putin to accept the resolution arguing that

While this resolution left the United States in full control of Iraq and lifting sanctions on Iraq (except military equipment); it provided a role for the United Nations (...) and noted that (one of) the goal of the resolution was for the Iraqis to manage their own natural resources (thereby holding out hope for Russian oil companies to obtain lucrative contracts)⁹⁸

On the 8th of June 2004, the United Nation Security Council adopted the Resolution No. 1546 and on the 30th of June, it was announced that the war in Iraq had ended. This resolution foresaw the formation of the Interim Government of Iraq, the dissolution of the Governing Council of Iraq and touched upon the United Nations Assistance Mission (UNAMI).⁹⁹

Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lavrov assessed this resolution positively, stating that

⁹⁵ Dmitri Litvinovich, “Russia: Unimpressed”, *Transitions Online*, 22.12.2003.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* Zlobin expressed a similar statement: “On 3 April, Putin declared that ‘because of political and economic considerations, Russia is not interested in a defeat of the United States. We are interested in having the resolution of this problem be transferred under the aegis of the UN’”. Zlobin, *op. cit.*, p. 97 referring to Vladimir Putin, interview in *Izvestia*, 3 April 2003.

⁹⁷ Robert O. Freedman, “Russian Policy toward the Middle East under Putin: The Impact of 9/11 and The War in Iraq”, *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol.2, No.2, Summer 2003, p. 72.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁹⁹ *The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546*, 8 June 2004, <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/381/16/PDF/N0438116.pdf?OpenElement>, accessed on 20.10.2005.

The adoption by the Security Council on 8 June 2004, of Resolution 1546 signifies the onset of a new stage in Iraqi settlement. On June 30, the occupation of Iraq ends and there arise before its people the tasks of constructing a peaceful life. The job ahead is the determination of a future states structure, elaboration and adoption of a constitution and preparation and holding of general elections to new power institutions.¹⁰⁰

He also expressed the Russian desire to help the reconstruction of Iraq's important infrastructure and power facilities and added that many Russian specialists already went there to help.¹⁰¹ Russia always underlined the importance of the United Nations Security Council in this process, so adopting this kind of resolution made Russia glad. Putin mentioned about this resolution that

I think a very balanced, good document that was adopted- so now one would wish that on the basis of the resolution of the Security Council the new Iraqi leadership, the new government of Iraq would gather momentum as soon as possible, would gain authority among their own people and use the possibilities that his resolution provides conditions for holding truly free elections in that country.¹⁰²

On the Iraqi debt problem, an interesting announcement was made by the Iraq. According to the report of Izvestia on the 8th of April; Mowaffak Fattuhi, a leader of Iraqi opposition and a member of the Central Committee of the Iraqi National Congress, expressed that "Russia should give up the hope that Iraq will repay its Soviet-era debts" and continued saying "Countries like Russia, Ukraine and Belarus were friends of Saddam Hussein." Despite this, "the new Iraqi government will respect Russia and will not exclude it from among its potential trading partners."¹⁰³ But, Putin answered this announcement moderately and stated they would discuss the debt problem under the framework of the Paris Club.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ "Interview of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov Granted to the Anotolian News Agency", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Daily News Bulletin*, 16.06.2004.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² "Replies by Russian President Vladimir Putin to Journalist' Questions After End of G8 Heads of State and Government Meeting", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Daily News Bulletin*, 11.06. 2004.

¹⁰³ Victor Yasmann (compiler), "War in Iraq", *RFE/EL Report*, Vol. 4, No. 15, 16 April 2003. <http://www.rferl.org/reports/securitywatch/2003/04/15-160403.asp>, accessed on 17.11.2004.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* The Paris Club is an informal group of official creditors whose role is to find co-ordinated and sustainable solutions to the payment difficulties experienced by debtor nations. "Description of Paris Club", <http://www.clubdeparis.org/en/presentation/presentation.php?BATCH=B01WP01>, accessed on 10.03.2006.

Russia, Germany, France had a meeting in St. Petersburg on the 11-12th of April 2003 and they tried to decide their attitude for the future of Iraq. Some analyzers defined this meeting as a “Summit of losers.”¹⁰⁵ In this summit, they also decided to solve the Iraqi debt problem under the framework of the Paris Club.

On the 18th of December, George Bush sent a special envoy to Moscow to demand Russia to write off the Iraqi debts. In that stage, Russia resisted to this desire because of the fact that Iraq was not a poor country and no country forgave the Soviet debts.¹⁰⁶ Dmitri Litvinovich commented that Russia opposed to write off Iraqi debts because Putin was concerning about the Russian companies’ share in the post-war Iraqi market. He expressed that the United States decided to exclude Russian companies from tenders for contracts to rebuild Iraq and France and Germany were also excluded.¹⁰⁷ Litvinovich commented that “Iraq’s debt could provide Russia with important leverage.”¹⁰⁸ Despite its importance, Putin decided to pursue different policies on this issue.

Finally, France, Germany and Russia, three most important countries of the Paris Club, agreed to forgive 80% of their \$38.9 billion of Iraqi debt and they expressed that the write-offs would come in parts: 30% of the debt now, another 30% in 2005 and a final 20% in 2008.¹⁰⁹ According to Economist, this decision was politic and America’s government lobbied European countries (and also Russia) to support post-war Iraq.¹¹⁰ This decision opened the way of relations with new Iraqi government.

After the war, Putin managed to re-establish Russia’s relations with Iraq. He held a meeting with Iraq’s interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi Putin in Moscow on the 4th of December 2004. During this meeting, Putin and Allawi said that they were intent

¹⁰⁵ Pavel Ivanov, “Russia Left Out In the Cold”, *Russia Weekly*, 18 April 2003.

¹⁰⁶ Litvinovich, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ A Load off ?”, *Economist*, Vol. 373, Issue 8403, 27.11.2004.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

on rebuilding their relationship and putting past bitterness behind them.¹¹¹ Putin also mentioned that "To be frank, I cannot imagine how elections can be organized when the country is under full occupation by foreign troops. I also do not see how you, on your own, can rebuild the situation in the country and keep it from collapsing."; but he also expressed that Russia supported the United Nations Security Council resolution calling for elections in Iraq, he was ready to support Iyad Allawi's efforts to stabilize the country and hope that Russian firms could be involved in reconstruction.¹¹² Boris Kagarlitsky commented about Putin's criticism on Iraqi election as follows

When Putin criticized Bush on Iraqi elections, it was not because Putin had a clear position on Iraqi election which became also visible later because he sort of retreated from his regional statements. But the problem was that Bush criticized the Putin about democracy problem inside Russia. Putin reversed the argument and said "you yourself have all these problems in Iraq. So it is not because Russia had a clear position on Iraqi election."¹¹³

On the 31st of January, 2005 nationwide elections were held to elect the Transitional National Assembly; on the 7th of April, president was elected; on the 28th of April, cabinet is approved and on 28th of August, the National Assembly sent the draft constitution to a referendum.¹¹⁴ On the 31st of January, Putin stated that "The conditions in which the elections in Iraq were held were very difficult, to put it mildly. Nevertheless, it is a step in the right direction; it is a positive event."¹¹⁵ The USA Today evaluated Putin's comments as "a far cry from his harsh warning in December that the elections could not be fair amid a continuing U.S.-

¹¹¹ "Putin Questions Iraqi Poll Plan", *BBC News World Edition*, 8 December, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4076351.stm>, accessed on 27.01.2006.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Interview with Boris Kagarlitsky, Moscow, 15.06.2005.

¹¹⁴ "Iraqi Vote 2005 Timeline", <http://www.rferl.org/specials/iraqelections/timeline/2005.asp>, accessed on 27.01.2006.

¹¹⁵ Golnaz Esfandiari, "Iraq: Regional Reaction to Vote Mixes Praise with Skepticism", 31 January 2005, http://www.rferl.org/features/features_Article.aspx?m=01&y=2005&id=F9FC15B9-58D7-4B3D-A6C1-25E99D3166C1, accessed on 27.01.2006.

led occupation”¹¹⁶ Putin’s comments on elections showed that fluctuations in his foreign policy towards Iraq continued during the post-war period.

On the 19th of August 2005, Putin again criticized the coalition forces mentioning that the coalition forces should determine a timetable for the withdrawal foreign troops from Iraq to encourage dissatisfied groups to take part in creating their state, after his meeting with Jordan's King Abdullah.¹¹⁷ During his speech, he also repeated Moscow's call for an international conference on Iraq to help bring peace to the country.¹¹⁸ Putin’s this kind of speeches could be evaluated as an effort not to be excluded from the post-war Iraq.

Putin’s policies, announcements and speech have been differed from time to time. During the Iraqi war, Russia was trying to prevent the occupation and made cooperation with Germany and France. On the other hand, he signaled Washington that she would not oppose to the Security Council resolution on the use of force against Iraq if Russia’s interests in Iraq were defended. This kind of policy described as “exploiting rivalries” by Mark N. Katz¹¹⁹ and did not give positive results. He neither prevented an invasion nor did he guarantee any interests in a post-war Iraq. He could not gain even any concessions from the Western European countries except the Kaliningrad issue.¹²⁰

Yelena Melkumin, however, commented Putin’s policy expressing that Russia and the United States did not contradict on the change of Iraqi regime but the difference was how to change. For this reason she did not see any instability in Russia’s position.¹²¹ Olga Vlasova stated that Russian leadership tried to maintain status-quo because of the decreasing power of Russia.¹²²

¹¹⁶ “World Leaders Praise Iraq Election”, *USA Today*, 1/31/2005, http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2005-01-31-iraq-world-reax_x.htm, accessed on 27.01.2006.

¹¹⁷ “Putin Calls for Iraq Pullout Timetable”, *ABC News Online*, 19.08.2005, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200508/s1441161.htm>, accessed on 27.01.2006.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Mark N. Katz, “Exploiting Rivalries: Putin’s Foreign Policy”, *Current History*, October 2004, p. 337.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

¹²¹ Interview with Yelena Melkumin, Moscow, 20.06.2005.

Putin is really a pragmatic leader and his pragmatism may be shaped as a reaction to unsuccessful years of Yeltsin. A pragmatic-realist approach was seen in his policies during and after the Iraqi war. American invasion of Iraq did not pose a threat for Russia's core interests. Christopher Hill expressed four components of power or instrumental interests as identity, prosperity, security and prestige. Although Russian leadership had some concerns related to security, ensuring security was not basic factors affecting Putin's policy during the invasion

Putin's policy during the invasion seemed that it was not related to a kind of identity or prestige problem if Putin's acceptance of American military bases in Central Asia¹²³ and enlargement of NATO and the European Union was taken into consideration. Russia attempted to prevent all these developments firstly, but then he accepted all the Western initiatives in the Eastern and Central Europe and in the Central Asia.

He mostly considered one of Russia's instrumental interests, prosperity. As in the Gilpin's model referring to "new historians", Putin opposed to the American invasion mostly because this invasion change the distribution of wealth and power concerning Iraq in favour of the USA but against to Russian interests. After, he decided to refrain opposing the USA because American so-called success impelled him to improve Russia's relations with the USA if he wanted to take a share in Iraqi oil market.

¹²² Interview with Olga Vlasova, Moscow, 16.06.2005.

¹²³ Havva K k also expressed that after 9/11 Russia accepted American presence in its "backyard" but she also asserted that after a while this policy can lead some problems in her relations with Central Asia. Havva K k, "Russia's Return to Central Asia Following September 11", *Hacettepe University Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 22, Issue 2, 2004.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS EFFECTING RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ

There were many factors affecting Russian leadership's policy towards Iraq. This chapter will try to evaluate these factors under three headlines. First, economic factors will be evaluated. After this chapter, socio-political factors will be assessed. Under this subchapter, effects of foreign policy perception, relations with Iraqi and Russian leaders, public opinion and elite's opinion on foreign policy formation will be studied. Lastly, international factors will be tackled. Under this headline, effects of the relations with Europe and the United States and international organizations will be evaluated.

5.1. ECONOMIC FACTORS

Economic factors are one of the most important determinants of the Russian Federation's foreign policy towards Iraq in all period of their relationship. Trish Wells summarized this relationship as follows:

Here are some key facts about commercial ties between Russia and Iraq:
Russia imports more Iraqi goods than any other nation-\$1.4 billion in the last half of 2001 alone. Iraq- Russia import volume is 5.8\$ billion in 2001.¹
Russia and Iraq are close to signing a multiyear, \$40 billion economic cooperation deal that would include massive Russian investment in Iraqi oil, energy and transportation infrastructure. Russia also would help build new steel plants and pipelines and rehabilitate ports.
Other Russia-Iraq deals involve:
Oil: Russian companies have been invited to develop some Iraqi oil fields.
Nuclear Power: Russia is helping to construct a civilian nuclear power plant in Bushehr on Iraq's west coast.
Transportation: Iraq is a major customer for Russian trucks.²

¹ *The Economist Intelligence Unit, December 2001 Country Report* in Hayrettin Yücel, "Irak Ülke Raporu" <http://www.igeme.org.tr/>, accessed on 27.01.2006.

Besides them, one of the main concerns of Russian leaderships in all stages of the relations was lifting the sanctions which were imposed against Iraq since 1991 because of its invasion of Kuwait. Russian companies would like to have shares in Iraqi oil market. Nearly 300 Russian companies did business with Iraq, they controlled the rights to sell 40% of Iraq's oil on world markets, and about ten Russian companies had development agreements with Iraq.³ Iraq had been in debt nearly \$7 billion to Russia, and they thought that lifting of the sanctions had been necessary to be repaid. But after the American invasion of Iraq, most of them were written off.

All companies sought contracts and some rights to do business in Iraq even though they could do nothing if sanctions were not lifted. Therefore, Russian conglomerates lobbied heavily for "prospective rights to Iraqi oil above and beyond the current the United Nations -imposed oil-for-food program and (...) and with the bulk of Iraqi concessions monopolized by Russian firms"⁴ It was expected that once sanctions were lifted, Russian business would rise suddenly in Iraq. According to Robert Freedman, Saddam Hussein cleverly signed contracts with influential Russian companies to provide pressure on the Russian government for its support on lifting of sanctions from these companies, such as agreement signed with Lukoil on West Qurna field.⁵ It may be said that this pro-Iraqi lobby could successfully influence the government. Russian Energy Minister Viktor Kalyuzhny, for example, declared in 1999 that "our task is to prevent the ousting of Lukoil from the Iraqi market and to keep the Russian position in Iraq strong"⁶

Oil companies concerned about losing their rights and abrogation of their contracts after a regime change in Iraq. These concerns deepened and they tried to avoid an

² Interfax, ITAR-TASS, World Almanac in Tish Wells, "Russia and Iraq Have Strong Economic, Commercial Ties", *Knight Ridder Tribune News*, 11 September 2002.

³"Russian Oil Companies Have Extensive Interests in Iraq" *Company News: Middle East*, Vol. 7, Issue 22, 13 November 2002.

⁴ Ilan Berman, "Russia and Mideast Vacuum", *IASPS Research papers in Strategy*, No. 12, June 2001, p. 14.

⁵ Robert Freedman, "Russia's Middle East Ambitions", *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 3, September 1998.

⁶ Berman, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

American intervention. Mr. Tokarev said “If there is military action, the prospects for us in Iraq will be zero. Do Americans need us in Iraq? Of course, not. Russian companies will lose the oil forever if the Americans come.”⁷ Alexandre Shumilin, director of the Center for the Greater Middle East Conflicts, thought differently, found Putin’s policy very stable, and stated Putin’s policy during the war mostly affected by the opposition of the oil companies to Saddam Hussein. He expressed that

About Putin’s refuse to join America in war, it is quite clear why. But Putin gave so many gestures to Bush by supporting operation, (...) But the main oil companies also were against Saddam Hussein in Russia. (Lukoil, Yukos) They were trying to push Putin to be neutral or to be closer to the United States, (they do not support) Saddam Hussein. (...) Putin did not put any obstacle to the Americans. No one obstacle, no politically in trying to take any resolution, no practical way in the United Nations because of his pragmatic approach that the war is an inevitable and the result of the war regarding to overthrow of Saddam was predictable, inevitable; it was highly desirable for everyone, for every moderate leader in the Gulf, for every normal European leader as well as for Russian leaders and for elite. That’s why after months of the war Putin started to establish relationship with new leadership in Iraq and with American commanders, by promoting all the same line, to get economic benefits to preserve the Russian companies in Iraq under American rule.⁸

Boris Kagarlitsky, director of the institute for Globalization Studies, underlined the importance of oil companies for the relations with Iraq but he asserted that under Saddam Hussein, Russian oil companies were involved in oil trade as well as in smuggling oil out of the country.⁹

Regarding oil, besides the oil companies’s problems in Iraq, another issue was the oil prices. Putin was mostly concerned about the deep fall of oil prices and this was expressed to be one of the main reasons of his opposition to the war. Vladimir Kolaev evaluated this issue, mentioning that

Given that Russian experts estimate that every \$1 fall in the price of oil costs the budget \$1 billion in lost revenues (...) so keeping the situation in Iraq, at least in its prewar state was good for Russia and good for its national champions, the oil exporters.¹⁰

⁷ “Russian Oil Companies Have ...” *op. cit.*

⁸ Interview with Alexandre Shumilin, Moscow, 09.06.2005.

⁹ Interview with Boris Kagarlitsky, Moscow, 15.06.2005.

¹⁰ Vladimir Kolaev, “Soiled by Oil”, *Transitions Online*, 4.7.2003.

Edward Lozansky, president of American University in Moscow, also expressed that one of the basic concerns of Putin was the effect of the war on oil prices but he miscalculated. Putin supposed that oil prices go down but they did not slump, they rised and Russia benefited.¹¹

Another issue that Putin has to take into consideration was Russia's current place in post-war Iraq. Before the war, Erich Marquardt mentioned that

Washington has warned Russia and France that if they do not support or at least remain neutral to the United States intervention in Iraq, their oil contracts with the Saddam Hussein regime may be cancelled and redistributed in part to the United States companies.¹²

However, according to Stanley Hoffman, it seemed that the United States would not react to the Russian opposition during the pre-war period more harshly and would not exclude Russian companies from post-war reconstruction ultimately unlike France.¹³ But all contracts between Russian oil companies and Saddam regime would not be preserved.¹⁴ Galia Golan also expressed that some contracts were included in "the United Nations priorities list but Russia's oil companies were uncertain regarding their contracts."¹⁵

Boris Kagarlitsky also underlined the effects of commercial interests in Russian foreign policy. According to him, in Iraq there were very specific interests such as that Iraq was a traditional market for Russian weapons, blocked by sanctions as well as Iraqi oil. He thought that after the normalization process in Iraq, it seemed very difficult to sell Russian weapons and to have a share in oil market.¹⁶ He explained why Russian government did not have clear position during the war

¹¹ Interview with Edward Lozansky, Moscow, 16.06.2005.

¹² Erich Marquardt, "Regional Powers React to Proposed US Invasion of Iraq", *The Power and Interest News Report (PINR)*, 06.02.2003.

¹³ Stanley Hoffman said that the United States "(...) chose to ignore Germany and remain friendly with Russia (both of which had sided with France), but to punish the French.". Stanley Hoffman, "France, the United States & Iraq", *Nation*, Vol. 278 Issue 6, 02.16.2004.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Galia Golan, "Russia and the Iraq War. Was Putin's Policy a Failure?", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, No. 37, p. 457.

¹⁶ Interview with Boris Kagarlitsky, Moscow, 15.06.2005.

because Iraq lost suddenly its importance for Russian government, and then Putin turned his face.¹⁷

Alexander Shumilin, had different views and argued that Russia could have a share in Iraqi market, mentioning that

Yes, (Russia will have a place in Iraqi market.) Not more than it was before.

It is the same size. Every major contract will be reserved; this shows the biggest contract of Lukoil is already controlled. No problem. That was main goal of Putin's foreign policy, to preserve the interest of Russian oil companies it seems to be done. It seems that it will be done.¹⁸

Azer Mürseliyev, from Kommersant Newspaper did not agree with Alexander Shumilin and expressed that Russia's role in Iraq would not be important and Russia could not follow an active policy because he claimed that after American invasion, Russia followed more active policy.¹⁹ But at that time some workers were killed and some of them were punished.²⁰ According to him, the perpetrators of these events were Americans not Iraqis. He also claimed that these workers were from the Russian Intelligence Service. After these events Russia pulled out her projects in Iraq, withdrew many workers back to Moscow. For Azer Mürseliyev, it was very difficult for Russia to follow more active policy.²¹ Olga Vlasova, from Expert magazine, agreed with Azer Mürseliyev and expressed that "The United States started all this campaign not to open Iraqi oil for somebody else, for us also. Of course our companies have some interests there but I don't think that they have many opportunities there"²² Georgy Mirsky, however argued that in forming trust

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Interview with Alexandre Shumilin, Moscow, 09.06.2005.

¹⁹ Interview with Azer Mürseliyev, Moscow, 09.06.2005.

²⁰ Interview with Azer Mürseliyev, Moscow, 09,06,2005. "Interenergосervis (company), which had 340 employees working to rebuild the country's power infrastructure, has pulled out of Iraq and evacuated nearly all its workers after its employees were attacked for the third time in six weeks , on 26 May (2004)."Sergei Borisov, "Last One Out, Turn Off the Lights", *Transitions Online*, 31.05.2004.

²¹ Interview with Azer Mürseliyev, Moscow, 09,06,2005.

²² Interview with Olga Vlasova, Moscow, 16.06.2005.

between the partners (Iraq and countries which are supposed to have a role in reconstruction of Iraq), Russia could give a tremendous assistance.²³

There were also some other concerns besides the post-war deals of Russia in Iraq. Russia was one of the most important oil-producing countries in the world, but she lost significant reserves with the break up of the Soviet Union. This was the cause for her strong interest in Iraqi oil.²⁴ Besides lost areas, the United States and British multinationals began to replace Russia's companies in the Caspian Sea and this resulted in Moscow's worry about that she was losing her effect and power to manipulate the countries in this region. Roland Dannreuther, referring to Alexander Surukhanov- Deputy Director of Zarubezhneft stated that "if Iraqi oil returned to world oil market, the Caspian oil project would be severely compromised. (...) It is more profitable to seek cooperation with Iraq rather than with Azerbaijan"²⁵ Today sanctions on Iraq were lifted and Russian companies tried not to be excluded from the Iraqi oil market.

Besides oil problem, it was expressed that Russia sold or agreed to sell arms equipment to Iraq. An article titled "Yeltsin's war games" in Newsweek, mentioned the arm sale plan of Russia and asserted that:

Washington Post reported on that United Nations arms inspectors had found a document suggesting that in 1995 Russia agreed to sell a huge fermentation vessel that could be used biological weapons, and reported that "Russia had spied on the United Nations inspection teams, tipping off the Iraqis to their plans; Russia denied these claims."²⁶

In the same article, it was also claimed that according to the United States intelligence, senior Russian military officials have enriched themselves on illegal arm sales.²⁷ Ilan Berman also expressed that Moscow had become a major military supplier to Baghdad and he mentioned two meetings. The first was a visit by an Iraqi delegation on arms deal in excess of £100 million (\$160 million) for the

²³ Georgy Mirsky, "The Baghdad Puzzle", *Russia in Global Affairs*, 24 March 2003.

²⁴ "Russia's New Middle East Policy", *MERIA Journal*, No. 6, June 1997.

²⁵ Roland Dannreuther, "Is Russia Returning to the Middle East", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 29, Issue 3, 1998, p. 354.

²⁶ Russell Watson, Gregory Beals, Gregory L. Vistica, Melinda Liu, Bill Powell, "Yeltsin's War Games", *Newsweek*, Vol. 131, Issue 8, 23.02.1998.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

reinforcement of Iraqi air defenses²⁸. The second, referred to the New Yorker magazine in 1999, was a secret meeting in 1997 between Primakov and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz regarding the Russian supply of nuclear-related materials and know-how to Iraq.²⁹

As expressed above, there were numerous economic factors pushing Russian leadership to determine their foreign policy towards Iraq. During Yeltsin presidency, in addition to other factors, economic issues were also influential on foreign policy making. In Putin term, he preferred to enhance Russia's power by pursuing a policy aimed to defend economic interest of Russia in Iraq. Putin and his team tried to change some international implementations related to Russia's economic interest but under different conditions, they tried to maintain status-quo.

5.2. SOCIO-POLITICAL FACTORS

In literature, it was written about some other factors which were expressed to be effective in policy-making process. One of the factors, most commonly expressed was foreign policy perceptions. According to many authors, Russia has strong problems with her position in international community related to the dilemma between her desire to gain previous position as the great power and limitations of her ability and resources today.

Nikolai Zlobin expressed this problem as follows:

Post-Soviet Russia continues to search for a new way to position itself in the world. (...) It has lost an empire but has not found a new role. Immediately after the collapse of the USSR, Moscow believed that it would be possible to retain its superpower status and become a sort of a democratic copotentate of the world together with the United States. But the inequality of two countries potential was so obvious. (...) Moreover after the collapse of the USSR, Russian foreign policy (...) has not created coherent new approaches or conceptions.(...)³⁰

Paul J. Saunders, referring to Sergei Karaganov, expressed this issue with different words: Russia lacked a coherent strategic objective.

²⁸ Con Coughlin, "Revealed: Russia's Secret Deal to Re-Arm Iraq", *Sunday Telegraph*, February 14, 1999 in Berman, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Nikolai Zlobin, "Iraq in the Context of Post-Soviet Foreign Policy", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, (Spring 2004), pp. 87-88.

Did we want to preserve international legitimacy or save the UN Security Council or make friends with the Europeans and play them off against the United States or remain on good terms with the Americans? All of these objectives are justifiable if they are based on an underlying strategic line. There was no such line, however.³¹

It was mentioned that Russia's foreign policy towards Iraq was shaped under the effect of these uncertainties concerning to Russia's place in the world. Tareq Y. Ismael and Andrei Kreutz defined the Russian-Iraqi relations as a result of the search of Russia for a proper place in the world community and the fact that Russian leaders tried to restore her previous international status.³² Russia's desire and quest for "a fair and multi-polar world" had shaped Moscow's approach to the Middle East.³³ Alain Gresh also expressed that Russia desired to be back in the game and she decided on the Middle East as the most suitable region.³⁴ Energy Minister Viktor Kalyuzhny also stated in an interview that "For Russia Iraq, virtually, is winning game, strike or no strike. It is a chance (...) to return the world arena as a truly great power (...). It may be the first time recently that we face the Americans in a game that we can win, let alone draw."³⁵ In addition to him, Nikolai Zlobin, related to the Moscow's policy toward Iraq during the American invasion of Iraq, expressed that "A disagreement with the United States over Iraq (or Iran) produces feelings of self-respect in both the Russian elite and the people as whole".³⁶ In sum, it was generally expressed that policies towards Iraq was an issue related to prestige of Russia.

In Yeltsin era or before the enlargement of NATO and the European Union, it can be thought that Russia saw the Middle East as a field to challenge the United States. and Russian leadership followed policies aiming both enhancing prestige and defending economic interest. In Putin term, after 9/11 events, American

³¹ Paul J. Saunders, "The US and Russia after Iraq", *Policy Review*, June/July 2003, p. 31.

³² Tareq Y. Ismael and Andrei Kreultz, "Russian-Iraqi Relations: A Historical and Political Analysis", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Fall 2001, Vol 23, Issue 4.

³³ Berman, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

³⁴ Alain Gresh, "Russia's Return to the Middle East", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1, p. 69.

³⁵ Interview with Energy Minister Viktor Kalyuzhny, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, February 20, 1998 in Berman, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

³⁶ Zlobin, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

military bases were established in the Central Asia. The East and Central European countries joined NATO and most of them are the members of the European Union. Russia attempted to prevent all these developments firstly, but then he accepted all the Western initiatives in the Eastern and Central Europe and in the Central Asia. Even in these areas, Russia conducted policies that did not lead serious problem between the Western countries and the Russian Federation. It seemed that Putin did not attach great value on Iraq except its economic potential.

Besides foreign policy perception issue, there are different factors behind Russia's foreign policy towards Iraq, such as economic relations between leaders of Iraq and the Russian Federation. It is alleged that Saddam Hussein gave important amount of money to the people not only from Russia but also from many countries to get their support. Vladimir Kovalev, referring to a list, published in an Iraqi newspaper Al-Maide, stated that Russia was found on the top of the list and gave details:

Among the alleged Russian recipients are some of the biggest oil producers in the country: Sibneft (8.1 million barrels), Transneft (9 million), Sidanko (21.2 million), and Yukos (2 million). Some of the other Russian names on the list are so prominent, it comes as a shock: the Russian presidential administration (5 million barrels), the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church (5 million), the Russian Foreign Ministry (1 million), the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (1 million), the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (79.8 million barrels), the Chechen administration (2 million barrels), Sazhi Umalatova, head of the Party of Peace and Unity that last year headed the election bloc For Support of the President's Policy (24 million barrels), Nikolai Ryzhkov, former head of the Soviet government (13 million barrels), the son of a former Soviet ambassador to Iraq (19.7 million barrels), and others. All of the contracts were handed out during a period that began in late 1997 and continued until the start of the U.S.-led war in Iraq in March 2003. They were issued under the framework of the United Nations-ordered oil-for-food program.³⁷

Similar assertions were claimed about Primakov. It was expressed that Primakov had received \$1.2 million from Iraq, but this claim was not verified. However, "in 1997, Britain's G. C. H. Q. (Signals Intelligence) intercepted a bank transfer which detailed a US\$ 800,000 payment to Primakov, from Iraq Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz."³⁸ Moreover, Azer Mürseliyev, from Kommersant newspaper,

³⁷ Vladimir Kovalev, "Russia: Bribery and Vengeance", *Transitions Online*, 2.16.2004.

³⁸ Andrew Campbell, "Russia's Primakov and Iraq's Hussein: The World's Most Dangerous Political Partnership", *National Observer*, Winter 1999, Issue 41.

expressed this point by saying that “there did not remain any people that Saddam bribed for support in the world, including Kofi Annan.”³⁹ Mark Hosenball, referring to David Kay’s speech in *Newsweek*, confirmed that Tariq Aziz mentioned that Saddam’s efforts to use oil deals were to buy friendship among French, Russian and British politicians.⁴⁰

It should be expressed that Russian leaders have had to face various elite factions which influenced Russian policymaking. Besides factions in the Duma, there also have been energy companies, business magnates, reformers and Rosvooruzheniye (the Russian arms sales agency), the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and the Ministry of Atomic Energy,⁴¹ the Foreign Ministry, Kremlin and some lobbies such as the Jewish lobby, growing Muslim population.⁴² To achieve a consensus in Russian foreign policy, an attempt was made to line up these quasi-independent actors and the Duma as much as possible in favor of a particular policy.⁴³ Boris Kagarlitsky expressed that the Russian foreign ministry became a sort of battle of different tendencies and interests therefore it is very difficult to reach any consensus.⁴⁴

Among them, one of the most important groups was Muslim minority of Russia. Leon Aron underlined that Russian leaders took her Muslim minority into consideration while they were developing Russia’s Iraq policy. In the case of Iraqi war, one of the most important Muslim clerics Sheikh Ravil Gaynutdin declared that “a military operation against Iraq would be tragedy for the whole region and could provoke a wave of terrorist acts throughout the world.”⁴⁵ State Duma Deputy Gadzhi Makhachev (People’s Deputy) argued that “Russian Muslims will be enraged if Russia sides with the United States. Hundreds of Muslims from his

³⁹ Interview with Azer Mürseliyev, Moscow, 09.06.2005.

⁴⁰ Mark Hosenball, “Saddam’s Aides”, *Newsweek*, Vol. 145, Issue 24, 6.13.2005, p. 5.

⁴¹ Freedman, “Russia and The Middle ...”, *op. cit.*

⁴² Gresh, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

⁴³ Freedman, “Russia and The Middle ...”, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Interview with Boris Kagarlitsky, Moscow, 15.06.2005.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

native Daghestan are ready to defend Iraq.”⁴⁶ It was possible to say Putin gave importance to Russia’s Muslim minority to overcome the problems with Chechen republic and in Iraqi war issue, it was said that Putin also concerned about a problem erupted among the Muslim minority.

It was also known that natural resources sectors were one of the most influential actors in foreign-policy making process towards Iraq. Robert Stowe expressed the influence of the natural resources sector and the importance of Gazprom. He also stated the existence of a kind of relations between Gazprom and Iraq mentioning that “Gazprom supported Saddam Hussein when it saw the possibility of lucrative contracts to rebuild the Iraqi energy infrastructure. (...)”⁴⁷ It was known that besides Gazprom, powerful oil conglomerates have lobbied for some rights in Iraq.

It is possible to say that the public opinion on Iraq could be effective at policymaking process during the American invasion of Iraq. Before the war, Tareq Y. Ismael and Andrei Kreutz defined public opinion saying that

According to a recent poll conducted by the All Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion, which was published on the 2nd of March 2001, 58 percent of Russians were upset and angry about the February 2001 American and British attack on Iraq. Only 2 percent of those polled approved of the attack.⁴⁸

In a January 2003 national poll, 52 percent of Russians felt “indignant” about a possible the United States-British military operation against Iraq, while 3 percent approved of the idea.⁴⁹ In the months leading to war, positive attitudes toward America fell from 69 percent in October 2002 to 48 percent in March 2003, while negative ones rose from 24 to 40 percent.⁵⁰ By the end of March, as coalition forces raced across the Euphrates plain, only 14 percent of the Russian people believed

⁴⁶ Victor Yasmann (compiler), “Iraq Crisis”, *RFE/RL Reports*, Vol. 4, No. 9, 4 March 2004. <http://www.rferl.org/reports/securitywatch/2003/03/9-040303.asp>, accessed on 17.11.2004.

⁴⁷ Robert Stowe, “Foreign Policy Preferences of the New Russian Business Elite”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 48, No. 3, May/June 2001, p. 55.

⁴⁸ RFE/RL Newline, Vol. 5, No. 39, p. 1, (26 February 2001) in Tareq. and Kreutz, *op. cit.*, p. 99 in Freedman, “Russia and The Middle ...”, *op. cit.*

⁴⁹ Vserossiyskiy Tsent Izucheniya Obschestvennogo Mneniya (VTs IOM, Russian Center for Public Opinion and Market Research), <http://www.russiavotes.org> in Leon Aron, “Russia, America, Iraq”, *Russian Outlook*, Spring 2003.

⁵⁰ VTsIOM, Russian Center for Public Opinion and Market Research, <http://www.wciom.ru> in *Ibid.*

that America played “a mostly positive role in today’s world⁵¹; 91 percent disapproved of the war, while in another poll, 82 percent expressed indignation over it.⁵² There were many factors behind these kinds of poll results, but the most important one was the factors shaping the public opinion. According to Nikolai Zlobin, public opinion was influenced by several important factors as follows:

Firstly, by groups that had economic and political ties with Saddam region as a sort of pro-Iraq lobby; second, by the country’s military elite and third, by the anti-American and nationalistic mass-media. But the long and hopeless war in Chechnya facilitated the consolidation and hostility toward the Muslim world among the Russian public.⁵³

Alexander Shumilin gave big importance to public opinion and stated that one of the most important factors behind Putin’s policy against the United States during the war was public opinion.⁵⁴ Although he accepted the influence of the some other factors, he underlined the effect of public opinion, expressing that

Public opinion was formed (...) by corruption provided by Saddam Hussein, by some politician and even by some political parties, financing: it is confirmed by United Nations list oil for food program. Putin could not take any other attitude and Bush understood it and Bush did not urge, did not demand any other attitude from Putin because during many decades, Iraq was one of the major Russian allies in Middle East and public opinion could not understand why Russia is joining to American alliance to overthrow Saddam Hussein.⁵⁵

There would be the presidential and parliamentary election; therefore, public opinion gained more importance for the United Russia party and Putin himself. If Putin had sided with the United States on Iraq, he would have reduced or even jeopardized the United Russia plurality in the 2004-2008 Duma.⁵⁶

5.3. INTERNATIONAL FACTORS

Relations with the European countries have been the most important factors, determinig Russia’s relations with other countries. During the first presidential

⁵¹ FOM, <http://www.fom.ru/reports/frames/of031201.html> in *Ibid.*

⁵² FOM, <http://www/fom.ru/reports/frames/short/d031212.html> and VTsIOM, <http://www.russiavots.org/images/slide388.gif> in *Ibid.*

⁵³ Zlobin, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁵⁴ Interview with Alexandre Shumilin, Moscow, 09.06.2005.

⁵⁵ Aron, *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

term of Yeltsin, relations with the Western countries were among the priorities of Russia. The decision to keep friendly relations with the West influenced the relations with Iraq and prevented to improve. In the second term, Primakov was the foreign minister, he followed different policies, and it was said that the problems between Russia and Western countries affected Primakov to pursue more assertive policies in Iraq. Putin gave also special importance to European countries to balance Russia's relation with the USA but after 9/11 events, he tried to improve relations with the USA, as well.

During the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, Russia cooperated with Germany and France at the beginning of the war but this cooperation ended after a while. It can be said that Russia decided to prefer to cooperate with his close ally in the war against terrorism, the United States. Most of the authors expressed that Russia was concerned to lose this close relations, or even friendship but one of the factors of this changed policy was that "Europe has repeatedly disappointed Moscow with its isolationism, (...) its near-obsessive concentration on what, to the Russians, seem to be petty details and project of political correctness and unification."⁵⁷ Fyodor Luk'yanov also stated that "when the war in Iraq is over, Russia will again face in the European Union a heavily bureaucratized colossus, unable to compromise"⁵⁸ It can be said that the sequence of developments was a general pattern in Russia's relations with the West. Russia, however should take this region into consideration because of its importance. But in Iraqi case, it seems that only Western power Russia will take into consideration is the United States.

Relations with the United States had a determining role in formulating the relations with other states. The United States and Russian Federation are not important trade partners. Today, political aspect plays a leading role in the United States-Russia relations. Edward Lozansky, director of the American University in Moscow stated about the relations that

"President Bush understands that Russia can be very important ally in war against terrorism. This is the most important issue, not economy, economy comes second. Usually not economy comes number one because terrorism is

⁵⁷ Hosenball, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁵⁸ Fyodor Luk'yanov, "Rossiya i Irak: iskushenie mnogoplyarnost'yu" (Russia and Iraq: A Temptation By Multipolarity), *Vedomosti*, March 7, 2003, <http://www.vedomosti.ru> in *Ibid.*

the most important issue. In economic term Russia is not very important because it is very weak economic country but Russia has tremendous sources of energy, oil remains the main subject of the foreign policy.”⁵⁹

There were different views on the effects of these kinds of problem such as Iraq and Iran on the relations between the United States and Russian Federation. Some of them asserted that Russian policies towards Iraq bothered the United States. For example, Nikolai Zlobin expressed that “it became obvious that if there is no fundamental basis to the relationship, and no understanding of strategy, then conflicts like Iraq can seriously influence the dynamic of the relationship.”⁶⁰

Some of the authors thought that Russia’s some policies towards Iraq as her policy during the American invasion in 2003 led damage in relations but it could be recovered. According to Nikolas K. Gvosdev, “the United States should be prepared to forgive Russia’s past sins in Iraq- as long as we have definite proof that Moscow plans to “sin no more” in Iran or North Korea.”⁶¹ Alexander Kononov, president of Institute of Strategic Studies underlined the importance of the United States and mentioned that

The United States policy may not be accepted by everyone and it certainly requires adjustment. But America remains a key ally in the fight against international terrorism for both Europe and Russia and should the United States suffer a defeat in Iraq, everyone also will suffer a defeat.⁶²

Dimitri K. Simes thought that the United States should do something and expressed related to Russia’s relations with America after the Iraqi war that if the United States took Russia’s priorities into consideration, the United States-Russian disagreement over Iraq would not have a long-term impact on the bilateral relationship.⁶³

⁵⁹ Interview with Edward Lozansky, Moscow, 16.06.2005.

⁶⁰ Zlobin, *op.cit.*, p. 85.

⁶¹ Nikolas K. Gvosdev, “Russia Can’t Keep Going Behind U.S. Back”, *CDI Russia Weekly*, 18 April 2003.

⁶² “Repercussion of Last Year’s Events Still Heard in 2004”, *International Affairs: A Russian Journal of World Politics, Diplomacy & International Relations*, No. 2, 2004, p. 47.

⁶³ Dimitri K. Simes, “A View from Russia”, *Foreign Policy*, Issue 137, Jul/Aug 2003, p. 36.

Besides these authors, Olga Vlasova expressed that Russia's policy during the war did not have a considerable impact on relations.⁶⁴ Timofei Bordachev also agreed that the position of Russia in Iraq did not damage seriously relations with the United States⁶⁵ and expressed a difference of American attitude toward Russia, saying that

I do not think that position of Russia in Iraq damage seriously relations with the United States. Many lobbies of some Russian companies in America did much more to worse relations between Putin and George Bush. This is a better reason of our worsening relations. Second reason is American's (attitude) It was very pragmatic. (They showed) that they don't need Mr. Putin in fact so much. You can take obvious example of changes: When Mr. Lavrov was flying to Istanbul to meet Condoleezza Rica for dinner. It was unbelievable, just 10 years ago Mr. Clinton was elected as president of the United States, his first meeting as a foreign leader was meeting with Boris Yeltsin and now Condoleezza Rice goes to Istanbul and Russian the minister of foreign affairs flies to Istanbul to have a dinner with her like a leader of third rate African country. It shows American attitude very clearly.⁶⁶

In the Iraq war case, the reason pushing Putin in difficulties was the dilemma he faced. As many authors said, if he opposed the United States invasion, this could destroy Russia's close relations, established in the past couple of years. This was one of the concerns of Russia. Many authors also said that if he supported the attack, he would look like an American puppet. In Iraqi war case, this concern could have some effects on Putin's policy making but it was known that Putin tried to avoid entering into unwinnable battles. He did nothing to prevent the basing of American soldiers even in Central Asian countries. However, the main factor that pushed Putin to oppose the United States was his deep concern of economic interest, one of his foreign policy's main priorities. After the end of the war, Putin supported all the United Nations Security Council Resolutions, elections, and establishment of the new government in Iraq. He saw relations with America as an instrument to reach his goals and he changed his instruments by changing his position towards America.

International organizations had also effects on the relations, even limited. During Primakov's term, NATO was enlarging toward three former Warsaw pact

⁶⁴ Interview with Olga Vlasova, Moscow, 16.06.2005.

⁶⁵ Interview with Timofei Bordachev, Moscow, 17.06.2005.

⁶⁶ Interview with Timofei Bordachev, Moscow, 17.06.2005.

members. Alain Gresh, about the effect of expansion of NATO in Russian foreign policy, expressed that after this expansion, “it definitely means there was no place for us (Russia) in the strategic struggle and that Russia had two choices: a minor partner of the West or a country pursuing an independent policy guided by its own interest. It chose the second alternative.”⁶⁷ Roland Dannreuther also reiterated that “the coincidence of Primakov’s appointment with the escalation of the Russian opposition to NATO enlargement during 1996 provided an opportunity to promote a more Asian centric approach.”⁶⁸ But now Russia seemed to accept these developments.

Russia’s permanent seat in the United Nation Security Council provided her with an important role in international relations. According to Economist, Russia’s right to veto in Security Council started to lose its shine; therefore, Russia tried to find a membership in other international organizations as the World Trade Organization.⁶⁹ Nikolai Zlobin thought that the seat in the United Nations Security Council was still important for Russia, stating that “(...) That seat in the Security Council is the last important instrument that allows Moscow to assert its influence in the world, without which Russia risks ending up on the political sideline, which is completely unacceptable to the Russian elite.”⁷⁰ Today, Moscow is also aware of that the United Nations has lost its importance and during the American invasion of Iraq Russia was attempting to internationalize major problems. In American invasion of Iraq, Putin tried to express importance of the solving problems in Iraq under the framework of the United Nations. He stated at the 58th United Nations General Assembly that “It is only through the United Nations’ direct involvement in the reconstruction of Iraq that this people will get an opportunity to decide their own future.”⁷¹ Galia Golan also criticized Putin mentioning that “By making the Security Council an instrument against the United States, Moscow played into the

⁶⁷ Gresh, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁶⁸ Dannreuther, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

⁶⁹ “Here Today, where Tomorrow”, *Economist*, Vol. 371, Issue 8376, 5.22.2004.

⁷⁰ Zlobin, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁷¹ “Vladimir Putin’s Speech at the 58th UN General Assembly”, *Russian Journal of World Politics, Diplomacy & International Relations*, 25.09.2003.

hands of those who sought to weaken the United Nations. (...)”⁷² Vladimir Brovkin also pointed out that “one of the main reason of Russia’s oppose is American ignore of the United Nations Security Council.”⁷³ The case of the United Nation could be influential on the Iraqi policy but it had very limited effects.

There were, as expressed above, many factors affecting Russian foreign policy. This chapter tried to show that Russian self-interests in Iraq were mainly defined in economic terms. The Iraqi issue never threatened Russia’s core interests so Russia pursued her lesser interests in this country if it was thought in terms of Morgenthau’s views. Russian leaders tried to defend Russia’s self-interests which could be defined as instrumental interests, mostly prosperity. In Russia’s effort to increase her power; besides economic interests, concerns about prestige could be seen as an influential factors. But in recent terms of Russian Federation, policy-makers decision was mostly targeting economic interests because of the importance given to ensuring economic prosperity. Moreover, Iraq had very important natural resources and economic potential. In addition, it was under pressure and controlled by the international community since 1991 and finally was invaded. Under these circumstances, it is normal that Iraq has mainly economic importance for the Putin administration.

⁷² Galia Golan, “Russia and the Iraq War. Was Putin’s Policy a Failure?”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, No. 37, p. 449.

⁷³ Brovkin, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I examine the Russian foreign policy towards Iraq, relying on the literature on the Russian foreign policy. I looked at the role of economic, socio-political and international factors in the post-Soviet Russian foreign policy formation towards Iraq. In this analysis, the United States-Iraq war in 2003 also formed significant parameter affecting Russian position.

In this thesis, I argue that Russian foreign policy towards Iraq has been primarily determined by Russia's self-interests which is mainly defined in economic terms. To reach these goals Russian leaders pursued different policies. I follow the realist approach to international relations and the theoretical perspective of Robert Gilpin in this thesis. According to the realist paradigm, state interests, including power are the only legitimate basis for state action. Domestic and international politics focused on three basic aims: to preserve power, to increase power, to demonstrate power. The policies used to reach these aims can be defined as: to preserve the status-quo, to achieve imperialistic expansion, or to gain prestige. Russian leaders followed status-quo policy, policies to gain prestige and tried to change international implementations to defend their instrumental interests, mostly prosperity.

In this regard, chapter two outlined the general policy of the Soviet Union towards Iraq between 1945-1991. Diplomatic relations started with Arab states in 1944 but Arab countries had little interest in Stalin and the Russian influence was at limited in the region. In the Khrushchev era, the Soviet Union also gave importance to the Middle Eastern countries. Even though relations cooled when Iraq joined the Baghdad Pact, relations improved after the 1958 coup d'état. During the Khrushchev era, the relations between Iraq and the Soviet Union did not develop so much. One of the main reasons for stagnant relations was the relatively low priority

the Soviet Union ascribed to ties with developing Iraq. During the Brezhnev period, the leadership decided to concentrate Soviet sources on only countries having high strategic importance in the region such as Iraq. Despite many problems, Soviet influence in Iraq gradually increased. On the 9th of April 1972, the foreign ministers of Iraq and the Soviet Union signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. Despite these developments, during the second half of the 1970s, the Soviet effect was waned in Iraq. After Gorbachev came to power, he changed his foreign policy radically. He left the cold war and asserted there was no need to win the global competition with the United States. Iraq lost its strategic importance for the Soviet leaders. During the Gulf war, Gorbachev supported neither the United States-led coalition nor Iraq. He tried to play a mediator role. When the war ended, the United States emerged as the dominant foreign power in the Middle East and as the military guarantor of the wealthy Arab oil states of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The Soviet Union was henceforth marginalized in the region. During the cold war period, Iraq was generally defined as “a traditional Soviet ally” but in fact, the Soviet influence was limited during the period between 1945 and 1991.

In chapter three, the post-cold war period under the presidency of Yeltsin was analysed. Yeltsin’s foreign policy was to adhere to his predecessor’s foreign policy: Western-oriented, aiming at cooperating with the West and the United States. In this general framework, the strategic importance of Moscow’s former allies in the Middle East decreased. Under these circumstances, Yeltsin first followed a pro-American policy towards Iraq but the situation changed at the end of 1993. During the period 1993-1999, Yeltsin accepted an increasingly hard-line in Russian foreign policy, especially towards the ‘Near Abroad’ and the Middle East. The change became evident in 1994. For the first time, Russia called for the lifting of the international sanctions against Baghdad and denounced the American bombing of Iraq. It is possible to say that there were two more factors which influenced Yeltsin’s foreign policy towards Iraq: lack of material resources to support her foreign policy ambitions and the existence of powerful lobbies regarding oil and gas. After the Duma election in 1995, the parliament was dominated by the communists and Yeltsin did not want to reverse the reform process as demanded by the Communists. Therefore, he changed his foreign policy and replaced Kozyrev with Primakov. During his term, Primakov tried to lift the

sanctions against Iraq and formed a kind of pro-Iraq lobby in the United Nations. When Iraq had problems with arm-inspectors and the United Nations Special Commission-UNSCOM, Russia tried to reverse the attitudes of the Western countries against Iraq. Russia condemned the United States and the United Kingdom when they attacked Iraq. There were set of factors causing Primakov to follow policy that was more active. In general, while considering Primakov's career and generation, his policies towards Iraq meant a message that Russia returned the world arena.

In chapter four, the general lines of Putin's foreign policies towards Iraq between 2000-2005 were analyzed. In the period between 2000 and 2001, he mainly followed the same direction with Primakov regarding the policy towards Iraq and developed close relations with this country. After the 9/11 attacks, Putin tried to improve Russian relations with the United States and the West but did not have an influence on the relations with Iraq. The period between 2003 and 2005 was shaped by the United States attack against Iraq. Russia did not support the United States attack and tried to prevent military solutions to Iraqi problem but instead tried to solve the problem by diplomatic ways. He cooperated with Germany and France as anti-war coalition. Putin did not want to support Bush due to numerous international and domestic factors. Firstly, Germany and France did not support military solutions to Iraqi problem as well, this encouraged Russia to oppose to the United States. Second, he gave importance to public opinion because of the parliamentary and presidential elections. He feared about a backlash from Muslim countries as well as her Muslim minority. He also worried about Russia's oil company contracts with Saddam, \$7-billion Soviet era debt and the possible fall in global petroleum prices.

After the capture of Iraq, however, Putin reformulated his policies and changed his terms. After the capture of Saddam, Putin tried to improve Russia's relations with the United States. He accepted all the United Nations Security Council resolutions, supported the new Iraqi government, held talks with Iraq's interim prime minister. He also tried to be included in the process of reconstruction of Iraq. Many authors evaluated Putin's policies during the Iraqi war differently. Some of them said that it was an unstable policy and he tried to exploit rivalries in an issue and some of them

claimed that it was stable policy, Russia and the United States did not contradict on the change of Iraqi regime but the difference between them was how to change. During the war, Putin changed his policies to reach his goals which is enhancing Russia's economic interests.

In chapter five, the factors affecting Russian decision-makers were put forward. The economic factors which were considered as the most influential factors in defining Russian self-interests in Iraq were evaluated. One of the main concerns related to Iraq was lifting of the sanctions. The other important problem was that Russian oil companies would like to have shares in Iraqi oil market. After the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, the oil companies concerned about losing their rights and abrogation of their contracts after a regime change in Iraq. Among the concerns related to post-war Iraq was Russia's place in Iraq and Russian companies' share in Iraqi market. There were also concerns related to Iraqi debt to Russia but most of them were written off.

Besides the economic factors, it was written in the literature that the foreign policy perception was influential in Russian foreign policy formation. It was claimed that Russia had strong problems with her position in the international community related to the contradiction between her desire to gain her nearly 200-year previous position as the great power and limitations of her ability and resources. This confusion could be influential during the Yeltsin term. But in recent periods, it seemed not to affect foreign policy-making towards Iraq. It was also claimed that there were special and economic relations between Iraqi and Russian leaders.

Among the factors, public opinion and elite's opinion were also stated. Russian leaders have had to face various elite factions which influenced. Public opinion could also be counted among the factors affecting Russian decision makers till the elections.

There were also international factors. Relations with Europe and the United States and with the international organizations such as the United Nations affected the foreign policy formation. The case of the United Nation could be influential on the Iraqi policy but it had very limited effects. Relations with the Europe influenced relations during the first years of Russian Federation. Moreover, during the American invasion of Iraq, European countries, especially France influenced

Putin's policy but this influence ended after the capture of Baghdad. The failure of the European Union in forming a coherent position towards Iraqi war led to occur a very negative impression in Russia.

Relations with the United States were also influential but in Iraq case, these effects also had an economic direction. In the first years of the Russian Federation, leaders were tilting towards the West but they had also an expectation of economic aid. It was mentioned that Primakov's policy was aiming to enhance Russian prestige in the world but intense economic relations should be taken into consideration while analyzing his contradictory policy towards the United States. In the Iraq war case, Putin faced a serious dilemma. As many authors said, if he opposed the United States invasion, this could destroy Russia's close relations, established in the past couple of years, since 9/11 events. Many authors also said that if he supported the attack, he would look like an American puppet. The concern over the relations with the USA could have some effects on Putin's policy making but it was known that Putin tried to avoid entering into hard to win battles. However, the main factor that led Putin to oppose the United States was his deep concern of economic interest, one of his foreign policy's main priorities. After the end of the war, Putin supported all the United Nations Security Council Resolutions, elections, and establishment of the new government in Iraq. He saw the relations with America as an instrument to get his economic goals and understood that he could defend Russia's interest by cooperating with the United States because of the new conditions in Iraq after the war.

To conclude, the analyses in this thesis show that Russian leadership followed a policy, aiming to defend self-interests, which is mainly defined in economic terms. It seems that realism is still convincing to explain Russia's policies towards Iraq. Russia's self-interests should be also taken into consideration. Such a perspective would enable researchers to comprehend rising importance of economic interests in decision-making process in Russia and different dynamics in Iraq which affected Russian leaders while conducting their policies towards Russia

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