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The Changing Dynamics of the Perception of U.S. Foreign Policy towards Kurds in Syria: Developing Relations in Light of Ignorance, Cooperation and Desertion (2011-2020)

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Abstract

Kurds have taken part a significant role in Syria country conflict since the 2011 crisis, mainly through their strong participation in the fight against ISIS. Under the power of both President Obama and Trump, the US achieved significant gain in the fight against ISIS, but they did not make an effort to establish a long term plan about this country, particularly the Kurds in Syria. After the collapse of the ISIS caliphate in 2019, Trump decided to withdraw the U.S. forces from Syria left the Syrian Kurds with tough domestic and external challenges. This decision made up a question of whether the US has a clear policy and strategy for dealing with the Kurds in Syria. Thus, the aims of the study are to find out factors and reasons that have led to shifts in US foreign policy towards Kurds in Syrian. In addition to exploring the outcomes of changing USFP dynamics post-2011, this research also investigates the ramifications and implications of ISIS's rise for the US-Syrian Kurdish strategy.

Through employing a qualitative methodology, this research examines the application of the neoclassical realism theory on the relations under study. Regarding methodology tool, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with politicians, policy makers, academics, and journalists, mainly in Syria and Iraqi Kurdistan. It can be inferred that shifts in the US foreign policy from direct military intervention to "no boot on the ground" and "America First" alternatives increased from accomplishing the primary objective of defeating ISIS. Under the power of both presidencies Obama and Trump, Washington has tactically used Syrian Kurds to maintain regional hegemony and combating ISIS. This is the main reason behind the absence of a coherent American policy for Kurds. The withdrawal of US forces left the Kurds exceedingly vulnerable. They were trapped between Assad's regime and Turkey's desire for vengeance without the presence of US troops to act as a buffer. Deserting Kurds has possible ramifications for other American allies throughout the world. For the US to regain its reputation as a faithful partner. Indeed, if the US does not want to serve as the world's policeman, it will need allies.

Keywords: Syrian crisis, US foreign policy, Syrian Kurds, ISIS, Neoclassical Realism.

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List of abbreviations

- AANES – The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria
- AKP – Justice and Development Party
- Rojava – Another name of Syrian Kurds
- BDP – Peace and democratic Party
- BPC - building partner capacity
- BYD – Democratic Union Party
- CIA – Central Intelligence Agency
- COP21 - the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement
- CRS - the Congressional Research Service
- DOD – US Department of defense
- DUP – Democratic Union Party
- ENKC – Kurdish National Counsel
- ENKS – Kurdish National Council
- EU – European Union
- FSA – Free Syrian Army
- GCC – the Gulf Cooperation Council
- HDP – Peoples' Democratic Party
- IS – Islamic State
- ISG - Iraqi Study Group
- ISIL – Islamic State of Iraq and the Levante
- ISIS – Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
- ISR – Intelligence, surveillance, and support
- JCPOA - the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
- KDP – the Kurdistan Democratic Party
- KIM – the Kurdish Insurgency Militants
- KNC - the Kurdish National Council
- KPDU – Kurdish People's Defense Unity
- KRG – Kurdistan Regional Government
- KRI – Kurdistan Region/Iraq
- LAFA – The Liwa Abu Fadl al-Abas
- MIT – the National Intelligence Organization

- NCR – Neoclassical Realism
- NES – Northern and Eastern Syria
- NIOC – National Iranian Oil Co.
- OPEC – Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
- PDK - the Kurdistan Democratic Party
- PDK-S – the Democratic Party of Kurdistan/Syria
- PJAK – The Kurdistan Free Life Party
- PKK - Kurdistan Workers' Party
- PPG – Presidential Policy Guidance
- PUK – the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
- PYD - the Kurdish Democratic Union Party
- SDF - the Syrian Democratic Forces
- SNA – the Turkey-backed Syrian National Army in northern Syria
- U.S. – US
- UN – United Nations
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- UNICEF – the United Nations Children's Fund,
- UNSC – The United Nations Security Council
- USA – US of America
- USD – US Dollar
- USFP – the US Foreign Policy
- VOA – Voice of America
- WKI – Washington Kurdish Institute
- WMD – Weapons of Mass destruction
- WWI – World War One
- WWII – World War Two
- YPG - the People's Protection Units

Acknowledgements

Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

1.0   Background of the Study

Events following the Syrian war helped the emergence and solidification of Kurdish autonomy in Syria. Syrian military departed many Kurdish-populated localities in the north of the country before the end of July 2012. This paved the way for the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its military wing People's Protection Units (YPG), to control and establish self-rule in the areas called Rojava (Western Kurdistan). The PYD and YPG played a significant role in the war against IS terrorists and this helped strengthen and solidify their power and authority. However, PYD faces many challenges as it attempts to maintain and expand its authority. A significant challenge Rojava faces is establishing normal relations with its neighbors, especially Turkey. Failure in achieving this aim can lead to an increase in ethnic tensions and even conflict both in Syria as beyond, because of the nature of Kurdish issue in the Middle East. Kurds in Syria are part of nearly 30 million Kurds who live in the Middle East. Kurds have their own distinct language and culture. Kurds are usually referred to as the largest stateless nation in the world as they are scattered mainly in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. They have a history of victimhood and struggle for national, as well as civil right demands (Federici, 2015).

The majority of Kurdish cities and regions in northern Syria were taken controlled by Kurdish political groups in July 2012. A commission that was formed by the majority of Syrian Kurdish political groups was able to achieve this control, maintaining authority over the regions and their boundaries. These deeply divided political parties were attempting to rule independently for the first time. In the midst of a wider Syrian crisis, their goal was to protect their own people and the Kurdish population. The unique dynamics of the Syrian revolution, the internal workings of Kurdish politics, the history of decades of state control over Kurdish identity, and the battles to establish political reason all contributed to this unprecedented circumstance (Harriet Allsopp, 2015, p. 14).

Major shifts in Kurdish politics in Syria began with the uprising in Syria, which changed the exchange demands of the Kurdish political groups. The state retreated from Kurdish areas during this uprising, allowing the Kurdish political parties to expand as a single, peaceful community whose main goal was to protect Kurdish rights. The Kurdish situation in Syria gained worldwide attention at the same time, especially in

relation to regional issues, and the Kurds were able to establish a kind of self-rule in several regions (Harriet Allsopp, 2015, p. 14). The United States' presence in Syria has been denounced by both the George H.W. Bush and Clinton governments for being excessive, while George W. Bush's administration was accused for not engaging with Syria enough. The 2006 Iraqi Study Group (ISG) Report, which was co-chaired by James Baker, the secretary of state under George H.W. Bush, supported this second stance and defended working with Syria during the first Persian Gulf War. "A robust diplomatic effort" with all nations interested in Iraq's stability, including Iran and Syria, was recommended by the ISG report (Sadat and Jones, 2017, p.8). But under both Obama and Trump, U.S. policy has devolved into accepting Assad over alternatives while remaining silent and turning a blind eye (Hirsh, 2019).

It is claimed that US foreign policy for Syrian Kurds was a cause of their foreign policy in Syria from 2012 until President Donald Trump's order to withdraw US soldiers from Northern Syria. Trump's most recent decision, made in October 2018, to maintain 200 American troops in Syria, does not significantly alter the complex nature of the Syrian conflict. This may be primarily due to their dedication to their Kurdish comrades (SDF). This is especially true now that Turkey has persisted on meddling in Syria. There might be more violence in Syria as a result of Turkish attacks and US exit. Meanwhile, Moscow's pro-Turkish and anti-Kurdish positions are mostly the result of efforts to sow a gap between NATO members and deny the United States local allies (Teke, 2020).

Kurds have played a significant role in the Syrian conflict since the 2011 crisis, particularly because of their strong participation in the fight against ISIS. Their proactive involvement cleared the path for Syria to align with a variety of regional and global powers. Thus, the US has provided military and logistical support to Syrian Kurds. The US's involvement with Syria has been unpredictable, and as of now, the Trump administration lacks a defined foreign strategy in the country. USFP's approach to shaping the fight has changed from working silently behind the scenes with SDF to making overt shows of US power and expanding its influence. Therefore, it makes no difference whether the US partnership with Syrian Kurds is a long-term plan or a short-term ploy—US foreign policy toward Syrian Kurds has moved from disregarding them from 2011 to 2014 to cooperating with them from 2014 to 2019 to finally abandoning them in October 2019.

1.1   Aim and Objectives

It is clear from the above issue description that Syria and other Middle Eastern countries are going through a power vacuum as a result of shifting alliances. According to Rubaii (2019), the risk associated with this sensitive or susceptible state is that there may represent a resurgence of the "Kurdish Movement." from the standpoint of the European nations as potential regional assets that the United States may depend on in its efforts to reconstruct and reestablish stability in Syria. According to academic observations, the nations are not equipped or willing to fill the void (Salloum, 2017). Also questionable is Russia's ability to make investments in the Middle East. In light of these developments in Syria, the United States' foreign policy approach to resolving the Kurdish issue needs to be updated immediately. This is especially true if the updated approach will help the United States meet the changing geopolitical and regional challenges that Syria and other Middle Eastern nation-states continue to face.

The main aim of the study was to examine how U.S. foreign policy toward Syrian Kurds has changed over time. The following are the particular objectives of the study:

- To determine the main reasons influencing and changing U.S. policy towards the Syrian Kurds from 2011-2020.
- To examine factors that have brought about a shift in the foreign policy dynamics of the U.S. towards Syrian Kurds
- To investigate the outcomes of present fluctuations in the relationships between the U.S. and the Syrian Kurds
- To demonstrate that post-2011, has been an important change in U.S. policy towards the Syrian Kurds and its demands.
- To explore the fallout and implications of the rise of ISIS over the U.S.-Syrian Kurds policy.
- To examine how the convergence of interests between Syrian Kurds and the U.S. affected the direction of U.S.-Kurdish policy in north of Syria.

1.2   Research Questions

In this study, the primary research query was: what are the changing dynamics of the U.S. foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds? The study's specific research questions include:

Main question:

- How and, why have the U.S foreign policy dynamics developed and transformed towards Syrian Kurds?

Sub questions:

- How have domestic, regional, and international factors contributed to the U.S. foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds?

- What is the nature of the cooperation between the U.S. and the Syrian Kurds in Northern Syria?

1.3 Hypotheses

The US's relations with the Syrian Kurds may be influenced by a variety of internal, regional, and global political factors. Nevertheless, the expansion of ISIS has been the primary force behind US foreign policy toward Kurds in Syria. Other reasons that have affected USFP's policy toward Syrian Kurds are also covered in this study, including the competition between the US and Russia, US strategy of restraining Iran, protecting US in the area, and maintaining US hegemony in the Middle East. Additionally, the relationship between the US and Syrian Kurds has been impacted by domestic US variables including the view of the leader and institutional dynamics. The US-KRG alignment can be viewed in the same way as US support for Syrian Kurds, despite the fact that it may not be the same. This is particularly true with regard to US involvement in Syria, in order to maintain its regional hegemony, the USFP has cooperated with non-state groups or militia organizations.

it is argued One that the approach of "Building Partner Capacity for Stability" (Jefferson P. Marquis, et al., 2010) offers valuable insights into the alignment between the US and Syrian Kurdish in 2015. The frequency and intensity of proxy wars, like those that underway or wound down in Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq, have been increased by the security assistance. The main focus of many studies is on the question of whether or whether the US has succeeded in achieving its goals via providing security support, a crucial aspect of which is known as "building partner capacity" (BPC). The goals, according to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), include achieving war victory or ending the war; handling issues with regional security; providing hidden assistance to a party in the conflict; mitigating conflict; fostering institutional and interpersonal

connections; increasing coalition participation; and forming alliances (McInnis and Lucas, 2015). In order to help the US accomplish its goals in Syria at a lower cost in terms of personnel and supplies than through direct military involvement, the US and Kurdish alignment may therefore provide security support.

Therefore, the hypothesis of this research is that the U.S. relations with the Syrian Kurds started and developed in the framework of the American anti-terror war, and particularly in the war against ISIS. Meanwhile, this research argues that changes in the U.S. foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds result from three main factors: developments in American domestic politics, the impact and policies of regional and international powers present in Syria, and changes in the American war on terror strategies. Hence, the interaction of the above-mentioned factors has repercussions for the U.S. policy in the region and towards the Syrian Kurds. This research investigates the interplay of these factors in formulating and transforming the American policy towards Syrian Kurds.

1.4   Rationale

By using the slogan "Amrica First" and other national slogans, the US has modified its foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds. This study is significant because it attempts to address the question of whether the US should continue with its current foreign policy while considering what other allies, such as Israel, it should abandon this policy and use a different strategy for stabilizing and rebuilding Syria instead of relying solely on military intervention. The proposed study is significant because it ensures that, even as an ideal path is recommended, factors that may have contributed to changes in strategies and possibly ended up working against the intended goals of the U.S. in the Middle East are countered within the proposed path appropriately. This is achieved by looking at some of the factors responsible for the changing foreign policy dynamics or changes on the U.S. side. Notably, a path that will be suggested to ensure that the foreign policy implementation policy is tailored in a way that accommodates beneficial results that might have gained during the foreign policy shift – while encountering issues that might have emerged from the foreign policy shift – has also been observed through the examination of some of the outcomes that have resulted from recent fluctuations in the relationship between the U.S. and the Syrian Kurds. The next chapter provides a literature review of some of the academic research that might have contributed to this study, as well as the theoretical framework on which the proposed study depends relative to the analysis and interpretation of primary and secondary data outcomes that will be obtained.

Chapter Two: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.0   Related Work

After reviewing all of the literature, it can be concluded that, given the complicated problems surrounding the current approach to U.S. foreign policy, one of the argued positions is that, given the emergence of Saudi Arabia and Israel's new alliance, the U.S. could use them as regional partners while working to implement its current foreign policy, which follows a trend of desertion as illustrated by the slogan "no boots on the ground" (Cetorelli and Ashraph, 2019, p. 4). Dewachi (2017) asserts that if the US decides to pursue the latter strategy, it could end up replacing its strategic partnership with Turkey, particularly in light of indications that Turkey is inclined to align itself with Russia and Iran.

In Syria the situation has been far more complicated than expected in early 2011, as not only the local content complexity but also the regional interests that were collateral to the crises. Add to this, even though the US could not prevent Russian military intervention in Syria, as Russia aimed to by in Syrian Kurds and Assad's government forces to fight against the ISIS in Syria. (Aben, 2017). Besides, of Russian interest in Syria, Iranian aims include opening a second front with Israel on the Golan Heights and establishing a land link to Hezbollah. Thus, Iranian expansion has military implications for Israel and Saudi Arabia. (Khan et al., 2020). According to Hashemi and Postel (2013), lack of proper international intervention in the Syrian conflict has resulted in much greater cost, which has been unnecessary. Due to inappropriate international support, Syrian government has conducted mass attacks on civilians and rebels alike. While, international assistant and aid began flowing to Syrian people and armed opposition groups far in the late 2011.

There is a perception that the emerging partnership between Saudi Arabia and Israel holds a chance at strengthening US foreign policy. Even though the early signals often indicate thatKurdish political elements may stand to gain from a three-way alliance between the US, Israel, and Saudi Arabia (Dietrich and Carter, 2017; Nader, Hanauer, Allen, and Scotten, 2016). Similar statements were made by Donabed (2015), who said that as neither Saudi Arabia nor Israel has recently expressed its opposition to the ambitions of the Kurdish people, this partnership may help Kurdish political

considerations. These findings were supported by the research conducted by Johnston, Alami, Clarke et al. (2019), which found that stabilization initiatives have been implemented in places where the Syrian Democratic Council controls a majority of Kurdish area.

The fact that Iraq's Kurdish political factors may benefit greatly from the U.S.-Turkey divergence or division relative to the U.S. anti-Iran policy is another factor that complicates the equation of Kurdistan regarding the shifting dynamics surrounding the U.S. foreign policy towards Syria's Kurdish people. Specifically, the Kurds in Iraq may become less dependent on Turkish military and financial assistance (Millare, 2019). Additionally, there may be cooperation between Kurdish political elements and Iraqi Sunnis to lessen Shia control in both Kurdistan and disputed regions (O'Driscoll, 2017).

It is also important to note that Kurdish political parties continue to hold major positions throughout the Middle East, including Syria, despite their weakness, particularly in places where the Kurdish population is concentrated. The present U.S. foreign policy of supporting friends in their efforts to reestablish and reconstruct Syria may be seriously imperiled if the Kurdish political parties do not provide their assent. In particular, while there may be a lack of unity among the Kurdish political groups, they have demonstrated the potential to upset both internal and regional balances in Syria, a pattern that has also been observed in Iran and Turkey.

Robinson, Egel, Johnston, et al. (2017) noted that factors that have been critical to the success of central authority control over Kurdish-populated regions have included efforts to strengthen the role of Kurdish parties, particularly in relation to their existence and work as the representatives of the Kurdish people's will. If the US's new foreign policy of supporting allies during this time of abandonment does not take into account the approval of the Kurdish parties that are present in Syria and have the potential to upend domestic and regional balances within this nation-state, then it is likely can address these dynamics and result in successful U.S. foreign policy has not yet been vividly documented.

2.1.1 International factors

It is important to note that from the perspective of international factors, events in the Kurdish context had been approached from the stance of domestic issues involving states that hosted the Kurdish people. Dewachi (2017) identifies Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq as some of the states. This view was formed during the Cold War, when Western countries provided support to the central authorities of the afflicted states to maintain control over their political borders (Ali, 2019). This demonstrated the vast differences between internal and foreign policy toward the Kurds who were confined within national borders. Dietrich and Carter (2017) raised a question about the state of affairs, presenting it as a security issue that affects and necessitates responses from inside the individual nation-states that are affected.

In line with the aforementioned views, Donabed (2015) observed that the Kurds would become socially, economically, and culturally isolated from one another if their question was treated as a security concern within national borders. According to Johnston, Alami, Clarke, and colleagues (2019), this strategy ultimately resulted in the Kurds' identity being differentiated and reshaped, leading them to adhere to nationalist projects that dominated mainstream culture in their various component nations (Millare, 2019). Kurdistan's geographical fragmentation, which resulted from national and identity or linguistic differences, remained the direction of progression even for Kurdish national groups that aimed to counter perceived nationalist initiatives (O'Driscoll, 2017). These minority groups became vulnerable at that time inside their individual nation-states (Robinson, Egel, and Johnston et al., 2017).

2.1.2 Significant changes in the state of affairs

The current state of situations has changed significantly in the previous ten years. For instance, a Kurdish zone was formed as a separate nation in northern Iraq in 1992. Kurdish governance began to take shape in northern Syria by 2012, which sparked a cross-border Kurdish mobilization (Rubaii, 2019). Recent data, according to Salloum (2017), indicate that the Kurdish reorganizing has evolved into four main components. The media, border business or trade, armed conflict, and immigration are some of these components. The UNHCR (2019) further reported that as migration has increased, there has been a dramatic reconstruction that has resulted in the former Kurds' identities which

were strictly separated from the rest of their respective nation-states changing and convergent into a common Kurdish identity. This trend has been further enhanced by a shared ethnicity.

Kurds were a major strategic and political force in the Middle East throughout the fight against ISIS, and they are widely seen as being essential to resolving this regional situation. When and how the Kurdish question may be changed has been a significant outcome of this topic. Following dissatisfaction with efforts that have proven to be mostly ineffective, particularly with regard to their attempt to attain equal political standing and equal rights in nations that host them, Kurdish parties have ultimately changed their strategies and perspectives (Ali, 2017). A notable shift is already apparent. The fight for justice, freedom, and equality inside a focused nation-state marked the early circumstances (Ali, 2019). However, as documented by Cetorelli and Ashraph (2019), in the recent past, the majority of the efforts have been focused on protecting Kurdistan in order to guarantee that the political region is protected from outside forces. The early fragmented approach, which considered events involving the Kurds as domestic and necessitated national attention, is beginning to fade. Syria's events reveal a complex scenario. According to UNHCR (2019), there have been two main goals driving the shared strategy of working with Kurdish-led forces for over five years, which is based on US foreign policy. Reducing the influence of Russia and Iran is one of the goals, particularly since both enemies of the US have backed the Syrian regime. Fighting the Islamic State (ISIS) was another goal. Therefore, the goal of the U.S.-Kurdish led forces' cooperation was to preserve some degree of leverage, particularly in the event that a future settlement of the war becomes necessary (Zaman, 2016).

2.1.3   Based on Low (2015)

Low (2015) argues that this motto's counterpart, "no boots on the ground," raises the possibility of a significant reduction in American military involvement in Syria and the rest of the Middle East. Instead of encouraging direct military incursions, Porker (2018) said that the US is increasingly supporting its allies rather than taking direct action. But in light of the events in Syria, even if its strategy shift aims to adhere to the previously

indicated motto, it's crucial to remember that there is a shortage of assistance from key partners in this area (Mueller, T. et al., 2017).

For instance, poor relations with Turkey have continuously weakened US alliance with it, showing that a number of crises may arise even if US foreign policy in the area was dominated by the need to support acquaintances. According to Ali's (2017) US provides support to Kurdish fighters in the Syrian context that has been the main cause of poor connections. Ali (2019) reached a different conclusion, claiming that the revelations from Pastor Andrew Brunson indicate that the strained relationship between the US and Turkey is deeper and is evident in the sanctions that have hindered efforts to use Turkey as an ally in addition to worsening Turkey's economic problems. Turkey's decision to move forward with negotiations with Russia to purchase an S-400 surface-to-air missile system puts at risk the US strategy of supporting allies rather than intervening militarily. After periods of ignorance, collaboration, and abandonment, the degree to which the United States' shifting foreign policy in Syria has benefited the Kurds in particular remains up for conflict.

But more recent developments create an understanding of a situation where President Trump and Washington have made decisions that include giving up on this strategy. This retreat, as noted by Low (2015) and Gunter (2014), suggests that President Bashar al-Assad and his supporters in Russia and Iran have a free hand. With Turkey invading northeastern Syria to uproot a Kurdish-led militia, the Syrian Democratic Forces, especially because Turkey perceives this group as a threat to its security because it (the group) is associated with a Kurdish separatist movement that has battled Turkey for decades. A significant facet of the Syrian crisis has been the emergence of a pan-Kurdish identity that is primarily dependent on political organizations in both Syria and Iraq (Allsopp and Van Wilgenburg, 2019).

The fragile peace has apparently stalled at a time when Kurdish fighters have been left at Turkish mercy, accused of treason in the U.S., and a deal with Damascus to help troops repel a Turkish invasion. As a specific example, six ISIS prisoners escaped when the Turks bombed a Kurdish-controlled prison in Qamishli (Porker, 2018). However, even inside the wake of the Kurds' betrayal through the U.S., having collaborated to defeat ISIS, Mr. Trump's position is that the need to make certain that infinite wars in which the U.S. Has been engaging had to be extricated. A question that arises is, whereas

the abandonment aids in achieving this purpose, in particular by way of deviating from a direct navy intervention including that in which the U.S. Subsidized the Kurdish-led militia (the Syrian Democratic Forces), how pleasant should the modern overseas policy of backing allies be evolved and carried out to make sure that the countless wars are curbed while additionally ensuring that with the Kurds inside the equation, the stress is stored on Mr. Assad, his forces are saved out of the territory, and the have an effect on of Russia and Iran stemmed?

As Devachi (2017) notes in the fight against ISIS, the U.S. made significant gains under Presidents Trump and Barrack Obama but sought to develop long-term strategies for Syria, especially the Syrian Kurds who were marked in the early years after the war and uprising with mixed results, the Obama administration focused on a single strategy to ensure ISIS was defeated on the battlefield (Dietrich and Carter, 2017).

The scholarly observation suggests that the US changed its foreign policy after defeating ISIS, moving away from direct military participation and toward a "no boot on the ground" and "America First" approach. As a result, the claims are instructive as they deepen our knowledge of a few potential causes of the desertion. It is also important to note that, although these findings are instructive, they do not provide insight into how the fate of the Syrian Kurds, who are well-known friends of the United States, may be expedited while enacting the new foreign policy, which aims to avoid direct military participation. It is also noted that while the previously mentioned findings help people comprehend potential reasons for the United States' withdrawal from Syria, they do not discover some of the events that might have contributed to earlier misunderstanding of the country's issue.

Due to the sudden timeline of the US departure from Syria, several studies argue that major long-term repercussions were anticipated, impacting a number of parties involved in the conflict directly or indirectly, with Iran being no exception (Allsopp and van Wilgenburg, 2019). However, Ali (2019) noted that even after the apparent knock-on effects, minority groups typically the Syrian Kurds might be the most severely affected and face the most immediate consequences due to the US's rapid shift in foreign policy. While Syrian Kurds have contributed significantly to the battle against ISIS, the study by Cetorelli and Ashraph (2019) revealed that their survival in the battle zone has mostly depended on American protection. Reviewing some of the circumstances surrounding the

US's initial decision to ignore the Syrian problem, its intervention up to 2019, and its eventual exit or abandonment in late 2019 are crucial at this point.

In addition to academic research on the reasons behind the United States' withdrawal from Syria after ISIS was defeated, other studies have looked at the effects of the new foreign policy, particularly with regard to America's longstanding partner, the Syrian Democratic Forces, or SDF. The findings of the Johnston, Alami, and Clarke et al. (2019) analysis indicated that the abrupt and rapid shifts in US foreign policy have presented a number of difficulties for Syrian Kurds. Similar to MacDonald's (2018) remarks, the study found that one of the wider ramifications of the U.S. pulling out is that Kurdish nationalists may be left defenseless and at a loss for what to do because America has abandoned them. Because they help comprehend some of the wider effects of the change in US foreign policy toward the Syrian Kurds, these academic insights are therefore instructive.

According to Millares's (2019) hypothesis, the majority of Syrian Kurds may wind up handing over territory that is governed by the Syrian regime. All things considered, these claims add value to the research by deepening our comprehension of the precarious circumstances that Syrian Kurds have found themselves in following the abrupt and swift departure of their patron and ally.

Though these claims are instructive, there are still a few holes that need to be filled. For instance, the observations deepen viewers' comprehension of the detrimental, far-reaching effects of the U.S. withdrawal, but they omit some of the strategies that the U.S. may still employ to guarantee that at a time when the dynamics of its foreign policy toward Syrian Kurds are rapidly shifting. Instead of giving up regions under Syrian regime control, the Syrian Kurds persist in advancing their agenda out of a sense of national interest. Additionally, the scholarly reports above are flawed in that they fail to emphasize the potential effects of the U.S. withdrawal on Arab forces associated with Kurdish militiamen. Additionally, these claims do not elucidate the potential effects on Arab tribes that Mueller et al. (2017) noted have consistently expressed dissatisfaction over the control that Kurds have over Arab-majority cities in Syria. In doing so, the study might not only increase the understanding of the changing foreign dynamics of the U.S. and how Syrian Kurds would need to cope while handling possible external aggression, such as that which might involve areas controlled by the Syrian regime, but also to cope

with internal affairs in cities where the Arabs dominate, but they are under the Kurdish control.

Mueller et al. (2017) claim that the US's new foreign strategy, which emphasizes tactical adjustments in fighting tactics and the slogan "America First," suggests that catastrophic outcomes are anticipated for Syrian Kurds. According to the report, Syrian Kurds have worked to establish autonomous government in regions they have wrested from jihadists; but, the U.S.'s retreat puts this initiative at risk of failing. According to Ali (2017), the situation is made worse by uncertainty about the Kurds' potential rights, if any, should they return to Mr. Assad's administration. Notably, different factions have traded places with the government on many occasions in an attempt to take control of northern Syria. The Kurdish people, radicals, Islamists, and rebels are a few of these groups (Cetorelli and Ashraph, 2019; Philips, 2015; Werz and Hoffman, 2014). But since joining American forces to fight ISIS, the Kurdish forces have established themselves as a formidable force in the area, particularly when it comes to defending former ISIS fighters and seizing territory that was previously held by ISIS (on behalf of the U.S., as well as other allies around the world). Combining the Pentagon's decision to remove forces with the Kurds' growing hostility after they sided with Assad, America's main enemy, to get the government's backing in opposing the Turkish troops' incursion, is what complicates the situation. According to Dewachi (2017), with Russia supporting the Syrian government, it is clear that the US's initial objective of limiting the influence of Russia and Iran (while maintaining some leverage regarding future conflict settlements) is at a crossroads. This is especially true given that the Kurdish forces have turned to government assistance, which Russia also supports, after the U.S. abandoned them during an invasion by Turkish troops. Overall, this review of the literature has shown that, even though the United States' new foreign policy involves supporting allies (e.g., providing Syria's civil society organizations and human rights defenders with financial stabilization assistance in order to advance human rights and protect prosecuted religious and ethnic minorities), the United States' abandonment of its Kurdish allies through the other newly emerged policy of how the US should conduct military interventions and the "America First" motto has unleashed a humanitarian and military crisis for Syrian Kurds. It begs the question: What is the most workable strategy to lead the shift in foreign policy dynamics, accomplish the goals the West has set for the Middle East, and simultaneously prevent the Kurdish crisis?

Even after reducing its reliance on petroleum from the Middle East, the US continues to attempt to protect energy flows that are still essential to the global financial system. The US should be concerned about Iran, a state foe that frequently employs asymmetric tactics, as intra-state war and violent extremism pose a greater threat to allies than inter-state conflict. The United States and its European allies are likewise affected by the instability that these threats bring. For example, the complex civil conflict and the emergence of ISIL in Syria have resulted in large-scale refugee flows into Europe, aggravating the political, economic, and security challenges important European partners face at Europe. Furthermore, the threat of terrorism against the US and its allies abroad has increased since the advent of ISIL and the emergence of "lone wolf" criminals.

In the meanwhile, other dangers have surfaced that were not foreseen in the conventional statement of US interests in the wider Middle East. Therefore, Americans' deep goal and commitment to maintaining the state structure in the region as symbolized by physical borders created a century ago have been impacted by the advent of ISIS and the active participation of Kurdish influence. Furthermore, although the US has long been concerned about the Arab Gulf nations' "checkbook diplomacy," it is only now that these governments are using their military might on their own, even in ways that are not coordinated with their conventional security guarantee (Mueller, et al.: 2017).

As If it goes back to the above-mentioned point, it could find that there are several details around the disclosure of how US foreign policy toward Syrian Kurds was developed, as well as the primary obstacles to maintaining such policies.

Even yet, only a small number of scholars have written about the subject of Kurdish issues, particularly in regard to US-Kurdish ties in the Middle East. One such scholar is Charountaki (2001), whose research examined the relationship between Americans and Kurds in the Middle East. The researcher gave crucial information on US-Kurdish ties in the Middle East from 1946 and 1945 to the present, as well as the Kurdish function as a nation with a (non-state) country (Charountaki, 2011) and their participation in American politics in the region, the research was limited to the KRG. It covered only the brief years after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 because the study turned in 2009 and was unable to observe US policy toward Syrian Kurds after 2011, which can be considered a new phase of US foreign policy toward both Kurds and non-state actors. Charountaki (2011) contended that although there were positive non-state contacts

between the US and the Kurds, the initial secret relationship was followed by an official one. One may argue that the US has not maintained a covert engagement with Syrian Kurds. When the Syrian conflict first started, the United States refrained from immediately intervening in opposition to other regional countries including Russia, Turkey, and Iran.

2.1.4   Relations between the US and the Kurds in the Middle East

It is also important to note that Gunter's (2011) work is a valuable contribution to the understanding of US-Kurdish relations in the Middle East. He criticized the US in his 2011 Insight Turkey paper because he believed that the US was not standing up for the Kurds in the Middle East (Gunter, 2011). He thus thought that the US supported these countries more than the Kurdish people in Syria and Iraq.

On the other hand, some claimed that although there have been studies on the subject, they are insufficient since they have not examined the nature and extent of these interactions, particularly after the rise of the Islamic State in 2014. A new age of regional and global transformation has begun at this time. Throughout this period, the Kurds were crucial to the battle against ISIS in the Middle East. Kurds have been closely coordinating with US official institutions in both Syria and Iraq to combat terrorism; this might be a new beginning for US involvement with armed organizations and non-state actors. Moreover, they might maintain the safety of Kurdish regions in Iraq and Syria.

2.1.5   Based on Syrian Kurds, history, politics and society

Kurds in Syria have been studied historically from the country's founding to the present in Tejel (2009)'s study, Syrian Kurds, history, politics, and society. Apart from the historical background of the Kurds in Syria, he also talked about the Kurdish community there and their interactions with the Syrian government. Additionally, until his arrest by Turkey in 1998, he provided crucial information on the PKK and its leader, Abdullah Ocalan. He also provided insightful information about the Democratic Union Party (PYD) in Syria and its fight against ISIS, which is also worth highlighting. But his research, especially after 2011, has not addressed US foreign policy toward Syrian Kurds.

The influence of the Syrian War on Kurdish politics across the Middle East is a research by Gunes (2011) that also discusses Syrian Kurds. His primary focus was on the debilitating Syria pattern and the Kobane conflict, which he claimed provided Kurds with an opportunity to obtain specialists in several spheres of politics and the military. However, given its established link to the Assad regime and its opposite, as well as its ability to remotely control police in neighboring regions and superpowers, it does not suggest that law-based Syria powers will be able to select these places. This idea gives rise to some problems with various Kurdish organizations (PYD, KNC). This indicates the conflict between the PKK and the PDK in the context of Iraqi Kurdistan; it cannot ignore Turkey's and Iran's intervention in that situation.

A scholar has been investigating PKK's role in creating PYD, and PKK's control and ideology (Abdulla Ocalan Ideology) cannot be disregarded. Abdula Ocalan adheres to an autonomous worldview, rejecting the National, and establishing a nation-state (Low, 2015). Under PYD experts, people of all different cultures, ethnicities, and religions might coexist. Additionally, the political and military developments in Rojava were investigated. The expanding PYD in Rojava is eroding Turkish security conditions, which has put Turkey under pressure due to these developments. For this reason, Turkey consistently faces pressure to resist Kurdish advancement in that area. Thus, Turkish policy keeps pressuring the Kurdistan region of Iraq to sever ties with the PYD. The diverse belief systems of PKK and PDK are another reason. He also discussed international assistance during the Kobane battle, including the USA's modification of its external agreement with PYD, which differed from its previous policy involving the Kurdish approach.

Furthermore, a closer examination is necessary to provide appropriate responses to these research-related queries, as the US once again sided with the Kurds while doing the actions they believed necessary to weaken and destroy ISIS, sometimes even in the absence of Turkey. What then is the rationale for Washington's strategy with the Kurds in Syria? The real inquiries concern Ankara's motivations.

There may be speculations that the US intends to redraw regional borders to create a more stable Middle East or that it will assess the fallout from its new strategy toward Iran after nuclear program talks. However, this is a significant issue in the Kurdish situation; the history reveals how the policy divide between these two friends came about.

In other words, Turkey rejected repeated US attempts to win its cooperation. Moving on, the specialist was ultimately unable to investigate how significantly altering US external agreements with the Kurds whose tactics involve transforming or deploying Kurdish fighters against ISIS would affect those agreements.

Although Johan W. Parker (Between Russia and Iran: Room to pursue American Interests in Syria) explored how, following a 2011 Syrian resident revolt, Russia and Iran succeeded in protecting the Syrian Regime. This paper examines the victory of the Shia side in that area. This would prevent the Middle East from joining the stated outside approach. It was evident in the 2018 aid discussions between Putin and Trump on the conflict between Syria and Israel's security.

2.1.6 Scholar's view regarding connection between Russia and Turkey on toll long war

Due of Turkey's distaste for the USA's relationship with PYD (Rojava), several academics have looked at the relationship between Russia and Turkey during that long war. The connection between Russia and Iran over Syria and the US and Russia was addressed in a clear and concise manner in the study. The analysis, nevertheless, was not prepared to focus on how Kurdish power dynamics in Rojava have affected the US and Russian external arrangement. In light of the Kurdish progress in Rojava, the US has modified its distant approach.

Regarding the US involvement in Syria, another factor that may be crucial to take into account is the nation-building or nation-states process, which has taken a different route than what is typically seen in the west. The Middle East has witnessed a process of nation- or state-building mostly carried out by foreign powers, with imperialist nations imposing state-building without any sort of social compact between the state and civil society. Following World War I, the Sykes-Picot agreement and the fall of the Ottoman Empire caused the Near East to become more polarized, with new nations emerging like Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Iraq. Additionally, the word "Lebanonization" is defined as the last phase of "Balkanization," which describes the breakdown of a state following a civil war and the critical role that outside forces play in its reconstruction. For example, it is evident from the situation of Lebanon that these external variables include

Saudi Arabia and Iran in addition to Israel (which withdrew its troops there in 2000) and Syria (withdrew its military there in 2005) (cited from Corm, 2007).

After 25 years of the civil war, large parts of Lebanon remain beyond the authority of the state. The theory of Lebanonization may be extended outside of Lebanon's boundaries to include Syria and the current state of affairs in Iraq. Furthermore, the competition and war between Saudi Arabia and Iran have a significant influence as well, weakening the Middle Eastern states and essentially destroying the Sykes-Picot limits.

A closer look reveals evidence that the U.S. foreign policy towards the Syrian Kurds has not been sufficiently documented by other publications. The majority of the studies failed to answer the basic question of why American policy has shifted from one of ignorance to one of collaboration with the Syrian Kurds. Humud (2022). Interventions against ISIS were feasible for the United States and the West.

It can be concluded that, the researcher, through his scientific tour in the space of these studies, has shown him the method of description, and how to narrate events, the importance of narration, the method of presenting propositions, the method of reaching conclusions, all of which opened the horizons of the researcher, and through these studies opened his horizons more, And he can apply those points in his presentation, and he has a good support in his writing, and then he comes up with his proposal.

In addition, study has concentrated on certain factors that call for a shift in the direction of US foreign policy toward Syrian Kurds. Some have gone above and beyond what has been reported in terms of the achievement of the objective of defeating ISIS.

Thus, it has been said both under Trump and under Obama that America's abandoning of Syrian Kurds remained one of its alternatives because many Western nations, including the United States, were unable to achieve the majority of the objectives in Syria. Some of the goals that have eluded the United States' original foreign policy, according to O'Driscoll (2017), include the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons, responsibility for mass murder, and the safe return of refugees. Porker (2018) acknowledged that the UN diplomatic track's failure to accomplish its goal in the area, mainly through the Geneva process, is the reason for this failure of aims. According to Rubaii (2019), these findings imply that the majority of Western nations' goals in Syria

have proven to be unachievable and that the country's poor situation had a role in America's decision to withdraw its support for Syrian Kurds. It is impossible to overstate how important these affirmations are to the literature on the Syrian situation because they deepen our understanding of how the US and other Western countries' prior goals in Syria were misaligned and ultimately led to their abandonment because they were unachievable. The fact that these academic studies demonstrate the demise of ISIS and the impracticality of the majority of the remaining goals—including the ones already mentioned—must be emphasized, as they were crucial in influencing the US's decision to alter its approach to the Syrian Kurds in its foreign policy. They exaggerate the reasons for the withdrawal while omitting to address some of the possible causes that led the United States to overlook the Syrian situation in the early going before ISIS gained power.

In the conclusion, this study that describes and assesses the changing relationships, despite the existence of studies addressing US policies in Syria and toward Syrian Kurds. In order to fill this gap, the proposed study aims to address a number of specific issues, such as why the US ignored Syrian Kurds at the outset of the Syrian crisis, why the United States continued to work with and support the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) until 2019, and why the United States changed its foreign policy and stopped supporting the Syrian Kurds.

2.2   Theoretical Framework – The Theory of Neoclassical Realism

A number of political strife and wars, significant oil deposits, and a range of religious and ethnic disputes highlight the region's complexity (Halliday, 2005). Building a suitable theoretical framework is a necessary first step in gaining a complete grasp of the nature of US foreign policy in this complex area. Nevertheless, a thorough analysis of Middle Eastern international relations indicates a noticeable dearth of research on the theoretical facets of this area of study. Despite the numerous attempts made by a number of scholars, including Brown, L.C.; Halliday; Fawcett; Hinnebustch & Ehteshami; Korany & Dissouki; and others. Theoretical studies that elaborate on some aspects of international relations are still conspicuously absent in the Middle east.

Despite the aforementioned shortage of scholarly work on the relevant subject, a number of international relations-related factors have been examined, albeit to differing degrees, and this should be taken into account when examining the foreign policies and

international relations of the Middle Eastern nations. The following points can be used to sum up these factors:

- The regional variables: given the historical, social, and religious links that unite the majority of the Middle Eastern countries, these aspects are essential to understanding the nature of the region's international relations. Additionally, the area is still impacted by the lingering effects of colonialism, which have kept these nations mired in a never-ending cycle of "durable patterns of amity and enmity" (Buzan, 2003, p. 45).

- International factors: Following World Wars I and II, the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain, and the United States all ruled over the Middle East as stronger transregional powers. As a result, it is difficult to fully comprehend the Middle East without taking into account the impact and influence of outside powers, particularly the US.

- Internal factors: The significance of regional factors for Middle Eastern international relations can be interpreted in two ways: first, when political unrest at home starts to undermine the legitimacy of governments; and second, when there are strong political and historical ties between two or more nations' ethnic or religious groups. Examples of these include the ethnic and sectarian ties between Sunni and Shiite communities in Iraq, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Jordan, as well as the Kurdish communities in Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey.

Theories of foreign policy and international relations frequently overlook certain aspects in favor of emphasizing others, which is a critical quality. For instance, classical realism has neglected the importance of domestic issues while emphasizing the function of the state and the allocation of power among national interests (Lobell, et al., 2009). In a similar vein, structural realism and neo-realism have prioritized the anarchic global system while downplaying the significance of home realities (Dunne, et al., 2007). Other theories, including constructivism, Marxism, neo-liberalism, liberalism, and the English school, may be ascribed of the same kind of shortcoming.

Therefore, in order to comprehend the nature of the USFP's approach to the Middle East, two theoretical frameworks that may be more relevant are hegemony and realism. More precisely, realism appears to be a more practical approach in addressing the influence of the super and regional power in Syria for a number of reasons: firstly, as realism is heavily focused on the allocation of power, which is at the same time a big concern of the USFP in Syria. Second, since the reorganization of power structures in the

wake of the Syrian crisis may be linked to the sectarian tensions that have surfaced in Syria, realism offers a deeper explanation for these tensions. Thirdly, realists contend that security-related concerns constantly influence the relationships between regional powers (Paul, 2012).

This study will employs a new version of realism theory called "neoclassical realism," which is based on theoretical presumptions of other theories of realism, such as classical realism and neo-realism. This is in consideration of the previously mentioned brief analysis of the fundamental points of the theory of realism as applied in the study of international relations. The mid-1998s saw the rise in popularity of neoclassical realism as a stand-alone theory that could explain the cultural dimensions of foreign policy and offer a fresh perspective on the study of international relations and foreign policy (Hadfield, 2010).

In terms of power dynamics, neoclassical realism offers a thorough comprehension of the rationale behind the formation of a potent alliance mostly composed of Sunni nations opposing Iran's expanding regional hegemony. In this particular context, neoclassical realism might prove to be a valuable analytical instrument in examining the regional competition among middle powers, which stems from the desire to upset the power balance in the area for the advantage of a middle power.

Neoclassical realism may also be a useful paradigm for comprehending and evaluating USFP's actions toward the Syrian Kurds for a number of reasons:

- Security considerations and power balance: Neoclassical realism went into great length about how power is distributed relative to one another. When there is a power balance between the system's components, it views regional systems as stable (see: Romanova, 2012; Dunne, et al; Hadfield, 2010). It should be mentioned that the power equilibrium was thrown off balance as one of the major changes following the 2011 Syrian crisis. As a result, certain countries have lost ground to Iran and Russia in the balance of power. The invasion's result has encouraged the other US partners to work hard to use Iraq's ethnic and sectarian divisions to challenge Iran's growing influence. The use of neoclassical realism theory aids in the comprehension of the force in question.

- The role of non-state actors: neoclassical realism has brought to the study of foreign policy an aspect that other realists had overlooked in the past. Neoclassical realism

provides space in its postulations for non-state actors, who are seen to be an intervening variable that might explain the state's actions in the instance of the Syrian Kurds (Laksmana, 2013). Furthermore, as political institutions were weak and each force meddling in Syria's internal affairs was a proxy for a different proxy group, the presence of non-state actors has had a significant influence on the country's political process after 2011.

As consequently, the goals of the US are the main emphasis of this thesis, which also analyzes the American approach to the Middle East and the Syrian Kurds. It additionally demonstrates how and why these motivating elements caused the US to collaborate with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Neoclassical realists contend that the structure of international systems influences how foreign policy is conducted (Foulon, 2015). The theory contends, however, that foreign policy activity is not determined by this framework. Rather, there are additional aspects to take into account (He, 2017). This theory is useful for the proposed study because it clarifies that the shifting dynamics of US foreign policy cannot be fully explained by the balance of power and a multipolar international order. Instead, because of its significant influence, the structural component merits consideration. Specifically, applying the theory to real-world situations creates a pathway whereby U.S. foreign policy activity may be ascribed to the moderating influence of a factor that just influences behavior—rather than necessarily determining it.

Neoclassical realism is criticized for the following shortcomings, despite its ability to explain:

- Neoclassical realism has lost some of its "analytical purity" and moved toward constructivism and liberalism by including the domestic dimension.
- It cannot provide a comprehensive explanation for international dynamics.
- International relations theory is less the focus of neoclassical realism than foreign policy. Consequently, the neoclassical theory is able to explain state conduct more clearly, but it is unable to foresee or explain the causes of war and peace.

It is also important to remember that neoclassical realism holds that nations act rationally because they are trying to survive in the aftermath of international chaos (He, 2018). Moreover, the theory shows that wars that arise when a sovereign declares war on

its inhabitants, particularly because of differences in religion, ethnicity, or other factors, are illogical (MacDonald, 2018). One of the fundamental tenets of the theory is that states are important entities in international politics. Another presumption is that states act rationally, seek their interests (and ultimately behave altruistically), and that supranational authority has no influence over the regulation of interstate relationships (Nye, 2015). Considering that world politics are currently characterized by anarchy, the idea further confirms that survival is not assured. Regarding the topic of inquiry, these observations particularly the last one are critical to comprehending the unstable circumstances that Syria's Kurdish population faces. They also demonstrate the applicability of the theory to the examination of the data that will be gathered for the planned research.

Particularly, the literature indicates that Kurdish troops worked with the United States to destroy ISIS and accomplish the American objective of reducing the power of Russia and Iran in the area. The chosen theory argues that given the chaos prevailing in world politics, the tension that results does not ensure the survival of organizations or governments, which is what Washington's betrayal of its friend, the Kurds, in Syria translates into. The hypothesis is also significant because it will help to clarify some of the elements that, in the wake of the military and humanitarian crises, endanger the existence of Syria's Kurds, particularly in light of the perceived "betrayal" by the US. Though these claims and theoretical insights are extremely beneficial, it is important to recognize that the theory does not offer a comprehensive list of possible paths that the affected states whose survival is threatened by the anarchical nature of international politics could take in order to find practical and long-lasting solutions.

This argument goes on to say that state institutions typically provide weak and partial information, which ultimately negatively impacts collaboration. The theory shows that states lose information regarding the present and future intentions of others due to the uncertainty that results from reduced cooperation (Schweller, 2018). The theory's assumption appears to apply realistically in the instance of the Kurdish equation in Syria, however it is unclear what Turkey's invasion of Syrian Kurds may have been intended to accomplish and how it will affect the government as a whole going forward. Furthermore, the chosen theory makes the assumption that power battles will always occur (Foulon, 2015). Power conflicts are evident in the chosen research surroundings. For example, it appears that Russia and Iran support Assad's government, whilst the United States is

working to reduce these states' influence in Syria. Power issues also surface with regard to Turkey's invasion of the Syrian Kurds, as it is known to be seeking to curtail the group's authority since it views the group as an ally of Turkey's internal rebel organizations.

Neoclassical realism, which aims to help understand the potential role of a power struggle as one of the factors that might have motivated state factors and accounted for the resulting tensions between the Middle East and the West, especially the U.S., is implied to be relevant to the proposed study.

Even though the theory's perceptive and helpful qualities are clear and appreciated, it stumbles and ends up highlighting how important political considerations are in piqueing the attention of state elements. Because of this, it is impossible to determine whether variables like economic pressures may be moderating the interest of the state considerations. Furthermore, the theory does not make clear if the political objectives driving different state elements' interest in an area could be supported or compromised by factors like economic motives or interests. However, the theory is still relevant in the case of the Syrian Kurds since the study will aim to question or expand the theory in light of the results of the primary and secondary data collection. In the event that politics, specifically power struggles, prove to be a significant factor in the current dynamics surrounding U.S. foreign policy toward Syrian Kurds, for example, the implication will be that the events surrounding the Kurdish forces' experience in Syria align with the chosen theory of neoclassical realism. on the other hand, the suggested study proves that variables other than power conflicts have influenced the dynamics and strategy shift concerning US foreign policy, which favors supporting friends over going to war? In that instance, the ensuing conclusions could not only follow the essential presumptions of neoclassical realism, but also question or expand upon it.

The neoclassical realism framework was also selected because different forms of realism view non-state elements as means by which higher states engage in power struggles or neglect to give them enough consideration. Nonetheless, the chosen model (neoclassical realism, or NCR) incorporates non-state elements into its analyses and acknowledges the crucial role they play at different analytical levels (Caverley, 2010). Considering that the proposed study touches on a non-state component (in this example, the Syrian Kurds, or SDF) and concerns U.S. foreign policy. Since the neoclassical realism theory fits nicely with the major focus of this study—the shifting dynamics of

U.S. foreign policy toward Syrian Kurds, or non-state factors it can still be assumed that the choice of theory was well-informed.Considering that non-state elements are a part of the NCR model (Lobell, 2009; Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro, 2009), it is ideally suited to direct the analysis of the proposed study by elucidating differences in threat assessments from the American point of view; how the assessments may have influenced its foreign policy choices; the advantages and disadvantages of the new foreign policy; and the prospects for U.S.-Syrian Kurdish relations.

Neoclassical realism, as a theory of foreign policy, is noteworthy for being better suited to this research since it concentrates on US foreign policy toward Syrian Kurds rather than systemically explaining the phenomena of conflict. The reasons this study does not make use of the other major theories of international relations are expounded upon below.

Additionally, it is critical to take advantage on Waltz's (1979) alliance concept. Waltz compares bandwagoning, in which the weaker nations join forces with the stronger, to balancing. Waltz contends that "because power is a means, not an end, states prefer to join the weaker of two coalitions." (Page 126 of Waltz, 1979). This behavior is mandated by the international system's structure as well as the need to survive. Bandwagoning, according to Waltz, is the antithesis of aligning oneself with the recurring balance of potential leaders across nations. According to Kenneth Waltz, a state's choice to support or oppose another state is mostly determined by whether state is stronger. Waltz (1979) argues that it is crucial to ascertain which state or set of states seems stronger. According to the Waltz theory, the US's hegemonic influence in the area allowed them to shield the Syrian Kurds from powerful regional forces, particularly Turkey, which is why they formed an alliance with them. Furthermore, nations are eager to partner with anyone even Satan.

- Nonetheless, by using neoclassical realism, our study does not rule out the possibility that alternative theories may shed light on some facets of US policy toward Syrian Kurds. It contends, therefore, that their justifications fall short and are unable to adequately capture the complexities of the relationships. Both liberalism and its neoliberal offshoot are formidable candidates for realism. The key idea of neoliberalism is the role that interconnectedness and international organizations play in promoting world peace and harmony (Tarzi, 2004, p. 119). Liberal-democratic

ideals and free commerce are seen as essential to fostering peace and interdependence. But in the case of the Syrian issue, these elements are missing, and in its place lies a catastrophic mix of rivalry, violence, and power dynamics rather than the liberal rhetoric of peace and collaboration (Mearsheimer, 2018). Therefore, rather than the liberal case for boosting cooperation and promoting peace through the use of democratic principles, free trade, and international organizations whose absence is palpable in Syria, the American stance towards Syrian Kurds makes more sense in the context of the American balancing act and regional and international competition. • The other rationale for the application of neoclassical realism theory is: first, the US foreign policy's failure to propagate liberal democracy in the Middle East, such as its inability to convert the regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan into democratic nations under US hegemony following the conclusion of the Cold War. Second, due to China's economic expansion and Russia's forceful comeback by meddling in the Syrian war, international relations have shifted from being unipolar to multipolar. As a result, US foreign policy won't be the only one setting the global standard for international relations. For the aforementioned reasons, the use of liberal theory was not included in this study (Mearsheimer, p146–147).

- In the meantime, theories such as Marxism, which emphasizes the class struggle and offers Neo-Marxist interpretations of dependency theory, and Immanuel Wallerstein's World System, which divides the world into core and periphery nations, could be useful in explaining the unfairness of international trade and political relations, which benefits developed core states at the expense of developing periphery states. But these theories don't really explain the complex interplay between regional and global rivalries in Syria and US policy toward Syrian Kurds, which has very little to do with class conflict or core-periphery ties (Barrow, 1993).

- Another popular theory of international relations is constructivism, which emphasizes the social construction of reality and the influence of internal factors like identity on a state's foreign policy. This hypothesis can help explain some of the changes in Syria that are connected to the players' competing identities, such as Turkish against Kurdish actors or Sunni versus Shia actors. It cannot, however, be very helpful in elucidating the complex power dynamics and balancing acts in Syria, especially with regard to US policy toward Syrian Kurds. In the meantime, the domestic issues

considered in evaluating international relations are taken into consideration by the neoclassical realism employed in this research (Hopf, 1998).
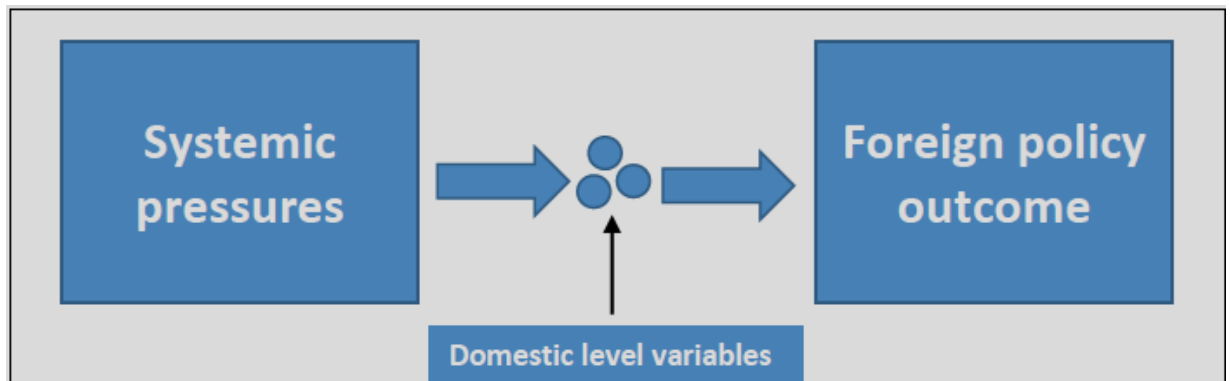
Figure 1: A summary of the model of neoclassical realism

The next chapter describes the methodological approach used during the collection of data and the processes of analysis.

Chapter Three: METHODOLOGY

3.0   Overview

The literature study above indicates that the current condition of U.S. foreign policy in Syria and other regions of the Middle East is characterized by a variety of difficulties. The United States is remarkably undergoing a shift in the dynamics of its foreign policy, but these dynamics necessitate a balance as the nation seeks to maintain its predominance in the Middle East, defend its regional friends, and curtail the power of adversaries like Mr. Assad, Iran, and Russia. Given these interactions, it is imperative to suggest the best course of action for carrying out the revised foreign policy without jeopardizing US objectives in the Middle East.

The primary goal of this chapter is to outline the technique that the suggested research used in an effort to provide light on the topic being studied. The chapter notably seeks to explain why particular research techniques, as well as techniques for gathering and analyzing data, were used in the study. In a similar vein, the chapter presents the demographic characteristics of the sample frame or population that was chosen, from which participants were picked, as well as data gathered on the purpose and goals of the study. In addition to main data, information from secondary data sources was utilized to enhance the outcomes. Books, electronic books, journals, newspapers, magazines, institutional and government reports, and periodicals are a few examples of secondary data sources that helped to supplement original data.

3.1   Data collection

As it was already mentioned, the suggested study is qualitative. This mimicked the disparities in conduct between Syrian Kurds and USFP. This made it easier for the researcher to gather sufficient information on the causes of the fluctuations in USFP dynamics. By documenting the actions, emotions, and attitudes of the participants, qualitative research, according to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), assist in gathering comprehensive or in-depth data. Furthermore, it has been shown that qualitative research produces comprehensive data that may be extrapolated to the target audience, the remainder of the sample frame, or the focus's demographic group (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). According to certain studies, the value of qualitative research stems from the transparency it produces. Specifically, the study methodology invites participants to elaborate on their responses or provide a rationale for their replies. According to Merriam

and Tisdell (2015), this pattern guarantees that qualitative research generates new topics, which in turn directs research continuity by suggesting new themes for future study that are derived from participant replies.

It is crucial to emphasize that the majority of earlier research indicates that qualitative research is adaptable (Punch, 2013). This characteristic makes it relevant to the study that is being suggested since it can allow the researcher to gather data in novel ways, particularly in situations where the chosen participants are unable to offer desired or trustworthy data.

Qualitative research has been associated with a number of drawbacks despite these benefits. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), for instance, noted that if a researcher aims to get data from a smaller sample size, qualitative research becomes more applicable. Therefore, if the study setting contains a vast and demographically complicated sample frame, the research approach is less appropriate or inaccurate. Studies with lower sample sizes are especially vulnerable to problems like researcher bias and impaired validity and reliability, as the results are unlikely to be entirely representative of the wider target population (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013). Since qualitative research was used in some of the current study, it is crucial to recognize that it may be subject to the aforementioned limitations.

It has also been demonstrated that using qualitative research makes it more challenging to conduct systematic comparisons. According to Antwi and Hamza's (2015) study, it might be challenging to identify recurring themes or patterns of response when participants in qualitative research have wildly divergent and extremely subjective viewpoints. Furthermore, Bernard and Bernard (2012) noted that these kinds of situations make it more difficult for researchers to make meaningful deductions or findings. Several studies warn that a researcher's abilities, particularly in relation to their knowledge with the political and cultural aspects of data gathering for the intended study, will determine how successful their qualitative research may be (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014). But the advantages of qualitative research exceeded the disadvantages, making the chosen research strategy worthwhile to use.

3.1.1 Data collection methods

Semi-structured interviews were the specific data gathering tool utilized in the proposed investigation. Direct access to the interview questions were sent to the

participating persons and organizations. The researcher intended to interview thirty to forty people in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Northern Syria. Elite interviews offered chances to improve the authenticity and dependability of the data that was produced. In a study design, conducting elite interviews correctly can provide a "rich and cost-effective component that can produce a valid and unique data resource for state politics studies," as Beamer (2002, p. 95) stated. There are several benefits to conducting interviews. For example, conducting interviews using mobile or online platforms can be particularly cost-effective, and they can reach a large number of participants within a given sample period (Creswell, 2014). The flexibility of the interviews, which allows them to be administered in different ways and customized for groups of the researcher's choosing, has also been highlighted as its practicality. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), this results in the gathering of enormous volumes of data. Consultations have also been linked to quick or instantaneous outcomes. Specifically, applications for smartphones and the internet suggest that other companies don't always have to provide the answers needed for interviews. Another advantage is scalability. Interview-based surveys, as declared by Gholamreza and Hasan (2010), guarantee that the researcher collects data from a wide range of respondents, having reached out to them at any time and from several locations.

Interviews may be conducted for a small fee, but they will likely focus on a large geographic and demographic area (such as a nation or town). Interviews became acceptable because of the researcher's resource and time constraints. A wide range of topics have also been covered in documented interviews. In particular, the tool makes sure the investigator gets as many questions as they can (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) did, however, provide a warning: each interview session should be kept brief in order to prevent intricate themes or answer patterns that might make it challenging to draw conclusions.

Interviews have an adverse association due to concerns of dishonesty. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) state that it is improbable that responders will tell the whole truth. The participants' desire to maintain their privacy and social desirability bias (particularly in multicultural contexts, such as the Kurdish area in this example) are some of the factors contributing to the dishonest replies given (Punch, 2013).

To prevent any dishonest responses, participant anonymity was ensured in the planned study. Instead of the participants' personal information (names, occupations, and

physical addresses), pseudonyms like codes were utilized. By guaranteeing data privacy and confidentiality, dishonest answers were also reduced. In particular, the written or recorded interview materials were gathered and safely kept. Strong passwords were employed to encrypt the raw data pertaining to the electronically gathered data, preventing any unwanted access that would jeopardize the participants' anonymity and privacy. The stages were explained to the participants as well, with the goal being to get truthful answers while raising the likelihood and willingness of participation in the study.

It is noteworthy in this study that differences in how interview questions are viewed and understood may be a factor in the instrument's shortcomings. In particular, it was hinted that participants would view the questions differently if they weren't asked face-to-face. As Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) point out, this kind of situation runs the risk of producing arbitrary results. Links to the interview questions were sent to the participants ahead of time for familiarization in order to prevent these misconceptions and misinterpretations.

The study gained informed consent from the subjects in order to maintain ethical compliance. It is implied that consent was obtained from the participants and other pertinent authorities. These authority comprised Syrian Kurdish community leaders, foreign relations organizations operating in Syria, and organizations tasked with providing political and military support to the Syrian Kurds.

3.1.2 The methodological limitations

This research relied on both primary and secondary data collection methods. One primary method was interviewing U.S. and Syrian Kurds officials from state institutions, political parties and other organizations. The fieldwork of this study was based both in the Iraqi Kurdistan region and the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, also known as Rojava.

For this study, the semi-structured interview was an appropriate technique for gathering data; it is a qualitative method in which the researcher asks informants a sequence of pre-planned but open-ended questions (See Appendix 1). As per DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), semi-structured interviews follow a semi-structured interview guide that presents questions or topics in a schematic way for the interviewees to explore. Frequently, semi-structured interviews serve as the only source of data for

qualitative research projects. According to Given (2008), the interview guide might consist of a list of subjects to discuss or be quite comprehensive with thoughtful questions.

Interviewing U.S. officials was a difficult process for the researcher since it is hard to gain acceptance from the White House, Pentagon or other U.S. officials because of the army conflicts in Syria, emerged COVID-19 Pandemic and the unavailability of US visa, which is why the researcher provided more alternative methods and data for the practical parts of the research as following:

A. Instead of interviewing the U.S. officials, which is not easy, the researcher made a hypothetical year of coding and formulating the U.S. (White House) Press Releases about the US policies with regard to Syria or Kurds in Syria.

B. Instead of interviewing the U.S. officials, the researcher analysed President Donald Trump's official speeches on U.S. foreign strategy towards Kurds in Syria, which were published on White Houses or Pentagon's websites.

C. The limitation of this study was the inability to interview a reliable sample of American leaders in the government and military. Instead, this study conducted three interviews; the first was with some U.S. politicians, and diplomats in Iraqi Kurdistan, it was easier for the researcher to interview them in Iraqi Kurdistan instead of interviewing the U.S. The second was with a US military commander in both northern Syrian and Iraq and the third with the professor of government who specialized in US foreign policy, especially in the Middle East.

D. The final alternative was to rely on one data gathering method, which was semi-structured with Kurdish Syrian politician, military, academics in Syria and Iraqi Kurdish, as Kurdish Syrian political parties have a basis in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah as well.

E. As a researcher of this study, one data collection method was preferred, depending on semi–structured interviews with Syrian- Kurd politicians and academics in Syria and Iraqi Kurdistan. In particular, the researcher tried to interview some official policymakers, particularly those involved in the political process in northern Syria and in the decision-making circles. Finally, the methods used for data collection in the research were conducted through direct semi-structured interviews with political and military leaders who were related to America, such as Kurdish politicians and forces in northern Syria and secondary data collection of existing information regarding the variables in order to achieve valuable information that helped us to

understand the form of the American relationship with the Kurds in Syria. So, in this way, the behavior of the US with regard to the Kurds was concluded to form the framework of the US foreign policy towards the Kurds. This study focused on qualitative analysis to obtain findings for the research question and these methods also enabled to support and check the hypotheses that were drawn by primary and secondary data.

3.1.3   Interview Questions

1. Why did U.S. foreign policy not interest the Syrian Kurds at the beginning of the Syrian revolt?
2. Do you think the rise of ISIS in 2014 has directly impacted the change in U.S. foreign policy approach towards the Kurds in Syria?
3. What internal factors have helped change U.S. foreign policy approach toward the Kurds in Syria, especially the U.S. presidential role? Do you think it is based on the U.S. national interest or merely a personal perception?
4. Have American-Turkish relations influenced the American relations with the Kurds of Syria, and how the Turkish factor has been dealt with in Washington?
5. Do you think that the great power competition, particularly between Russia and USA in Syria and the wider Middle East, impacts the change in the U.S. strategy toward the Syrian problem, particularly the Kurdish issue in Syria?
6. What regional factors have influenced the change in U.S. policy approach towards the Kurdish problem?
7. Do you think that the U.S. foreign policy toward the Kurds in Syria as a national minority without a state is a long-term strategic policy, or a tactical one directly connected to the war on terror?
8. What are the future dimensions of U.S. foreign policy toward the Kurdish question in Syria?
9. Do you think the Kurds in Syria are credible allies in maintaining vital U.S. interests inside Syria and the Middle East?

Note: Interviews were conducted before the end of 2020. For this purpose, many participants were contacted and few already agreed to give interviews.

3.2   Data Analysis

The objectives described in the first chapter of the study were used to categorize and summarize the participant responds. After completing the data analysis procedure, the researcher used the qualitative information gathered to provide an explanation or interpretation of the topic being studied. Moreover, statistical tables, charts, and graphs were used to show the data. In fact, the primary goal of these data analysis techniques was to identify any potential overlaps in the participant replies before outlining some of the themes that arose subsequently in relation to the topic under investigation. After examining the original data, the research investigated if correlations existed between the primary findings and secondary data found in publications like government papers, e-books, and journals. Important to note is that while a content analysis approach helped present and analyze qualitative data from semi-structured interviews, graphs and charts helped present quantitative or numerical data involving the demographic characteristics of the participants (including their age, length of stay in Syria, and gender).

3.3   Ethical Issues

Different methods were used to ensure ethical conformity in the planned investigation. For instance, it was made clear to all of the groups and individuals taking part that participation was entirely voluntary. In the same way, the participants and the institutions in question were made aware of their right to leave the study at any time during the data gathering process. Participants were specifically told that there would be no penalties for withdrawing. They were also told that certain hardships including psychological distress and trauma on their end can lead them to decide to withdraw. Furthermore notable is the fact that consent was obtained from the participants as well as other pertinent authorities. An additional measure to guarantee adherence to ethical standards was providing an explanation of the delicate nature of the issue under investigation, as well as the emotional, psychological, and social repercussions and challenges that may arise throughout the data collection procedure.

In order to maintain participant anonymity, data confidentiality, and privacy, codes were utilized in lieu of participant personal information. In order to prevent unwanted access, strong passwords were also used to safeguard the data. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) provided evidence that ensuring participant anonymity involved more than just gathering truthful data to reduce the likelihood of victimization. With respect to the secondary data sources, the suggested study fulfilled the ethical compliance requirement

by gathering and evaluating data in accordance with intellectual property rights standards. Finally, the researcher did not meddle with or manipulate the secondary data collection and analysis process; it was done in its original form.

Chapter Four: THE US FOREIGN POLICY GOALS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

4.0   Introduction

Since World War II, the Middle East has dominated US foreign policy (henceforth referred to as WWII). Due to political, geographical, and worldwide forces, the Middle East has grown in significance since World War I. The area and the West have a long history of cultural exchange that dates back to the Middle Ages and continues into the present day thanks to Western missionaries' efforts and educational endeavors (Al Sarhan, 2017). Long stretches of tenacious common agitation in the Middle East, Russia's reactivation of expansionist aspirations in Eastern Europe, and the expanding Chinese test in the Pacific area, just as the Obama organization's quick reaction to counter the danger by redistributing military assets and political consideration, a few investigations have contended that the Middle East's geostrategic circumstance has crumbled (Miller, 2012; Logan, 2014).
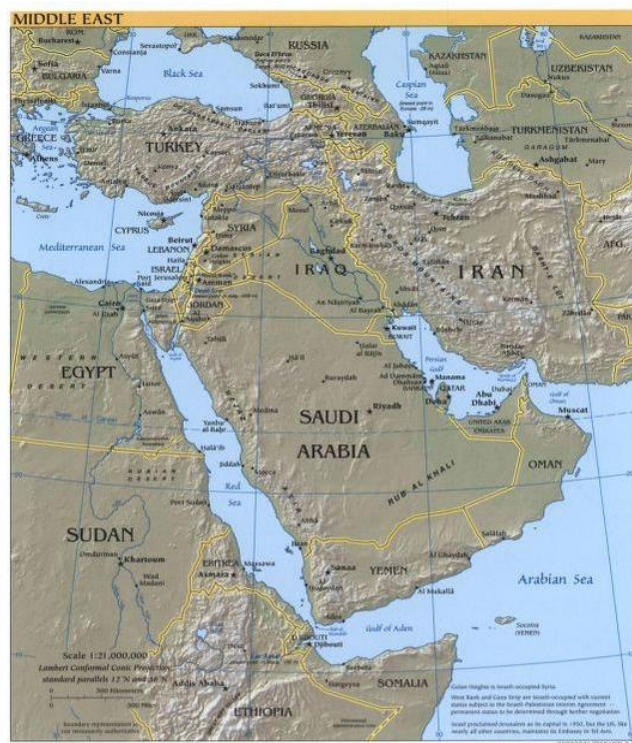
Figure 2: Map of Middle East (Source: The US Central Intelligence Agency)

The border between Iraq and Syria is still one of the most unstable geopolitical areas in the Middle East, even after the self-declared Islamic State collapsed. In recent

years, a number of Kurdish organizations and political groups have gradually influenced the dynamics along this border's northern section. In particular, there are two dynamics that need discussion. The Syrian government has been denied entry, and the Iraqi government's stance has been disputed. Consequently, new border crossings in this area are now effectively under the administration of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, which is dominated by Kurds. This indicates that in this area, the movement of persons and things is mostly controlled by two entities that are neither state nor non-state actors. The reality on the ground reveals hybrid arrangements that have arisen due to both central governments' inadequacies and Kurdish parties' rising autonomy (Hasan & Khaddour, 2021).

The Kurds seemed to be a vital US ally throughout the Syrian conflict and, more significantly, a secular counterweight to the Islamist forces among the anti-Assad opposition (Federici, 2015). The US is making an effort to uphold both its partnership with the KRG and its commitment to the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces), which is its principal ally in Syria's war against the Islamic State. Nonetheless, the KRG hosts US military personnel stationed across the border and collaborates with the military in the battle against the Islamic State. For the autonomous government in northeastern Syria to be legitimate, or at the at least for hostilities between Turkey (and its Syrian allies) and the SDF to cease, both the US and Turkey feel that the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) must be driven out. If they applied their influence in that way, their efforts may help define the borders of the Kurdish territories of Syria more clearly and highlight the existence of the border with Iraq (Hasan & Khaddour, 2021).

The US is formally opposed to the establishment of a Kurdish state, as is widely known. But the US approach is actually vague and unclear. Washington originally hesitated to engage the Syrian Kurds, especially the PYD/YPG (Democratic Party Union/Protection People's Units) troops, because to its prior involvement in Iraq, where the KRG was perceived as a danger to Iraq's unity (Küçükkeles et al., 2014). Reluctance to become involved in the Kurdish issue was partly a result of the Obama administration's determination to put an end to the Syrian conflict. With the eruption of the civil strife, the US was compelled to take a more assertive stand on the ambitions of the Syrian Kurds. The Kurds, who are spread across four different nations, are thus without a declared foreign policy of their own (Gunter, 2015).

This chapter highlights the US foreign policy goals in the Middle East by considering the Syrian Kurds. The structure of the present chapter includes aspects/topics like combating terrorism, regional stability, preventing Iranian expansion and maintaining power balance.

4.1   Combating Terrorism

One of the highest needs of US international strategy in the Middle East is to battle Islamic resistance developments and fear-based oppressor gatherings because they are considered the source of terror. The superpowers' expansion inclinations created these in the regions. One of these was the previous Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 which outraged the US and its allies. The US government then devised a series of policies to persuade the Soviets to withdraw their armies. "Any attempt by any foreign power to seize control of the Gulf Region will be regarded as an attack on the vital interests of the US of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force," President Jimmy Carter said in his State of the Union address on January 23, 1980 (Carter, 2001: 857).

It is evident from studying the history of US forces stationed in the Arabian Peninsula and other near Eastern locations that the primary motivations remain mostly same. One of the fundamental tenets and explicit goals of US foreign policy in this region, as articulated by Djerejian (1992, p. 16498) in his address, is ensuring stability and unfettered economic access to the Middle East's enormous oil reserves. Additionally, he contended that any instability in the Gulf undermines not just our interests as a nation but also the global community's economic security.

Furthermore, Djerejian (1992, p. 16497) noted that foreign policy goal encompasses more than just protecting essential resources and resolving conflicts. He asserted that there are further pillars to US foreign policy, such as our rejection of extremism, oppression, and terrorism, as well as our support for pluralism, women's rights, minority rights, and public engagement in politics. As per his assertion, the US policy to interact with this region of the world heavily relies on these global viewpoints. Furthermore, the contemporary circumstances in Syria and other regions in the area might still be addressed by these kinds of historical views.

US policy makers see themselves as guardians of global openness, democracy and the rule of law. This was clearly reflected in Djerejian speech (1992, p:16498) decades before

now as he stated that we are not imposing our model on other countries! And each country must commit it according to its traditions, history and specific circumstances. He explained and said: "Those who are prepared to take specific steps toward free elections, creating independent judiciaries, promoting the rule of law, reducing restrictions on the press, respecting the rights of minorities, and guaranteeing individual rights, will find us ready · to recognize and support their efforts, just as those moving in the opposite direction will find us ready to speak candidly and act accordingly."

These facts tell us why US foreign policy in the Middle East always has a broader engagement than other global forces! Djerejian in his speech, stated a very essential point as he pointed that to define US foreign Policy clearly, we could say that who act terrorism, oppress minorities, violate human rights, opposing to political pluralism, and are against peaceful resolution of conflicts are counted as the enemy and must be confronted!

Following the September eleventh fear-monger assaults, the US started a worldwide 'Battle on Terrorism'; terrorist organizations such Al-Qaeda and the Taliban government were associated with protecting Al-Qaeda bunches by the George W. Bush organization. Moreover, the Bush organization associates a few nations with supporting and aiding psychological oppressors, including Iran and Syria. Due to their help for Palestinian terrorist gatherings, for example, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the US has assigned the two nations as state supporters of illegal intimidation (Bush: Syria, Iran harboring terrorists, 2003). "Syria and Iran proceed to the sanctuary and help fear-based oppressors" President Bush said in such a manner.

Then again, the viability of the battle missions is still up for conversation. Following the occasion of September 11, 2001, the 'Battle on Terrorism' turned into a main concern for American international strategy. Following that, the US dispatched an attack on an assortment of Islamic associations, most of which are Sunni Muslims, including the Muslim Brotherhood. Somalia's Al-Shabaab, Afghanistan's Taliban, Afghanistan's Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. The attack was to fight all of those terrorist organizations to protect the country's national security interests worldwide. The US believes these Islamic organizations hold a radical interpretation of Islam and are anti-Western. Besides, the US claims that such terrorist organizations directly threaten the stability and security of America, its allies, and the entire region. During the 2001 intrusion into Afghanistan, President Bush blamed Iraq for supporting

psychological oppression. As per Bush, Iraqi president Saddam Hussein and Al-Qaeda had a functioning relationship, with Iraqi insight staff meeting with Osama Bn Laden in Sudan (Milbank, 2004).

In February 2003, the George W. Bush administration announced a National Strategy for Combating Terrorism in an effort to tackle terrorism on a global scale. The comprehensive plan included strategies to destroy fear-based oppressors and their organizations, refuse sponsorship, assistance, and safe havens for terrorists, reduce the social and financial environments that terrorists exploit, and protect US citizens and public safety both domestically and internationally (National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, 2003).

As a result, on March 19, 2003, the US invaded Iraq and toppled Saddam Hussein's government. The Iraqi government was charged by the Bush administration with weapons of mass destruction, human rights violations, and providing shelter to terrorist leaders. Moreover, US authorities stated that the security and stability of the whole Middle East area were threatened by the Iraqi administration. To combat ISIS, the US organized a worldwide coalition in August–September 2014. On September 23, 2014, airstrikes against ISIS lodging in Syria were carried out by the US and other countries, including some Arab countries (Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates). The goal was to undermine "the assailant gathering's capacity to request, train, and resupply its warriors" (Fantz & Pearson, 2015).

ISIL is a recent jihadist group that views Kurds as ideological rivals and foes that must be subdued. For the first time, Kurdish towns and villages were being vigorously defended by the YPG, the PYD's military branch, who seemed to be a more effective actor on the ground than their Peshmergas counterparts in Iraq (Gunes et al., 2015).

The Syrian war has surely established a new dynamic in the area through the militarization of the Syrian-Kurdish conflict. On September 13, 2014, ISIL launched its second attack on the city of Kobani; this assault marked the end of the Kurdish presence in the region for the Jihadists. After losing twelve towns in the first few days of the conflict, the YPG found itself in a precarious situation right away (Desoli, 2015).

One of the major factors that changed the political landscape of the Middle East was the rise of ISIL, but thanks to an international alliance, the Kurds quickly gained an

advantage from the Siege of Kobani. In fact, the US carried out its first round of airstrikes against the Jihadists, which led to extensive media coverage of the Kobani conflict and the Kurdish issue in general. Moreover, it showcased to the global community the productive collaboration between the United States and the PYD/YPG, which persisted in spite of Turkey's resistance. With US backing, the Kurds not only overthrew ISIL but also seized control of much of Syria's border with Turkey. In Kobani, the US, PYD/YPG, Peshmergas, and Free Syrian Army (FSA) collaborated to demonstrate global support for the Kurdish cause. Due to the PYD's military victories over ISIL, the YPG's legitimacy has increased and it is now considered an official partner of the US (Plakoudas, 2017).

Since the 9/11 attacks, the US has made combating terrorism a primary priority in its Middle East strategy. International recognition has been bestowed to Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen for their cooperative efforts against terrorism, while the US has reinforced its relations with long-ignored nations like Algeria. George W. Bush and Barack Obama's administrations had a significant impact on stable Gulf nations like Saudi Arabia. The Bush and Obama administrations advocated for outlawing the funding of terrorism and providing assistance to jihadist organizations. Security forces in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Syria are said to have infiltrated al-Qaeda using human properties (Rudner, 2004).

Thousands of people have died as a result of these insurgencies, which also destabilize the participating nations. The Sinai Peninsula, Syria, Nigeria, and Mali are potential hubs for al-Qaeda. In addition, the Islamic State is trying to establish "provinces" with assistance from organizations in Afghanistan, North Africa, Nigeria, and Sinai, among other places. Libya apart, it has just benefited from these alliances for symbolic reasons and has not made sufficient financial contributions to sustain them. Interdependence helps everyone in the battle against terror. Together, the US and local agencies are able to obtain critical intelligence, monitor and eliminate terrorists domestically, and in certain cases—like Yemen—the US is able to carry out drone attacks thanks to physical access to designated areas. The US and Saudi Arabian governments worked together to thwart similar AQAP schemes in 2010 and 2011, respectively, after the Saudis played a key role in thwarting the group's attempt to attack a US airliner in 2010 (Dreazen, 2012).

Counterterrorism and rebellion have a symbiotic partnership for alliance purposes. Today, violent anti-US militant groups are based in Pakistan and Yemen, and the governments' policies bolster the jihadists' strength. In Saudi Arabia, jihadist groups have historically relied on wealthy individuals to finance their activities. Similarly, the Assad regime's deliberate promotion of sectarianism and the Iraqi government's repressive policies against the country's Sunnis have helped the Islamic State's rise. In all of these situations, the terrorism situation has been exacerbated by faulty security policies and systemic weaknesses. However, since the problem is so serious, these allies are much more important. As a result, the threat's importance fluctuates in lockstep with the alliances.

In a similar vein, where the anti-terrorism line is drawn determines a lot to be carried out. Hamas and Hizballah, and two well-known extremist organizations, for example, that are also significant ploitical role in Lebanon politics. Both have a negative attitude toward the US, but unlike al-Qaeda, none is organizing attacks on Americans. On the other hand, both have repeatedly criticized Israel, and Hizballah is often quoted as saying that if there is an armed conflict with Iran, it is more likely to target the US. Hence, within the combating strategies, it evident that US foreign policy has something to do with dealing with them.

Similarly, democracy often advances as a result of the war against terrorism. In order to fight terrorism, the US works with allies to bolster its security forces, which are frequently the least democratic portion of an autocratic government. Counter-terrorism also has the unintended consequence of being self-fulfilling. According to the rationale, supporting partners and acting alone puts the US in the crosshairs of terrorism. Furthermore, the US' reaction to the threat just bolstered the jihadist narrative. The reason that counter-terrorism needs not to be prioritized is that the threat is still insignificant (Mueller and Stewart, 2012).

The behavior of the US generated a two-tiered sense of insecurity between actors in the region. Conversely, during a more considerable period of strategic disengagement from the region, the US's extent of participation was not always predictable, as it stuck to its previous commitments in some situations, for example, through direct intervention or Libya's 2011-style offshore engagement. Second, due to the unpredictability of US foreign policy, regional actors have been required to assume additional security-related

obligations. Uncertainty over what to anticipate from Washington in the face of numerous security challenges has caused some regional players to reconsider their positions and obligations. This can be clearly observed particularly in light of Iran's revived assertiveness after 2003—favored as a result of Iraq's absence as an effective counterbalance (Byman and Moller, 2016).

Since 2000, efforts to upend the status quo in the area and measures meant to preserve it have taken the place of Washington's previous foreign policy. In seeming opposition to Washington's long-standing defense of the regional status quo, US foreign policy has pursued many transformational agendas against some of its traditional allies since the 2011 Arab uprisings and the Iraqi regime change action. Figure 2 below illustrates the extreme uncertainty this has produced among regional actors over what to anticipate from the US. Since the early 1980s, the US appears to have expanded the range of its activities from mostly status quo reinforcing acts to include a variety of instances down the horizontal axis as well, moving down the vertical axis from greater to lower degrees of intervention (see figure 2 below). Numerous examples of Barack Obama's and George W. Bush's foreign policy initiatives support this claim (Queroa and Dessì, 2019).
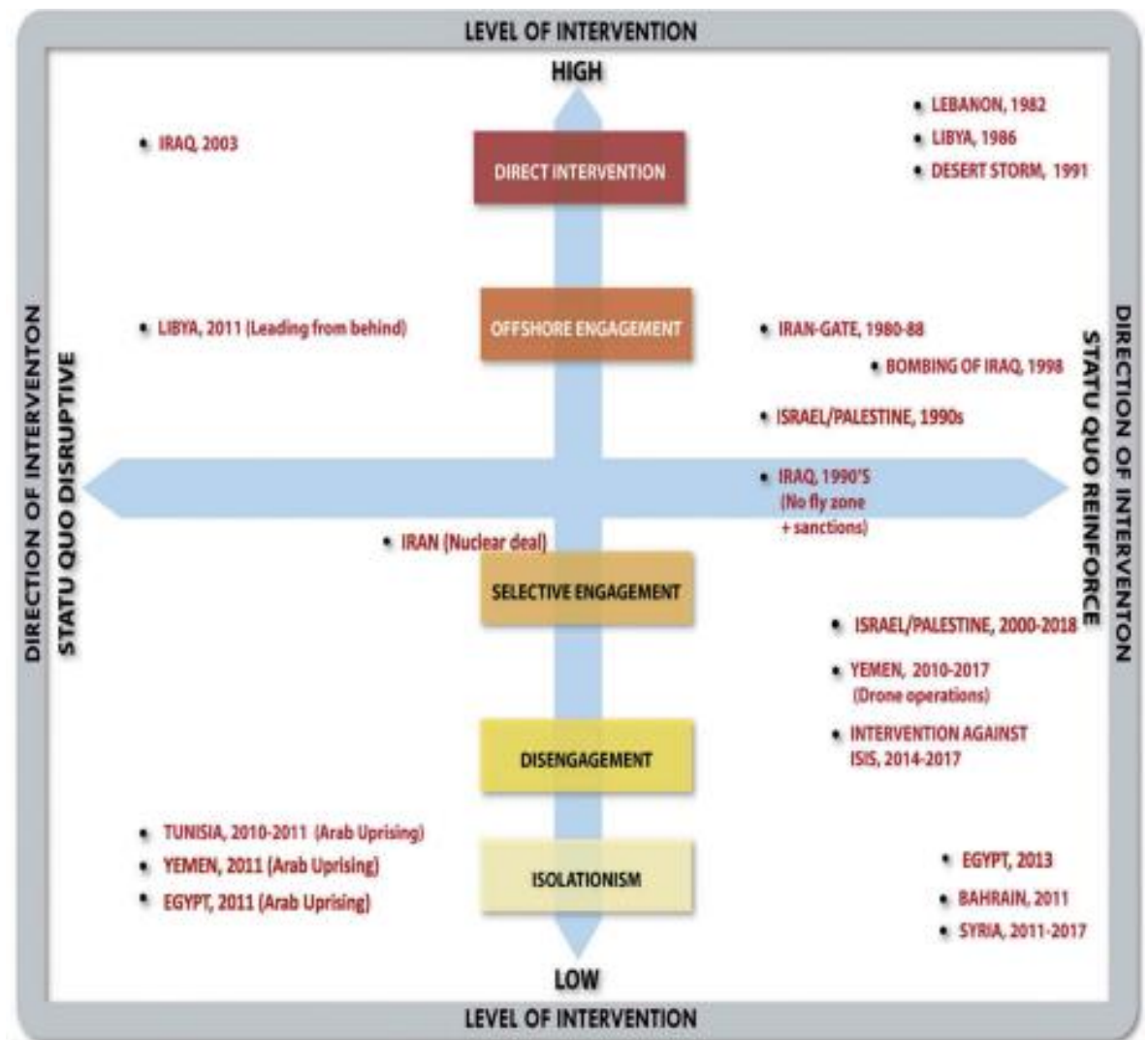
Figure 3: US foreign policy in the Middle East- An uncertain matrix, Source: (Queroa and Dessì, 2019).

4.2   Regional Stability

The United States has a long history in the Middle East, and since the conclusion of the Cold War, its influence has only grown. Despite this, there are tensions in trade and culture, and the military might of the area is not as great as that of Europe or Asia, where the US intends to "pivot," which is a long-standing concern. During the Cold War, the Middle East's oil resources and other nations with communist leanings served as a chessboard between the US and the Soviet Union. In order to maintain pressure on Iran's religious regime and Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the US increased its military presence in the area throughout the 1990s. However, Washington continued to try and was mostly unsuccessful in bringing about peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors (Byman and Moller, 2016).

Maintaining inclusive Middle East relationships is essential to US foreign policy objectives. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a regional organization founded in 1981 to reconcile and coordinate its members' political and economic interests, is one of their allies. The entities in question comprise the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the State of Qatar. The GCC meeting has been sought after by the US and the EU for communication and security opportunities. On the other hand, recent territorial instability has strained interpersonal relationships. Regardless, Oman has been particularly supportive of global tact.

Israel "has for some time been, and continues to be, America's most reliable Middle East partner." as indicated by the State Department. In 1985, Israel and the US marked a deregulation bargain, and the two nations worked together on military drills, military exploration, and weapons improvement. The Joint Counterterrorism Group, which depicts itself as "the State Department's longest working vital counterterrorism discourse," regularly unites the two. The US wishes to assist Lebanon with keeping up its vote-based system, sway, public solidarity, and regional honesty. Lebanon's primary guard accomplice is the US, which furnishes Lebanon with a two-sided unfamiliar guide to battle the impact of Hezbollah, which is generally subsidized by Iran, just as ISIS along Lebanon's Syrian boundary (Foreign Policy: The Middle East - The Policy Circle, 2021).

From 2003 to 2011, US powers were sent to Iraq as a feature of a US-drove attack. The state had been tormented by sectarianism and the spread of ISIS by 2013, compelling the Obama organization to re-send troops to help the Iraqi Army (Iraq Timeline: Since the 2003 War, 2020). Under the US Generalized System of Preferences strategy, Iraq has been assigned as a "gainful non-industrial nation" permitting a scope of American organizations to put resources into Iraq's energy, guard, data innovation, and transportation areas. Iraq is the US' second-biggest wellspring of imported oil from the Middle East (U.S. Crude Oil Imports, 2021).

The US first intended to convince the PYD to join the opposition against Assad while supporting the Kurdish National Council. The majority of armed Kurdish factions supported the PYD, which remained firmly in control of Rojava despite these attempts (Küçükkeles et al., 2014).

The PYD was quickly seen by the US serving as a shield against Islamist 14 organizations such as ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusra. As a result, the US found itself in a difficult situation: collaborating with the PYD/YPG, which is critical for Syria's democratic transition, while keeping Turkey a vital alliance opposing Iran and Russia. The fundamental challenge for the US was to devise a strategy for keeping Turkey in the American camp without jeopardizing Kurdish military backing. If the US loses the YPG, it will be compelled to withdraw from northern Syria, opening the field to the Iranian ally and the Syrian regime. The US needed to prevent an ethnic conflict in northern Syria, even if the Kurds turned out to be the most effective allies in the battle against ISIL, having already forced the group out of about 99 percent of the territory it had occupied. In fact, it was unreasonable to expect the PYD/YPG to rule Arab neighborhoods, and the Arabs were against a power transfer favoring the Kurds (Nordland, 2018).

Kurdish forces, on the other hand, were needed, according to American officers, to ensure that ISIL was defeated for good. They warned that if the US stopped assisting the Kurds, ISIL would regroup and retake territory in Syria. The US involvement in Syria was also justified to thwart Iranian regional expansionism and the establishment of an 'Iranian corridor' linking Teheran and Beirut, which could threaten Israel (Balanche, 2018).

That is why, in an anti-Iranian war, the US required Turkey as an ally and other Syrian parties in the neighborhood. The US realized they could not rely on Arab Sunni tribes to protect their local interests. As a result, the PYD was the only remaining ally. This does not mean that the Kurds are more trustworthy than the Arab tribes of the Euphrates Valley, but it does indicate that they are less inclined to modify their cooperation if their competitors outbid them. Officials in the US, on the other hand, were pursuing more enthusiastic objectives. The Trump administration planned to keep US troops on the ground in Syria as long as possible to maintain a presence in the nation, rather than assisting Syrian Kurds in achieving their goal of establishing an autonomous area within Syria, Trump and his administration attempted to use the Rojava revolution to effect regime change in Syria. According to US special envoy James Jeffrey, the US-Kurdish alliance is 'tactical and ephemeral' (Aziz, 2020).

However, US President Donald Trump declared on May 8, 2018, that the country will unilaterally from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). His predecessor,

Barack Obama, had signed the deal with the rest of the permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany just three years ago, in October 2015. The US' intervention surprised many people. While election pledges, the pacta sunt servanda (agreements must be kept) principle, which requires states to keep their promises under international law, were intended to keep the new administration from being unable to fight escapism temptations. Iran's president, Hassan Rouhani, accused the US of "failing to live up to its foreign obligations." Several other world leaders, including the UK, France, Germany, Russia, and Canada, have indicated that such behavior not only jeopardizes international peace and stability but also "critically decreased the confidence in international peace and security agreements," as the Swedish Foreign Minister put it (World reacts to US withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal, 2018).

President Trump approved attacks against Syrian regime sites on April 13, 2018, just a few weeks earlier, in response to an alleged chemical weapons assault on civilians in the Ghouta area near Damascus. Although there had been at least 50 prior instances of chemical weapons attacks, according to US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley, this was the first time the US administration has taken such (re)action during the eight-year-long Syrian conflict. In spite of the fact that President Barack Obama declared in 2012 that the use of chemical weapons was a "red line" that would require urgent US action, the US has previously declined to respond to this danger until now. This strategy hampered any sense of predictability in US foreign policy, as it did in the case of the Iranian nuclear deal, where the US reacted differently to similar incidents over the span of a few months. (Quero & Dessì, 2019).

"The US no longer makes hollow threats." President Trump said, emphasizing the special essence of the US reaction. "When I make a commitment, I keep it." Trump's decision to forego already-advanced Trans-Pacific Partnership talks contrasts sharply with the US' exit from the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement (COP21). These developments have brought foreign policy predictability, international actors' credibility, and public aspirations to the forefront of global discussions—contrasts with "chaos, instability, or lack of predictability." Peace and security occur only when foreign players respond predictably to particular incidents or circumstances. This increases expectations among the other players in the system, forecasting individual or group results by expecting continuity in behavior, and eventually organizing the relationships between them. As a

result, predictability becomes a critical component in establishing and preserving global political orders (Hurrell, 2007).

The US' foreign policy has been profoundly active in international affairs over the last seven decades, including trade relations, crises, and clandestine campaigns to depose those state leaders who oppose America. Following the Red Line Agreement of 1928, which established the primary oil restraint infrastructure by prohibiting proprietors from pursuing near-home interests, the US signed the Anglo-American Petroleum Agreement, which divided Middle Eastern oil between the US and the UK. In 1953, the CIA and British secret services organized a coup in Iran to remove nationalized Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddegh from power. In 1956, the United Kingdom, France, and Israel launched an assault on Egypt to reclaim the Suez Canal, which included Egypt. The humiliation and expulsion of European forces, just as the breakdown of the Middle East under American impact, came about because of the US' dismissal of the assault. The US kept up matchless quality nearby during the Cold War to keep the Soviet Union from extending its essence around there and throughout the planet's presence (Prifti, 2017).

After the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union began to disintegrate, a new American era in the Middle East began. Surprisingly, there was a battle to start. In early August 1990, Iraq launched an invasion on Kuwait, a country wealthy in oil. The US quickly engaged, leading a military alliance and creating pressure on Iraq to evacuate. More than seven years later, in December 1998, the United States launched a four-day besieging assault against Iraq in an attempt to weaken its ability to produce and use WMDs and to keep it from violating UN Security Council resolutions.

Afghanistan was attacked by the US after its massive presence in the region during the 9/11 terrorist incident, which was blamed on the country's support for the oppressors who carried out the act out of fear. The US got involved in the most problematic conflict of the twenty-first century after two years: the 2003 Iraq invasion. The US's influence and involvement in the Middle East did not cease with the Iraq War, however. On the contrary, the conflict brought about a new chapter in US foreign policy for the Middle East, one that is still in place today and involves diplomatic relations with Iran and other regional countries as well as direct military action against ISIL in Syria and Iraq (Brands, 2016).

While many attributed the Iraq War to President Bush's neoconservative ideas, others anticipated that Barack Obama, his successor, would handle the area differently. Obama declared as a presidential candidate that the Bush Doctrine would be "as doctrinaire" as the Obama Doctrine, which gave rise to the divisive concepts of prosecutorial immunity and unilateralism. He campaigned on a platform of "shared prosperity" and "mutual peace" with other nations. Additionally, he pledged to abandon fear-based politics and alter the mentality that has drawn the US into innumerable international crises and wars (Ackerman, 2008).

In his early days as president, Obama emphasized the necessity for a new era of foreign policy directed against the Middle East and the Muslim world. In pursuit of this objective, the president made his first trip to Turkey, one of the most powerful nations in the area and a longtime ally of the United States. Shortly after departing Turkey, President Obama pledged a "New Beginning" in US foreign policy in the area in a speech to Egyptian politicians and women (Holzman, 2009).

Asking whether President Obama's foreign policy is a continuation of President Bush's or a departure from it makes sense in light of this split. Still, the response will not be very significant until it makes it clear if President Bush's US foreign policy continues from previous Middle East plans or changes them. Consequently, this mission will incorporate the expertise of pre-Bush foreign policy features. Truly, the more one studies US foreign policy, the more accurate and thorough one's understanding of foreign policy behaviors and trends and how they impact the field's evolution and consistency over time (Collinson, 2014).

Ronald Reagan said that US foreign policy is shaped by ongoing global forces and aims to protect the nation's existence and core values (National Security Strategy Archive 1988, 1-3). The assertion that US national security policy has not changed since the commencement of the Cold War was stated by President George H. W. Bush in his 1991 National Security Policy. In the National Security Strategy Archive (1991; p. 1).

4.3   Preventing Iranian Expansion

Iran plays an important geopolitical role in the region. It is bordered on the north by the Caspian Sea and south by the Arabian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. It also sits at the crossroads of the world's most dominant oil regions, including Central Asia, the

Caucasus, and the Gulf, both of which the US and Western countries have sought to dominate for decades. Iran also has possession of a host of islands in the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, as well as a 9% share of global oil reserves (Katzman, 2019).

The Middle East has been greatly impacted by the 1979 Iranian revolution, the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of Islamic republics in Central Asia, the events of September 11, 2001, the start of the new century, and the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. As a result of these incidents in the region surrounding Iran, the US tightened its blockade of the nation, establishing military bases in Central Asia and deploying fleets in the Gulf, where Iran is mainly cut off from the outside world (Habashneh, 2008).

The disagreement between Iran and the US stemmed from the Iranian nuclear program (Farhani and Qamadi, 2016). Former President Barack Obama approached Iran differently, according to Zoueiri and Suleiman (2018) (where the American goal has attained in the first place). Nunlist (2016) supported maintaining open lines of communication and discourse between the United States and its adversaries, including Iran, during the Obama administration. This might be accomplished by providing room for discussion on the Iranian nuclear issue. Furthermore, Castiglioni (2013) said that the best way to persuade Iran to halt its nuclear program would be through diplomatic measures as opposed to military ones.

Obama placed a strong emphasis on "diplomacy first" throughout his election campaign and has continued to do so ever since. This principle served as the basis for his foreign policy with Iran. Obama realized that the United States would be better served by using diplomatic means than military force to pressure Iran to halt its nuclear program. As a result, Obama decided not to disrupt Tehran's communication in an attempt to put pressure on the Iranian leadership, unlike his predecessor. Obama highlighted the need to begin a long-term diplomatic endeavor in the Middle East, to break free from the "Trap of the Past," and to move on with a future of mutual respect with Iran in his speech at Cairo University (Castiglioni, 2013, p. 3).

The nuclear accord negotiations in America were spoiled by internal opposition, with President Obama facing Republican-majority opposition, opposition from a few Democrats in the American Congress, as well as opposition from several state governors. In a statement to Obama, Indiana Governor Pence expressed reservations about

decreasing the degree of enforced sanctions on Iran. Investors in Indiana, he said, will not put their money into companies that cooperate with Iran (Adebahr, 2017, pp. 3–4). Despite internal opposition, Obama insisted on pursuing a new policy toward Iran to advance American interests: eliminating the Iranian nuclear threat, preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, and avoiding a new Middle East war (Katzman, 2019, p. 19). Furthermore, Obama began to explore the two countries' shared economic and geopolitical objectives, beginning with the idea of transforming Iran from a revolutionary and ideological state rejecting regional and international reality into a state trying to integrate into the global system (Abdul Fattah, 2014, p. 137). The P5+1 (the US, the United Kingdom, France, China, Russia, and Germany) and Iran signed the Iranian nuclear accord in 2015. In exchange for a progressive relaxation of sanctions, Iran agreed to guarantee the peaceful nature of its nuclear program (Hijazin, 2016, p. 156).

Because of this, former President Barack Obama took a different tack when it came to his relationship with Iran. He lifted the economic sanctions that the US and other Western nations had placed on Iran since 2006 in return for Iran's promise to end its nuclear program and refrain from developing nuclear weapons. Following the implementation of the deal in 2016, Iran was freed from financial and economic sanctions, freeing up hundreds of billions of dollars in Iranian cash that had been embargoed overseas (Zoueiri and Suleiman, 2018, p. 14).

Katzman (2019) asserts that the US and Iran have become more similar as a result of the Obama administration's Iran nuclear deal (beginning with attaining the national interest). Abdul Fattah (2014) asserts that this accord will terminate the ideological conflict between the two nations and permit Iran's assimilation into the international community.

With the election of Donald Trump as President of the US, the foreign policy trends in the US have shifted dramatically. On the other hand, Trump has moved away from accomplishing American interests according to his vision, focusing instead on his election campaign statements about the country's internal affairs. Then there is his isolationist stance, which entails not relying on the US' interventionist foreign policy. He advocated for the US to be free of the burdens of global leadership; as a result, the US will embrace a partner-paying attitude (Branda, 2018, p. 162).

According to Badawi (2018), Trump became hostile toward Iran throughout his presidency, calling it a corrupt regime. Trump came to the realization that the US would gain by taking on Iran and supporting the Gulf States. Masters and Hunt (2017) claim that Trump's isolationist stance and his offer to release the US from the obligations it faces as the world's leading nation served as the catalyst for the US-Iran conflict. Similarly, Katzman (2019) argued that Trump began to challenge Iran by withdrawing from the nuclear agreement and imposing economic sanctions on the nation due to Iran's unrelenting path toward becoming the world's largest sponsor of terrorism, as evidenced by its emphasis on extending the long-range missile system and its provision of cash and weaponry to the Houthis in Yemen.

After winning the election, Trump turned his attention to Iran's foreign policy, accusing it of continuously funding terrorists with money and weapons while permitting the country to continue developing its long-range missile system (Katzman, 2019, p. 21). During his inaugural address to the UN General Assembly, Trump accused Iran as becoming an emboldened despot. He then said that the United States would be withdrawing from the Iran Nuclear Deal and that more economic sanctions would be imposed on Iran, from which the US President would release Tehran once every ninety days. Trump, however, disapproved of the exception and started putting economic penalties on Iran. Following a second round of sanctions that targeted Iranian ports, the country's energy sector, and companies that import Iranian oil, the first round of sanctions focused on non-oil industries and currency transactions (Badawi, 2018, p. 2).

Iran has therefore restarted its nuclear weapons program, making it more politically susceptible to US military intervention by supporting Israel and Saudi Arabia while opposing the interests of Europe and Russia. The US is willing to resume diplomatic and economic relations with Iran, but only under certain conditions, the foreign minister of the US, Mike Pompeo, stated in May 2018; the most significant being the full disarmament of Iran's nuclear program, the suspension of the country's ballistic missile system, and the cessation of Iranian intervention in the region, notably in Yemen, Syria, and Iraq (Thompson, 2018, p. 2).

As Secretary of State Pompeo stated in the speech he gave on May 21, 2018, President Trump has publicly urged communication with Iranian leaders, and the administration has laid out certain requirements for a substantial shift in US-Iran ties. Iran

is unlikely to approve many of the demands as they would complicate the country's national security and revolutionary objectives. Numerous attempts at direct negotiations between the two nations have failed. In December 2018, President Rouhani said that on eight instances in 2017 and three times in 2018, the US urged discussions with Iran, and on three occasions in 2018, the US "indirectly" commanded conversations. He continued by saying that Iran has turned down these offers to be flexible with its national security strategies (Mousavian, 2018).

Consequently, under Trump, three poles of US foreign policy against Iran emerged. The first pole, "Delegitimization," is centered on Iran's development of a ballistic missile system and its sponsorship of terrorism. The second is "Penalties," which refers to the imposition of more severe economic sanctions on Iran. The third is "containment," which supports Israel's, Saudi Arabia's, and United Arab Emirates' policies. Each of the three wants to reduce Iran's sway over the region (Alcaro, 2018, pp. 6–9).

By targeting the Iranian economy, the US government seems to have had some success undermining the regime's authority, and the most recent sanctions announcement looks to be reverting US policy toward Iran to that paradigm. Without a doubt, oil is Tehran's main source of income and the prerequisite for its protracted and contentious presence in the Middle East. For this reason, the current US administration's strategy of depleting Iran's hard currency reserves by going straight after its oil revenues is especially successful. Meanwhile, Tehran's non-oil revenue streams have decreased due to sanctions against Iran's steel, iron, aluminum, and copper sectors. Targeting Iran's economy has had real repercussions for Iran's regional power-building strategy. Lack of foreign exchange has made it more difficult for Iran to pay the bills and wages of its regional proxies, which has restricted the amount of money available to maintain Iran's cunning propaganda operation, which has been crucial in furthering Iran's regional objective to oppose America's allies (Almogbal, 2020).

4.4   Maintaining Balance of Power

In the Persian Gulf region, pursuing and implementing a balance-of-power system has resulted in regional insecurity, confrontation, instability, and tension, wasting resources, energies, and riches. The US has even suffered negative consequences due to the balance-of-power system. It will remain challenging and precarious for the US to

address regional crises such as the Israel-Palestinian peace process, democracy promotion, and the establishment of sustainable peace and stability in the region, especially in the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan, as long as there are ongoing wars, crises, and tensions in the region. The system has ceased to be practicable or workable as a result of new geopolitical changes in post-invasion Iraq, and will have to give way to a solution that better reflects these new developments. Although this tactic failed, US policymakers believe it is still effective and may attempt it in the future (Barzegar, 2010).

Preventing any regional domination or hemispheric influence from growing in other regions is the US's main goal as a regional powerhouse in the Western Hemisphere. The US has accomplished this diplomatic goal by employing the offshore balance grand plan (Mearsheimer, 2001). First, according to Prrifti (2017), "the arrangement and direction of a state's political, military, economic, and moral assets in order to achieve foreign policy objectives that fundamental policy fails to achieve" is the definition of grand strategy. In other words, the extent to which diplomacy and intelligence work with the armed forces may influence the course of international foreign policy (Luttwak, 2009).

The US' status determines offshore balance as a continental hegemon and its geographic location. When the discussion is about offshore balancing, it should be about an offshore state's grand plan for maintaining regional power equilibrium and avoiding the rise of regional hegemony. It is reasonable to conclude that this approach has remained unchanged as the US' status as the only international hegemon and its geography have remained unchanged since the nineteenth century. President Ronald Reagan argued, citing Walter Lippmann, that geography determines the US' national interests and foreign policy and that national interests, goals, and strategies do not vary substantially regardless of the realities of geography (National Security Strategy Archive, 1988).

A major US priority during Ronald Reagan's administration (1981–1989) was maintaining a balance of power between Iran and Iraq. In its strategy for balancing power, the US favored Iraq; yet, in order to accomplish some foreign policy objectives, such as providing munitions in return for American hostages held by Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, the US also allied with Iran. After Reagan, President George H.W. Bush's administration (1989–1993) saw little improvement in US–Iranian relations. In general, the Bush administration's approach to Iran was influenced by Iraq's 1990 invasion of

Kuwait, American hostages taken by Iranian friends in Lebanon, and a new phase of Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. Dual containment might be used to describe President Bill Clinton's Iran policy, which from 1993 to 2001 focused politically, economically, and militarily isolating both Iran and Iraq (Richards, 2015).

The Islamic Republic of Iran is the main cause of instability in the area, according to the traditional understanding of the balance of power, which is backed by the US and conservative Gulf Arab regimes. The main goal of any regional deterrence strategy should be to avert threats brought on by Iranian activity. According to this perspective, the primary strategy of control should be directed towards entities, like Iran, that are incongruous with the political-security goals and purposes of the West and the existing circumstances. Thus, one may contend that the "axis of evil" concept, which portrayed Iran as the main cause of instability in the area, and the "dual containment" policy, which simultaneously targeted Iran and Iraq, are both based on the "balance of power" paradigm (William, 1995).

The second major issue in foreign policy is Syria, where it is clear that terror by the Islamic State, which has served as the Sunni bloc's spearhead in containing Shiite expansionism, cannot be contained and ended without a comprehensive deal, especially with forces that support the Assad administration. It will also be necessary for the US, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia, and other Arab and Western countries to come to an accord with the moderate rebel groups that are associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. The only way to make forward is via intensive diplomacy, as the present military effort is ineffectual. Turkey, which has strong commercial and financial links to Iran and is worried about the prospect of Kurdish independence, may stand to gain the most from the Iranian pact, despite their divergent views on Syria and Erdogan's desire to topple Assad. In Bruno (2018).

Proponents of a balance of power strategy in the Persian Gulf think Washington should pursue a policy preventing any regional state from gaining dominance. They say that the US should adopt such a policy in order to safeguard its national interests and security, particularly in terms of ensuring the free flow of energy. According to this viewpoint, the US has had a long-standing historical presence in the Persian Gulf, and there is no reason to believe that this situation will change. As a result, the US should

adopt a policy that provides a reliable security umbrella for its regional partners (Barzegar, 2010).

President George H. W. Bush agreed, saying that the grand containment plan shaped US foreign policy during the Cold War (National Security Strategy Archives, 1991). Offshore balancing is referred to as the grand strategy of containment in almost every official US national security plan. The grand strategy of containment, known by various names, sought to counterbalance the Soviet Union in Europe and prevent the expansion of Soviet hegemony across the world in the past, which could consequently result in the Western Hemisphere being encircled and the US being strangled. US foreign policy experts disagree about the type of grand strategy that the US has adopted at any given time, despite official comments made by US presidents on their national security policies and actions prior to them. There are two types of specialists who approached the matter differently. On the one hand, some use the phrase 'offshore balancing' to describe a grand strategy aimed at preserving US hegemony while ignoring non-security goals like maintaining a strong military presence abroad, promoting democracy, and carrying out humanitarian missions (Layne, 2006; Mearsheimer, 2001; Mearsheimer and Walt, 2016).

However, some other scholars have developed the idea of "liberal hegemony," which refers to a grand strategy meant to uphold US hegemony, support liberal international institutions, and advance democracy around the globe (Ikenberry 2005, 2011; Brands, 2016).

Although the two camps disagree on the definition of grand strategy, they accept that the US has used a number of grand strategies over the years as a result of different presidents' philosophies and foreign policy strategies. These two strategies, however, can be merged into a third strategy that blends the liberal elements of sustaining hegemony by spreading democracy and adhering to international institutions with the realist elements of sustaining hegemony by depending on the balance of power approach because of their considerable similarities. The third strategy, an updated version of offshore balancing, argues that governments should follow non-security policies such as promoting democracy and adhering to international institutions as long as they do not breach balance-of-power logic or jeopardize national security interests (Mearsheimer, 2001).

In this vein, the national security goals should be preserved. When the goals clash with non-security interests (such as humanitarian assistance or the propagation of democracy), individual leaders' moral predispositions, and/or a great power's national values/culture at any point in the process, national security interests usually win out. When national security interests (political, international, and local) collide, the ones with the most global geostrategic significance win. This is referred to as the 'dominance doctrine' of foreign policy. The US has been a leader in establishing international institutions and adhering to their laws and decisions, but, when national security interests are at stake, the US has consistently defied worldwide organizations. In other words, the use or threat of force to achieve foreign policy goals is another option when the US national security interests are challenged. The country's use or attempt to use force can be by foreign organizations or state agencies (Prifti, 2017). Another explanation for the lack of importance and significance of the differences between the two groups mentioned earlier is that states have their own grand plans and tactics to deter the hegemony of aggressor countries.

The US, a naval force, employs two tactics to carry out its grand policy of offshore balancing: buck-passing and balancing. The buck-passing technique is referred to in official US national security plans as the deterrence strategy, which means no direct offensive action against the aggressor. However, since deterrence alone would not be enough to keep the aggressor at bay, these tactics stress the importance of maintaining superior military strength to handle direct threats or situations in which the buck-passing strategy fails. Buck-passing is an excellent tactic as it helps the US to transfer control of the aggressor to other provincial states who, like the US, have few options left to handle the aggressor. Since regional states are forced to curb the threat or risk extinction, the US does not need to expend its own money to prevent Russia from spreading across Europe, China from spreading across Asia, or Iran and ISIL from spreading across the Middle East.

The buck-passing strategy is aided by the engagement of several nations as regional actors with different preferences. Since there are more players in the game, regional nations are less likely to work together, which makes it simpler for the US to locate a regional power to oppose any state that is acting aggressively. On two occasions, the US has preferred buck-passing. It safeguards US military capability first. Second, it is also impairing the military might of hostile nations. Because the attacker might stop

the buck-catcher and obtain sufficient leverage to upset the power balance, the buck-passing method can occasionally be harmful (Mearsheimer, 2001).

Since no power politics event happens immediately, the hegemon would use a dual-containment strategy to prolong the conflict and prevent the emergence of a victor. One of the best examples to refrain from the drawbacks of buck-passing is the dual-containment strategy used in the Iran-Iraq War. The geographic location of the US is its biggest reason for reliance on the strategy of buck-passing. Its main idea is that if a great powerful nation is closer to its rival, it is more likely to balance as it would be in front line if the rival state decides to strike (Toft, 2005).

In the same way, if there is more distance between rival forces and the inherent barriers that differentiate them, they are more likely to use a buck-passing strategy to keep the rival at bay. Thus, with the distance between the US and the Middle East and the challenge of projecting force across oceans, the strategy of buck-passing becomes more favorable to keep the aggressor away. Maintaining US military capabilities is a sensible and cost-effective strategy. The US has been able to overcome territorial limits over the last seven decades, but it has yet to overcome cost constraints. The geographic proximity of provincial land forces like Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and others to one another, or the area affected by the ISIL is another factor that makes it likely for the US to exert its focus on buck-passing to change any of the previously listed powers or the ISIL.

If the buck-passing strategy fails, the US has a direct intervention policy that includes sending diplomatic warnings, uniting with allies against the aggressor, or using its own armed troops and economic might. In certain situations, it will combine the buck-passing process with direct shuffle in order to prevent an obvious confrontation with the assailant (Prifti, 2017).

4.5   Conclusion:

For most of the twentieth century, even well into the twenty-first, the US has had multinational aspirations and a global footprint. By using diplomatic, economic, and military power to further its national interests, the US has become a key player in the Middle East. The Middle East has been a focal point of US foreign policy since World War II, after which it has increased in importance due to global, geographical, and political influences. The year 2011 was a turning point in history, influencing US foreign policy in the Middle East. The Arab Spring is a phenomenon that has spread across the

Middle East. It has challenged the political power of present regimes in many Middle Eastern states in one way or another; it has also dominated internal political debate in countries where the Arab Spring has not gained pace. A glance at the changes in the Arab world's political map reveals that the region's political variety has grown dramatically. Until the Arab Spring, the majority of the distinctions between Middle Eastern political systems could be found in the degree to which they were autocratic. However, there are two significant types of states now: authoritarian systems and transitional systems, as well as stable versus unstable systems (Beck & Huser, 2012). The Iraqi Syrian border remains one of the most geopolitically volatile places in the Middle East, notwithstanding the fall of the self-proclaimed Islamic State. Various Kurdish entities and parties have progressively affected the dynamics across the northern section of this border in recent years. During the Syrian crisis, the Kurds appeared to be a crucial partner for the US and, even more importantly, a secular bulwark in the fight against the Islamist factions of the anti-Assad opposition. The US, as is well known, does not officially favour establishing a Kurdish state. However, the US strategy is uncertain and ambiguous. Due to its previous participation in Iraq, where the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) was viewed as a threat to Iraq's unity, Washington was initially hesitant to engage the Syrian Kurds, particularly the PYD/YPG forces. The Obama administration's reluctance to engage in the Kurdish problem largely stemmed from its desire to end the Syrian crisis. As the civil conflict erupted, the US was forced to adopt a firmer stance on the Syrian Kurdish aspirations. As a result, the US has never stated a foreign policy toward the Kurds, who live in four different countries.

For the past four decades, the US' foreign policy toward the Middle East has been ambiguous toward the dominant international powers. Rather than stabilize the region, the US foreign policy has created a mechanism that allows the US to remain an intrusive external force. As a result, the US military and diplomatic activity in the area has worked against both its own national interests and a stable international power balance. The US' constructive interaction with Iran has shown that a pragmatic approach to dispute resolution without partisan attachment is possible and may also signal a shift in US foreign policy in the region. According to Paul Pillar, a break from permanent attachment to or estrangement from respective countries in the region may allow an offshore balancing strategy (Prifti, 2005). Using US leverage to stifle ethnic ambitions and progress is akin to pitting one side against another in a competition. A more realistic US

foreign policy that manages to change the balance from afar rather than defend its own interests in regional crises could drive the country toward a power-balanced arrangement (Kaussler & Hastedt, 2017).

Preserving international hegemony, retaining peace, helping alliances, maintaining energy supplies, combating terrorist groups, and, more recently, democracy promotion is still essential to the US. This research concludes that three out of four investigated factors – combating terrorism, regional stability, preventing Iranian expansion and maintaining a balance of power – have changed post-2011. While the US remains a significant player in the Middle East due to its alliances and military presence, a discussion of what lies ahead in terms of power transfers should not be unduly centered on the US. This is due to a number of factors. First, with Russia's intervention in Syria in 2015, the country has cemented its position as a relevant external actor in the region. Secondly, under President Donald Trump's leadership, the US withdrew backing from the Syrian opposition and abdicated leadership in May 2017 by violating the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA). These acts bolstered the perception that the US is an untrustworthy actor in the region (Harrison, 2018).

It's only fair to acknowledge that Afghanistan and Iraq's invasions and subsequent occupations occupied most of the US' attention and resources in the decade following 9/11. These battles were more about counterinsurgency than counterterrorism, and there was little appetite or funding for a strong global soft power campaign to combat extremism. The Arab Spring of 2011 presented another window of opportunity for the US to capitalize on public movements more meaningfully. But, once again, a political-military view on the stability and danger concerns arising from individual nations, particularly Libya and Syria, affected us. Extremist groups, on the other hand, took advantage of the chances created by the movement in formerly autocratic regimes. They sparked divides and made inroads into the consequent sects (London,2020).

Since the end of the Cold War, the US has increased its efforts to acquire or maintain influence around the world. The primary goal of US operations in the Middle East has been to strengthen regional domination in an endeavor to take control of the whole world. For several reasons, the Middle East is seen as one of the most unstable areas in the world. One of the US's top interests is to see security and prosperity continued in the Middle East. One of the most important pillars of US policy in the twenty-first

century has been fighting terrorist organizations in the Middle East, particularly after September 11, when the Bush administration declared a "global war on terror" in response to the terrorist assault (Shukri, 2017).

Thus, the study's conclusions show how the US's economic, national security, and diplomatic interests in the Middle East have been significantly impacted by terrorism, civil conflicts, and instability in the region. Achieving US foreign policy goals in the Middle East requires understanding the nature of conflicts and preserving close relationships with allies.

Chapter Five: THE NATURE OF US ENGAGEMENT IN the SYRIAN CRISIS

5.0   Introduction

The countries belonging to Arab, West Africa and North Africa were confronted with some serious political and economic crises, in December 2010. In the whole Arab world, the political situation was, along with some built-in costs, to shifting degrees. Millions of people were facing unemployment. Economic development was '*a piece of cake*' only for a few people, but youth were agitated about their future. While the emergency in Tunisia rapidly spread to nearby countries, where economic and political circumstances were nearly identical. It was feared that the fire would spread to Syria, threatening the country's sovereignty. This did not occur. Calls for ascending against the decision Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's system was unable to hold on present circumstances of his government (Haran, 2016).
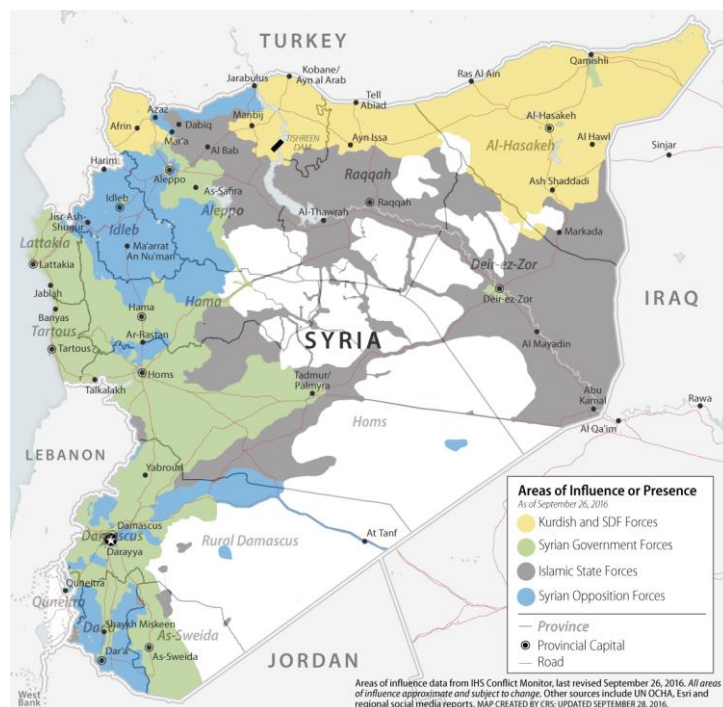
Figure 4: Syria's areas of influence (source: Humud, Blanchard and Nikitin, 2016)

As described above, the Syrian government was also expecting such kind of political crisis that could harm the government in the near future. Anti-government

protests have erupted throughout Syria. These demonstrations were sparked by Arab Spring-related protests that were similar in the Middle East. It got worse when the Assad dictatorship responded to the nonviolent protests with violence. According to Khan and Khan (2017), he employed security and intelligence agencies to arrest dissidents and suppress protests and marches, frequently using live rifles. The Syrian system has, for the past five years, defied expectations by enduring constant external pressure and booming. To understand why the government has persisted and why finding a durable political solution in Syria has proven to be so challenging, it is helpful to examine the circumstances in the country in 2010–2011 (Ottaway, 2015).

For years, the Syrian situation has been complicated, and it doesn't seem like it will get any easier very soon. Global, topographical, and national levels were the three different spheres of supervision. It calls for both the global and national levels of the issue (Rabinovich, 2017).

5.0.1 The Domestic Crisis

The civil war in Syria started in March 2011 with shows in the southern city of Dera'a. These shows were roused by the Arab Spring, which started a couple of months sooner in Tunisia and had shaken the establishments of a few Bedouin systems. It likewise reflected hopelessness in the Syrian wide open with the system's treatment of quite a while of the dry season. Bashar al-Asad and his lieutenants could have likely prevented the emergency if they had responded tactfully and intelligently to the underlying issues. Assuming all else was equal, they chose to brutally suppress the opposition and initiate a pattern of violence that quickly spread and became an unavoidable shared struggle. The main causes of that conflict include a number of grievances against an unjust and oppressive system, the most important of which is the overwhelming Arab Sunni faction's denial of Alawite authority. According to Dostal (2014), the Alawites comprise 12% of the province's population and are viewed as a valid branch of Shiite Islam, which conventional Sunnis do not accept.

5.0.2 Regional Dimension

The Syrian common conflict did not take long to secure a local measurement. It turned out to be the most significant point of convergence of the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia and the Shiite and Sunni alliances formed by the two heroes. Iran had extremely high stakes in the Syrian emergency. The best achievement of the Islamic

Republic's strategy of trading the transformation in Lebanon through its intermediary, Hezbollah, which rules Lebanese governmental issues. The relationship between Iran and Syria has shifted from one of organization and collaboration to one of dependency under Bashar al-Asad. Iran had to become more interested in Syria as the shared Syrian war intensified and the threat to the system's existence increased. It was unable to consider the prospect of losing its base in Syria, much less Syria coming under the influence of the West or conservative Bedouins (Berti, 2015).

In Feb 2011, protests started in Daraa, a city in Syria. The present government took the military's help to control this situation created by protesters against the present government, but opposition expanded across Damascus, Aleppo and Homs. The protesters in Syria have requested to rectify political and economic changes from the current government (Azimov, 2019).

Protests and political crises in Syria transformed into armed discord, and the government got support from outside forces to fight against the opposition, contrary to the others. Moreover, the lack of unity among the opposition groups in Syria who has led to upholding the present government and lengthened the crisis (Boghani, 2016). As of December 2016, nearly 1,000,000 Syrians had died in the conflict, with the birth rate falling from 70.5 years in 2010 to 55.4 years in 2015. The circumstance in Syria got savage in May 2011, when the Assad system sent his military to scatter against system fights. Because of the division that has marked the resistance to Assad's regime, the Syrian battles are unique among Arab Spring uprisings. Islamists and jihadist contenders took advantage of the force vacuum in the region, allowing Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad to portray his regime as the last bastion of stability (Robbins, 2014). This has allowed the contention to grow into an all-out, extended common conflict that prompted the most exceedingly terrible helpful person emergency in recent memory (de Laat, 2018).

5.0.3   International Dimension

Consequently, when Hezbollah fought on al-Assad's side in 2012 with Iran's help, other nations or international groups began to take part in the direct combat. Though, this was undoubted to counter the indirect involvement of other countries like America, Saudi Arabia and Qatar that have been providing grams and financing to the Syrian National Coalition, controlling them through Turkey and Jordan (Bhalla, 2011; Khashanah, 2014; Richard, 2014). After a prolonged interval in 2013, the US of America became engrossed

in direct attacks on those fighting on al-Assad's side (Cozma and Kozman, 2015). The suspected use of chemical weapons by the al-Assad administration in the war was the entrance point for the US. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) started the campaign in 2014 with the goal of creating an Islamic State and Caliphate. Russian involvement was evident in the latter quarter of 2015 with direct assaults on an ISIL station. The Syrian administration was reportedly approached with this offer. On November 24, 2015, a diplomatic conflict between NATO and the two countries occurred after Turkey shot down a Russian plane. Russia strengthened its armed forces in the Middle East as a response. China, although not being a direct participant in the conflict, has opted to adopt a diplomatic approach by using its veto power in the UN Security Council. This has hindered international military action in Syria, despite the willingness of many nations to intervene militarily (Swaine, 2012).

The common Syrian conflict has altogether exacerbated the test presented to Europe by rushes of displaced people from African and Middle Eastern nations. The issue had existed preceding the Syrian common conflict and will keep on representing a critical test in years to come. However, the rushes of displaced people from Syria carried the issue ahead in 2015 – 2016. The issue made major issues for the European Union just as for singular part nations, and its repercussions could be seen during Brexit, the British, French Dutch and German races. Significantly, Turkey has used the issue as a state of influence in its relationship with Europe (Byman and Speakman, 2016).

5.1 Maintaining US Military Presence in Regional Stability

Every year, the world's strongest nations pour large sums of money into fragile states with the ostensible goal of bolstering regimes facing internal turmoil. Military support is provided to nations in order to fortify them against terrorists, drug traffickers, and other violent non-state actors, from Colombia to Iraq to the Philippines. While weak states may benefit from foreign military assistance if it improves their authoritarian capability (Fearon and Laitin, 2003), the same weakness may enable illicit armed groups to seize or divert significant amounts of external resources (Besley and Persson, 2010).

Foreign powers have showed interest in Syria's civil war by their varied interventions in the conflict. Aside from selecting a side in the conflict, intervening nations also plan for financial, diplomatic, and logistical support. The numerous interventions are among the dispute's most noteworthy features. According to Giacomini

(2016), as of 2015, thirty thousand foreign fighters had traveled to Syria to fight on either side of the conflict. The numerous interventions at the conflict might be one of the reasons. As one of the main parties to the Syrian conflict, the US has demonstrated its military and other assistance for the rebel organizations (Sulce, 2019).

In an ideal world, the U.S. military would have a military job. Be that as it may, practically speaking, nobody gets to battle the conflicts they need, which is particularly obvious today. The US was closely linked to conflicts that needed to be won at the highest military level, where it was essential to comprehend both the critical external reasons and the deep internal divisions and conflicts of the host nation. Except if the US adjusts to this reality, it could without much of a stretch lose to conflict at the common level in any event, when it will succeed at the military level. This is particularly obvious on account of the "failed states" where the US is currently battling. The US either needs to expect an immediate marvelous improvement in the administration and capacity of host-country accomplices or spotlight effective common military tasks as being as significant for progress as a battle (Cordesman, 2017).

The United States has, up to now, failed to recognize the magnitude of the shared problems it encounters while conducting major military operations. It has failed to understand what has to be done to resolve discord in common military matters in order to be effective in battling dissolved state conflicts, such as large-scale counterinsurgency operations and reliance on possessing nation powers. For instance, the role played by the U.S. military in Syria was crucial and clearly illustrates how any military effort to try to control only a portion of the usual side effects of a conflict may be a recipe for failure (Blanchard, Humud, and Nikitin, 2014).

If we talk about the Syrian Government, resistance to President Asad spread quickly in various urban areas, which coordinated peaceful expositions to ameliorate changes; in response, the president's reaction was cruel, requesting the military to start shooting at strikers. After a short period of peaceful exposition, The Syrian government forced opposition groups to use arms against the Syrian military. Syrian military units fled and formed the Free Syrian Army. They sought refuge in Syria's Northern provinces and Turkey.

Conversely, the US administration has been engaged in the fight for a while before in September 2014, when the US military began to take part in the battle. Their involvements varied from calling for the removal of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to provide nonlethal support to the rebel forces. The Central Intelligence Agency provided clandestine arms as part of this assistance. To opposition groups, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was worth 1 billion dollars. Other initiatives included rebel recruitment, sanctions against the Syrian government, and humanitarian aid (Blanchard, Humud and Nikitin, 2014; Mazzetti, Goldman and Schmidt, 2017).

The use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime in the Syrian war is commonly viewed as the reason for America's participation in the conflict. Since September 2014, the US has been aggressively intervening in the Syrian conflict by a variety of means, primarily airstrikes. This occurred a few days after Obama's announcement that Asad would cross a red line if chemical weapons were used (Kfir, 2016); after US and UN investigators confirmed Syrian gas use, President Obama considered a military strike to act as a deterrent and a roadblock to Assad's use of chemical weapons (Kaphle, 2014). Obama made an appeal to seek approval for a military strike. Prior to the vote, Russia negotiated a deal allowing Syria to hand over its chemical weapons. On September 21, Syria agreed to its demands and handed over information about its chemical weapons to the UN, effectively putting an end to the threat of Western attacks (Escritt, 2013).

Yadlin and Golov (2013) claimed that the U.S. government had not seriously contemplated military action in Syriaprior to the chemical attack in the eastern suburbs of Damascus, the war-torn state's capital. In line with this, Manfreda, (2017) identified ties between the Assad government's chemical attacks in Damascus and US military interventions in the conflict. However, the US' postures and actions in the conflict have revealed more grounds for involvement than the use of chemical weapons. A connection to the American clandestine provision of lethal and nonlethal aid to opposing forces in the conflict was known as prejudice.

Following September 2014, the peculiar nature of the interference was markedly different from that of other powers, especially Russia. The Russian intervention in Syria began in September 2015, a year after the US entered the conflict. However, since the beginning of the conflict in 2011, the Russian state has expressed support for the Assad-led government and its forces. Despite the fact that intervention discussions were held, this is the case. The decision to interfere in the long-running conflict was bolstered by the

Syrian government's invitation. Syria, to put it another way, inviting Russia to interfere in its dispute provided the latter with an opportunity to do so compulsion to get involved in the dispute (Charap, Treyger and Geist, 2019).

Pantti, (2016) analyzed how newspapers in the US and Lebanon covered the unstable situation during this critical and volatile month. While the two countries differ in their topographical and social proximity to the conflict, the presence of industrialized countries and upper-class citizens, as well as the potential for negative consequences for a few countries, were the root causes that turned the Syrian crisis into a "global problem".

According to some experts, the United States' foreign goals in the Middle East are to ensure Israel's stringent and ethnic containment while also controlling the production and trade of oil and gas products in the region. That was why the US did not need an entire Syria representing a danger to Israel's security. Since 2012, military and monetary help have been given to a few resistance powers around there. In 2016, the US installed an army in al-Tanf, close to the Iraq and Jordan line. At this base, the assailants of "Megavir al-Tavra" were prepared by the US military. In 2012, the "Kurdish People's Defense Unity (KPDU), a neighbourhood Kurdish gathering in Syria, which has developed altogether with the assistance of the US, assumed responsibility for the northeastern pieces of the country. The US has detailed that they have been furnished Kurds against ISIS warriors in Syria (Oner, Durmaz-Drinkwater and Grant, 2020).

The US and its cronies have been fighting the Islamic State in northwest Syria for a long time. The main concern was to cut off the group's access to the Turkish border and advance toward Raqqah, the group's proclaimed resource. Islamic State power professing over the "Manbij Pocket" territory was limited by Azaz in the west, the Turkish boundary in the north, in the south Al Bab, and in the east followed by Euphrates stream filled in as the excess association point for the Islamic State to the rest of the world and gave the main stockpile with unfamiliar contender travel course (Erlich and Chomsky, 2014).

In the last days of May 2016, the Syrian Arab Partnership, predominantly Arab SDF forces, referred to launch a new invasion plan to reconquer the city, backed by Kurdish fighters. ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) support and support counsels situated on SDF ground, are provided by the US and allied alliance forces for the Manbij campaign (Bacevich, 2016).

Islamic State (IS) opponents were highly provoked in their attempts to take the city, and some IS warriors were used as human shields as a result of the presence of what military authorities estimated to be a large number of ordinary mortals were estimated by present military authorities. In July, reports surfaced that US strikes had killed a large number of people in the Manbij region. As a result of the deaths of civilians as a result of US attacks, two statements were imposed under legal scrutiny. In August, the control of the town of Manbij was taken by SDF forces. A group of more than a hundred IS warriors were threatened to exit the region because nominees in every vehicle had relations with civilians (Garver, 2016).

On September 17, US military officials announced that they had frozen an incursion in eastern Syria after learning from Russia that the automobiles and persons targeted were potentially vital to the Syrian military. As statement by Syrian and Russian representatives, in the attacks, 62 Syrian soldiers were murdered and another 100 were injured. Russia organized a Security Council crisis meeting to discuss the incident, it is said that, since the country's dynamic activities began in September 2014 for the very first time, US forces had been linked to the Syrian military (Fischer, 2014).

According to Pentagon officials, alliance powers confessed that near Dayr az Zawr they were trouncing Islamic State assailants, and the Russian authorities had expressed no concerns, and had been informed of the activity prior to that day (Vanderspurt *et al.*, 2019). US officials regretted any specious alliance airstrike, "Alliance powers would not intentionally strike a recognized Syrian military unit," Britain, Denmark, and Australia have all admitted that their planes were involved in the strike (Blanchard, Humud and Nikitin, 2015). Given the abruptness of the US withdrawal from Syria, several studies predict significant spillover effects in the near and long term, impacting a variety of troupes that were directly or indirectly involved in the conflict, including Iran (Allsopp and van Wilgenburg, 2019).

However, Ali (2019) stated that despite the apparent spillover effects, the result of the US 'shifting foreign policy, a minority group, Syrian Kurds, received the hardest hit and suffered the most immediate consequences, marked by its sudden withdrawal from Syria.

According to the study by Cetorelli and Ashraph (2019), Syrian Kurds have provided vital assistance in combat contradiction of ISIS, but their survival in the war

zone had been profoundly dependent upon American safeguards. At this point, it was dire to look back at several proceedings that led to the US' early decision to snub the Syrian crisis, as well as the events that led up to its intervention in 2019 and in late 2019 the period of departure or abandonment.

According to Dewachi (2017), during the war against ISIS, both President Trump and Barrack Obama made substantial strides, but neither sought to develop long-term strategies for Syria, especially for the Syrian Kurds. Following the mixed results of the first years of the war and rebellion, Obama's administration concentrated on a single policy: defeating ISIS on the battlefield (Dietrich and Carter, 2017). Similarly, Wallin, (2018), the singular emphasis on defeating ISIS as the primary goal resulted from assertions that the flourishing of ISIS in Syria was caused by root causes such as discriminatory, corrupt, and authoritarian regimes in power.

Since these root causes seem so complex that they cannot be easily mitigated or resolved, the Obama administration has shifted its focus to a more realistic and achievable goal: defeating ISIS. Based on this academic finding, it can be deduced that the US' foreign policy has shifted away from overt military action and toward a more consultative approach, "no boot on the ground" and "America First" the situation emerged as a result of achieving the primary goal of crushing ISIS. As a result, the assertions are instructive because they help to clarify some of the reasons that could have prompted the desertion (Thornton, 2018).

Nevertheless, while these results are valuable, they do not provide insight on how the future of Syria's renowned US ally, the Syrian Kurds, may be made easier whilst upholding the present foreign policy, which tries to refrain from direct military intervention. It is also important to note that the earlier research helps to explain why the US would have decided to withdraw from Syria, but it does not identify any of the events that might have led to the nation's prior ignorance of the situation (Phillips, 2016).

There are a lot of circumstances and issues that the US experiences. To begin with, hostile-to-base fights happen much of the time. Additionally, US opinions have gotten ordinary in Iraq's governmental issues. Moreover, psychological warfare is as yet a worry around there. Furthermore, overall power and territorial disputes necessitate the projection of more assets to the Middle East, but the US' contradictory foreign policy

complicates the situation. Locals have taken issue with US troops' presence from the Asia-Pacific region to the Middle East (Kleykamp and Hipes, 2015).

Regarding Iraq, the issues are hostile to government fights that occurred in October 2019 and against US fights that occurred in January 2020. The October hostile to government challenges unfamiliar impedance and meant to redesign the post-2003 political framework set up by the US military mediation. The January hostile to the US fights requests all unfamiliar soldiers out of the country (Danis, 2020).

Indeed, even within the Iraqi government, as authorities focus more on power than security, anti-US sentiment will persist. Iraq has stated that it will not allow its domain to be used as a Launchpad for attacks on its neighbors. "It is our sovereign duty to comply with our constitution, not Iraq to be used as a basis for any danger toward our neighbors," Iraqi President Salih said. Karim Alawi is another model, and The US expected to carry "more than 1,000 fear-based oppressors from Syria to Iraq through holes in our lines and airspace," according to a member of the Iraqi parliament's security and defence council. The speeches of President Salih and Karim Alawi reveal that the Iraqi government has internal enemies who are hostile to the US military presence (Burns, 2019).

The US's erratic international strategy has demolished the situation. US collusions that previously relied on US guarantees and generosity are beginning to question the validity of their relations with the US. The primary reason nations allow US army installations in their countries is security. Regardless, whether the US military benefits the countries or encourages violence against neighbors is unclear. Iraq is extremely wary of the US rockets that have been dropped within the region. Iraq was angered by the assassination of Soleimani in Bagdad (Yi-zhong and Yi-zhong, 2021).

Psychological injustice and revolutionary fanaticism are both dangerous. Regardless of ISIS' defeat, psychological warfare also has a long way to go. Under the guise of jihad, revolutionary revolutionaries train warriors. The brain science of radicalism can be traced back to the Gulf War, when most Middle Eastern countries were enraged by the US's successful contribution. Jihadism resurfaced in order to save the Muslim world from Western invaders. From one point of view, an individual's, a family's, and a state's vulnerability lead to a decision based on unconstitutional coercion and fanaticism. On the other hand, the unsteady world of politics provides fertile ground for psychological oppression to develop. Revolutionary fanatics and oppressors motivated by

fear are then ready to use religion as a political tool to achieve their goals. They have killed and wounded a large number of ordinary people and US troopers. (Rasheed, 2021).

The ultimate influence in the Middle East is the problem for the US to maintain a military presence, which is a great approach point of view. The US procedure will be influenced as Russia and China seek greater control in the region. Regarding provincial matters, nations are no longer as reliant on the US as they once were. Perhaps they prefer to benefit from both sides. The contribution of various powers undermines the US system's adequacy. For example, the US must support Iran while prohibiting other countries from purchasing oil. Iran will now have to choose between trading with China or other buyers. Since August of this year, China and Iran have discussed exchanging oil in the Chinese Yuan. China is said to be investing $280 billion in Iran's oil industry, with an additional $120 billion going into developing the vehicle framework. (America's Failed Strategy in the Middle East: Losing Iraq and the Gulf, 2021).

Since 2011, the "Middle Easterner spring," notable changes have occurred in the Middle East: the emergence of radical Islamic forces addressed by ISIS; the real fracture and dissatisfaction of Iraq and Syria; Egypt's loss of its position as the Arab world's bellwether, with Saudi Arabia and Turkey supplanting Egypt; the minimization of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; Iran's rapid ascent. Russia and China jumped in for their stakes within the confines of America's Middle East presence. However, the scenario has dramatically changed. Despite its grave concerns, the US maintains a military presence in the Middle East and North Africa, especially in Iraq (Yi-Zhong and Yi-Zhong, 2021).

5.2   Ensure The Enduring Defeat of ISIS

ISIS is an Iraqi association predicated on an organization between al-Qaeda in Iraq and components of Saddam Hussein's system; however, the association took off in Syria, where it dominated in the battle against Asad's system. The very name ISIS is an abbreviation for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. The name reflects, likewise, a long-standing Arab disdain of the Sykes-Picot arrangement and the creation of the Arab state framework by Britain and France in the repercussions of World War I (Chia and Xeuling, 2016).

The purpose and dedication of the US to preserving the regional state system as delineated by the physical borders established a century ago. The emergence of ISIS and the vigorous position of Kurdish power has influenced it deeply. Although the US has

been concerned about the Arab Gulf states' "cheque book diplomacy" for a long time, it was only that time when these states were using military force on their own, even in ways that were uncoordinated with their conventional security guarantor. (Mueller, et al.: 2017).

In reality, ISIS pulverized the Syrian-Iraqi line and, at the stature of its prosperity, made a true state, which is named "caliphate" on the two sides of the Syrian-Iraqi line, with its capital in the Syrian city of al-Raqqa. With a limited capacity to focus time, ISIS compromised the establishment of the Iraqi state, just as Jordan and other Middle Easterner states.

It pulled in a huge number of volunteers, mostly Arab and Muslims from European nations, large numbers of whom got back to Europe as prepared fearmongers. The fear-monger danger in Western Europe and somewhat in the US over the recent years is, in this manner, an immediate aftereffect of the Syrian emergency (The Islamic State: A Brief Introduction; The Rise of Islamic State: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution, 2021).

Presently, the worldwide mission against ISIS in both Iraq and Syria has fundamentally decreased the domain of the "caliphate". It is probably going to end with the catch of both Mosul and al-Raqqa. When this occurs, ISIS will be denied the regional base and large numbers of the resources it has appreciated during the mid-long stretches of this decade; however, it will keep on representing a critical fear-based oppressor danger universally (Lakomy, 2017).

According to estimates, the so-called Islamic State lost roughly 45% and 10% of its regions in Iraq and Syria (Chia and Xeuling, 2016). Such huge rises in military missions were specifically critical in lessening ISIS capability to take complete control over its membership base, as well as its capability to invest itself unrestrictedly in the sale of oil, slaves, objects, and the burdening and coercion of money-related instalments from its daily citizen population (Speckhard and Yayla, 2016). After some time, US authorities had announced that the number of migrants travelling from Iraq to Syria had been decreased from 500 to 2000 per month, with some evaluations falling as low as 200 (Gibbons-Neff, 2016; Kozaric, 2017).

The Islamic State's spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, and the man blamed for planning and leading the latest terror attacks in cities like Brussels, Istanbul, and Paris, were also preparing the groundwork for potential outbreaks (through the Emni—the ISIS' outside activities)assassinated in Aleppo, Syria (Speckhard, Shajkovci and Yayla, 2017).

The execution of Abu Omar al-Shishani, a top Islamic State officer and a veteran of the Chechen jihadi war, south of Mosul, Iraq, in July 2016 was closely followed (Worley, 2016). The killings of these two fights solidified and appealing pioneers additionally addresses a critical hit to Islamic State's center initiative, particularly significant given the line of ongoing military mishaps that the gathering keeps on encountering in Iraq and Syria.

The accessible information proposes steady, yet likely, triumph against ISIS on the military front line, even though local people in Iraq have been communicating worries over Shia local armies as of now and possibly ordering vengeance in freed territories (A global guide specialist in Iraq working in freed zones, Speckhard individual correspondence, October 30, 2016). Despite the critical mishaps in the combat zone, ISIS keeps drawing in adherents since its online accounts stay charming. Proof of the gathering rousing, distantly enrolling and coordinating assaults in Europe and somewhere else, and its proceeding with a capacity to pull in unfamiliar warriors to the real front line clarify that in Syria and Iraq, ISIS might be losing the ground battle, however different captivating regions, particularly in the advanced fight space (Speckhard, Shajkovci and Yayla, 2016).

In France, a new case was incarcerated of three French women for their role in a foiled, ISIS-led fear-mongering violence nearby Paris in an area called Notre Dame Cathedral. After that, a case was reported in which a 16-year-old boy suspected of promoting ISIS and planning a psychological attack in France; in an event in Garland, Texas, Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi, opened fire at a police officer and in consequence, the Policeman was killed, and the case of Mohamed Lahouaijej Bouhlel, the Bastille Day fear monger, who killed 84 people and injured over 300 more, all serve as examples of ISIS's threat and ability to move and guide attacks in the West (Connelly, 2016; Moore, 2016; Shoichet and Pearson, 2015; Verdier, Visser and Haddad, 2016). ISIS' military defeated unknown warriors in Syria and Iraq, who most likely fled somewhere else with a plan to return.

Kosovo's law administration officials, revealed that a few ISIS units were being falsely proclaimed executed on social media and then returned as a result of illegally crossing lines to avoid security. Those were heavily philosophically motivated, weapons-ready, fight-ready, and possibly explosives-trained units returning home, some overhead and others below the radar of government and security administrations. It was not clear if all ISIS returnees were a source of threat to their home countries, but some people left

ISIS, but believed in establishing an idealistic Islamic "Caliphate" were more effectively controlled to attack at home or return to support ISIS (Speckhard, Shajkovci and Yayla, 2017).

The US has maintained political, economic, and military relationships with the Central East for more than 50 years. For the foreseeable future, the US remained heavily involved in the district despite public exhaustion with the conflict and rising support for an excellent limitation policy. Notwithstanding the difficulties in identifying—not to mention pursuing and achieving—the US has several core interests in the Middle East, ranging from the Israeli-Palestinian issue to the Syrian civil war and the unwelcome tension in advancing democracy and power. The avoidance of terrorist attacks, nuclear growth, and the emergence of a local hegemon is vital. Additionally, the safety of provincial partners and the provision of oil access were noted (Altunışık, 2013).

The majority of the significant regional dangers that have emerged in recent years—ISIS, or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria—have their roots in these entrenched interests. Luckily, ISIS doesn't really threaten the US's most important territorial interests, which include stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and the emergence of a regional hegemon. The bad news is that ISIS is a serious danger to several other US objectives that the US has to protect, namely the security of regional partners and the avoidance of psychological attacks by militants (Nance, 2016).

Furthermore, since ISIS is not only a terrorist organization, its unique nature makes it more difficult for the US and its allies to defeat it. Perhaps it is self-evident that in a controlled and represented region the magnitude of Indiana exists a global revolution attempting to extend disorder and destabilize various institutions throughout the region and democratic development attempting to reshape social orders and spread a narrow ideology and prophetically calamitous vision (Hüppi *et al.*, 2016).

How to defeat ISIS's stem was a large part of the confusion in the surroundings. To begin with, ISIS is leading a transnational revolution that successfully destabilises regimes in Iraq and Syria, Libya, Nigeria, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Yemen (Arkin *et al.*, 2016). ISIS fighters in Iraq and Syria were made up of a mixture of former Iraqi military officials, fight-hardened fighters from previous battles, and strangers from other countries, many of whom have little or no military experience or skills (Krause, 2018).

The unmistakable quality of previous Iraqi military and knowledge officials may appear to be impressive given the philosophical separation between the prophetically

calamitous Salafi jihadists of ISIS and the mainstream Arab patriotism of the Baath Party. Be that as it may, their normal foe (Shiite ideological groups and volunteer armies), basics of help (the Sunni heartland), and common force place outwardly glancing in after the descent of Saddam made for an underlying marriage of comfort that, for some, turned out to be considerably more. For example, Abu Muslim al-Turkmani was an Iraqi military official who served under Saddam Hussein and later rose through the ranks of ISIS to become its second-in-command and lead representative for all of Iraq's regions until he was killed in a US drone strike in 2015. Indeed, former Saddam military officials have overseen three of ISIS' most important services: defence, military, and finance (How Saddam's fighters Aid Islamic State Rule, 2021). Former of Saddam's era Fallujah intelligence official Ayad Hamid-Jumaili. He supervised all of ISIS' defence and intelligence operations until his death in March 2017, similar to those of the Baathists, with their dependence on a vast network of witnesses and harsh retribution for any betrayal (Nance, 2016).

As a result of the combination of previous Iraqi military officials and battle-hardened extremists, ISIS has put on great, imaginative displays on the front lines. The capture of Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, in 2014 with just 800 fighters against 30,000 Iraqi officers, a significant number of whom escaped despite the presence of ISIS members, was the most notable achievement and their standing for outrageous brutality (Gerges, 2017).

At its height in 2014, ISIS ruled a territory the size of Extraordinary Britain, stretching from Mosul in the east to the outskirts of Aleppo in the west, from the Turkish border in the north to Iraq's Anbar area in the south (Islamic State: What has happened since the fall of Mosul, 2021).

The group's range reached even further thanks to its linkage of branches, which consistently grew to the detriment of its adversary Al-Qaeda. ISIS, in the past Al-Qaeda (Al-Qaeda in Iraq) ally, had captivated influential groups like Boko Haram into its organization and formed its allies in the midst of continuing conflicts in Egypt, Yemen, and Somalia, Libya, and beyond (Bethan McKernan indy100, 2021).

In May 2015, the group captured Ramadi by detonating thirty self-destruction vehicle bombs in the city's main square, "ten of which were equivalent in capacity to the Oklahoma City truck bomb of 1995." (Which executed 168 people). They have infiltrated Iraqi and Syrian military targets on many occasions by smashing through their defenses with a variety of suicide car bombs. Even as ISIS has been hammered by a global coalition

that has retaken more than 70% of the territory it once controlled, surprise attacks have exposed its adversaries' unwavering confidence and fine-tuning of their operations under duress. Not only did ISIS fighters seize control of key areas of the region, but they also projected and set up traps for Kurdish cavalry responding to the assault. In 2018, ISIS will try to plan similar strikes to destabilize fragile areas and prepare to fill the void left by weak states and polarized societies (News, 2021).

The analyst stated that ISIS has three aspects, but somehow ISIS is, at the same time is a rebel group, a state government, and an innovator association. Understanding and beating any of these individuals is thought-provoking; efficiently addressing all three at once is almost dreadful given the tensions in main concern and strategies among them. The task turns out to be much more troublesome given that the U.S. is far superior position to overcome a few parts of ISIS than others. The underestimation of ISIS will, in this way, need a multidimensional, multi-stage exertion across various fronts: a conflict of bombs, a conflict of administration, what is more, a conflict of thoughts. Another study by Huppi and others offered a progression of strategy suggestions for how these three isolated battles can be sought in reciprocal style instead of in detachment or inconsistency (Hüppi *et al.*, 2016).

More is required to eliminate ISIS as a state than just removing them from authority within the nation. In order to prevent the "Islamic State" from resurfacing and becoming recognized by the people living in the battered provinces, the competing authority needs to be engaged and acquired. Basic requirements like safety and transportation, as well as essentials like jobs, healthcare, and education, must be provided by local governments to their citizens. Above all, they ought to ensure that citizens, irrespective of their ethnic or religious background, feel safe and secure in our nation.

The Islamic State can usually hire individuals if the new rulers do not have nearby help," former US ambassador to Syria Robert Ford explained. "Particularly if the water isn't turned on, the schools are not open, and the power is out (Richa *et al.*, 2020). As much as the media focuses on ISIS's heinous brutality, the group rose to power in Syria between 2011 and 2014 by concentrating on creating and administering a state in the Sunni borderlands. Assad concentrated on annihilating those who sought to overthrow him. Activities aimed at debasing the "Islamic State" and its properties should be viewed as slackening the "Islamic State's" actual control of a region as well as delegitimizing its administration in the eyes of its people. The "financial war" waged against ISIS in 2015-2016 has limited the group's ability to essentially increase tax collection from its

constituents and split the military pay rates in half, causing further discontent and defections (Ingram, Whiteside and Winter, 2020). Even though numerous inhabitants loved the administrations that ISIS gave, they did not care for the expanding costs they needed to pay for them.

In this context, the slow media coverage prior to the educe of Mosul and Raqqa may be viewed as a plus. It compelled ISIS to offer more unfortunate administration fewer properties, resulting in a tainted perception of its standard among ordinary citizens over time, rather than dissipating all at once while memories of dependable, honest ISIS administration remained fresh (News, 2021).

The way that ISIS is a transnational association lamentably implies that this opposition over administration should be won in one spot, yet rather in nations across the area. Something else, the gathering will unquestionably attempt to profit by any powerless connection where there are malcontented Sunnis. The conversation of a "phantom caliphate" depends on this idea of ISIS sticking around for opportunity before leaking into breaks left by bombing nearby administration, as the gathering did once before in Iraq and Syria. Albeit this battle over administration is vital to overcoming ISIS across different fronts, it is one in which the U.S. cannot play the lead job (Zhang and Hellmueller, 2016).

In any case, the US can and should set the tone by providing political, financial, and military assistance to Middle Eastern countries to help them approve power-sharing agreements within and between themselves. Fights between gatherings and states over the circulation of assets and power are the most critical obstacles to quality, systematic administration in the country. The US should help territorial states join and establish agreements that ensure that all ethnic and religious networks have a seat at the table and a stake in the region by providing momentum and international pressure. They may also work with key allies, such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt, as well as key rivals, such as Russia and Iran, to develop specific concessions to deal with global knowledge exchange and authoritative reaches. Conflicts can rage on, but the costs of endless intermediary wars that only serve to reinforce a widespread threat like ISIS should allow these interactions to shift toward a more stable territorial appeal (Silverstone, 2018).

The most egregious failures of US mediation in the Middle East could all be copied back to a conflation of open approaches and desired closures. Even though she entered office having criticized President Bush for his botched Iraqi mediation after Saddam Hussein's ouster, President Obama realized that his biggest foreign policy

blunder was dying to adequately prepare for the "following day" when Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi was deposed. Nonetheless, the Obama administration demanded the overthrow of the Assad regime in Syria but only committed enough resources to prevent the rebels from losing rather than winning (Kozak, 2017).

Scholars and politicians debate the merits of mediation and restraint, but there should be no doubt that the goals of the former should never be pursued along with the assets of the latter (Goldberg, 2018). After initially questioning the Obama administration's Syria policy, the Trump administration declared in April 2017 that Assad should step down, but did not provide sufficient resources to the mission. The United State suffered lots of embarrassment and as a result, learnt that even the world's superpower which has an inaccessible area of glad, skillet citizens and countries with their interests, could be defeated (Blumenthal, 2020). Furthermore, ISIS could be overcome, but only if the conflict does not relate to more extensive foreign-imposed regime change and democratization attempts, which have a dark past and a dark future. Moreover, only with strong provincial coalitions. Understanding ISIS's three facets and taking advantage of the weaknesses this dynamic organization presents were key to destroying it.

5.3   Counter The Future Expansion of Iranian Influence

Iran has been able to formalize and expand Shi'a unfamiliar warrior organizations all over the region as a result of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Shi'a assailants from Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq are forming a "Hezbollah-style" group loyal to Iran, ready to fight alongside Iranian soldiers and guides. The Afghan and Pakistani Khomeinist networks were then expanded to include a significant number of candidates for use as stun troops in Middle Eastern and South Asian conflict zones (Daraghi, 2017).

Hezbollah's operational ability was improved by the IRGC's preparation, which also enabled Hezbollah to prepare other psychological militant groups, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. This 'train-the-mentor' model is currently on show in Syria, where Hezbollah and the IRGC are working together to train Shi'a warriors in guerrilla tactics and lopsided fighting techniques. In order to produce exceptionally top-notch, specific mix units capable of fighting both state and non-state actors, prized candidates are chosen for more in-depth training (Jones and Markusen, 2018).

Hezbollah remains the most powerful Shi'a warrior group in Iran. Despite the fact that it has become one of the most successful fighting forces on the ground in Syria, it has suffered significant losses. Clarke and Smyth, (2017) stated that Hezbollah has

attempted to hire a large number of fighters from Syria and has played a crucial combat role in Syria, supporting the Assad regime in reclaiming territories and securing key towns and cities.

It is possible that different hubs are being created, aided by the Syrian civil war, which has served as a true testing ground for these emerging gatherings. A few notable Iraqi unfamiliar warrior groups have played a significant role in Syria, but they rely on the rhythmic movement of the conflict across the Iraqi border. Since the Islamic State has mislaid vast swaths of the region and Mosul has been educed, Iraqi Shi'a local army pioneers were in a situation to refer fighters to Syria to support the Assad regime.

The Liwa Abu Fadl al-Abbas (LAFA) was the Assad regime's first major attempt, built on the Hezbollah model and supported by the Lebanese faction, to form its own Shi'a state army in Syria. Other fundamentally Syrian Shi'a groups, including Quwat al-Imam al-Baqir (the Imam Baqir Forces), were formed with Hezbollah's help and have fought alongside Iranian-backed Shi'a groups (Clarke and Smyth, 2017).

Dobbins and Jones (2017) described that the absence of a credible local government ally in Syria has complicated attempts to drive the Islamic State out. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which has been overrun by a Syrian Kurdish group closely linked to Turkey's savage dissident creation, has proven to be a good ally for Washington (SDF). The SDF has surrounded Raqqa and is planning an attack on the city with American assistance and air support, but it lacks the heavy weapons that could be critical for success.

Turkey opposes any further expansion of Kurdish rule in Syria and any American attempt to arm the SDF. In this situation, Washington must choose between disregarding Turkish concerns and arming the SDF, enlisting the support of the Turkish Army in the attack on Raqqa, and sending more American troops to the front lines. Waiting for the Turkish Army and its Syrian allies would mean delaying the operation and allowing ISIS to retain control of the capital for a few more months, and it is uncertain whether the Turks would arrive in sufficient numbers to win (Yegen, 2009).

Continuing to focus on the Kurdish-led SDF for offensive operations, bolstered by the intervention of a few additional American powers, appears to be the quickest and safest way to end the caliphate in the middle. Whatever route is chosen, Washington will need a strategy for what comes next, including who owns and controls Raqqa and its environs once it is liberated (Dinc, 2020).

The Obama administration's Presidential Policy Guidance (PPG) document, titled "Methodology for Approving Direct Action Outside the US and Spaces of Active Hostilities," outlined a roadmap for short-term strikes outside of "spaces of dynamic challenges," which include Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and a few Libyan spaces. Jones (2017) described the White House Deputies Committeemeetings ase critical in gaining approval for such attacks regularly. In any case, terrorist organizations like ISIS have become more decentralized and adaptable, necessitating the US to become more powerful and adaptable as well.

Christopher.S, (2016) stated that the Islamic State has ignited and organised attacks across Europe, North America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. It's also improving its ability to use commercially available encoded correspondences as well as modern systems like autonomous airborne vehicles. When the PPG was written, the Islamic State did not exist in its current form. The Trump campaign has started to push for places to lead direct action at lower levels of command in a wider range of war zones, and it should continue to do so. Al-Qaeda members are the target, with Libya as the first stop and Yemen and Somalia likely to follow. When American envoys and leaders cannot agree, debates should be led to Washington, but in any case, there should be more caution for activity at the neighborhood level based on clearly established guidelines, as is the case in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria right now (Hartig, 2021).

Even though substantial changes in Iran's energy sector could create a new, more favorable climate for foreign investment following the incomplete elating of the endorsements, the political economy of hydrocarbon running in Iran plays a significant role in defining current and potential stakeholders, their goals, and benefits.

The Iranian oil industry was negatively impacted by the drop in oil prices that began in mid-June 2014 (a 60 percent drop from the peak price). The low prices made it impossible for the country to profit from the expansion of oil exports after the atomic agreement, no matter how great the revenue may have been under previous circumstances. Saudi Arabia, Iran's philosophical and foreign foe, has a major effect on the price of oil, and the Kingdom's long-term low-value level serves the Kingdom's interests toward Tehran (Farzanegan and Parvari, 2014). Without significant fare earnings, it is impossible to accumulate domestic money, obstructing the recovery of the Iranian hydrocarbon sector (Munro, 2016). Since the Iranian government has yet to produce the high economic results anticipated in the post-sanctions period (Davig *et al.*,

2015),the direction has been facing condemnation from the exponents of political and economic isolation of Iran.

Simultaneously, Iran is opposed to reducing domestic production and development costs, as this will result in introducing more (primarily shale-based) providers and increased competition in the oil industry, as more exorbitant costs would make their company viable. According to NIOC, the cost of producing a barrel of oil in Iran is about 5–10 USD and as high as 15 USD, according to international eyewitnesses (Baffes *et al.*, 2015). As a result, it is still important if the market offers at least 35-40 USD per barrel, although this amount of money is still below the monetary make back the initial investment cost of oil in Iran (IMF, 2021).

The agreement reached by OPEC in Vienna on November 30, 2016, is the most significant step forward in terms of global cooperation on oil prices. Individuals agreed to reduce total output from 33.2 million BPD to 32.5–33 million BPD (Mehrnews, 2016). Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates completed 66% of the reduction, with the remaining 33% distributed among the association's other seven nations (except for Libya, Algeria and Iran) (al-Monitor, 2016d). The agreement benefited Iran in two ways: On the one side, the cost of oil has increased by 10% as a result of the production cut, while Iran has the option of increasing its output by 90,000 barrels per day BPD before it meets the 3.797 million BPD target (al-Monitor, 2016c). Following that, the Islamic Republic could continue its oil-related growth from 2015 to 2016.

To resolve the existing shortcomings and potential dangers in the Iranian hydrocarbon sector, the Iranian government must make improvements to the infrastructural foundation and institutional foundation of oil and gas companies and address the global impact on these critical areas. Iran should take advantage of its current qualities and anticipated freedoms when in doubt to fully solve domestic and global oil and gas problems (Dudlák, 2018).

Iran appears to be making strides toward greater energy success. Recently, in the administration of the Iranian economy and critical properties, there has been a rational change from metaphysical contemplations to a more sober-minded methodology. Building trust is critical in these circumstances, but it is a more extended relationship due to its temperament. This suffering shift in Iran could be an excellent example of how a closed economy rich in hydrocarbon assets can gradually change its conceptual and political design from the inside. In this time of change, external forces, in addition to internal practices, continue to play a significant role, and in this context, the global

community's responsibility to support Iran's reformist plan is crucial. In light of everything, it merits keeping just the lower assumptions concerning the impending creation blast of the Iranian hydrocarbon industry has suffered because of external market proclivities (low oil value, oversupply on the horizon) and inward reallocation of monetary capital. Practically speaking, it implies that both the augmentation of fare limit and the contribution of worldwide organizations will happen in a continuous, managed way, wherein every one of the interests of significant Iranian political and monetary partners will be thought of among the invested individuals.The most plausible situation proposes a sluggish and ceaseless change in the Islamic Republic's oil and gas industries (Dudlák, 2018).

5.4 Political Settlement to the Conflict, Containing the Asaad Regime in the Interim

Syria's civil war is now in its seventh year, with a wide range of public and international events. Critically, no group is in a position to take control of the entire world. This document contains recommendations for efforts at stabilization. There is a growing recognition that the Assad regime cannot be overthrown and that efforts to find a diplomatic solution should consider this. The focus has shifted to methods for reducing conflict and planning for reform talks (Heydemann, 2020).

Two major cycles are currently underway to find a solution to the Syrian conflict: the 'Geneva cycle,' which is supported by the UN, and the 'Astana interaction,' which is led by Russia, Iran, and Turkey. The last differs from the first in that it involves outfitted meetings and attempts to find a way to stop the fighting before coping with a diplomatic resolution. At the most recent round of Astana talks in May, progress was made, with the help of four truce zones across the country, which would allow for the arrival of uprooted ordinary people and the provision of compassionate guides to those areas (Armitage, 2017).

Proposed improvement options include forming a Syrian National Stabilization Force (SNSF) made up of Syrians to enforce the rule of law on the ground and allowing an exchange period to take place in order to reach a political agreement (COUNCIL). The EU has been urged not to make financial aid to Syria conditional on regime reform at this time but rather to direct aid to non-system regions and basic areas and tie recovery aid to a supported cease-fire. Others have identified protection area transition as a need, concentrating on the need for the removal of unfamiliar warriors, followed by a secure

framework for the progress period, decentralization, leisure and return of displaced citizens, and a comprehensive momentary equity programmer, all of which are underpinned by the end of combat (Freear, 2016).

Lessons from other conflicts, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, include: a) the need to focus on building a strong, focused government rather than focusing first on a vote-based structure and markets, which risks creating a dictatorial government; b) adjustment should begin even while peace agreements are being negotiated; c) realistic goals should be set while keeping limits in mind and reasonable objectives should be set while keeping limits in mind. d) It is important to focus on localism and begin discussions about Syria's future; e) adjustment should take precedence over psychological oppression; and f) adjustment necessitates synchronized regular citizen authority through the formative, defense, and discretionary capacities (Idris, 2017).

The Syrian dispute is a multi-layered one involving multiple entertainers rather than a war between two gatherings. There are threats between various Syrian resistance gatherings (eminently' conservatives' and' radicals'); with the Kurds; with Islamic State; and between fanatic gatherings (ISIL just as there is a 'key' struggle between the Assad regime and Syrian resistance gatherings, with the Kurds; with the Islamic State; between fanatic groups (including ISIL and Jubhat al-Nusrah).Furthermore,there is an intermediary fight between Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah, which support the Assad regime, and the West, which sponsors' moderate' resistance groups. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Turkey are also included in Supporting various Syrian resistance groups, including fanatic gatherings – the first two nations are primarily moving fanatic gatherings in the south, while the third and fourth nations are primarily moving fanatic gatherings in the north (Pawlak, 2017).

The Assad regime, moderate and radical Syrian opposition groups, ISIL, and the Kurds are currently fighting for control of Syria's territory. Turkey was adamantly opposed to the Kurds in charge of the Rojava domain. The Syrian resistance is profoundly fragmented and disorganized, and there is no organized public process in place to deal with the situation. Although the main division is between "moderate" and "fanatic" groups, there is also fierce rivalry between the two main extreme groups: ISIL and Jubhat al-Nusrah. In general, the role of 'jihadist' elements in the growth of resistance has grown. While the Assad regime has made significant progress in recent months thanks to Russian military assistance (particularly aviation-based armed forces), it is not yet prepared to take command of the entire world. Also, by all accounts, opposition groups do not appear

to be in a position to overthrow the system (especially with restricted western military help) As a result, there is a deadlock in which neither side can defeat the other (Totten, 2015).

The contention in Syria is progressively becoming partisan (Jenkins, 2013). Throughout the scheme, a number of Sunni forces have surrendered to rebellion gatherings. The scheme is bolstered by local military forces as well as unknown Shi'a warriors (Kodmani, 2015). The need to save Shi'a-blessed areas in Syria, rather than unwavering loyalty or duty to Assad, motivates the latter.

Iran is adamant about preserving the regime, fearing that Assad's removal would lead to parallel efforts in Iran to destabilize the Islamic Republic (Jenkins, 2013; Kodmani, 2015). Iran would also lose a major ally in the area. Iran has pressed Hezbollah to assist Syria's army, as it has gathered Shi'a volunteers in Iraq and Lebanon. The West is reluctant to provide generous military assistance to opposition groups for fear of Assad being replaced by a radical Islamist government and advanced weapons falling into the hands of radical groups and being used to attack the West (Jenkins, 2013; Kodmani, 2015). The dispute has disintegrated government institutions, including the nation's outfitted powers, replaced by a web of increasingly self-governing neighborhood elements. Most volunteer forces fighting to protect the regime are not under direct government supervision (Jenkins, 2013). This has implications for any potential settlement, as there are several independent military and criminal gatherings, regardless of whether the military is killed.

The authority is close by. 'Various combinations of "legitimate leaders" have attempted to land the last arrangement: Iran and Russia, Russia and the US, and most recently, Russia, Iran, and Turkey, according to UN-backed measures. The most important criterion is to devise a political reform strategy acceptable to all sides of the debate (EPRS, 2017).

Second, Syria's civil war has not been a neatly contained intrastate dispute across national boundaries. It is a proxy war that's gone global, with a lot of regional spillover and involvement from regional actors. State and non-state players, as well as foreign actors. Furthermore, the war has resulted in substantial spillover, not only from terrorist groups such as the Islamic State (ISIS) and al Qaeda but also from a major provincial power: the United Arab Emirates. Turkey is a European republic. Turkey has taken charge of parts of northwest Syria and has stationed troops there. In its southern province, these

regions are governed by a regional governor. Gaziantep is a Turkish province (Bell and Perry, 2015).

As a result, governments that back local proxies, such as Russia, Turkey, and Iran, have a direct stake in the outcome of Syria's war. The concerns of the leading foreign supporters of the dispute have been demonstrated by diplomatic efforts to reach an agreement, a diplomatic solution regarding power distribution, the government and the opposition are not perfectly matched for the opposition in turkey (Heydemann, 2020).

The Assad regime's pyrrhic triumph came at a cost that the regime could not afford on its own. Syria's economy has been ravaged by conflict, which has wreaked havoc on the country's culture. The cost of Syria's civil war has been measured by the World Bank. The cost of post-conflict reconstruction is estimated to be around USD 200 billion. As a result, even though the Assad regime sees victory as nothing more than a chance to enforce it will authorize peace, fiscal constraints severely limit its ability to do so. These financial restrictions and the leverage external actors will wield during the transition from war to peace would affect the regime's ability to function. The tradeoffs associated with an enforced authoritarian regime are the subject of calculus. A power-sharing deal versus peace (Heydemann, 2020).

European Union to provide reconstruction support (Hémono et al., 2018). However, as President Obama expected, the Syrian crisis has not turned into a "quagmire" for Russia. Russia has made a concerted effort to get Western sanctions eased to avoid the financial strain of rehabilitation or the possibility of forever supporting an insolvent client regime.

On the other hand, the EU maintains that reconstruction assistance can only be given if the Assad regime participates in a "meaningful and inclusive political process." The transition that would invariably erode the European Union's regime's authority (de la Unión Europea, 2018). As a result, for Russia, the tradeoffs associated with power sharing are distinct from those associated with the power distribution regime of Bashar al-Assad

The United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2254 on December 18, 2015, which alludes to a temporary administering body but also calls for "sound, inclusive, and nonsectarian administration," drafting a new constitution, and UN-managed decisions. The UN is secretly de-emphasizing aggressive conflicts about how to decode temporary language acquired in 2012 by shifting focus to coincidental political courses of action, thus opening the possibility of a peaceful relationship that allows al-Assad to stay in power (Lund, 2017).

Russia and Turkey expedited a truce in December 2016, including a checking instrument for infringement. This prompted the appropriation of UNSC Resolution 2336 on 31 December 2016, which prepared for the Astana cycle (see underneath) and the resumption of intra-Syrian talks under UN sponsorship in February 2017 (Zaarour, 2018).

Thus far, it has been challenging to establish a fair compromise about Assad's future. There are deep divisions about the Assad regime: while some (including the Syrian opposition, the US, the EU, and the majority of Arab governments) want him gone, others (like Iran and Russia) think the system is just as important. There appears to be growing recognition, based on rationality, of the Assad regime's continued presence among global partners. Nonetheless, as Kodmani points out, "there is a difference between maintaining Assad and his system as is, and maintaining Assad and his system as is, on the one side, and keeping Assad in control for a limited period of time before his flight can be booked as part of a pre-planned popularity-driven loop based on sacred components, on the other (Ibrahim, 2017).

It was found that Assad was unable to control over the entire nation, and it is doubtful that Syria can be preserved in its current state given the differences in stances held by pro- and anti-government groups on a number of subjects. Future attempts at Syria's post-conflict rebuilding could be predicated on the bare notion that "Syria" has lost any political substance and cannot be meaningfully revived (Tuck, 2016).

Whatever the situation, the power balance in the Middle East is seriously threatened by Syria's breakup or independence. According to Zaarour (2018), the deal may now involve preserving Syria's present political and economic system, as well as giving Kurdish territories special status. However, Turkey might object to this final proposal.

Tuck, (2016) suggested that different groups have different ideas, and even the intentions of singular shareholders can be contrary, for example, how to resolve the need for peace (which could necessitate collaboration with groups complicit in human rights violations) and the requirement of integrity and settlement.

5.5 Conclusion

Understanding how the US evolved in the area and its post-Manifest aims is made easier by looking at its political and economic influence in the Middle East before, during, and after World Wars I and II. The article in question also highlights the US's vital

interests in the Middle East, which include protecting Israel's hegemony, securing regimes that support the US, opposing terrorist groups and Islamic movements, and securing purposeful access to oil in the Gulf. Based on this literature review, a synthesis of research demonstrates that the US has maintained its foreign policy in a region that is essential to its national security interests because of the oil resources there, as well as its motivation to defend Israel, maintain military bases to support security, maintain its status as the protectorate of friendly regimes and client states, and fend off terrorist and Islamic movements. These five forces, which are still vital to the US today, are what forced American decision-makers to seize control of the region.

International affairs experts and students must take into account the significance of Middle East history as well as gain understanding of the goals and incentives of US policymakers in order to shape and implement policy (Al Sarhan 2017).

Chapter Six: EVOLUTION OF THE KURDISH ENTITY IN SYRIA: EMERGENCE OF "ROJAVA"

6.0   Introduction

An ethnic crew of the Middle East that share racial, cultural, and linguistic links who live in Armenia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey are known as Kurds. They also follow a variety of religions and creeds, with Sunni Muslims constituting the majority (Boms, 2016).

According to the 1920 Sevres Treaty, the Kurds were promised their own nation after World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire. However, the 1923 Lausanne Treaty reversed this promise. There are at least 25 million Kurds living in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Their total size is around 230,000 square miles, which is almost equal to the combined area of Germany and the United Kingdom. The majority of ethnic minorities in the world without a state are Kurds. The term "Kurdistan" designates the Kurdish territory of northern Iraq in Iraq, and the Kurdish portion of northwest Iran in Iran. Despite being widely used during the Ottoman era, Turkey and Syria, on the other hand, avoid using this word for political reasons (O'Leary, 2002).

Three million Kurds, or 13% of Syria's 23 million inhabitants, are thought to reside there. Their primary region of residence is in the northwest of the nation, which borders Turkey to the north and west and Iraqi Kurdistan to the east. Important Aleppo and Damascus areas are also home to Kurdish residents. They include the neighborhoods of Ashrafiya and Shaykh Maqsoud in Aleppo and Hay Akrad and Rukn al-Din in Damascus ("Syrian Kurds and the Democratic Union Party (PYD)," 2012). The Kurdish dialect that is most often spoken in Kurdistan is the Kurmanji dialect, which is spoken by the Kurds in Syria. The Kurdish population in Syria has become a prominent actor in the conflict due to the establishment of de facto autonomy in their territories. Since then, as seen by the siege of the Syrian town of Kobani, the relationship between the Syrian crisis and Kurdish politics in Turkey and Iraq has expanded significantly. All of these began in the Baath period. The formal adoption of Arab nationalism by Syria in 1958 against non-Arab ethnic minorities, especially the Kurds, marked the beginning of the denial of rights to Syrian Kurds. The majority-Kurdish province of Hasakah lies in northeastern Syria. In October 1962, Syrian authorities conducted a so-called special census there.

Subsequently, the authorities produced statistical studies in an attempt to identify potential infiltrators of Syria illegally (Ziadeh, 2009).

In an effort to weaken the Kurdish region's continuity, the Baath dictatorship's Arabization initiatives in the 1960s and 1970s created the so-called Arab-belt, which stretches from the Jazira region in northeastern Syria to the northern Kurdish city of Kobani ("THE RESURRECTION OF SYRIAN KURDISH POLITICS," 2013). The Ba'athist government has long been resisted by the Syrian Kurds, who have been marginalized and subjected to "Arabization" (the Arab Belt policy), which has kept the region's agricultural conditions subpar. A purposefully low yielding agricultural output was upheld. Underutilizing a fertile region that had been deliberately set aside as a "bread basket," it concentrated on growing staple food crops, especially wheat and beans, and employed landless Kurds as cheap labor (Lowe, 2014). The regime's objective of hydro-civilization in the river valleys, especially along the Euphrates, included the settlement of Sunni Arabs in areas with greater economic opportunities and higher yielding agricultural. Consequently, almost 20 percent of Syria's Kurdish population has been denationalized, meaning they have lost their citizenship rights, such as the ability to vote and engage in public life, travel outside of the nation, own private property, and work in the public sector (Yacoubian, 2005).

Following World War I, the Allies assembled in Paris for the Paris Peace Conference to establish new international borders for Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, allowing the Kurds to form their own country. The concept of self-determination was introduced by President Woodrow Wilson, indicating a new way of thinking in the international community. Wilson advocated for his Fourteen Points to be the focal point of the peace talks. The twelfth point specifically addressed the future of non-Turkish people living under Ottoman rule. However, it stopped short of promising independence: "The Turkish Portions of the current Ottoman Empire should be assured of secure sovereignty, but other nationalities now under Turkish rule should be assured of undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity for autonomous development" (Ahmed, 2016). The twelfth point's concept of Middle Eastern self-determination clashed with European imperial goals in the region, as detailed in the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement, in which the British and French agreed to share sovereignty of

Ottoman territory at the end of the war. The Kurdish regions were partitioned between the two European countries under this arrangement (Aktan, 2016).

The Kurds lacked a unifying figure who could legitimately claim to speak for the whole Kurdish population in the postwar era (Akyol, 2015). The few leaders that did arise were not well-liked by Kurds and, in certain circumstances, offended the British by being perceived as being overly assertive in their desire to create an independent state. In addition, the British were unable to present a convincing substitute for the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which prevented them from painting a clear vision of the Kurds' future (Silitonga, 2019). Because of this, the Kurds lacked a leadership that might have cooperated with the British to resolve the political dispute over Kurdish autonomy or independence in 1919.

As the frontiers of the Middle East cemented in the 1920s, the topic of Kurdish statehood revived. On the other hand, the British government's approach to the Kurds was inconsistent. The British decided to manage Iraq's Kurdish territory separately from the rest of Iraq, as well as the Treaty of Sevres, which offered the Kurds an autonomous region that might apply to the League of Nations for independence, boosted the potential of Kurdish independence (Allam et al., 2008). These measures ran counter to the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which did not include a provision for Kurdish independence, and the 1924 alliance between Britain and Iraq, which was contingent on Britain protecting Iraqi rights in Mosul (Allawi, 2008).

The League of Nations officially awarded authority of Mosul and the surrounding territory to Iraq rather than Turkey in 1926, after British attempts to shift the province's society and economy toward Baghdad and Basra had virtually eradicated Turkey's formerly significant Ottoman influence in Mosul (Aqrawi, 2010). The lack of a unified policy toward the Kurds was evidenced by the British's conflicting statements on Kurdish autonomy and independence throughout the early 1920s. The Treaty of Lausanne and the 1924 alliance closed a window of opportunity for Kurdish autonomy or independence.

The Kurds' inability to gain regional support, which stopped them from establishing an independent state after World War I, has continued to impede Iraqi Kurds from gaining autonomy or independence. Iraq's pre-Saddam era was marked by independence. The League of Nations established the Covenant of the Prophets the

mandate system. It was transferred from one government's control to another at the which the League declared unfit for independence at the end of the war was entrusted to the management and supervision of a higher-ranking official in a developed country (Arango & Krauss, 2013). In this way, the United Kingdom created a mandate in Iraq. Britain began looking for methods to reduce its commitments in Iraq soon after the mandate was formed. The British and Iraqi monarchies agreed to an early ending of the mandate, allowing Iraq to gain independence in 1932, although the treaty did not include provisions for Kurdish rights. When the terms of independence were made public, prominent Kurds petitioned the League of Nations for autonomy or independence and recognition of other Kurdish rights that the Baghdad administration had not extended. Between the end of the British mandate in 1932 and the start of the Saddam era, the Kurds made various attempts to develop relationships with individuals both inside and outside Iraq who could promote Kurdish interests. Following the fall of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958, a succession of coups put in place a series of governments led by military elites, Nasserists, and Ba'athists. The Kurds approached each of these parties at one point or another, but they all abandoned the Kurds when the relationship failed to serve their purposes, just as the British did during the mandate period (Nader, 2015).

Iraqi Kurdistan's history has been one of underdevelopment, political and cultural persecution, destruction, ethnic cleansing, and genocide since the foundation of the modern state of Iraq. An aggressive, planned military operation against Iraqi Kurds was codenamed Al-Anfal (The Spoils) (Bruinessen, 2009).

It was part of a bigger assault against Kurds due to their struggle for autonomy inside the Iraqi Republic. Anfal was staged in 1988 under the guidance of Saddam Hussein's cousin, Ali Hasan al-Majid. Because of his use of chemical and biological weapons in Kurdish cities and villages, he was dubbed "Chemical Ali." The campaign's overall goal was to destroy Kurdish resistance by whatever means necessary. Its explicit goal was to rid the territory of "saboteurs," who were defined as all males aged 15 to 70. In the targeted villages and adjacent areas, mass executions were carried out. The operation was meticulously organized, and it entailed selecting communities in rebel-held territory, naming these villages and surrounding areas "prohibited," and sanctioning the death of anybody or anything found in these locations. Economic blockades were erected around these settlements to isolate them from any sources of assistance. The army also

planned to evacuate them and relocate the residents to reservation-style collective settlements (Kelly, 2008).

The Kurds' personal experience with such strikes has driven them to ask the international community for protection from such weapons if the US-led military operation against Iraq occurs. Iraqi Kurdistan was partitioned into two halves in April 1991, following uprisings by Kurds in the north and Shi'a Arabs in the south against the central government in March. Military personnel from eleven countries, including the US and Turkey, executed Operation Provide Comfort to provide security and humanitarian support to refugees in camps along the Iraq-Turkey border, based on UN Security Council Resolution 688. This framework established the so-called Kurdish safe haven and northern no-fly zone. The Kurdish safe haven has been successfully controlled for a decade by the Kurds themselves, despite significant constraints and fierce external and internal resistance. This region of Iraqi Kurdistan covers over 40,000 square kilometres, or roughly half of the country (Azam, 2007).

Similarly, the US turned its back on the Kurds in the mid-1970s, choosing instead to support peace negotiations between Iran and Iraq. The Kurdish leadership's division hindered the region's attempts to achieve independence and autonomy prior to Saddam. Kurds had very primitive political organization in the 1930s, and what little political activity there was was repressed by Baghdad (Baker III et al., 2007).

Despite being the leading Kurdish party for decades, the KDP's failure to maintain Iranian support and defeat government forces in the 1970s significantly weakened the party, resulting in a political vacuum in the Kurdish region that led to a group of KDP members breaking away and forming the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) under the leadership of Jalal Talabani. The KDP kept its hold on the northwest provinces, while the PUK built itself in the east, towards Iran. Intra-Kurdish warfare started within a few years as the KDP and PUK vied for control of the population. This competition caused long-lasting political and geographical splits among Iraqi Kurds, which continued to sabotage Kurdish independence ambitions (Nader et al., n.d.).

Despite this disappointment, several positive advancements have occurred. In the KDP and PUK territories, free and fair local elections were held in dozens of municipalities under international observation in 2000 and 2001. On October 4, 2002, the

KNA met in Erbil in its entirety for the first time since 1994. The KNA's reconvening is a clear indicator of the KDP and PUK's increased cooperation, notably in their relations with the Bush administration and US Congress, as well as with regional and European powers. The KDP and PUK, in particular, are united in asserting the Kurdish right to self-determination in a democratic state. They demand a democratic Iraq in the future, supporting Iraqi Kurdistan, and joining the federal government's relationship with the government at large in the context of a new constitutional arrangement (Arango & Krauss, 2013).

The Kurdish safe haven has been an illustration of what can happen for a decade. Iraq's rest of the country All Iraqis desiring freedom and democracy have found refuge in the liberated region of Iraqi Kurdistan. Thousands of Iraqi refugees have returned to Iran since 1991. Thousands more Iraqis from central and southern Iraq have sought shelter since 1991. Even more surprising, since 1991, some families who fled Iraq over 20 years ago and become citizens of the US and other European countries has chosen to return. Before 1991, Iraqi Kurdistan's history was one of disaster and displacement. More than 4,000 localities, including towns with more than 50,000 Iraqis, were devastated. Hundreds of thousands of people were arrested and executed. Thousands of people were compelled to reside in "communal towns" run by Baghdad. During the years of battle, many people were harmed. Despite their successes in democratization and civil society formation since 1991, Baghdad and surrounding governments continue to threaten the residents of Iraqi Kurdistan, jeopardizing their hard-won freedom and uncertain well-being. Iraqi Kurdistan's future is extremely uncertain (Beehner, 2007).

6.1 Kurds and Syrian Uprising

According to the interview conducted by Sinam, (2017) the question of nationalism and nationalist politics—which are seen as an attempt to create a nation-state that would provide a voice to a previously stateless national group—are not being questioned in relation to the Syrian revolt. Rather, the uprising has prompted a reevaluation of long-standing issues related to peoplehood, identity, and national community, therefore igniting a "form of politics" around these ideas. According to Bliesemann de Guevara (2014), it started in early 2011 with a string of ostensibly unconnected actions and events that eventually came together to form a large-scale national movement for freedom and the end of security services dominance, upending a

key element of the al-Asad government. The rebellion began spontaneously in the southern city of Dar'a, when a group of children were detained for drawing anti-government graffiti on their school walls. Residents of the city were outraged by the imprisonment and cruel treatment of these children by security agents, and marched to the streets in protest. Similar events occurred in Douma, a rural Damascus suburb, following the same pattern as the Dar'a episodes. Protests expanded from these towns and cities to others nearby and towns and cities in other governorates. Interview conducted by Mahmud Ahmed Al-Harbo.A.M, (2021) in a face-to-face meeting explored that for the first time in the history of Syria, Bashar Al-Assad had sent a private plane to Qamishlo for Kurdish leaders offered them to meet in Damascus, but the Kurdish leaders refused and did not go to Damascus.

Security strategies used to put an end to the protests included violent crackdowns on public gatherings, arrests, incarceration, and torture while in detention; yet, they encountered even more opposition. The extent to which the protests grew may be seen in press accounts, which estimated the number of protesters above four million by the sixteenth week. As a result, the regime's challenge shifted from local acts of conflict with regime representatives to a nationwide rebellion against the system as a whole. The uprising's main demands had become the release of all political detainees, the lifting of the state of emergency, and the opening of the political arena through constitutional revisions that would end the Ba'th Party's stranglehold on government institutions (i.e., removal of Article 8 of the Constitution and the introduction of a new Political Parties Law) (Ismail, 2011).

As the demonstrations were met with violence, the desired dramatic shift became encapsulated in a cry used in earlier upheavals across the region: 'The people want to bring down the dictatorship. The revolt, which Syrian activists and opposition leaders call a "revolution," has grown in popularity, with mass rallies occurring daily in several major towns such as Hama and Homs throughout June and July 2011. Despite five months of protests and extraordinary levels of public mobilization, the revolt has yet to yield a tangible change in administration. This popular protest movement has succeeded in mobilizing a large number of people and breaking down the fear barrier that has previously prevented collective action. However, involvement in the rebellion has been

restricted in Syria's two main cities, Damascus and Aleppo, and the role of religious minorities in the uprising is unclear (Landis, 2012).

Understanding some of the dynamics involved in the current conflict between the regime and its supporters and the protest movement and uprising participants is crucial. Bashar al-regime, Asad's terms of rule were inherited and preserved from Hafez al-regime, Asad. Public discourse and the cult of the leader were important mechanisms of governance and control under Hafez al-Asad's rule, as Lisa Wedeen (1999) demonstrates.

Regime propaganda established the framework of public debate around the regime's claims to be the Arab nation's leader and "the front of resistance and steadfastness." Furthermore, Syria's entire political life centred on Hafez al-Asad, the so-called "eternal leader." Even though Bashar al-Asad seemed to recognize the need for reform when he took office, the regime continued to use the same methods of authority. Significantly, there has been an attempt to resurrect the leader's cult as a rule strategy, with the son now taking up his father's role. This is shown by the abundance of political symbols in public spaces and the re-enactment of the regime's mythology. The manufacturing of the cult has accelerated in the current setting, as demonstrations in support of the president have proliferated, loyalty campaigns have been started, and activities geared to encourage public expressions of love and allegiance to the president have become commonplace.

Loyalty to the president's person is framed as an act of patriotism in these regime-sponsored events. Beginning with Hafez al-Asad and demonstrated and supported in the creation of Suriyya al-Asad (or 'Asad's Syria,' the present uprising reflects the decline in meaning between leader and nation, associating the leader with the Syrian or Arab people. At regime support rallies, slogans like 'God, Syria, Bashar, and that's all' ('Allah, Suriyya, Bashar wi bas') crudely establish a identity relationship between the president and the population. Another factor in the nation-leader equating process is the visual twinning and melding of the president's face and the national flag. The dictatorship has attempted to frame the opposition protests in particular terms, implying sectarian manipulation by foreign players by portraying the protestors as infiltrators, saboteurs, or armed gangs and associating them with plots and conspiracies by a variety of identified and unnamed opponents.

Accusing demonstrators of betraying the country or failing in their patriotism is intended to deprive them of their freedom to dissent. As a result, the protest movement can be seen as a challenge to the idea of the 'eternal leader' possessing the Syrian nation, the monopoly of authority that is theoretically granted to the Ba'th Party but has come to rest in the hands of a ruling clique backed by a handful of benefactors. The goal of opposing the dictatorship is to retake the country from the tyrant and to undo Suriyya al-Asad. The protest movement and national revolt have engaged in a reimagining of the nation to convey a vision of the ideal democratic community. Much of this reimagining has taken the form of symbolic manufacturing and protest practices.

The Syrian Kurdish minority experienced a political awakening in 1998 after the Assad administration stopped supporting the PKK (under threat of war from Turkey). After the PKK was driven out of Syria and Syrian-occupied Lebanon, and after Ocalan was taken prisoner, it ceased pressuring Kurdish activists to refrain from criticizing the Baathist government. Meanwhile, in the late 1990s, Assad's reunion with Saddam Hussein weakened his ties with Iraqi Kurdish leaders. In November 1999, the Yakiti Party, a pro-KDP group, took the lead by adopting a political platform calling for Kurdish to be made an official language, government administration in Kurdish areas to be "organized and run by Kurds," and security in these areas to be "the responsibility of their own residents" (Owen, 1992).

Assad's death empowered Kurdish activists in June 2000, and a new generation of political parties arose. For a time, Bashar Assad, Assad's son and heir allowed Kurdish political organizations to gather openly, stores to distribute Kurdish books and music freely, and the expansion of private Kurdish language lessons to go unnoticed. Two senior officials from the ruling Baath Party met with a team from the Kurdish Democratic Alliance (KDA), a coalition of six Kurdish parties, in August 2001. Syrian President Bashar Assad visited the mostly Kurdish province of Hasaka in August 2002, as it became clear that an American battle to depose Saddam Hussein was unavoidable. It was the first time a Syrian president had done so in more than 40 years.

Assad's historic visit, however, did not result in any concessions from the regime, and Kurdish political activists continued to be intimidated, threatened, and jailed. Yakiti held an unusual sit-in outside parliament in December, delivering a statement demanding

that the Syrian regime "lift the impediments put on the Kurdish language and culture and recognize the existence of the Kurdish people within the country's unity" (Gambill, 2004).

Yakiti coordinated a demonstration in front of the UNICEF building in Damascus in June 2003, with 200 Kurdish children and their parents. The assembly was dispersed by security authorities, who also arrested seven Yakiti activists. Within days, officials detained Marwan Othman and Hassan Saleh, two members of the party's political bureau, on charges of "inciting religious and ethnic conflict." behind the scenes, Othman and Saleh were exposed to the standard bribes to pledge in writing that they would refrain from participating in political activities. After their conviction in February 2004, the two Yakiti leaders were released on time served, implying that they signed the vow. They had not, however, been intimidated by their time in prison.

They vowed to carry on the struggle and ran across the border to Iraqi Kurdistan after being freed. Both inside and outside of Syria, many were taken aback by the Kurdish uprising last month. Although the country's young president has given the regime he inherited from his father a kinder and gentler face, the government's legacy of brutality in the face of internal challenges to its authority remains largely unshaken - the massacre of up to 20,000 people in Hama, Syria's fourth largest city. Kurds have no cause to doubt Assad's readiness to crush violent challenges to his rule, given the government's incarceration and reported torture of scores of Yakiti activists in reaction to peaceful rallies over the past two years. The unprecedented outbreak of Kurdish riots in March would not have happened if local and regional events had not coincided in such a way (Charountaki, 2010).

The riots occurred at a time when American-Syrian relations were at an all-time low. In late 2003, the Bush administration approved congressional penalties on Damascus and public support for an Israeli air strike on Syrian soil, signaling a dramatic shift in US-Assad relations from constructive to punitive engagement. The announcement that sanctions would be implemented in early March in Syria's state-run media sparked a storm of exaggerated denunciations of neo-conservative plans and threats of impending American "attack." Assad's efforts to persuade ordinary Syrians that Damascus was next on the American "kill list" for regime change were a catastrophic political miscalculation because one of the most important aspects of his regime's air of invincibility is the belief that it has worldwide support. For the first time in decades, Syrians could be confident

that their government's mass killings would not be met with silence by the rest of the world.

Relations between Syria and Iraqi Kurdish leaders have also deteriorated to new lows. Assad's aggressive push to organize Arab opposition to Iraqi Kurdish autonomy failed to stymie the post-Saddam Iraqi political process, while seriously alienating Kurdish leaders Jalal Talabani and Barzani. Both had welcomed exiled Kurdish activists from Syria and supplied them with political organizing facilities, but they were wary of antagonizing Assad while talks over Iraq's political future were still ongoing. After an interim constitution was approved on March 8 that recognized KDP/PUK administrative and military control over Iraqi Kurdistan and gave Kurd's veto power over the drafting of a permanent constitution, the gloves came off, and the two Kurdish leaders quietly signaled that they would not disapprove of Kurdish political agitation in Syria. The ratification of Iraq's interim constitution also put to rest any remaining misgivings about the US abandoning its Kurdish friends in Iraq's quest for political agreement (Rafaat, 2007).

The Syrian government had anticipated a rise of Kurdish activism. For months, the Assad regime had been supplying weaponry to Arab settlers in Jazeera, according to Kurdish sources. Yakiti's attempt to arrange a public demonstration on March 8 (ostensibly to honor International Women's Day) was promptly thwarted by Qamishli police, who arrested eight of the group's organizers. On March 12, supporters of a visiting Arab soccer club gathered at a stadium in Qamishli wielding sticks and knives, hurling ethnic slurs and chanting pro-Saddam Hussein slogans. When supporters of the Kurdish squad retaliated with slogans supporting President Bush, the two sides clashed. Following that, security forces opened fire on the Kurdish mob, killing six people and causing panic in which three children were trampled to death. This provoked a riot among the city's Kurdish citizens, who set fire to cereal warehouses and destroyed a large number of public buses and private vehicles (Falah Mustafa Bakir. F.M, 2021).

The disturbance swiftly expanded to neighboring towns like Hasaka and Amuda, where protestors set fire to Baath Party headquarters and defaced murals of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his late father. The violence extended to northwestern Syria in the days that followed. Rioters set fire to a government civil register office in Ain al-Arab and attempted (but failed) to liberate detainees from a local jail. Thousands of

people rioted in Aleppo and Afrin, both in the Kurd Dagh region, on March 16. Kurdish districts in and around Damascus were also affected by the protests. The damage to property was estimated to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars (Dajani et al., 2021).

Shortly after the protests began, the authorities shut down border crossings from Iraq and Turkey into Kurdish areas and dispatched highly armed police and military forces to subdue the uprising. In just eight days, 40 people died (33 Kurds and seven Arabs), 400 were injured, and nearly 2,000 Kurds were detained. Tanks were only sent into all major Kurdish towns after the calm was restored. Security authorities raided the houses of several Kurdish activists in Lebanon, arresting at least seven people and forcing dozens more to flee. Early in the conflict, Assad dispatched a delegation to meet with local Kurdish leaders in Jazeera, led by his brother Maher and Defense Minister Mustafa Tlass, although the regime intended to threaten, not discuss. Kurdish leaders' demands for a meeting with Assad were flatly refused (*Political Program Submitted to the Third Convention of the Yakiti Party in Syria*, 1999).

The Syrian regime quickly blamed foreign elements for the unrest. The turmoil was blamed on robbers "motivated by foreign hands" and saboteurs "from neighboring nations" seeking to undermine the country's stability, according to state-run media (DOSYASI, n.d.). According to a government-appointed mosque preacher, the riots are "a huge scheme to destabilize Syria from inside, after the traps from the outside, such as the Syria Accountability Act and terrorism allegations, failed." Kurds were depicted in the media as uniformly hostile to the provocateurs, with Syrian television broadcasting footage of Kurdish crowds chanting, "with our blood and souls we redeem you", oh Bashar," and interviews with Kurdish villagers rejecting prejudice in Syria. On Syrian television, one Kurd triumphantly declared, "On the contrary, I have more than others" (Z. N. Kaya, 2015).

The Syrian crackdown has been criticized by the US. "Refrain from deploying increasingly coercive tactics to ostracize a minority that has pleaded for greater acceptance and integration into Syrian life," State Department Deputy Spokesman Adam Ereli said (Hama, 2020). This was a noteworthy reaction since American strategists have long feared Syria's division along ethno-sectarian lines; encouraging American remarks in the middle of ethnic conflict in Syria would have been inconceivable only a few years ago. All plausible explanations for this response assume that the Bush administration is

unconcerned about the consequences of a Kurdish insurrection in Syria or, at the very least, is actively conveying this impression to Syrians. In any case, Assad is up against the first American government in almost two decades, willing to jeopardize Syria's Baathist regime's stability. Other Arab states, alarmed by the tremors of instability in Syria, quickly expressed their support for Assad. Saudi Arabia and five other oil-rich Arab monarchies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) condemned Kurdish "acts of sedition." Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who had planned to visit Damascus in late March, paid a surprise visit on March 14 to the Syrian capital (MacQueen, 2015).

The link between the Syrian conflict and Kurdish politics in Turkey and Iraq has grown dramatically since then, as seen by the siege of the Syrian town of Kobane. The emergence of de facto autonomy in Syria's Kurdish majority areas has elevated the Kurds to a crucial player in the Syrian conflict. This article aims to assess the war's impact on the Kurds in Syria and across the region, both in terms of current political dynamics and long-term trends. The war's ramifications for Kurdish politics in Syria, Turkey, and Iraq and the intricate web of interactions between Kurdish political movements and regional powers are among the specific focus areas (Gunes, C., & Lowe, R., 2015).

6.2   Kurdish Factor in Post-2011 Syria

The fractured and heterogeneous nature of Kurdish politics in Syria persisted until the onset of the civil conflict in 2011. The country had fifteen pro-Kurdish parties of varied sizes and types. Most of these groups, which wanted formal equality between Kurds and Arabs, traced their roots back to the PDK-S (Partîya Dêmokrat a Kurd li Sûrîyê), Syria's first Kurdish political party, which was created in 1957. Factionalism had no substantial ideological underpinnings, instead relying on familial and tribal ties. As a result, compared to their ethnic brethren in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, the extent and durability of nationalist mobilization among Syrian Kurds remained far weaker throughout the twentieth century (Tezcür, G. M., & Yıldız, H., 2021).

Kurdish politics in Syria's Kurdish area are currently dominated by two major parties: the Kurdish National Council (KNC) and the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) (Gunter, 2013). The PYD is a branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). In contrast, the KNC is a coalition of 16 Kurdish parties allied with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq (headed by Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and

Masoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party). Other tiny parties exist, such as the Kurdish Future Movement, which was created by Kurdish activist Meshaal Tammo, who was later assassinated while working with the Syrian National Council. The PYD, associated with the PKK, is the most powerful of Syria's Kurdish parties. The KNC, although a coalition of over a dozen Kurdish parties, has little real power in the region. It lacks the military might and other necessary resources to combat the well-organized PYD in this regard (Guler, 2011).

Kurdish politics in Syria remained fragmented and diverse up to the 2011 start of the civil crisis. Fifteen pro-Kurdish parties of varying sizes and sorts existed throughout the nation. The PDK-S (Partîya Dêmokrat a Kurd li Sûrîyê), Syria's first Kurdish political party, was founded in 1957 and was the source of most of these groups, which advocated for formal equality between Kurds and Arabs. Factionalism was based on kinship and tribal relationships rather than having any deep intellectual roots. Thus, the degree and longevity of nationalist mobilization among Syrian Kurds remained significantly lower throughout the twentieth century in comparison to their ethnic siblings in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey (Hope, n.d., 2011).

The post-civil war situation in Kurdish-populated areas of Syria, typified by the PYD's (Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat) control, starkly contrasts this historical context. The PYD, which was founded in 2003 as an offshoot of the PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan), has managed to defeat all Kurdish political actors, gain de facto territorial control over large portions of the country, and gain international recognition as the most important military partner of the international coalition fighting the self-styled Islamic State (IS). By the summer 2012, the PYD had firmly established authority over the three Kurdish-majority enclaves of Jazira, Kobanî, and Afrin, renaming those 'Rojava' cantons of local governance in November 2013. The PYD's rule, which exemplifies rebel government, extends far beyond security and taxation to include institutions and regulations governing a wide range of sectors of civilian life, including the judiciary, education, health care, and gender relations. According to popular wisdom, the PYD's success is primarily due to its reliance on the PKK's brutality, which was created in Turkey in 1978, and the Assad regime's participation (e.g., Baczko, Dorronsoro, & Quesnay, 2018). Since the 1980s, the PKK has supported the Assad administration, which has allowed it to mobilize large numbers of Syrian Kurds to fight the Turkish state (Demirsu, 2017).

While the regime repressed the PYD after 2003, the PYD was able to replace regime forces after the Syrian rebellion spread in 2012, thanks to a carefully organized transfer facilitated by an informal agreement (Baczko, Dorronsoro, & Quesnay, 2018, pp. 38–9, 169–170). The regime and PYD forces did not engage in direct combat except for a few isolated incidents. Unlike its tactics in other rebel-controlled areas of Syria, the regime did not launch a bombing campaign against PYD-controlled territories. Furthermore, in the territories under its control, the PYD has used coercion against civilians, suppressed Kurdish opposition, and tolerated little genuine political pluralism. It has also violated human rights by forcibly displacing civilians, confiscating their property, and conscripting minors (e.g., Amnesty International, 2015).

The existence of ethnic groups that cross international borders raises the likelihood of civil war by strengthening and making ethnic insurgencies more realistic. Insurgencies can rely on ethnic relatives for personnel, logistical, and financial resources over the border in particular. In the case of the PYD, a similar dynamic is present. More specifically, the PYD benefited from this cross-border connectivity over its co-ethnic opponent organizations in three ways. First, the PYD accepted the PKK's egalitarian ideology, which intended to unite Kurds across familial, gender, tribal, and regional lines. Its ideology, which Abdullah ÖOcalan primarily developed, the PKK's founding leader who has been imprisoned in Turkey since 1999, has limited the fragmentation and parochialism that have plagued other Kurdish political entities in Syria in the past and has helped it recruit militants and supporters with marginalized identities, including many women and young people from low-income families. Unlike traditional Kurdish parties, which are mostly centred on familial and tribal relationships, the PKK developed a populist model based on ÖOcalan's charisma. While the PKK no longer advocates for a unified and united Kurdistan, Kurdish self-determination remains a central theme in its political programme (Khoshnaw, 2012).

Furthermore, since the early 1980s, the PKK has recruited thousands of militants among Syrian Kurds to fight against the Turkish state, providing the PYD with a loyal and long-lasting popular base. Shref.Y, 2021, in a face-to-face interview, suggested that the rapprochement of Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) with Rojava did not create an obstacle between the Kurds of Syria's relations and America's or American foreign policy.

Compared to other Kurdish groups that were mostly dormant, the PKK's battle against the Turkish state gave it political credibility. Over the years, the PYD developed vast networks among the militants' families, relatives, and acquaintances, which substantially aided its ability to mobilize diverse elements of the Kurdish people after 2011. Finally, once the popular movement in Syria turned into a vicious and lengthy civil war, the PYD benefited greatly from the PKK's fighting experience and skills. In areas vacated by the central government in the summer of 2012, both Syrian and non-Syrian PKK cadres soon supplanted governmental authorities (Gunter, 2013).

Thousands of Turkish volunteers were also recruited by the PKK to assist in defending Kobanî, a border town under siege by IS militants in September 2014. The defeat of IS forces by defenders led by PKK members, aided by heavy Western air strikes, was a turning point in consolidating PYD rule in broad sections of northern Syria (Chomani & Hess, 2011).

By the 1980s, the PKK had begun recruiting Syrian Kurds with the help of the Assad dictatorship. In the 1980s and 1990s, it is reasonable to believe that at least tens of thousands of Syrian Kurds joined the PKK. Tezcür (2016) created the Kurdish Insurgency Militants (KIM) dataset, which contains biographical information on 9,196 militants who fought and died in the ranks of the PKK between 1984 and 2016. It accounts for more than 40% of all PKK fatalities during this time period. PKK sources such as short obituaries and martyrs' albums are used to gather information on the militants (Gunter, 2015).

The KIM dataset contains information on 1,096 extremists born in Syria. Except for Turkey, the number of Syrian Kurds in the PKK is much higher than in any other country. In the early 1990s, the PKK's recruitment capability peaked. This is also true in the case of Syrian recruitment, which peaked in the years 1989, 1990, and 1991. Regarding geographical distribution, Afrin, the westernmost portion of northern Syria bordering the Turkish provinces of Kilis and Hatay, has the most Syrian recruits. There were 370 militants born there in total. By the early 1990s, the PKK had established itself as the major Kurdish force in Afrin, with extensive networks among the local population, with the agreement of the Syrian regime, in contrast to the Jazira region, which was characterized by the presence of several Kurdish organizations. Between 1991 and 1995, 199 people born in Afrin joined the PKK. As previously stated, these recruitment

activities aided the PKK's sociopolitical clout. In May 1990, six publicly linked members of the organization ran for seats in the Syrian parliament (Fadaee & Schindler, 2014).

Kobanî, the town that resisted IS insurgents in 2014, has 159 recruits, Dêrika Hemko (AlMalikiyah in Arabic), a district in Syria's northeast, has 153, and Qamishli, a large Kurdish majority city, has 108. Some people joined the PKK in their hometowns, while others were recruited while working or attending school in Aleppo and Damascus. The PKK's ability to recruit people from various backgrounds and life experiences reflected its egalitarian ideology and was a key strength in allowing it to break through the more established Kurdish parties in Syria's narrower social base. The PKK's self-narrative as a revolutionary and youth movement confronting traditional society and waging heroic nationalistic resistance was particularly appealing to a huge number of young people, including many women. The vast majority of them were recruited in their late teens and early twenties, which is consistent with this evaluation. The average age of recruiting is 19.8, which is statistically considerably higher than the 19.2 average age of PKK recruitment (Yegen, 2009).

Women make up about 15% of PKK fighters born in Syria. As documented by the KIM dataset, the overall ratio of women in the PKK ranks is relatively similar. The recruits' educational achievements are barely documented. 29 of the 102 Syrian PKK members for whom education information is known had some college education. This 28 percent percentage is the same as the overall organization's ratio of college-educated recruits. The PKK had a strong following among Syria's poor and uneducated Kurds. The PKK kept recruiting from Syria's Kurdish provinces throughout the second half of the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century. Terrorist families assimilated into the networks of the organization among the Kurds in Syria. As with Turkish sociocultural dynamics, the foundation of PKK grassroots mobilization is these families. Consequently, the PYD had a huge pool of cadres and established networks to fill the power vacuum when the regime retreated from mostly Kurdish areas in the summer of 2012 (Z. Kaya & Lowe, 2017).

The Assad regime opted to withdraw from Kurdish territories in the north of the nation, where the PYD quickly acquired control as the rebellion gained momentum and overwhelmed state forces. The YPG would not emerge as a serious force with substantial regional geopolitical consequences until the IS siege of Kobanî. The nearly five-month

siege, which lasted from September 2014 to January 2015, sparked widespread Western support for the PYD, contributed to the collapse of the truce between the Turkish state and the PKK by the summer of 2015 and heightened tensions between the US and Turkey. During the siege that concluded on January 26, 2015, US military help played a critical role in the YPG's triumph against the IS. At the same time, the YPG troops, mostly PKK cadres who have received considerable military training and indoctrination, and volunteers (seferberlik) who are primarily ethnic Kurds from Turkey, would not have been able to provide this support (Hevian, 2013).

The YPG's trans-border nature became the most cherished asset in its fight against Salafi-jihadism in this aspect. In 2014 and 2015, Turkish fighters comprised a significant percentage of the YPG forces fighting ISIS in Syria. An original dataset collecting personal data on 785 Turkish individuals who died in the ranks of the YPG and its female counterpart, the YPJ (Yekîneyên Parastina Jin), between 2013 and 2016, provides valuable insights into the trans-border nature of their mobilization efforts. They are largely ethnic Kurds, however, there are a few non-Kurds who have joined the YPG for ideological and inter-ethnic reasons (Akkaya & Jongerden, 2012).

The Kurdish populations of Turkey, Syria, and Iraq have fought for equal citizenship and expression rights since the founding of the modern states of Turkey, Syria, and Iraq about 100 years ago, despite pervasive ethnic prejudice. For the most part, these efforts failed. However, in the 2000s, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq, which governs the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), and a limited rapprochement between the Turkish state and its Kurdish population gave rise to a sense of unprecedented opportunity for the region's more than 35 million Kurds. This feeling grew stronger in late 2013 when the autonomous administration of Rojava was established as a result of Syria's civil war (Gunes & Lowe, 2015). New negotiations between the state, Ocalan, and the PKK were held in 2010 after the PKK declared a cease-fire. During these new meetings, Ocalan drafted and presented to the state another road map comprising three protocols: "The Draft for the Principles for a Democratic Solution of the Main Social Problems in Turkey," "The Draft for a Fair Peace in Relations Between the State and Society," and "The Draft for the Action Plan for the Democratic and Fair Solution of the Kurdish Question" (Yeğen, 2015).

In practice, the protocols advised forming three committees of people from both sides: a Constitutional Commission, a Peace Commission, and a Truth and Justice Commission. It has been revealed that the Ocalan protocols were negotiated during the Oslo Talks and that both the PKK and state officials approved the protocols and promised to take the necessary steps after the 12 June 2011 elections. Meanwhile, Ocalan stated that he had done his best and that a new phase might begin after the elections. Both the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), the predecessor of today's HDP, and the AKP were victorious in the elections. In Kurdish provinces, the BDP received nearly half of the vote; in Turkey, the AKP received half. However, following the elections, it became clear that the AKP government was not keen on continuing the peace process. The PKK commanders claim that following the elections, the state halted the Oslo meetings and refused to sign the protocols agreed upon by the PKK and state officials at the Oslo talks. As a result, the PKK broke the ceasefire and resumed the so-called People's Revolutionary War (Tezcür, 2013).

On the 14th of June 2011, just one month after the elections, the PKK attacked Silvan, killing 13 soldiers. The second round of the peace process ended at this point. While the official narrative claims that the first round of the peace process ended with the Reşadiye attack and the second round ended with the Silvan attack, PKK circles argue that the second round ended when the PKK concluded that the state was not ready to move forward along the lines specified in Ocalan's three protocols. The PKK and the state resumed negotiations in this setting at the start of 2013. In a television interview on December 28, 2012, Prime Minister Erdogan claimed that conversations between state officials and Ocalan were ongoing. The fact that the conversations were taking place, rather than that the prime minister wanted to announce them on television, indicated that something was different about the process after the slaughter of the preceding 18 months (Yeğen, 2015).

Only a few days later, BDP delegates Ahmet Türk and Ayla Ata Akat paid a visit to Ocalan at Imra Prison. According to Ahmet Turk, Ocalan looked committed and confident in building peace, but wanted to check into the prospects of doing so by communicating with the PKK headquarters in Kandil and the BDP. If the conversations between the state and Ocalan had not yielded anything, Erdogan would not have announced them.

The fact that the visit of Imral was made public indicated that the new round of the peace process would not take place behind closed doors. In fact, it became clear early on that the talks with Ocalan would follow a complicated pattern: as the state and Ocalan continued to talk, Ocalan would inform the PKK headquarters in Kandil, which would then inform the BDP deputies on the ground. While a serious crisis occurred only a week after the new round began Sakine Cansz, Fidan Doan, and Leyla aylemez, three well-known women in PKK circles, were murdered in Paris on 10 January 2013 by Turkish citizen Mer Güney the PKK and the BDP saw these murders as a provocation perpetrated by a third party and remained committed to the new process (Toktamis, 2018).

The events that followed demonstrated that both sides were committed to starting a new round. While Erdogan stated on February 12, 2013, that he was willing to face any political risks to achieve peace, the AKP group in parliament passed a law allowing courtroom defense in one's mother tongue. Meanwhile, BDP deputies visited Imrali's Ocalan and the PKK's Kandil headquarters to foster communication between the PKK and its commander. During these meetings, Ocalan delivered his fresh peace plan, and PKK leaders stated their reservations about the new round. Ocalan eventually created a fresh proposal for peace and settlement, which he delivered to the public on March 21, 2013, at Diyarbakir's Newroz celebration, which was attended by hundreds of thousands of Kurds. The PKK, on the other hand, made a second announcement in September 2013, claiming that the pullout had been delayed because the government had failed to take the actions it had promised, instead erecting new military posts in and near the areas where the PKK had withdrawn (Üstündağ, 2019).

Throughout the summer, the Turkish government constructed new fortified military installations and dams along the routes used by the PKK to retire to Iraq in the autumn and return to Turkey in the spring. Despite the pause in the pullout, the PKK remained committed to the truce and asked that new dams and power stations be stopped,in addition to the release of those imprisoned under the guise of KCK membership and that a law providing legal grounds for the resolution process be enacted. The determination of the PKK bore fruit. The AKP modified the law of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) shortly after the 2014 local elections, giving the MIT the right to meet and negotiate with "terrorist organizations" and those who are imprisoned (Hakyemez, 2017).

Hemn Hawrami, (2021) was asked in a face-to-face interview to evaluate the role of the Parliament and the Kurdish President in the region regarding changing dynamics. He said that we have a clear strategy and attitude in the Kurdistan parliament in support of the Kurds in Syria, and we want them to remain together. And to always have a Kurdish-centric agenda, rather than a Turkish-centric agenda, a Syrian-centric one, or an Iranian-centric one. We advocated for unity and more dialogue with one another, and we urged for the cursor to be united in their talks with the opposition over Syria's future constitution. We also encourage the Kurds to unite. That is why we welcome this conversation between Anakasa and the PYD in order to unite even in negotiations with the Syrian regime or with Russians, such as in the Astana process or with the Turkish process, which is assisting.

Similarly, KCK inmates began to be released around the same time, and by the end of 2014, almost all were released. The AKP then took a more extreme move in June 2014, enacting a "framework law" for the resolution process. The framework law, titled "Law to Stop Terrorism and Strengthen Social Integration," gave the government and bureaucracy the authority to establish the required procedures to take and prepare the rules needed to end terrorism and assure social integration. Practically, the law was broad enough to specify all military, political, and legal steps needed to ensure disarmament and resolve the Kurdish question. The law also authorized officials to contact "terrorists" (Mandıracı, 2016).

After just a few months, the peace movement ran into yet another serious issue. On October 6 and 8, Kurdish citizens demonstrated against the Islamic State's (IS) week-long siege of Kobani, Syria, as well as the government's apparent "contentment" or "apathy" to the siege and Kobani's possible capitulation. More than forty people, mostly HDP supporters, lost their lives as a result of the Kobani events, which resembled a civil war. The HDP deputies' meeting with Ocalan in early December 2014 demonstrated that the process was progressing. Ocalan had prepared a draught for negotiations for the deputies when they returned from Imrali. Even though it was unclear whether the Turkish state had authorized this document, its publishing was significant because it indicated that Ocalan and the Turkish state had established or were close to reaching an agreement on the framework for negotiations (Aslan, 2007).

The HDP deputies took the document to Kandil to be ratified. The administration quickly made it clear that it needed the PKK to decide to disarm before the state and the PKK could begin a dialogue. In response, the PKK stated unequivocally that the ultimate decision on disarmament would be made only once the parties obtained agreement on the resolution's terms, and that disarmament would be completed only after the legal and constitutional changes required by this agreement were implemented. While the problem appeared intractable, a solution was found, and Ocalan's demand for disarmament and article draught for negotiations were disclosed to the public on February 28, 2015, in a meeting attended by officials of the administration and the HDP. While the members of the government were careful not to give the idea that they endorsed Ocalan's blueprint for the negotiations, the meeting's format was significant since it signaled that there were two formal sides to the process and that there was a basis for negotiations (Eralp, 2018).

Following that, the PKK stated once again that they would adopt disarmament if the government took the steps outlined in Ocalan's ten-article proposal. While the government expected Ocalan to announce planned disarmament in his 2015 Newroz statement, he did not go further than what he said on February 28th. He stuck to the PKK's stand and maintained his ten-article plan for negotiations, advocating for disarmament but not committing to a timetable. It became clear that the PKK would not agree to disarm unless the negotiations were officially launched and progressed, all while monitored by a "third eye." The government seems eager to overcome this stumbling block, bringing up the long-debated third eye in the talks to ensure a disarmament decision. At the end of March 2015, this was the situation. In other words, the process was progressing gradually, notwithstanding some conflicts (Yeğen, 2015).

6.3   Syrian Kurds and War on Terror (ISIS)

The terrorist organization has expanded into a more widespread phenomenon after the declaration of the Islamic State's (IS) Caliphate (Khilafa) in late June 2014 and the beginning of coalition airstrikes led by the US against IS targets in northern Iraq and Syria in August and September of the same year. A growing number of jihadist fighters responded to IS commander Abu Bakr al-demanding Baghdadi's worldwide loyalty to his self-declared authority by pledging their allegiance (bay'a) to IS in the next weeks and months. By early August 2015, IS, along with its already established force in Syria and Iraq, had welcomed groups operating in Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Nigeria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan-Afghanistan (Af-Pak), and Russia's North Caucasus into its fold.

IS's "Leader of the Faithful" (amir al-mu'minin) Baghdadi, also known as Caliph Ibrahim. Even while some of the recently joined IS affiliates, referred to as "provinces" (wilayat) inside the Caliphate, are operationally smaller than others, they have all launched assaults since joining the group (Knights & Mello, 2015).

IS's clear and present threat warrants, if not necessitates, a reaction from foreign nations and regional administrations that face IS head-on in combat. However, the degree to which each foreign element and each of the thirty-six provinces in Iraq and Syria have established and solidified strong command and control (C2) ties with the IS central leadership remains unclear. Several tactical successes over IS have been scored in areas of Iraq and northeastern Syria after nine months of coalition operations, but it does not seem like they represent a strategic advancement in undermining and eliminating IS as an entity. In actuality, a number of the widely recognized methods might eventually be detrimental. The international community's top strategic goal should continue to be fighting IS in its strongholds of Syria and Iraq, given the extent of IS activities in these regions and the questionable nature of its command and control (C2) connections with other nations. However, the current strategy is neither large nor well-designed enough to attain this goal or translate tactical victories into long-term strategic progress (Lister, 2015).

In Syria, IS has been targeted from the air by a smaller coalition of countries, with the US-led operation focuses on striking publicly available targets while largely ignoring larger military dynamics on the ground. The coordination of strikes with Kurdish militants against IS in northern Syria, which began most infamously in Kobane (or Ayn alArab) in late 2014 and continued elsewhere in the northeast in early 2015, has proven an exception to this latter view thus far. While Kobane grabbed international attention and forced IS to spend hundreds of fighters, the town had little strategic value to IS, and its near-total destruction and depopulation by March 2015 robbed the Kurds and the US-led coalition of any sense of victory. The Kurdish militia known as Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (YPG) has demonstrated consistency in its effectiveness, as seen by the reoccupation of up to 200 villages and towns in northeastern Syria by its forces in May 2015, frequently with the assistance of coalition airstrikes. Additionally, on June 22 it was reported that Kurds possessed the military capacity to threaten IS' de facto capital of Raqqa, so long as coalition air assistance persisted. In mid-June, it also conquered Tel Abyad, a border town of great strategic importance to IS, and the adjoining 93rd Brigade base. Al-Kadhimi

(2015) notes that it is unclear how committed the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) would be to extending military operations and providing vital resources outside of core Kurdish area.

Despite some claims that the city of Raqqa remains a YPG target, tensions between the Kurdish militia group and the Syrian government are rising. The YPG was accused of ethnic cleansing by the broader Sunni Arab opposition in mid-June. When pushing deeper into Syria's interior, their role becomes more complicated. Furthermore, Turkey's recent attacks against Syria are a source of concern. The YPG's role in northern Aleppo is threatened by IS's restart of combat with the PKK inside the anti-Islamic State coalition's activities. In spite of Turkey's occasional attempts to draw small divisions between the PKK and the YPG, the Syrian branch is organically integrated into the PKK's larger organizational structure. If Turkey-PKK confrontations grow further, northern Syria's dynamics may drastically change. Furthermore, there is a chance that new fronts in the conflict could neutralize the possibility of Kurdish advancement against IS entirely. Reports indicate that the Assad regime has started to use the mostly Kurdish northeastern Hasakah governorate as a new base for Iranian military personnel and avowedly pro-regime Baathist Sunni militias. In portions of Iraq, progress has been achieved against the group since the start of coalition anti-IS operations (Lister, 2015).

Although the group's operational momentum in Syria has slowed, IS remains a formidable terrorist force capable of inflicting significant death and destruction and taking targets. Ramadi, for example, is a prime example of this. While Kurdish forces have also made gains on the other side of the border, IS is significantly more comfortable elsewhere in Syria than in northeastern Syria, notwithstanding the loss of Tel Aviv. Abyad does not appear to be in any immediate danger. Along with its global expansion and its professed leadership over 36 "provinces" in 10 countries, IS also went through operational changes in an effort to sustain its internal momentum on the battlefield. Control and freedom of movement across a desolate desert has proven crucial as strategic depth and a launching ground for varying levels of military and guerrilla activity. The group's primary source of income, tax and extortion, was estimated to be worth $600 million in Iraq alone in 2014. Control over population centers is undoubtedly important for this purpose. IS has also begun fortifying its control of major urban centers, such as Raqqa, Mosul, and now Ramadi, by erecting trenches and constructed walls, demolishing bridges, and deploying a massive number of booby traps and improvised

explosive devices (IEDs) both inside towns and cities, as well as on major transportation routes leading to them (Gulmohamad, 2020).

IS, for example, planted over 100 IEDs on an 8-kilometer length of the road heading to Tikrit. In contrast, the Kurdish Peshmerga defused over 6,000 IEDs on roads leading to IS-controlled areas in northern Iraq between August 2014 and March 2015. IS' adversaries are slowed, their resources are depleted, and openings for IS militants to undertake diversionary attacks elsewhere are created by such defensive methods as a flea and a canine. The guerilla fights the flea war, and his military foe suffers from the dog's flaws: there is too much to defend; the opponent is too little, widespread, and agile to deal with (Burns, 2019).

IS is a ruthless foe that offers a serious threat that the existing coalition policy fails to address. 'Degrade and defeat,' to put it another way. To better combat, ISIS and the greater terrorist danger posed by the group, three major issues in Iraq and Syria must be addressed and acknowledged: The driving force(s) of IS, tactical advantage vs. Syria's relevance and the strategic win. The idea that IS is motivated by a particularly radical apocalyptic Salafi-jihadi ideology appears to have gained traction. A detailed examination of the group's public speech and propaganda materials confirms this conclusion. IS's ideological goal is to topple the existing world system, which it considers corrupt and inherently un-Islamic; convert all people to Islam; and rule all Islamic areas, eventually the entire world, according to its hardline interpretation of Islam. The establishment of an Islamic State (first in Iraq in 2006, then in Syria in 2013) and its Caliphate (in June 2014) is considered the cornerstone of this transnational and revolutionary Islamic governance (Moosavi et al., 2020).

IS academics' fatwas and other judicial works on the treatment of Christians and Jews, as well as other ethnic minorities and sects, share an extremist worldview? The self-justification of Yazidi enslavement in Iraq and the abduction of their women as concubines is just one illustration of IS' Salafi-jihadi ideology at work. While this fanaticism feeds IS' worldwide propaganda, fuels recruiting, and projects the kind of ominous picture that can sometimes undermine its opponents' will on the battlefield, IS is also invested in another ideological driving force. IS has continuously strived to depict itself as a movement dedicated to defending the rights of underprivileged people on a more local and less internationally recognized level. IS promotes itself as an army and an

alternative "state" in both Syria and Iraq, ostensibly to protect against and replace repressive or failed governmental regimes viewed as oppressive to Sunni Muslims. This socio-politically focused image has been most influential in securing IS, the kind of roots into sectors of society that provide the potential for long-term existence in both nations (Barnard & Schmitt, 2015).

While this social engine, which is more comparable to "Sunni nationalism," has allowed IS to present itself as a viable option, it has repeatedly accompanied this "carrot" with a "stick" in the form of overpowering societal control through absolutist forms of law and order and behavioral rules. In times of chaos and instability, something IS actively seeks to cause and sustain such a "carrot and stick" approach can potentially prove a highly effective method of territorial and population control, so long as the "carrot" is at least equal to, if not superior to what else could be alternatively offered. By supplementing lost momentum in Syria and Iraq with the perception of growth more internationally through the acquisition of new affiliates, IS further enforces a sense of permanence within its controlled communities. Academics and practitioners seeking to comprehend IS' radical ideology and build successful counter-narratives are thus right and justified in isolation. A powerful counter-narrative, on the other hand, necessitates a delivery method that is sufficiently convincing to persuade those within IS and anyone who may be susceptible to its message. This is a monumental task that no Western or Middle Eastern nation appears to have yet accomplished (Khatib, 2015).

As a result, the most effective materially-focused approach against a group like IS today is to address the socio-economic and political failings and divisions visible within the nations where IS operates, particularly Syria and Iraq. In terms of practicality, this would function as a highly effective counter narrative. Iraq's administration in Baghdad needs to speed up and broaden its efforts to reclaim the nationalist image of a strong, united, multiethnic, and multi-confessional community. In this regard, the international community must exert pressure on divisive elements within parliament and the broader political system to bolster the voices of credible Sunnis, and to ensure that continued financial and military assistance to the Iraqi government is conditional on progress in this area. Given the military's continued primacy in the fight against ISIS in Iraq, the role of Sunnis must be greatly extended. Plans to form, train, arm and support a Sunni National Guard force and re-established local police forces drawn mainly from

Sunni tribes in Anbar must be followed through and be given preeminent roles on the frontline in both capturing territory and then holding it (Almukhtar, 2015).

In Syria, it must be acknowledged that the Assad regime's survival remains one of IS' most effective recruitment tools. The Syrian security apparatus has been openly duplicitous in facilitating IS' growth and expansion to harm and divide the opposition insurgency directly and indirectly. Despite many international diplomatic declarations declaring the Assad regime's legitimacy to be revoked, the US and its coalition allies have continually failed to confront its continued existence. So far, this has just given jihadists like IS more time and space to operate unchecked. Without resolving these countries' fundamental political challenges, societal divisions, instability, and power vacuums will continue to exist for violent extremists to exploit (Giglio, 2015).

Only by understanding IS's use of societal cleavages to develop roots and expand will the international community have a hope of genuinely confronting the terrorist group and the IS phenomenon's long-term viability. Iraq has been given priority status for the use of airstrikes, the provision of support to and coordination with armed actors on the ground, and other activities since the anti-IS coalition operations began in August 2014. Given the more favorable diplomatic circumstances and the idea that the central administration in Baghdad and the Kurdish authority in the north are bodies potentially worthy of partnership, coalition members' partiality to act in Iraq is fully justified. Furthermore, it is undeniably true that the great majority of IS' history has taken place on Iraqi soil. However, combating IS should not be solely focused on Iraq. IS has invested substantially in capturing strategically valuable terrain in areas of Syria since its debut as an active terrorist force in May 2013, including establishing its capital in the city of Raqqa. It is no coincidence that the onslaught on Mosul in early June 2014 featured fighters from northern Syria and that within 24 hours of Mosul's takeover, enormous amounts of ammunition and money were smuggled across the border into Syria (McCants, 2014).

The intensity of the Syrian conflict, the growth of armed factions on all sides, the massive influx of weaponry, the contentious engagement of various regional and international nations, and the savagery of the combat itself make it ripe for intractability. All of the country's jihadist organizations for this reason, a number of groups, including ISIS, have made investments in Syria. The longer the conflict lasts, the worse it gets. The

more unmanageable it becomes, the more jihadists will be forced to operate in a hostile atmosphere. This ensures their long-term viability. As a result, the fight against ISIS in Syria has been pushed to the back burner. In fact, the international community is giving the group more time to establish its footprint. Furthermore, IS' territorial control along the Euphrates River from Raqqa, through Deir ez Zour, and across the border into Iraq's Anbar province end route to Baghdad offers the group a key C2 and supply link between fronts. The fall of Ramadi to IS on May 17, 2015, demonstrated the group's potential in Iraq's Anbar province, and as of early June 2015, IS was in an even stronger position in Syria's eastern Deir ez Zour governorate, where regime forces controlled only half of the provincial capital and a southern airbase. On February 11, 2015, President Obama boldly declared, "Our coalition is on the offensive, ISIL is on the defensive, and ISIL is going to lose (Prothero, 2015)."

General Lloyd Austin III, the commander of US Central Command, told the US Congress two weeks later that coalition operations had killed an estimated 8,500 IS members since August 2014, and that number had risen to an estimated 15,000 by late July. These figures are impressive when one considers that the CIA estimated IS's workforce to be no more than 31,500 in September 2014. Conversely, these figures could be regarded as realistic (Chauhan, n.d.).

When local recruits and those placed on standby or in civil guard-type jobs within IS territory are added together, the group might reach 70,000 members. Iraqi analyst Hisham al-Hashimi claimed in August 2014 that IS has as many as 100,000 members. On the other hand, many of those warriors could be considered just tangentially committed to the fundamental IS cause. If local governments and the international community successfully " roll back" IS from its core power centers and ensure the supply of a credible socio-political alternative to IS, the group might shrink to a core of 20,000-31,500 people, according to the CIA. Numbers notwithstanding, U.S. Deputy Special Presidential Envoy to the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL Brett McGurk was absolutely right in April 2015 when he clearly stated that IS "remains an adaptive and formidable foe, so this is going to be a long-term campaign that is going to take years, not months (Sisk, 2015)".

The prolonged duration of any conflict with the organization should not lessen the importance of making sure the approach is sound from the outset, even as it is imperative that IS' demonstrated capacity to adapt and persevere in the face of a coordinated

offensive be acknowledged. Retaking towns and villages on IS's periphery is a crucial first step, but only if it is done in tandem with a more comprehensive strategic understanding of the problem at hand. Just as the demolition of temporary oil refineries does not always signal that IS finances have suffered an existential blow, slowing down the organization's pace does not always mean that the group is headed toward defeat. While significant progress has been since August 2014, the present counter-IS approach does not appear sufficient for a long-term and peaceful post-phase. A bold honest appraisal of the logic underpinning the coalition's current approach is urgently needed now (Connor, 2017).

Understanding the three points mentioned in this paper is critical, but perhaps more importantly, an acknowledgement that military action alone will not be enough to degrade, much alone defeat, an organization like IS. Indeed, it is safe to say that IS will never be completely defeated from the outside but instead be restricted to a minimal operational capability, where its internal dynamics under such pressure may lead to self-destruction. The key to fighting ISIS is to address Iraq and Syria's socioeconomic and political failings. It is imperative that the security forces and central government of Iraq be strongly pressured to reflect the variety of the nation. In the meanwhile, nationalist Iraqis and the international community should limit Iran's growing influence in forming paramilitary organizations in Iraq, if needed. The international world needs to come to the realization that Bashar al-Assad is not a representative of a cohesive force in Syria. The only way for Syrians to start taking back control of their land from terrorist organizations like IS is if a planned transition is able to be negotiated politically. A program for successfully training and equipping Syrian rebels that looks at achievement in years rather than months is by no means a surefire way to success (Nichols, 2015).

Jabhat al-Nusra, the affiliate of al-Syrian Qaida, has risen to prominence along with pragmatism on the ground, guaranteeing its position as an acknowledged key player in the broader rebel movement against the Assad government. In sharp contrast to the Islamic State's shameless unilateralism, Jabhat al-Nusra has been using this advantage since late 2014 to create a strong stronghold in the northwest province of Adlib, which borders Turkey. Idlib will undoubtedly become a hub of transnationally oriented jihadist militancy for years to come, with the majority of the so-called 'Khorasan Group' and countless other top veteran al-Qaida leaders dispatched from Afghanistan, Yemen, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. IS is arguably the most potent powerful and capable terrorist

organization the world has faced in modern times, but its strategic thinking is comprehensible, and its weaknesses are apparent. Only by grasping the true nature of these fundamental issues can we begin to think about more practically implementing a blueprint to 'degrade and destroy (Mohammed, 2014).

According to Turkish Ministry of Economy figures for 2013, Turkish businesses contributed to the economic consolidation of Turkish soft power in the Middle East by creating trade worth 11 billion dollars per year between Turkey and Iraq. Soft power, as a term connected to power in general, has traditionally been viewed through the lens of a state-centric perspective. Soft power strategies, on the other hand, necessitate the participation of non-state actors such as businesspeople, civil society organizations, artists, and filmmakers; soft power circulates as a result of their contributions. The relationship between Turkey and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) exemplifies the importance of non-state entities. Business has been the cornerstone of Turkish-Kurdish ties, helping to dispel a number of taboos around the possibility of a Kurdish state in the Middle East. In addition to being the driving force behind a new phenomena, businessmen support Turkey's soft power initiatives in the Middle East. The operations of Turkey's Kurdish enterprises align with the country's recent foreign policy goals, earning them a newfound respect from state actors. Now that their activities have been "legitimized," they may advance their political and social goals related to Turkey's Kurdish issue through improved negotiation techniques.

6.4 Emergence of 'Rojava' as a Political Entity and its Impact on the Syrian Crisis

A press release (*REPORT FROM ROJAVA: REVOLUTION AT A CROSSROADS*, 2018) suggested that the revolution in Rojava is one of the most promising democracy and social transformation efforts in the Middle East right now. Location amid the current Syrian War, a conflict involves local, regional, and global powers, making it extremely risky. Those working for meaningful social change must build bonds with others who share their views. Unfortunately, outside of a tiny but expanding circle of activists and scholars, the revolutionary movement in Rojava is poorly understood and little known in Western countries like the United Kingdom.

In Rojava, Northern Syria, a group of Kurds founded a secular, inclusive, bottom-up democratic government in 2012, where all ethnic and religious groups may coexist

together. 2019 marks the expansion of their sphere of influence seven years later, to include the General Council of the Self Administration in Northern and Eastern Syria (NES). Thanks to municipal councils in cities liberated from the Islamic State, it currently controls around one-third of Syria's area (Rojava in Syria – Growing Local Democracy and Defending Ecology in the Midst of Conflict, 2019). Women's human rights are fully realized, grassroots democracy is the norm, and the economy is ecologically friendly and cooperative.

Syria's 2011 uprising and ensuing civil conflict have paved the way for a fundamental shift in Kurdish politics and society in the country. The Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria - the first Kurdish nationalist party formed in 1957 is the ancestor of most Kurdish political groups. These parties have always been illegal and have had difficulty mobilizing supporters. They have mostly restricted their operations to the cultural domain, as they have been undermined by official persecution and internal fissures. In the 1990s, Syria provided a safe haven to the PKK, and the number of Syrian Kurds who joined the organization grew during this time (Gunes and Lowe, 2015).

Former PKK militants created the PYD in Syria in 2003 after the PKK was expelled from Syria in 1998. Even though it denies being a branch of the PKK, this party shares its ideology with the PKK. The PYD is an open member of the Union of Kurdistan Communities (KCK), an umbrella organization for parties supporting the PKK's philosophy and aspirations. The PYD was one of several players in Syrian Kurdish politics at the start of the uprising. However, its subsequent climb to prominence as a result of its exploiting of wartime conditions has been exceptional. Compared to the earlier, fissiparous Kurdish parties, the PYD's superior discipline, organization, and strategic planning are among the particular elements driving this increase. The PYD's ties to the PKK provide it with a unique ideology and access to training, expertise, fighters, and weapons (*Rojava in Syria – Growing Local Democracy and Defending Ecology in the Midst of Conflict*, 2019).

As Syria devolved into warring groups and fiefdoms in the summer of 2012, the PYD pushed strongly to take authority over three pockets of land in the north of the nation with majority Kurdish populations: Jazira, Kobane, and Afrin. By late 2013 and early 2014, the PYD had designated these areas as cantons of local governance, dubbed Rojava

('West') to symbolize Western Kurdistan, and held local assembly elections (Gunes and Lowe, 2015).

The PYD's development has been facilitated by the Syrian regime's implicit approval, which has allowed the PYD to gain power without a struggle, maintain a presence in the key city of Qamishli, and continue to pay government officials' wages in PYD-controlled regions. Although the Assad administration and the PYD are not natural allies, the expediency of war and the fact that they have common opponents (most notably jihadist organizations and Turkey) have led to a temporary truce, but tensions linger. 'The PYD is a part of the Syrian revolution, but it is not prepared to be used as its troops,' said Saleh Muslim, the PYD's co-president (Gunes and Lowe, 2015).

Rojava is the first effort at administration based on Abdullah Ocalan6 and the PKK's political philosophy of democratic confederal or democratic autonomy. It expresses the view that the nation-state and capitalism have failed and that a bottom-up, direct government structure is required (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2010). Its goal is a profound restructuring of the state and democratization of society, including gender equality and separation of church and state. Kurds in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran keep a careful eye on the Rojava administration's growth, which is of special importance to Kurds in Turkey because the initiative is based on Ocalan's principles. Local self-government by Kurds has few antecedents before Rojava, with the exception of the short-lived Mahabad Republic in Iran in 1946 and the KRG in Iraq. As a result, many Kurds in other states rejoice at its existence. The fact that the autonomous territory arose in Syria is noteworthy. Prior to 2011, the notion of autonomy in the area had rarely been addressed, let alone desired by the locals. However, the instability and insecurity of the Syrian war and the PYD's vehement response created an incredible change in the Kurdish movement, shown in a growing desire for self-determination. The Rojava initiative is still in its infancy, but its sheer existence has drastically transformed Kurdish nationalist rhetoric. As a result of being trapped in such a harsh and dangerous environment, Kurds even those who do not support the PYD have no choice but to form their own government to ensure their safety. The larger body of Kurdish political parties has also shifted its views, becoming more supportive of autonomy or federal status for Rojava (ICG, 2014). As a result, public support for the initiative looks robust; in an attack on Rojava, the YPG is expected to defend the autonomous territory zealously, with widespread backing from the Kurdish populace (Gunes and Lowe, 2015).

6.5   Conclusion

After establishing a Kurdish autonomous zone, Syrian Kurds will never tolerate persecution, discrimination, or social exclusion from a future Syrian government. Kurdish autonomy in Iraq is, in fact, a reality. Syria has reignited interest in the Kurdish issue problem. There's no denying that Kurdish nationalists worldwide are keenly watching a possible outcome of this experiment on Kurdish self-rule as a model. However, given its harsh surroundings, Rojava's future remains unclear. The Rojava administration is based on political and ideological grounds that are separated from the society it seeks to govern, with PYD control attracting only a small amount of outside support. The PYD's nationalist goal has little chance of survival unless it makes a concerted effort to boost its appeal among Syria's Kurdish and non-Kurdish communities and engage Syria's opposition's more moderate and pragmatic forces. In practice, this means reducing its reliance on the PKK, ending cooperation with the Assad regime, and refraining from unilateral incursions into the non-Kurdish territory. It will also be difficult to persuade Syrians that the vast majority of Kurds do not support separation. The Kurds can only hope to consolidate their achievements and enjoy greater political liberties in a post-conflict Syria if they normalize relations with their Arab neighbors and seek a more balanced relationship with Turkey. To reach a true agreement with the PYD, Turkey would need to declare a cease-fire and restart a credible peace process with the PKK. If a new political order is established, Syrian opposition parties, both political and military, would have to seek a constructive discussion with the PYD to negotiate a viable solution for addressing Kurdish aspirations.

Chapter Seven: THE DYNAMICS OF US FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS "ROJAVA": (IGNORANCE, COOPERATION, AND DESERTION)

7.0   Introduction

In this chapter, the study tries to explain the nature of relations between Kurds as a non-state actor and the U.S. as a great power during and post-Syrian revolution within the Arab Spring era. Although, this chapter is divided to three main sections, and the first section is regarding the beginning of Syrian revolution and the position of the Kurds within it. Particularly, the reasons why neither U.S. nor the international coalition did not provide any interest or concerns towards the Kurds at that time! This section is also critical to understanding the other thesis's main questions about why the relations between the Kurds and other powerful nations like the U.S. are unstable.

In the second section, following the incidents that happened during the revolution throughout Syria, the Kurds' role as non-state actors, successfully grabbed a wide area from the Northern Syria and challenged the radical terrorist groups which have been growing as a serious threat to the whole region. This is also a crucial moment of building a real relationship between the Kurdish forces and the U.S. as the leader of international coalition against ISIS.

The third and last section will determine how the existence of the great powers like Russians and the west on the Syrian lands are affecting the relations of the Kurds with others. Despite the conflicts between the West and others reflecting the dynamics of the links between actors, several regional actors like Iran and Turkey are having a great impact on the Kurds. Furthermore, this section also points out how oil as a global energy sources plays a critical role in the continuity of conflicts between major powers there, and most of the Oil wells are located within Kurdish-dominated geographic areas, which is also this point making great powers realize the importance of holding Kurdish forces within their agenda.

The future of the Kurds' relations with great powers, in addition, is also examining in this chapter and in each section, the thesis used a large number of data which have been available online, especially from U.S. official bodies like the White House, Congress and other academic sources plus interviewees answers, to predict and analyze the future of

remaining U.S. and other great powers in Syria and how this affects the Kurds question there.

7.1 USA-Rojava Relations: Ignorance Period

To begin with, Starting with World War I, the US and Kurdistan have had diplomatic ties. American President Woodrow Wilson demanded autonomy for the non-Turkish peoples of the Ottoman Empire, including the Armenians and Kurds, in the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920. The concept for Kurdish independence was quickly abandoned and the Kurds were left without their promised country after the Treaty of Lausanne was substituted in 1923 after the Treaty of Sèvres was rejected by the new Turkish nationalist administration (Aziz, 2020).

Regarding US foreign policy, all the interviewees 100% assured that the Middle East is an interesting part of the world, as well as, The Middle East is rich, and its history, culture, and resources are diverse. All of them are interested in this question, which constitutes 100% of the total number of those interviewed; their opinion about it: There are different factors that the US tries to refrain from the Kurdish groups first, because of Turkey. Whoever cooperates with Turkey. Whoever Cool page with Turks. It means they have to face a Turkish means threaded Turkish, conflict. The conflict with Turkey. Actually, being confronted with Turkey so and Turkey is a NATO ally and the long-term USA ally. Some argue that the US is concerned about working with non-state or militia groups,. Therefore, in the beginning, this was not possible.

In this case, Salih Muslim Muhammad, (2021), Former YPG President, thinks relations with America must be founded on shared interests and need a thorough grasp of the Kurdish community and its goals. Meetings and direct talks are the only ways to do this. We think that Kurdish-American ties will evolve and expand due to America's discussions with the Kurdish community, its creation, and genuine ambitions that align with American values.

Accordingly, the relations with America and the international coalition to fight ISIS began with the actions of ISIS in Kobani as well as the Kurdish fighters' response caught the attention of the American forces and the coalition. They realized no ground force could defeat the expansion of ISIS other than the People Protection Units and the Women's Protection Units. The relations began simply and quickly and were limited to exchanging field information and coordination related to ISIS movements and airstrike support.

Subsequently, the relations have been developed gradually, beginning with establishing airport bases in Rojava and after that fighting ISIS.

Consequently, when it came to Syrian Kurds, the US did little except turn a blind eye while the Ba'ath administration denied them the ability to work, own property, get married legally, and attend to elections. Before the Syrian crisis started, everything was very different. From then on, the Kurdish elite had long hoped that American assistance would help them achieve their national rights, but it was unaware that it was only engaged in a proxy war on Trump's behalf. Once again, the US took advantage of the Kurds. Meho et al. (2004) state that observers have discovered a startling fact about the Kurds: they were never taught "to restrain themselves from being pawns of interests for the US." They also stated that this kind of Kurdish curious behavior toward American opportunism found itself once again during the Syrian conflict (Aziz, 2020).

However, the interviwees makes a point that at the beginning of the Syrian Revolution, 2011-2012, there was very little information about Syria in general and the Kurdish dynamic specifically. Therefore, the Kurdish question in Syria was not that important. At the outset of Syria. Secondly, as the situation started to develop. There was no credible representation of the Kurds and no historical opposition parties. There were in Iraq or Iran or movements as they have been in Turkey, so nobody was representing the Kurdish voice in Washington. Even in the region, there were few expect the Kurds from Syria who tried to create a movement similar to the INC that was the coalition of Iraqi opposition?

So it could be concluded that the US failed at the beginning of the Syrian uprising to work with Kurdish groups in Syria because they had no connection with them. It took years for the PKK to Develop a stronger foothold in Syria and then through administration and security and the war against ISIS. After this stage, the Syrian Kurds became a strong player in Syria.

7.2 USA-Rojava Relations: Cooperation Period

The Syrian Kurds faced severe harassment in the first half of 2014 from ISIL, a recently formed jihadist organization that sees the Kurds as rivals for resources and territory, as well as ideological rivals. In contrast to their Iraqi Kurdish neighbors, the Peshmergas, the YPG, the PYD's military wing, looked to be a more effective player on the ground when it came to defending Kurdish towns and villages when it started using

force for the first time (Gunes et al., 2015). The militarization of the Syrian Kurds' resistance is undoubtedly one of the new dynamics that the Syrian war has formed in the region. (Aziz, 2020).

All of the interviweess, who constitute 100% of the total number of those interviewed, they assist that concerned that rising of ISIS has a direct impact because, in the beginning, the US did not want to directly engage with the BYD, the Democratic Union party because of its perceived links to the Kurdistan Workers Party, the PKK. Add to this; Turkey is still a strategic NATO ally. So, there was the battle actually against ISIS that made the BYD, the people's Protection Units, very important for the US because, in the end, it was with the help of the YPG and the Syrian Democratic Forces that they liberated by who is at the hands like they defeated the caliphate in Syria, because of the bigger the SDF. So the foreign policy outlook of the US was changed entirely due to the war against ISIS, because the US needed partners on the ground. They call it like by with and through, they did not want to sacrifice US soldiers in Syria or Iraq. Therefore, they decided to find local partners to fight and support them with our strikes. So definitely had a huge impact on foreign policy.

Dr. Dlawer Aldeen, (2021) is the founding President of the Middle East Research Institute, MERI. On 2021-Sep-20, in his opinion, the US has always had institutional links with state governments, and it only has less formal relations with constituents within a state, minorities, and others. Iraq and Kurdistan are exceptions. It is one of a kind. The US establishes a formal link between the government and the people. Alternatively, minorities or local activities have no links to Kurds until they become a separate entity. Constitutionally, recognized on the ground a force that has developed a system of governance. As a result, the Syrian Kurds were acknowledged as a distinct identity and entity. Previously, there were merely communities inside a state with whom the US might or might not have had contact.

The US has been involved in the Kurdish problem since the conclusion of World War I, when President Woodrow Wilson called for autonomy for the non-Turkish peoples living in the Ottoman Empire in his Fourteen Points. The possibility of a Kurdish state was eliminated by the Turkish Republic's consolidation, which disapproved of the Treaty of Sevres, and the League of Nations' decision to assign Britain's new Iraqi mission vilayet, which included the majority-Kurdish city of Mosul. The US lost interest in

Kurdish goals until the early Cold War, when they were used as a useful tool to topple pro-Soviet governments in Iraq.

The US, along with its allies Israel and Iran, provided significant financial and military support to Kurdish separatists in Iraq throughout the 1950s and 1960s, especially to the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP).

However, one of the interviweess assist the impact not directly on the Kurds of Syria, but on the Kurds of Iraq as well. We are aware of ISIS destruction to Mosul, all populated Iraqi Sunni areas, Deir ez-Zor Raqqa, and Homs.

Dr. Janroj Yilmaz Keles, (2021) is a Senior Research Fellow "researching peace and conflict". On 2021-Apr-12, what are the future dimensions of U.S. foreign policy toward the Kurdish question in Syria? he responded, the Autonomous area, and especially if Russia accepts the Autonomous region, the US will try to assist. Attempt to shape this process, but only if Russia is currently involved. In addition, placing is effective with Erdogan, as evidenced by the debate. If one looks at Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's remarks, one will notice that he says that the US creates 'I believe you inquired about a separatist party backing separatists'. They refer to the Kurds in Syria if they divide the proofs individually. As a result, Russia plays a crucial role in the curse. Yes, there are Kurds in Syria, assert Russia and Syria. We, on the other hand, cannot allow any federation.

As a result, on September 13, 2014, ISIL began its second attack on Kobani.The end of the Kurdish presence in the area for the Jihadists was foretold by this attack. The sudden loss of twelve villages in the first few days of the conflict left the YPG in a precarious situation (Desoli, 2015). One of the primary causes of the shift in the Middle East's political landscape was the advent of ISIL, although the Kurds swiftly gained from the Siege of Kobani, owing to an international alliance. In fact, the US launched its first round of airstrikes against the Jihadists, which paved the way for media attention to focus on the Kobani conflict and the Kurdish cause more broadly.

Furthermore, it showed the world the successful cooperation between the US and the PYD/YPG that 10 persisted despite the disapproval of Turkey. The US support enabled the Kurds to fight ISIL and gain control of most of Syria's border with Turkey. The cooperation between the US, the PYD/YPG, the Peshmergas, and the Free Syrian

Army (FSA) in Kobani showed international support for the Kurdish cause. The victories on the field of battle against ISIL have upgraded the status of the PYD as an official ally of the US and enhanced YPG's legitimacy (Plakoudas, 2017). The international coalition finally perceived the PYD as a respectable ally. After the siege of Kobani, the YPG was easily allowed to capture the city of Tell Abyad, thus uniting the Kobani and Jazeera cantons. Since then, Rojava, or the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (NES) began to take shape and to weigh in the dynamics of the Syrian civil war (Aziz, 2020)

At the beginning it seemed that strategic but following the changing of circumstances, this kind of relations between a non-state actor like Kurds and Great power as U.S. have been unstable. However, based on their answers, the US decided to work with the Kurds groups as necessary, and the partnership happened. On this point, the researcher agrees with the answers, the USA should evolve and it does not give up this cooperation and leave the Kurds, not for the Kurds is sake, but for their own policy, of course, as interviweess assured the relations with America must be based on common interest and depend on a deep understanding of the Kurdish Community and its aspirations. This can only be achieved through meetings and direct dialogues.

However, there was a tactical change rather than a strategic one in a way that the US approach towards Rojava Kurds was on a military level, not on a political level, and it was for a tactical and short period, not a long period because Rojava Kurds have proved this is since they already have 11 thousand martyrs and 20 thousand injured fighters. Thus, this proves that they can stand against ISIS, but it is unfortunate that Kurds have not been able to turn this military agreement into a political one and invest in it.

So it could be concluded that if there was not ISIS emergence, the experience of Syrian Kurds on the International stage never have come out as it is now.

A- Russian position towards Kurds and Rojava (West Kurdistan)

The future looked quite promising for the Syrian Kurds by early 2016: they had driven out ISIL, had US assistance, and established a democratic project in Rojava. Kurdish autonomy was unthinkable prior to the Syrian revolution, but since 2013, local self-governance by Syrian Kurds has become a reality. With the help of a split Kurdish opposition and a weakening state, the PYD was able to seize power in northeastern Syria

(Federici, 2015). Following the takeover of the Kurdish areas, the PYD declared the formation of Rojava, which attracted 1.5 million residents (Desoli, 2015).

Some interviweess said they are against Russian presence in Rojava because Russia has never had a good, close and stable relationship with the Kurds. The history proves that Russia has never been a good friend for the Kurds. We must take a lesson from the Republic of Mahabad's experience; how Russia supported and assisted the Kurds to have a Republic and how it abandoned them effortlessly in later when its interests and advantages threatened.

Thus, the party's discipline, organization, and ability to capitalize on the dynamics of the Syrian crisis account for its ascent to power. Being the only political party with its own militia—the YPG, which has 60,000 fighters—the PYD owes a great deal of its influence and strength to this reality (Thornton, 2015). The PYD and PKK's tight ties have also made it possible to provide weapons, militants with the appropriate training, and other resources. The PYD's achievements have led Syrian Kurds to embrace the political group as a source of job, services, and security (Plakoudas, 2017). Without necessarily approving the PYD's authoritarian methods, many Kurds see this party as the only one capable of keeping Kurdish areas out of Islamist forces. The numerous threats have pushed many Syrian Kurds to join or support the YPG as their only protection, which is why the YPG may be stronger than the PYD. However, many Syrians see the PYD's success as part of Assad's plan to destabilize the Syrian opposition and not as a true Kurdish political project. Indeed, the Syrian regime has not given up its full power in north-eastern Syria, it has continued to pay the incomes of its public employees and many state structures continue to have their budgets from the government, weakening the Kurdish authorities' legitimacy. In fact, Rojava is far from consolidated as a complete political entity (Kaya and Whiting, 2017).

Based on 50% of who were interviewed about this case, we concluded Russia's stance toward mastic. It does not exceed the use of Kurds as a card waving against Turkey or the Syrian Regime according to its situation in order to gain concessions from them. So far, we have not noticed any serious change in Russia's policy towards the Kurds.

B- The internal factors that have helped change U.S. foreign policy approach toward the Kurds in Syria, especially the U.S. presidential role.

American-Kurdish relations stretch back to the First World War. President Wilson of the United States demanded autonomy for the non-Turkish populations of the Ottoman Empire, such as the Armenians and Kurds, in the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920. The Treaty of Lausanne replaced the Sèvres Treaty in 1923 when it was rejected by the new Turkish nationalist leadership. The proposal for Kurdish independence was quickly abandoned, depriving the Kurds of their promised homeland (Aziz, 2020).

Regarding the internal factors, from %40 interviewee viewpoints were that the president does not only direct US foreign policy, they see that their security council have much to say in many important and essential cases and files. In rhetoric, each elected US president practice their own visions and works on specific targets, but this is not changing anything in the US long-term policy in the region. They were depending on this rather believes by us; we always tried to adapt to US main foreign policies rather than the coming presidents. They assured us we believe that the US Administration should learn from some big mistakes done by them. For instance, some minor errors in the agreement between Saddam Regime and Coalition forces in 1991 after Gulf War, lead to big suppression by the Iraqi forces to topple down Shia and Kurds uprisings in the North and South of Iraq.

Also, some of the interviewees argued that Kurds should acknowledge that the US internal factors are near zero in terms of impacting US foreign policy towards the Kurds in Syria. The war against terror, indeed, is any US administration's priority in their foreign policy strategy and this priority impacts the way they deal with any case.

However, that is a tactical approach, is not strategic, and it is not personal, but tactically it suited the US to be more supportive of the Kurds initially when there was the battle of Kobani created a big emotional focus and so this group of revolutionaries, women fighters fighting against ISIS and it created this perception. That their world democracy that the free world has friends in Syria so. I think tactically it has been very useful for the US to work on the Kurds, but I do not see this becoming something strategic or long time.

So, throughout the 20th century, the US has alternated between supporting and ignoring the Kurds. For years, the US administration has considered the Kurdish people a tool to guarantee their national interests in the Middle East; the Kurds have been exploited several times by the US to destabilize regional regimes. For example, America's attention towards the Kurds increased during the Cold War, when Kurdish ambitions were useful for keeping Communist governments in Iraq out of power. That is why, during the fifties and sixties, the US sent important military and financial support to Iraqi Kurdish rebels and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) of Mustafa Barzani. This backing stopped in 1975 when Iraq and Iran signed the Algiers Accord, which settled a territorial dispute in Tehran's favor in exchange for an end to Iran's support for Kurdish rebels in Iraq. Then, the Ford administration avoided support for an independent Kurdistan (Küçükkeleş and Mankoff, 2014).That is why in 1988, during the Iran-Iraq war, when Saddam Hussein decided to attack chemically the city of Halabja, killing between 3200 and 5000 Kurds, the US decided to stand aside. However, three years later, the US encouraged once again a Kurdish revolt to help Saddam Hussein fall at the end of the Gulf war, which failed to intervene because Saddam Hussein's forces crushed the uprising. Meanwhile in Turkey, the US stayed out of the clashes between Ankara and the Kurds because of its strategic alliance. One more time, the US remained silent when Turkey cracked down on Kurdish groups during the PKK's uprising. Later, the Clinton administration even provided intelligence and diplomatic support to capture PKK's leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999. In 2003, Washington became, suddenly, more supportive of the Kurdish objectives as tensions with Turkey mounted over the 2003 American invasion in Iraq. Bush's administration turned to Iraqi Kurds as partners against Saddam Hussein's regime. That is how Iraqi Kurds were allowed to seize control of much of Northern Iraq. Nevertheless, at the same time, Washington pursued to back Turkey's campaign against the PKK (Küçükkeleş and Mankoff, 2014). Concerning Syrian Kurds, the Ba'ath government deprived them of the rights to be employed, own property, enter into a legal marriage, or participate in elections, and the US simply closed its eyes. Things were completely different when the Syrian conflict began. Since then, the Kurdish elite had been hoping to attain their national rights for a long time through American support but did not realize that it was only fighting a proxy war on behalf of the US. Their ignorance encouraged the US to exploit the Kurds repeatedly. However, the surprising truth is that the Kurds never learned "to restrain themselves from being pawns of interests for the US"

(Meho and Nehme, 2004). This curious Kurdish behavior toward American opportunism found itself once again during the Syrian conflict.

So, one of our samples has the American Turkish relation in close testimony. He assured the personal aspect we mentioned, the personal aspect, or the personal perception of Donald Trump, was a unique phenomenon in US presidential history.

Accordingly, there might have been one or two other presidents like in the old days, but nothing in recent history. Therefore, his perceptions played a significant role in US foreign policy. Some of it was catastrophic. Some of it was okay. The question of involvement in Syria had started under Obama. Therefore, Donald Trump continued to the policy, the interesting thing about US policies is that the establishment, that is, the Pentagon and the State Department, was for involvement in Syria. However, Donald Trump wanted to get out.

Thus, the influence of great power competition in Syria, particularly between Russia and the US. The USA does not officially support the creation of a Kurdish state. However, in practice, US policy is unpredictable and indistinct. Washington was first reluctant to engage the Syrian Kurds, especially the PYD/YPG forces, because of its last involvement in Iraq, where the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) was perceived as a threat to Iraq's unity. US officials even warned the PYD against attempts to declare autonomy in northern Syria. Furthermore, the PYD was implicated in violence against opposition groups in northern Syria, including Kurdish anti-Assad protesters in Amuda in July 2013 that Washington had openly condemned. Nevertheless, the US regarded the PYD and its army as valuable partners in helping rout ISIL from Syria, the original purpose of the US military deployment (Hubbard, 2018). Since 2014, the YPG was receiving arms and military advice from the US (Küçükkeleş and Mankoff, 2014). Washington's hesitancy to engage on the Kurdish issue was mainly due to Obama administration's aim of ending the Syrian conflict. The outbreak of the civil war forced the US to take a clearer position on Syrian Kurdish aspirations. Therefore, the US has never expressed a foreign strategy towards the Kurds since they live across four countries (Gunter, 2015).

- In this regard, most interviewees think that Turkey is a big country. It has an important geographical and geopolitical situation here and the US and Turkey are NATO members. According to Article five of the NATO agreement, they are

obliged to protect each other's interests. The US and Turkey have bigger interests than the US and the Kurds, or Turkey. But of course, there are differences in points of view between Turkey and the US.

However, based on their answers, I agree with the opinion that Kurds in Syria should not put themselves in a situation where the US has to choose between Kurdish and Turkey. No matter what, they will choose Turkey. They will favour Turkey. Turkey is an important state, a partner, and a member of NATO. However, the difference here is that Turkish leadership has told us and has told the Kurdish the Kurds in Syria as well. Despite their differences, Turkey's military is a crucial factor to be contained and afforded by the US administration. And we should also recall the fact that during the Cold War, Turkey was an essential player in blocking soviet blocks there.

Thus, the first American approach was to fortify the Kurdish National Council while persuading the PYD to become a part of the resistance against Assad. Notwithstanding these initiatives, the PYD maintained the loyalty of most armed Kurdish groups and maintained a significant amount of authority over Rojava (Küçükkeleş and Mankoff, 2014). The PYD was quickly viewed by the US as a counterweight to the Islamist 14 organizations, such as Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIL. Thus, the US found itself in a precarious situation very quickly: maintaining Turkey's status as a vital ally against Russia and Iran while working with the PYD/YPG, which is essential for Syria's political transition. Thus, the US's primary concern was devising a strategy to maintain Turkey's alliance with the Kurds while retaining their military backing. The Syrian regime and its Iranian partner would have free rein in the north of Syria if the US were to lose the YPG and be forced to evacuate. The US had to prevent an ethnic conflict in northern Syria, even if the Kurds turned out to be the most successful partners in the battle against ISIL, having driven the group out of more than 99% of the land it had taken over. Moreover, it was unrealistic to believe that the PYD/YPG could control Arab districts, as the Arabs opposed the reversal of power for the advantage of the Kurds (Nordland, 2018). However, American officers said Kurdish forces were needed to guarantee that ISIL was gone for good. They warned that if the US stopped cooperating with the Kurds, ISIL would regroup and regain parts of Syria.

Based on the answers of the interviweess, we conclude from 35% of their answers: there are two different treatments between Biden and Trump administrations. It was always clear that the Trump administration was clearly helping Erdogan and the relationship between Erdogan and Trump has always been reflected in the political approach towards Turkey. In contrast, Biden is not ready to aid Erdogan and is against all these cross-border operations. Even he said in several interviews during the election campaign that he will limit Erdogan's actions, but until now, none of these promises has been put into practice.

Add to this, in recent years, specifically during the Erdogan era, Turkish policy throughout the region has been shifted dramatically. So, Turkey does not tolerate anything related to Kurds and does this international Member of international Community also base this on this concern? And develop the attitude towards particular groups who are not state and non-state groups.

In addition, the American presence in Syria was also justified in order to stem Iranian expansionism in the region and the achievement of the "Iranian corridor" from Teheran to Beirut that could threaten Israel (Balanche , 2018). The US needed Turkey as an ally and other Syrian actors in the region in an anti-Iranian struggle. The US knew they could not count on Arab Sunni tribes as they kept local interests. Therefore, the only remaining ally was the PYD. This did not mean that the Kurds were necessarily more reliable than the Arab tribes of the Euphrates valley, but they are less likely to change their cooperation if their rivals were outbidding. Nevertheless, US officials were pursuing more motivating goals. As long as US forces remained on the ground in Syria, the Trump administration wanted to use them to preserve a foothold in the country. Rather than trying to help the Syrian Kurds achieve their dream of an autonomous region within Syria, Trump and his administration were trying to exploit the revolution in Rojava to attain regime change in Syria. US special envoy James Jeffrey has described the US-Kurdish relationship as "tactical and temporary".

However, the USA has not been keen on turkey's policy in the last decades but turkey still remains a vital country for the US. So the US thinks very carefully about any political engagement to the Kurds and always have turkey in mind so their relationship always affects how you're nice he behaves in Iraq and Syria and how they engage the Kurds. Therefore, whenever the US decided to do anything with the Kurds, especially in Syria, they had to think of the impact that may have on Turkey and Turkey as a state and lobby

very hard behind the scenes to Convince the US to limit its support to the Kurds. So the answer is yes, of course, Turkey will always have Turkish American relationships and always have a big influence on how that relationship evolves and reflects on events on the ground as well.

- Therefore, it could be argued a great power competition, particularly between Russia and the US in Syria. The leader or the Middle East have un impacted over the changing of the US foreign policy strategy to where the Syrian-Kurdish problem is complicated issues in regarding the Russian factor, based on most answers from interviews, the Syria state is the very focal point to the Russians and this state geopolitically and even in military terms is a very strategic position for Russia's government. Therefore, by acknowledging this fact, we could also state that the existing of US forces in Syria is more technical rather than a long foreign policy strategy. That is why there is a significantly higher possibility of seeing the withdrawing of US forces there. And we also see that for the US administrations' foreign policy the Iraq is much important and within the influence area for their future agenda throughout the region.

At the same time, the interviewees assured the Kurds it is better to understand Dempasq's regime and the Russians if they want to see a result for their efforts; these facts also have been acknowledged by the Kurdish authorities there in Rojava.

However, based on their answers, the rivalry between Russia and America has not reached Syria because their competition is in another zone of the world: the big strategic Macrozones. But if the relations between America and Russia get tensed and spread out, it will certainly affect the Syria crisis in the future. However, up to this moment we both are talking, Syria is not an important area for America, America can easily interfere in Syria and has not been an area of influence and the zone of pressure, work and movement for America during history compared to other countries. For example, the Gulf countries and Syria have always been the area of influence for Russia. Therefore America does not want to be rival with Russia on Syria, except in one case, America may do it; if the challenges between America and Russia become extremely intensive in other rivalry zones, this means that America is ready to leave Syria in favour of Russia at the lowest price with some conditions and priorities.

In this point, Dr. Nawzad Abdullah Shukri, (2021) a Lecture at Salaheddin University-Erbil said during an interview with author that a slew of foreign and regional players have been involved in the Syrian conflict. So, in the name of combatting terrorism, the Americans seek assurances that a new Syria would not become a source of extreme groups and a path linking radical groups in Iraq to Syria and posing a threat to Israel. The US administrations are likewise concerned about Syria's stability, believing that a chaotic situation would severely affect US interests and allies. Based on these data, we may see the US military stay longer, but I still believe they will opt to leave from there in the end. However, Dr. Abdulkarim Omer, (2021) Co-Chair of Foreign Relations Department in North and East of Syria. On 2021-Aug-23, he believes that US policies and tactics do not change as a result of internal disagreements in general but rather as a result of America's objectives and interests, but the strategy and method may shift from one administration to the next and from one president to the next. The difference between President Trump and Vice President Biden is that while Biden is a capable diplomat with political experience, knows the region and the Kurds well, and believes in American values, America's interests drive their policies, as evidenced by their recent withdrawal from Afghanistan.

So, the Kurdish issue is considered as the most important issues in the Middle East and this is due to the distribution of the Kurdistan Map in four powerful countries that have relations with great power. Therefore, the Kurdish issue is directly affected by the expansion of ambitions of the great power countries and their attempts to increase their influence with regional countries, even if it is at the expense of other nation's issue.

In addition, the Russian government and Putin supported the asset government from folly in cooperation with Iraq. Moreover, this was against Western interests. They wanted a change in Syria as well. However, the Russian help Iranian help military, economic, diplomatic and political help collided with the Western interests and US interests. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, both Russia and the US want to come to terms with a joint agreement for the future of Syria within the Geneva framework under UN.

Thus, the PYD was protected from the Turkish danger by its connection with the US. Despite Turkey's concerns about the Kurdish issue, the Kurds were able to expand their power in Rojava since they were an ally of the United States. To be sure, Turkey

was quite hesitant to see an uninterrupted Kurdish belt running along its border. Turkey is concerned that the PKK intends to establish a second operational base in Syria, which is its neighbor. As a result, the PKK would be able to exert more influence over regional affairs and pressure on Turkey to grant formal recognition to the Kurdish minority. The PYD's close connection to the PKK and the YPG's military prowess were perceived as a direct danger to Turkish national security. It was made quite evident by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that Ankara believed that two terrorist groups were involved in the fighting in Kobani. The US's 2016 choice to support Turkey when Syrian Kurds tried to cross the Euphrates served as a reminder that the international community is more likely to prioritize Turkey's interests above the aspirations of the Kurds, even if the US 15 chose to ignore Turkey's viewpoint about the US-YPG relationship (Aziz, 2020).

From guessing their answers, it has a direct and indirect effect. Syria is considered a very strategic place for the Russians do not have a strategic relationship with any country in the Middle East except for Syria.They have a big interest in supporting the regime. They wanted to survive intact and US did not like the fact that Iran was overwhelming this region.Iran has big influence in Syriaands Iraq in Lebano,n and they do not like that Russia is the main beneficiary of any Prices there. They consider the Russians relationship necessarily in the American interest. So, whatever the US decides to do in Syria. For example, keeping the troops in the Kurdish region supporting Turkey or doing anything they always have Russian policies in mind, so great power competition between US and Russia greatly influences the behaviour . That does not mean US is prepared to confront Russia for the Kurds no US always has Isis in mind and it keeps the troops there for both Isis and a wind agenda in the middle east, but the American presence in Syria is very symbolic very small but Russian presence in Syria is more significant it has a base it has presents and it is at vision of its relation to Syria is a long term strategy.

So, based on their answers, the Kurdish issue in Syria, especially within Biden's administration, is not the priority, instead, the priority is the attention to the conflict with powerful countries. Thus, the US is not committed to prioritising these small issues. They try to restrict Russia and China's involvement. The main focus for the US is to stand against China and Russia's involvement. They focus less on this region particularly on Kurds. Also, Kurds have always been part of a more significant issue and are dealt with within a larger one. So, Kurds have been a factor and used as a card of pressure and never dealt with as an independent case.

C- **Regional factors that have influenced the change in the US policy approach**
Regarding factors, 85% of the interviweess attribute the reason to the rise of ISIS. ISIS is basically sort of gone, but still there, that you see other problems that were there in the past got more of like the problems between Iran and the US and other issues. So, ISIS plays a big role. But other factors also play a role, such as Turkey as a NATO state, Russia in the region, and Iran. Add to this, ISIS threat to Saudi , Qatar to Jordan and the US wanted to eliminate ISIS and the Kurds could play a crucial role in this ambition.

Ibrahim Khalil Biro, (2021), Former Head of ENKS Responsible of the foreign relationship-ENKS, was asked what the regional factors are such as Iran, Turkey and Israel or Arab and how they have affected the US Policy change towards the Kurds? And according to him, Iran is America's adversary, but it has no bearing on US policies toward the Kurds. On the other hand, the enforced restrictions and demands of Turkey have a terrible and awful influence on US policy toward the Kurds. The nation of Turkey opposes the Kurds' desire to create their own state. Turkey is not concerned about PKK's presence in Syria; in fact, PKK has been there from the start. Over 600 kilometers of Turkey's 930-kilometer border with Syria are shared with the Kurds. The US, Russia, and the EU do not purposely reject Turkey, notwithstanding Turkey's animosity for the Kurds.

However, in this point, Falah Mustafa Bakir, (2021), Former president of the department of the foreign policy of the KRG, and Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to Nechirvan Barzani, President of Kurdistan Region of Iraq, has different views on this regard anwho stated that there is a Kurdish problem here or there? In the US, whether a Republican or Democratic government is in power, they take two distinct tactics. One believes in the military mind, whereas the other believes in communication, peaceful niceties, and soft power. As a result, one believes in military power, hard power, and hard effort hard power, while the other believes in soft power. So now, we have a democratic administration that values communication, tries to address climate change, and promotes diplomacy, and we heard it loud and clear, when Vice President Joe Biden was elected.

However, some visions of the interviweess around there is a constant interaction between both systems. From this interaction, actions and reactions occur, for example, the emergence of ISIS as a radical power because it is not only a national power but a regional one power this is first. Second is the emergence of Arab opposition movements as it is called Arab Spring, third is the dominant return of Turkey to the Middle East as a national and regional power. Fourth is the transformation of the Middle East to militia

groups by Republic of Iran, as now the talk is not on a national country in the Middle East but on the country of militias such as Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen. Transforming the Middle East to Militia groups by Iran, Iran's nuclear program, Yemen war and the rise of Saudi Arabia to the stage as an Arab nationalism representative, as well as a strong Arab power that takes away the power from Egypt, Iraq and other countries. All these factors together have created a situation in which the U.S. could not ignore the Kurds and not seriously consider them in the Middle East. Because they are aware of the reality that the Middle East has great crises, but the two main structural crises are Palestine and Kurds. However, the regional foreign policy in the regional equation playing big roles.If you look at the Syrian stage, there are many external factors. These external factor has impacted the US foreign policy, for example, the Turkish factor, the Iranian factor, the Sunni Arab factors, the Israeli factors, the Russian factors, and also the elements from within Syria, the Assad regime, the Alawi's, and also the Syrian opposition divided, the Turkish Qatari element, impact on the part of the opposition, so these Jordanians and Emirati impact on the part of the opposition, these are all regional impacts on the situation.

We can conclude from their answers that the relationship between Russia and China or the USA will also change. A restructure reorganized according to the design of these countries. The regional countries, and not because it will not always be in favour of the curves. Also, the Kurds and Kurdistan that very difficult neighbours surround it seems that the Kurds have a very complex relationship with all the dominant forces around us. They have to be sensitive to anything that the US does with the Kurds. Of the original dynamics in the relationship with Turkey, Iran, Israel and Saudi Arabia. So, when they help the Kurds take, sometimes that goes against the Turkish agenda, and sometimes that goes against the Iranian agenda; therefore, this dynamic Or the regional power play will influence US Kurdish relationship all the.

15% did not answer this question, also 15% of the interviweess see that America hopes that all the Kurds to agree, but it also realizes who is wrong and who is correct as well. In the end, uniting all the Kurds and eliminating differences is in the interest of the Kurds more than it is in the interest of America, and the Kurds must act from this point of view. Furthermore, 15% of them see there is no regional factor. They think the number one issue for the US and Kurds of Syria right now is combating terrorism. So, if this threat once I go away. Accordingly, we will likely see much less support from the US to the Kurds in Syria.

We can conclude that more than 60% of interviewees answered that a large number of international and regional actors were playing in the Syrian scene. The most notable ones are Israeli and Iranian engagements there! So for the Americans, after the cause of fighting terrorism, they want to be guaranteed that a new Syria is not become a source of radical groups plus a route to link radical groups from Iraq to Syria and threaten Israel. The US administrations are also very sensitive about Syria's stability and see that a chaotic one would harm US interests and friends painfully. We may see that the US forces stay longer, but I still think they will decide to withdraw from there in the end.

A foreign policy where there could be in serious national minority without a state in a long term strategy policy or a technical policy that has a direct connection to the war on terror.

- Regarding foreign policy, 100% of interviewees agree that USA has neither a permanent friend nor a permanent enemy. It is a permanent interest . So,more than 50% interviewees see the relation between USA as tactical more than strategic.They argue for that USA kept silent when Turkey attacked Afrin; for example, what was the US policy toward not allowing Turkey to do that? When turkey attacked many other places? that is why it is not a long-term. And then we have. So, based on their speech, the relation is tactical, and transactional, for a specific framework and friend and a context and time, it is not a long-term relationship.

- Additionally, some answers assured that America would not accept the current situation to be continued this way. According to my reading of the situation and opinion, America wants new things and systems to be established. So as far as US policy is concerned, they are meditating now between KMC and BYD , hence they would cooperate to have a common delegation of command demands, and to have a stronger presentation the Geneva discussions.

Accordingly, the existence of US forces only relates to the priorities like defeating ISIS and protecting its friends like Israel and other interests like preventing the expansion of Iranian proxy groups. By evaluating these circumstances, one can conclude that the US policy towards Syria generally is a short-term and technical one. So, for the Kurds, it is very difficult if they only depend on the US, and they should also note that there is not an

obvious attitude by US officials to support or draw lines for the Kurd's rights in new Syria. Moreover, they should also take the withdrawing forces of the US from Afghanistan as the case may be repeated in Syria too!

- However, more than 35% do not have any doubt that the relation is short term. They assured the US policy in Syria is a short-term tactical policy, not a long-term one. It is directly related to the war on terror, as soon as the war on terror is over, in this case the American policy and Turkey's position in the middle east is more important for the superpower in the case of political and economic terms compared to the Syrian Kurds.So, the Kurdish forces in northern Syria must be considered, which is why the treatment here is more tactical than strategic . It is more about eradicating the threats that ISIS has created to the interests of the US in this area.

Nevertheless, 20% have another voice, and their vision more relates to the positive side. They agree that right now is a tactical relationship, but in the future may be is going to change. They argued that US entered Syria based on the fight against ISIS, because they thought they believed strongly that you cannot fight ISIS here for ISIS to have a sanctuary and the safe haven there. In order to defeat ISIS, you have to fight them here in Syria.So that was their approved policy, and that is how they went there. But for the future of Syria, they say that there needs to be a political settlement for the Syrians, for the Syrians to determine their future, and for the Kurds, like the rest of the people of Syria, to enjoy their rights. However, this is US approach for the Kurds themselves. They need to prove themselves on the ground. If they prove themselves on the ground, if they establish a strong administration, an inclusive administration, represented through the representative administration, and go to elections free and fair elections, develop their educational system, their municipality health system, and universities and the economy, they will be able to establish a de facto just like what we did. So, a de facto reality that years later, nobody can undo it. So, therefore, part of it, yes, it will depend on US policy towards that. But that is not the only way. The other way is for the Kurds to prove themselves to develop their experience so that it can be a strong experience

Kurds are not looked at as a nation, nor as an epic, but rather as a political actor who have armed forces, political organizations, running an administration and have land under their authority. Based on above, Kurds are one of these actors. The Kurds issue in

Syria is not presented as an issue of a nation to the U.S. or the U.S. does not want to deal with the Kurds of Syria as a nation with an issue, a nation that must have a framework of a country and to have rights. But the U.S. is dealing with the Kurds as a Syrian who can impact the power correlations and short-term and long-term strategic plans.

7.3 USA-Rojava Relations: Era of Desertion

Based on the answers of most interviewees, the future dimension of U.S policy towards the Kurds is around those angles that future dimensions relate to the presence of energy in the West. The US has power where there is oil. Secondly, regarding national security, the US gives attention to the west (Rojava) and the Kurds because of the threat of ISIS. Third, due to the conflict between Russia and Assad's regime. Any party that might be against the US, whether this is Russia or Syria or Iran. Moreover, the US and its support for Kurds is all to put a limit on the US enemies.

Somehow the interviwees sees the dimension still not very clear. But two factors permits the US to stay. One is the resurgence of ISIS and two is the question of that if they withdraw from Syria, Iran and the Russians would have the upper hand and Syria and the US would come out empty-handed. Not only them but other Western allies like Britain, France, Germany, European Union, are against such a direction. Moreover, they do not want to do that.

Even as Assad's troops recaptured significant territory from anti-Assad insurgents elsewhere, the US-Kurdish cooperation also deterred Assad's forces from attacking the Kurdish region. In fact, Iran wished to establish a physical link between the troops it supports in Iraq and Syria, while Russia desired for Assad to retake control of Syria's oil resources in order to aid in funding the country's rebuilding (Hubbard, 2018). However, in order to pose a danger to Turkey, Moscow, Teheran, and Damascus required the PYD/YPG. That is how there was no doubt that outside intervention might affect the Syrian civil war. The situation was made more complex by the many proxy wars fought by these major nations. But whereas Iran, Turkey, and Russia have a clear objective in Syria, the US has not made its policy purpose clear (Aziz, 2020).

Additionally, President Trump announced the withdrawal of American forces from northern Syria in October, but he has declared that the US would retain around 500 troops to guard oil facilities, along with Kurdish-led forces (BBC, 2019). Indeed, the US military started reinforcing its position around oil fields in eastern Syria and has returned to six

bases they previously abandoned, saying "the new deployments are part of its continuing counter-terrorist mission" (Borger, 2019). However, experts are questioning the credibility of this mission. "Following the last withdrawal and the whiplash of reinserting, by what credibility can we continue to be there?" asks Melissa Dalton, a senior fellow at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. The adjusted military presence has also raised legal questions about a deployment focused on another country's natural resources (Geltzer, 2019). Stephen Vladeck, a national security law professor at the University of Texas at Austin, said there is no solid legal argument the Trump administration can make for claiming Syria's oil (Burns, R. and Baldor , 2019).

Twenty per cent of the interviewees are going to think It is not possible to predict the future of relations, but they notice that if America is determined to preserve the future of its interests in the Middle East, it will not find a better ally than the Kurds if they obtain their democratic rights and become free in their political decisions.

Fifteen per cent of the answers think this case is more open, and they see clear vision of US foreign policy towards the Kurds in Syria. However, so far, it has been within the security aspect; their engagement with the Kurds in Syria has been based on the fight against ISIS, and also to bring stability and to deal with the aftermath, the aftermath, the camps, and Holtkamp,.

However, one interviwee , based on his research and follow-up in Syria, said the U.S. policy was in the framework of showing the Kurds and dealing with them as an actor. I believe that the skyline of relations between the America and the Kurds of Western is not so hopeful in this general framework. This is because first; Syria is not an area of power for the U.S as I mentioned before. Second; America is not insisting on its existence in Syria and has the readiness to withdraw from the Syria equation in favor of Russia and Iran with the lowest possible price.Third; till the moment America stays in this equation, the Kurds will remain as an important and valuable actor for U.S for placing effective strategies.

This fact shows that the Kurds in Rojava should be very aware of their future and existence in Syria and consider the US factor as temporary, not forever and long term. Ten per cent of the interviewees assured the future dimensions of U.S. foreign policy toward the Kurdish related to the Kurdish and the US position towards Syria. They think we should expect the US to have a separate policy towards the Kurds in the same way

that it has not had a separate policy. Their hope is unclear right now, what the US policy towards Syria is? Is it regime change? Is it containment? Is it ignoring it? It is not clear. They can not expect the US if it does not have a very clear Syria policy. They do not expect the US to have a.Even a taller Kurdish policy.

Moreover, more than 20% of their opinion is about how to break down the word future. They assured too short-term, intermediate term and long-term. They say, at this moment, it is not clear because US policy is not clear. They are not clear in their mind. What will happen in the future and how they behave. They are not clear how Turkey will Behave in the future Towards its own Kurds as well as Syrian Kurds; they are not clear what happens to the Syrian regime And how Russia and Iran Will deal with the crisis in Syria.So there is a lot of uncertainty does not help make it clear what is it.

Most of the interviwees, around 90%, are sure that Kurds can play important role as they play; for example, when it comes to fighting terrorism, Kurds, both in Syria and Iraq, prove that they are the only reliable force on the ground, that they can fight terrorism? The Kurds in Turkey, Kurds in Syria, they are in between this regional anti-degree power competition and for any future settlement in Syria, whether it is in negotiation with the Assad regime, when the removal of the Assad regime in the Constitution, writing of the Syrian state, the Kurds will play a very important also Kurds. Yes, they can play that vital role if you stay in the area.

In on other hand, the interviwees assist the point of saying that is why the American investing in the Kurds provides the course with weapons they need for protection. With the even door, Trump abandoned the Kurds for Turkey, but that was the interpreter had to. So, based on the under particular elements, they mentioned that because of circulars, the cursor appreciates them because in theory. clear as well that Jeffrey also mentioned that the clear, more clean guys in the region, actually comparatively so, and for this and then they are well organized and just the cost that also includes other at Nick and religious groups in the region. I think for this reason, they are credible. If the US administration would like to have an actor that has same vision on human rights and democracy, so they should support and protect Kurds in Syria. And the existence of Kurds in new Syria would also guarantee that the threats on US close allies like Israel would be minor. The US policy were always directed to make Kurds be united and have one agenda and they do not like to see different parties with different agenda; and that is why they were making

many efforts to make the Kurd's parties be united. The US policy was very clear to engage ANAKASA with Rojava authorities as the US tried to show that it is not only PKK-leaning parties have said in Rojava, but ANAKASA as those close to Turkey have participated in this as well. Nevertheless, the Russians have not been engaged as the US did. And we also acknowledge that the US Administration has offered much military aid, which should also be praised.

So, there is a degree of we can see there is such a movement that can push Kurds to be a strong regional power, stroked regional.

At the end, we can conclude , based on the answers, especially Adil Bakawan, (2021), who is a Sociologist and Director of the Centre for Sociology of Iraq (Soran University), associate researcher at the French institute of international Relations and Member of the Institute of Research and Studies on the Mediterranean and the Middle East, said during the interview with the author, "The Middle East, on the other hand, is a different story. America has been unable to locate another group or player in Syria to secure its interests, such as the Kurds. The Kurds of Syria are America's last hope for getting out of Syria's all-out conflict with minimum casualties. At one point, America is fully aware that the PYD and SDF are locally related to the PKK, and that the PKK as a mother party is designated as a terrorist organization by the US and the European Union, yet it is obligated to manage this contradiction".

The conflict between PYD and ENKSA has implications on US foreign policy toward the Kurds in Syria. Regarding the conflict, first, the conflict between the UAE and anarchism Affects the US foreign policy compared to the Syrian Kurdish the interviwees's vision about it does not influence their attitude, because they know that that PYD and YPG is a strong military forces. While KNC is a big political force, they have among the population of the Kurds in Syria. Their following is more than They are. They want them to cooperate with each other and they want them to become bigger. They are forced to deal with Syrian politics because they consider them allies. And they are putting a lot of pressure. And they are using a lot of patience. They have been meditating now for more than since December 2019. For them to reach an agreement, the French as well are mediating. So if they are, they are not impatient. We are afraid that they will become a patient that leads, so we are pressuring the Kurdish forces to agree among themselves.

But they are patient and they want to make them return as they did here in Washington between Mam Jalal and Masud Barzany 1997

On the other hand, regarding the issues between the Kurdish party in Syria Anakasa and then impact the U S foreign policy declarations. All who answered this question are seeing there are a credible ally. But , they have not been able to influence US policy to have more so far the Kurds in Syria Are part of the US security plans for Syria. They're not part of any political plans. They see the U S has no real vision for what the political map of Syria looks like after this war and it's not like Iraq, where there is a there is political and investment in Syria in Iraq by the U.S. So, it is clear that the US policy towards Iraq and the Kurdish component to it . They are looking at the country not just from a military perspective but from a geopolitical strategy. I do not see this same vision for Syria, so I think the future is purely a military and counterterrorism Operation of the US.

Concerning the question, does the Kurds' relations with the Syrian regime in the west affect or had affected the relations with America? The answers from 100% see that there are no effects, because America, as a pragmatic actor, is quite aware that the Kurds of Syria do not have a lot of options. Their only options are Iran, Russia and Syria of Assad; the more they get close relations with America, they will get away from other parties and political actors in Syria. The U.S. is aware that if its relations with Kurds fade, the Kurds, as a pragmatic and rational party that carefully calculates their interests, will be compelled to deal with other capitals. So the U.S. understands the fact that the Kurds of Syria have a credible office in Moscow.

Regarding the role of KRG in building the relationship between the US and Kurdish in Syrian. for 100% of answering this question, KRG played a very potent role in making the coalition between US and the Rojava emerge. And the US already have a very long and good experience with the Peshmerga forces, so this also became another point to ensure that this kind of relationship would be successful and this was proven right.

Add to this, America and France are two concerned with finding an outline for establishing a common or general representative for Kurds. They would like to gather all the Kurds around one table, one representative, and one national framework, but even if they do not gather, this will not be a big problem for them as the current situation is appropriate to fulfil their demands and interests.

So, based on their answers, the main political parties in the Kurdistan Region also played a bigger role in bridging this kind of connection which is why we could say that without Kurdistan Region cooperation, it was very difficult to see the birth of a coalition between them.

The responsibilities of the regional governments in South and Kurdistan's political parties in developing the U.S.-Kurds of West relations. The answers to this question assured that Kurdistan Regional Government had a significant role, because KRG does not have the same role as the Kurds of Syria in the U.S. strategy. KRG is considered America's political, strategic, geopolitical, and economic partner. The president of KRG had been received in the White House in August as the president of the country. KRG had played a great role in building the relations between the U.S. and the Kurds of Syria; without KRG it would not be possible to have the current relations. We should not forget that most of the U.S. military and humanitarian aid is delivered to the Kurdistan of Syria through KRG. Second; we should remember that the meetings are held in Erbil more than in Qamishlo. Third; when America reaches a finishing line of some issues and cases with the Kurds of Syria, it resorts to the Kurdish parity in the KGR (PUK and KDP) to help him.

At the same time, the role of the political parties in the Kurdistan Regional Government in building the relationship between America and the west of Kurdistan (Rojava) based on the answering from interviwees were that the south has always been the way that America has tried to send support through to the west. Assistance has been provided by the Political Leadership of Kurdistan from both sides so that they will be able to offer proper support in terms of logistics that the US needs to deliver their help to the west. Furthermore, even national reconciliation assistance has been encouraged. For example, Political Leadership of both parties here in Kurdistan region has tried to provide the west with assistance because the south is the only part of Kurdistan which can receive the US support safely without issues. This can be useful for both parties, which have deep conflicts with each other, between ENKC and PYD. Assistance has also been a presence here; this is to ensure that the US attempts will be practical to make both parties at peace.

To evaluate the role of the Parliament and the Kurdish President about the region about changing dynamics, the answers from interviwees were well.One hundred precent

who answered this topic stated that 'we in Kurdistan parliament, we have a very consistent policy and position that we are supporting the Kurds in Syria, to be united. And always to be like a Kurdish-centric agenda to have not to have a Turkey centric or the Syrian or Iranian agenda to have a Kurdish agenda. We pushed for unity, for more engagement with each other, and for dialogue.Additionally , we push that the cursor would be united in their talks with the opposition on the future constitution of Syria. We also urge the Kurds to be united. So that is why we support this dialogue between Anakasa and the PYD in order to be united , even in negotiation with the Syrian regime, or with Russian.For example, in the Astana process or the Turkish process that is helping. So, our policy has been to support the Kurdish unity and to continue the dialogue.

Regarding the European Union and France presence, this experience has Most who answered this question see the European countries have played a more significant role in humanitarian affairs in Syria and Afghanistan. Based on their experience saying: America and Russia are always seeking their interests and nothing else; in media, they show that they have other roles, but in reality, they work to preserve their interests. In opposite, the European countries and France have strong relations with the Kurds, François Mitterrand and Macron visited Kurdistan Region and other European countries such as Sweden are better than America and Russia trying to assist and support those areas that have been damaged by war, but I have never seen such intention from America and Russia neither in Rojava nor in Iraq or Afghanistan or other countries I have visited or lived in or worked in.

7.4 Conclusion

After the end of this chapter, the researcher reached some conclusions. Most noteworthy is that, as a non-state participant, the Kurds were involved in the Syrian revolution from the outset were not given much attention compared to other players.But the Kurdish eagerness to have a destiny within a new Syria made great powers like U.S. to give proper attention. After appearing of ISIS as a serious threat not only to Syria but also to the whole globe, the U.S. and international coalition to fight ISIS they realized that the Kurds are a key player in confronting this wave of radicalism and terrorism. That is why the international coalition led by western countries is aware that the Kurdish forces on the ground are a very important tool to confront ISIS, and this is a crucial point of having Kurds as a close ally.

We could also point out that the relations with America and the international coalition to fight ISIS began with the confront of ISIS in the city of Kobani, As the resistance of the Kurdish male and female fighters caught the attention of the U.S. forces and the coalition. They realized there is no other ground force that could defeat the expansion of ISIS other than the People's Protection Units and the Women's Protection Units.

In addition, if there was not ISIS emergence, the experience of Syrian Kurds on the International stage never has been coming out as it is now. This is more obvious that eighty-five percent of the interviewees attribute the reason to the rise of ISIS. And most importantly, ISIS is basically gone, but still there, that you see other problems that were there in the past got more like the problems between Iran and the US and other issues.

Two factors permit the US to stay; One is the resurgence of ISIS, the second is the question of If they withdraw from Syria, that means Iran, and Russians would have the upper hand and Syria and the US would come out empty-handed, and it is clear that this does not serve their interests and existence.

Furthermore, KRG as a regional player plays a very potent role in making the coalition between US and the Rojava happen. And the US already have a very long and good experience with the Peshmerga forces, which is the backbone of this region's military, so this also became another point to make sure that this kind of relation would be successful and this was proven right.

There is another interesting point to mention is that 20% of the interviwees are going to think It is not possible to predict the future of relations. However, they notice that if America is determined to preserve the future of its interests in the Middle East, it will not find a better ally than the Kurds if they obtain their democratic rights and become free in their political decisions. According to this research's analysis, 15% of interviewees see US relations with Syrian Kurds as that the US has a clear foreign policy towards the Kurds in Syria. But so far, within the security aspect, their engagement with the Kurds in Syria has been based on the fight against ISIS.

Compared to the strategic U.S. assistance to the Kurds in Syria, the European countries have played a greater role in humanitarian affairs in Syria and even in Afghanistan rather than the military one. Hence, this research focuses more on the relations between U.S. and Kurds, not the broader international coalition.

This chapter also reached the point that the regional players like Turkey and Iran are very influential on the nature of the relations between the U.S. and the Kurds. Specifically to mention the role of Turkey as powerful regional actor and as a member of NATO and

sharing a border with the Kurdish authorities upon the Northern Syrian border has many effects. Because this perspective also includes the national security of the two mentioned regional countries.

To conclude, we could state that the International coalition fighting against ISIS and the U.S. as a great power should not let a gap to enrich radical thoughts to be grown and not support or solve the Kurdish question in Syria. This increases the probability of letting such radical forces rise again, threatening global stability and peaceful international order.

Chapter Eight: CONCLUSION

The United States has a rich history in the Middle East, and since the conclusion of the Cold War, its influence has only grown. Trade and cultural relations remain tense in spite of this, and the military might of the area may be inferior to that of Europe—a persistent source of worry—or Asia, where the United States intends to "pivot" in the near future. During the Cold War, the Middle East's oil resources and other nations with communist leanings served as a chessboard between the US and the Soviet Union. In order to maintain pressure on Iran's religious regime and Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the US increased its military presence in the area throughout the 1990s. However, Washington actively participated in and continued to support attempts to bring about peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, but it was largely unsuccessful.

Given the Kurds' geopolitical position in the area and their division among four governments (Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria), the US does not have a grand strategy for them. Every state has certain issues of its own. Moreover, the governments with Kurdish majority hold greater significance for US foreign policy than do Kurds. But the US has come to feel that it has a duty to the Kurds because of its interest in human rights and Middle East security. However, the US is against their independence since it would surely lead to the division of the nations in which they reside, resulting in undesirable instability in the Middle East.

The literature suggests that the scholarly assessments have conflicting results, with some stating that the U.S. made a well-informed decision to leave the Syrian Kurds behind. Others, on the other hand, contend that if the choice is made carelessly, it will probably cause more harm than good to America's long-standing friend, who was vital to the war against ISIS. In particular, the results show that America left Syria as a result of two things: first, ISIS was effectively defeated; second, the majority of other goals (like the safe return of refugees) were not achievable; these findings suggest that American troops may not have been justified. The Syrian Kurds find themselves at a crossroads where they must deal with both internal and foreign problems, even though these reasons tend to justify America's withdrawal. The problem the Kurds face from the outside is that they could have to flee places under the Syrian regime's authority. Because of the potential for Arab insurrection in Kurdish-majority cities, the Syrian Kurds are in a precarious

position internally. At first, there was a certain level of comfort in the US, the Syrian Kurds' benefactor.

Nonetheless, the material mentioned above shows that Kurds in Syria are in a very precarious or unstable situation. How and why America changed its foreign policy towards the Syrian Kurds is a topic that has to be answered. What are the primary causes of USFP's attitude toward Syrian Kurds, furthermore? The planned research is expected to provide insight on how and why U.S. foreign policy has been shaped toward Syrian Kurds since 2011 by investigating the causes of these shifts, the reasons for U.S. intervention, and the circumstances leading to U.S. desertion of Syrian Kurds. After more investigation, it becomes clear that the prior literature did not address U.S. foreign policy regarding Syrian Kurds. Thus, the majority of studies failed to answer the crucial question of why American policy has shifted from one of ignorance to one of cooperation with the Syrian Kurds.

This study endorses the hypothesis that the USA does not have a clear and well-developed strategy or policy towards the Kurds of Syria. On the contrary, American policy has been influenced by the changes and developments on the ground. Perspectives of different American administrations, Turkish pressure, and the War on Terror -in particular- have greatly impacted changes in American policy towards Syrian Kurds. Once again, this indicates the extent to which American domestic politics, regional and global actors and the war on terror are directing the American policy towards Syrian Kurds without any genuine American strategy for future Kurds and their rights in Syria.

It was only the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) that the U.S. military chose to back. Then all other options were exhausted. The U.S. chose to support the SDF when the training and equipping programs for Syrian opposition organizations failed catastrophically and there were no longer any local allies. Despite its military assistance for Kurdish-led organizations, the United States has never officially endorsed the administrations established by Kurds in Syria. No international forum has ever invited the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) to debate Syria's political destiny. As a result, the U.S.'s partnership with the Syrian Kurds was limited to military action with the sole goal of permanently defeating the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

The formation of a Kurdish state is not supported by the US. In reality, though, US policy is hazy and confusing. Because of its prior involvement in Iraq, where the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) was seen as a threat to Iraq's unity, Washington was cautious about engaging Syrian Kurds, notably the PYD/YPG forces, at first. US officials have even cautioned the PYD against proclaiming autonomy in northern Syria. The PYD has also been implicated in violence against opposition groups in northern Syria, including a deadly crackdown on Kurdish anti-Assad protesters in Amuda in July 2013, which Washington strongly denounced. Nonetheless, the US considered the Kurdish party and vital army allies in the fight to drive ISIL out of Syria, which was the mission's main purpose (Hubbard, 2018). Since 2014, the US has provided arms and military advice to the YPG (Kucukkeles et al., 2014).

The Obama administration's aversion to dealing with the Kurdish issue arose primarily from its desire to end the Syrian catastrophe. When the civil war erupted, the US was forced to take a tougher stance on Syrian Kurdish aspirations. The US aim was first to support the Kurdish National Council while convincing the PYD to join the anti-Assad fight. Despite these efforts, the PYD retained control of Rojava and was supported by the majority of Kurdish armed forces. In the view of the US, the PYD quickly established itself as a bulwark against Islamist groups such as ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusra. As a result, the US found itself in a difficult position: partnering with the PYD/YPG, which is crucial for Syria's democratic transition, while also maintaining Turkey as a major ally against Russia and Iran (Aziz, 2020). As a result, the US has never declared a foreign policy toward the Kurds, who are spread over four countries (Gunter, 2015).

Initially, Saudi Arabia and the Obama administration decided to end Bashar Al Assad's Syrian dictatorship. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia considered Obama did not go above and beyond to achieve this goal, and he was hesitant to contribute arms and funding to the opposition. Furthermore, in 2012, Obama drew a line in the sand regarding deploying chemical weapons in Syria. When Bashar al-Assad deployed Sarin Gas on civilians in 2013, Obama backed down from a military response and instead agreed to work with Russia to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons. As a result, Obama's actions have heightened tensions between the US and Saudi Arabia. In reality, Saudi Arabia questioned Obama's legitimacy and whether he had any ambition to overthrow Al-Assad (Aziz, 2019).

From Turkey's perspective, the military stalemate in Syria, which has resulted in a cemented north-south line of government authority in the western portion of the country, is not a stable equilibrium. The Syrian Kurds are expected to benefit from this, as ISIL's presence will allow them to continue receiving US support, and the lack of any armed force to fight them in Syria will allow them to solidify their hold in the north. These advances will be difficult to reverse if they do not make mistakes in handling non-Kurdish minorities in their midst. Now that the Syrian-Kurdish issue has become a domestic Turkish issue over which the government and Turkish Kurds are at odds, any action taken by Ankara in Syria or even Iraq risks repercussions at home (Barkey, 2016).

Kurds have played an essential role in US Middle East foreign policy, as the US's primary goals in the region are to control oil supplies, maintain the Middle East's balance of power, restrict Iran, and fight extremist "Islamic" movements while preserving Israel's security. Three factors influence US foreign policy toward the Kurds in Syria: Turkey's position in Syria as a NATO member ally, Russia's and Iran's policies in Syria, and radical Islamist terrorist groups. Syria's Kurds have proven to be a beneficial tool for the US in all three of these areas.

Maintaining the balance of power is one of the most important interests of the US in the Middle East. Iraqi and Syrian Kurds have constrained Iran's influence in Syria and Iraq. Following the Arab Spring, they took on the outsourcing duty of inflicting security problems on Turkey due to tensions that arose between this country and the US due to the Arab Spring. On the other hand, the Kurds had two fundamental expectations from the US: security and autonomy (Sari, 2019).

During the Obama administration, liberalism influenced US foreign policy, emphasizing the importance of diplomacy and cooperation over using armed force. Obama backed political and diplomatic dialogue in Syria and other nations, as seen by his foreign policy initiatives (Mazza-Hilway, 2019).

The Obama administration's choice to ignore Syria's political transition and focus entirely on eliminating ISIS in Raqqa and elsewhere sparked a furious debate in official circles regarding the types and identities of prospective "allies" in the anti-IS fight. In contrast to the situation of Iraq, where the central government collaborated with the US in its attempts to destroy IS in Iraq's west and northwest, this search had to be performed without regard for the Assad regime's opinion. Initially, the US attempted to organize and

arm battalions of Syrian army deserters, but the plan failed when they chose to unite around battling IS rather than the regime that started the persecution and conflict in the first place (Zaideh, 2017).

The Obama administration left behind a convoluted, and at times irreconcilable, network of Middle East friendships and conflicts that defies easy categorization. In the fight against ISIS, the US is allied with the Baghdad government, which is linked with Iran. In Syria, on the other hand, the Obama administration adopted a particularly harsh rhetorical stance against Iran's long-time partner, Bashar al-Assad, whom both the Iraqi and Iranian governments have backed militarily. Turkey, a NATO member, had a tumultuous relationship with ISIS in both Syria and Iraq during the Obama administration, however, it has since adapted to Russia's operations in Syria. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's president, urged Assad's ouster at first but now accepts Russia's support for him, worrying more about Kurdish aspirations in Syria than the fight against ISIS. Iran's growing regional influence inspires America's Gulf and beyond Arab friends (Al-Istrabadi, 2018).

Despite Trump's commitment to realism and focus on power politics, the US has abandoned its promise to depose Assad. In reaction to the Assad administration's repeated chemical weapons attacks, Trump has not hesitated to use military force against them. Trump has condemned Assad's conduct and stated that he wants to punish and restructure the regime. Despite Trump's focus on power and military action, the Assad government is still in the same state as it was throughout Obama's presidency. President Trump's foreign strategy in Syria is divided into two main goals. The initial objective is to combat and eliminate ISIS's presence in the region and to cripple the organization as a whole. ISIS, which Trump called his major foreign policy priority, was one of the few foreign policy problems Trump addressed during his presidential campaign. The administration's second purpose is to end the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons (Krieg, 2017).

Take into consideration Trump's choice to maintain US military control over the nation's oil reserves in order to defend the US against ISIS. But his main objective is probably resource development and oil exploitation to lessen dependency on natural resources from the Middle East. Power balance, creating a powerful autonomous state, and keeping the US as the world's dominant power are other factors that probably contributed to the decision (Pettersson, 2020).

With Donald Trump's presidential victory, US backing for the YPG has grown. The Trump administration prioritized a speedy military victory over ISIS in both Syria and Iraq. Trump handed American generals the discretion to decide what is best on the battlefield in northern Syria, avoiding direct engagement in military operations. Simultaneously, they planned to increase the frequency of aerial bombing flights against IS in Raqqa, resulting in a significant spike in civilian casualties. At the same time, Turkey, which had branded the YPG a terrorist group and tried to persuade the US to depend more heavily on Syrian opposition troops in capturing Raqqa, became embroiled in a public spat (Zaideh, 2017).

The once-marginalized Syrian Kurds have emerged as a local factor, attempting to become a more dominant participant in the country's increasingly complex military and political battlefield. Syrian Kurds formally seized control of their historic regions in 2012 and established local councils to manage local matters. They have also recommended a federated structure to replace the country's current centralized governance system, which Arabs dominate. Kurds have been positioned to strive for wider legitimacy in terms of local government and self-rule as one of Syria's most organized groups. The Syrian Kurds' ultimate goal is to serve as a model for the rest of the country. In their federalism manifesto, they contend that self-rule guarantees peace and democracy in post-war Syria (Kajjo, 2020).

In the first half of 2014, ISIL, a new jihadist organization that sees the Kurds as ideological foes as well as competitors for land and resources, launched a major assault on Syrian Kurds. For the first time, the PYD's military branch, the YPG, began resolutely defending Kurdish towns and villages, and it appeared to be a more effective player on the ground than its Iraqi Kurdish counterparts, the Peshmergas (Gunes & Lowe, 2015).

As a result of the Syrian war, the militarization of the Syrian Kurdish movement has clearly shaped a new dynamic in the region. On September 13, 2014, ISIL invaded Kobani for the second time; this assault indicated the end of the Kurdish presence in the region for the Jihadists. The YPG was instantly put in a difficult situation after losing a dozen villages in the early days of the battle (Desoli, 2015).

The development of ISIL was one of the key forces altering the Middle East political map, but the Kurds swiftly benefited from the Siege of Kobani owing to an international coalition. Indeed, the US committed air strikes against Jihadists for the first

time, resulting in widespread media coverage of the Kobani conflict and the Kurdish cause in general. It also demonstrated to the rest of the world the US's fruitful cooperation with the PYD/YPG, which persisted despite Turkey's resistance. Thanks to US aid, the Kurds were able to not only destroy ISIL, but also take control of the majority of Syria's border with Turkey. In Kobani, the US, the PYD/YPG, the Peshmergas, and the Free Syrian Army (FSA) have collaborated to demonstrate global support for the Kurdish cause. The PYD's standing as an official US partner has been elevated due to its achievements over ISIL on the battlefield, enhancing the YPG's legitimacy. The PYD was now seen as a respectable ally by the international alliance (Plakoudas, 2017).

The party's rise to power is explained by its structure, discipline, and ability to capitalize on the Syrian crisis dynamics. The PYD's influence and strength are bolstered by the fact that it is the only political party with its own militia, the YPG, which has 65000 fighters (Thornton, 2015). The close relations between the PYD and the PKK have allowed for vital training, well-trained militants, and weapon supplies. Because of the PYD's success, Syrian Kurds have decided to support the political organization providing security, services, and jobs (Plakoudas, 2017).

The People's Protection Units (PYG) – the armed wing of the PYD (Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat/Democratic Union Party) – maintained a successful foreign policy with other non-state actors in Syria (especially after 2011) and managed to secure assistance from regional and international powers, namely Russia, the US, and European States (Darwich, 2021).

One of the major factors that changed the political landscape of the Middle East was the rise of ISIL, but thanks to an international alliance, the Kurds quickly gained an advantage from the Siege of Kobani. In fact, the US carried out its first round of airstrikes against the Jihadists, which led to extensive media coverage of the Kobani conflict and the Kurdish cause in general. Moreover, it showcased to the global community the productive collaboration between the United States and the PYD/YPG, which persisted in spite of Turkey's resistance. With US backing, the Kurds not only overthrew ISIL but also seized control of much of Syria's border with Turkey. In Kobani, the US, PYD/YPG, Peshmergas, and Free Syrian Army (FSA) collaborated to demonstrate global support for the Kurdish cause. The PYD's military victories over ISIL have improved its status as an official US partner, which has improved the YPG's credibility.

The US has declared counterterrorism a top priority in its Middle East policy since the 9/11 attacks. Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen have gained international acclaim for their anti-terrorism cooperation. The US has bolstered ties with historically ignored countries such as Algeria. The administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama had a strong effect on Saudi Arabia and other stable Gulf countries. The administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama had a strong effect on Saudi Arabia and other stable Gulf countries. Both the Bush and Obama administrations pushed for a ban on terrorism financing and support for jihadist movements. Human properties are said to have been used by Egypt's, Jordan's, Morocco's, and Syria's security forces to penetrate al-Qa'ida.

Preserving inclusive Middle East alliances is vital to the US' international security priorities. One of their accomplices is the Gulf Cooperation Council, a local body set up in 1981 to sort out and interface its individuals' political and monetary interests. Individuals include the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, the Sultanate of Oman, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the State of Qatar. The US and the EU have sought the gathering for exchange and security openings, however, late territorial insecurity has stressed relations among individuals. In any case, Oman has been encouraging worldwide tact specifically.

As the dominant force in the Western Hemisphere, the US's primary objective is to stop any hemispheric influence or regional hegemon from expanding into other regions. By employing the offshore balancing grand plan, the US has succeeded in achieving this diplomatic goal. To start with, grand strategy is said to be "the arrangement and direction of a state's political, military, economic, and moral assets in order to achieve foreign policy objectives that fundamental policy fails to achieve" . In other words, it's the extent to which military might, diplomacy, and intelligence work together to influence the course of international foreign policy. All states, whether they acknowledge it or not, have master plans; that much is required of them.

For the past four decades, the US' foreign policy toward the Middle East has been ambiguous toward the dominant international powers. Rather than stabilizing the region, US foreign policy has created a mechanism that allows the U.S. to remain an intrusive external force. While the US accepts "lies" and "deception," "fear-mongering," and "mythmaking" as statecraft devices in the realist tradition, it is argued that the way they

were constructed violated realism's central doctrines. Thus, US military and diplomatic involvement in the region has served to undermine both a stable international power balance and US national interests. The positive engagement between the United States and Iran has demonstrated that a nonpartisan, practical approach to conflict settlement is not only feasible but might also indicate a change in US foreign policy in the area. As Paul Pillar puts it, an offshore balancing plan may be possible if there is a temporary break from the individual nations in the region. Suppressing ethnic aspirations and advancement by US leverage is like setting one group against another in a competition. US foreign policy may move the nation toward a power-balanced arrangement if it were more realistic and succeeded in shifting the balance from a distance rather than protecting its own interests in regional conflicts (Kaussler & Hastedt, 2017).

The information available in the military battle room suggested a possible victory over ISIS. Even though we have defeated ISIS on a major milestone, the fight is far from over. Although ISIS would continue to use ingenuity to enlist people and adherents and advance a middle-aged philosophy that excuses decapitations, attacks, and dictatorship, among other items, attempts must be made to introduce a counter-account to counter the possibility of an idealistic "Caliphate" that can be conveyed into presence by harsh cruelty and through illegal intimidation reached out preposterous (Mourtada, Schlecht and DeJong, 2017).

It is not always easy to defeat ISIS accounts and spread their propaganda through the Internet and web-based media. The point sometimes scrambles such endeavors that organizations need satisfactory strategy and legal outlines on the most effective method for effectively integrating the accounts of individuals who have left fear-mongering organizations like ISIS into their systems. Unusually, more emphasis is placed on criticizing those people's efforts rather than finding creative ways to bring the two together. In either case, when the voices of ISIS deserters are raised, problems will arise if they do not stick to their message and switch sides.

Similarly perplexing is the administration's emphasis on removing online propagation and mounting counter-informing campaigns confined to normal and intelligent arguments, while organizations like ISIS use imagery, enthusiastic arguments, and material to draw supporters (Goldberg, 2018).

The most reliable voices criticizing ISIS are insiders and ISIS deserters who have personal knowledge of the terrible reality of life in regions under ISIS control and under

the Islamic State. The creators of the ISIS Defectors Interviews Project have started to ridicule the group and its philosophy by using the voices of real turncoats to recount their accounts of time spent inside ISIS. We will start by capturing the voices of ISIS defectors as they reprove the collection and development of convincing counter-stories and stuff from their accounts that compete with ISIS's productive and tempting online missions. There is also the issue of the computerized landmark to consider. Crushing ISIS's claim of creating an idealistic Caliphate, overcoming its "suffering" belief system, and crushing its belief that Islam, Islamic terrains, and Muslims themselves are under assault by the West, and that all Muslims must rate the West, are all equally important (Khen, Boms and Ashraph, 2021).

Omar Sheikh Mous, (2021), Independent Analyst and Consultant Middle Eastern and Kurdish Affairs, Executive Member of SCCCK, when he was asked about does he think that the rise of the ISIS in 2014 has had a direct impact on the changing in the US foreign policy approach to the records in Syria? He responded that it was not just a factor but the most important element in shifting US policy toward Syria's Kurds. They didn't come out supporting the Kurds against ISIS until the night of September 25, 2014, the night of the Kobani attack. And this is the PYD/PKK possibility of Kobani falling into Daish's hands. A variety of variables influenced your decision at the time. One was Kurdish lobbyists, which we all knew about. They called for activists and such, but by accident, Iraq's president, Foad Mahssum, was in Washington at the time, and he discussed the issue with Biden, who was the vice president at the time. Then there is the KRG, of course. Dr. Burham and several others are urging the US to support and assist the Kurds to prevent Kobani from falling. And then, they agreed to collaborate with the United Kingdom here in Slemani. They also built a PYD or YPG IBG operating room. They were also providing the coordinates to US allies. Slemani, commanded by Lahur Talabany, and the YPG were giving recordings on the ground, which contributed to the first time we could prevent ISIS from gaining victory in Kobani. After 2014, there was also a period of collaboration. It was just the military till many years later. It was never a political statement. After many attempts to send delegations to Washington, the PYD was denied visas. So, the corporation only has a military, and it was only two or three years ago, in 2018, they began interacting with them on a political level.

There is also a definite realistic outlook for the US. However, notable contrasts remain between the Obama administration's approach to the war and President Trump's.

During Obama's presidency, the liberal viewpoint was more prominent; for example, he voiced a wish for the UN to create a peaceful and democratic Syria. Regardless, the ultimate purpose was most likely to secure a new ally in the fight against Iran. In contrast, Trump has stated realistic views, such as his choice to keep US Marines in charge of the country's oil in order to protect the US from ISIS. However, his primary motivation is most likely to grow resources and exploit oil to reduce reliance on Middle Eastern natural resources. Other motivations that are likely to explain the choice include power balance, building a strong independent state, and maintaining the US as the world's leading power. Officials are primarily concerned with the country's security, economy, and power. Iran has been a significant element for the US, influencing their involvement in the Syrian conflict. Russia has a strong desire to reclaim its former status as a superpower, as well as a strong desire to establish influence in the region. In Syria, the realistic perspective has played a significant role, with superpowers using the country as a platform to promote their own interests and expand their dominance (Pettersson, 2020).

Understanding how the US evolved in the area and its post-Manifest aims is made easier by looking at its political and economic influence in the Middle East before, during, and after World Wars I and II. The current study also highlights the vital interests that the US has in the Middle East. These interests include protecting Israel's hegemony, securing regimes that support the US, fighting terrorist groups and Islamic movements, and securing purposeful access to oil in the Gulf. Based on this literature review, a synthesis of research demonstrates that the US has maintained its foreign policy in a region that is essential to its national security interests because of the oil resources there, as well as its motivation to defend Israel, maintain military bases to support security, maintain its status as the protectorate of friendly regimes and client states, and fend off terrorist and Islamic movements. These five forces, which are still vital to America today, are what forced American decision-makers to seize control of the region. International affairs experts and students should take into account the significance of Middle Eastern history as well as gain understanding of the goals and incentives of American policymakers in order to shape and implement policy (Al Sarhan, 2017).

Dr. Janroj Yilmaz Keles, (2021) is Senior Research Fellow "researching on peace and conflict". On 2021-Apr-12, what are the future dimensions of U.S. foreign policy toward the Kurdish question in Syria? He responded, the Autonomous area, and especially if Russia accepts the Autonomous region, the US will try to assist. Attempt to

shape this process, but only if Russia is currently involved and placed influence on Erdogan, as evidenced by the debate. If you look at Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's remarks, you'll notice that he says the US creates. I believe you inquired about a separatist party backing separatists. They refer to the Kurds in Syria if they divide the proofs individually. As a result, Russia plays a crucial role in the curse. Yes, there are Kurds in Syria, assert Russia and Syria. We, on the other hand, cannot allow any federation.

The current position in 2019 demonstrates the success of the Mediterranean politics hedging strategy. The Trump administration approved Operation Peace Spring, a Turkish operation requiring Kurdish forces to give over their weapons and evacuate, which Syrian Kurds saw as desertion (Borger, 2019). As a result, the YPG forged deeper ties with Russia and the Assad administration, striking a deal to prevent their long-time foe, Turkey (Ayton, 2020).

It's unclear whether or how changes in the US posture in Syria in 2019 will affect the US-Syrian-Kurd relationship in the long run. According to military authorities, joint US-SDF operations against the Islamic State began in late 2019, and Congress has approved funds for ongoing training and equipping of partner forces in Syria, including the SDF. Due to perceived ambiguity regarding US policy in Syria and the future of US military involvement, US partner forces, particularly Kurdish forces, may seek support from other countries, even US adversaries (Humud et al., 2016).

So it could be concluded that three factors led to establishing of relations between Syrian Kurds and Washington. The first one was the emergence of IS and its success in capturing sizeable territories in Iraq and Syria, which enhanced the value of local actors capable of blocking and countering the IS spread. The second factor was the military success and strength of PYD (or its military wing YPG), the party's secular ideology, and the nature of its relations with the regional actors. Indeed, the fact that PYD was not the proxy of regional powers paved the way for its relations with the USA. The third factor was a weakness of the Syrian opposition and the extent of leverage Turkey had over this inefficient opposition. These factors eventually led to a dramatic shift in American treatment of the Syrian Kurds, culminating at military aid delivered to Kurdish fighters under IS siege in Kobani. Political relations followed the military cooperation, in that Washington assisted the Kurds to establish an autonomous administration consisting of

all Syrian components after the liberation of the territories captured by IS, including Raqa city, the capital of IS Caliphate. It could be argued that realities on the ground, in particular military success in the field and ideological and political flexibility of the Kurds paved the way for a shift in American foreign policy and the establishment of relations with the Syrian Kurds.

The fluctuation of the US foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds has gone through the following stages:

At the outset of the Syrian crisis in 2011 and under President Obama's leadership, American foreign policy did not pay any attention to the Kurdish factor. Instead, under Turkey's influence, Washington was supporting, training, arming, and providing logistic aid to pro or close to Turkey's elements in the Syrian opposition. In 2014, when ISIS attacked Kobane City, it became a turning point in the US foreign policy to establish relations with the Syrian Kurdish.

In 2016, under Trump's presidency, American foreign policy towards Syrian Democratic Forces changed, mainly due to Turkish influence. Turkey views the Syrian Democratic Forces as a national security threat, and Trump's 2019 decision to withdraw American forces from Syria gave Turkey a free hand to invade and control areas under SDF's control. The pressure created by public opinion, congress, and allies, especially France, convinced the Trump administration to send some troops back to the Kurdish administered areas in northern Syria.

The Ascendance of Joe Biden to the presidency resulted in changes in American foreign policy, especially regarding the Middle East and Kurds in Syria. American new engagement in the region demonstrates the rigor of neoclassical realism, which details the role of domestic factors, including the leader's personality on foreign policy.

Furthermore, this study examines another major topic, which is alliances between states and non-state actors. It discovers that these types of alliances are typically less institutionalized than those between states because they lack formal agreements or accords and do not compel the parties to create shared institutions. Therefore, nothing prevents them from collapsing. Thus, one might argue that the US-Syrian Kurdish cooperation was tactical rather than strategic. High levels of collaboration are a hallmark of strategic alliances, which are typically founded on similar ideologies and ideals. As a result, these partnerships are typically more enduring and sustainable. When the parties

pursue a variety of short-term goals in common without necessarily depending on long-term affinities and interests, this is known as tactical cooperation. In the present Middle East crises, groups seeking to gain power, influence, or financial gains appear to be more likely to form tactical alliances in an unstable times. In this regard, the cooperation between the United States and the Syrian Kurds in Syria serves as an example.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview guide and Questions

The Changing Dynamics of the US Foreign Policy Perception towards Kurds in Syria: Developing Relations in Light of Ignorance, Cooperation and Desertion (2011-2020)

Respondent Brief

This PhD research is entitled "The Changing Dynamics of US foreign policy perception towards Kurds in Syria: Developing Relations in Light of Ignorance, Cooperation and Desertion (2011-2021)." The research explores how these relations have developed over the mentioned period and which factors have been influential in shaping the relations. It further aims at finding a proper international relations theory or, otherwise, a number of theories, capable of explaining the evolution of the relations up to their current status and predicting how the relations will proceed in the future. By accomplishing these aims, the research attempts to provide a comprehensive insight into the relations for academics and politicians engaged or interested in the field and generate a number of policy recommendations for future advancement and improvement in the relations with mutual benefits for all the parties involved.

For the sake of achieving the stated aims and finding out the major factors directing the relations, conducting interviews with politicians, intellectuals, academics and researchers involved in the field is inevitable. These interviews provide insightful data and are

essential to the PhD project. The researcher will protect the information obtained through these interviews and will be merely used for advancing this PhD thesis. Interviewees' specific requests regarding the discussions will be accommodated and are granted the right to ask for anonymity or retract any parts of their statements. Any recording will be with prior consent of the interviewee and will be performed with a smartphone or through applications used for conducting the interviews remotely.

You are selected as an interviewee for this PhD thesis and the information obtained through the interview will be used for this thesis with your prior consent.

Questions

10. Why did U.S. foreign policy not interest the Syrian Kurds at the beginning of the Syrian revolt?

11. Do you think the rise of ISIS in 2014 has directly impacted the change in U.S. foreign policy approach towards the Kurds in Syria?

12. What are the internal factors that have helped change U.S. foreign policy approach toward the Kurds in Syria, especially the U.S. presidential role? Is it based on the U.S. national interest or merely a personal perception?

13. Have American-Turkish relations influenced the American relations with the Kurds of Syria, and how the Turkish factor has been dealt with in Washington?

14. Do you think that the great power competition, particularly between Russia and USA in Syria and the wider Middle East, impacts the change in the U.S. strategy toward the Syrian problem, particularly the Kurdish issue in Syria?

15. What regional factors have influenced the change in U.S. policy approach towards the Kurdish problem?

16. Do you think that the U.S. foreign policy toward the Kurds in Syria as a national minority without a state is a long-term strategic policy or a tactical one directly connected to the war on terror?

17. What are the future dimensions of U.S. foreign policy toward the Kurdish question in Syria?

18. Do you think the Kurds in Syria are credible allies in maintaining vital U.S. interests inside Syria and the Middle East?

Thanks for your Participation.

Zainaddin Mawlood Khidhir

Ph.D. Student at Corvinus University of Hungary

Appendix 2: List and Detail of Interviewees

	Name	Specialization	Interview form	Date
1-	Wladimir Van Wilgenburg	Co-author of the Kurd of northern Syria journalist analysis MA conflict study	Face to Face	19-Apr-2021
2-	Yasaman Shref	MA communication and Media. Journalist specialized in Syrian Kurds	Face to Face	01-Apr-2021
3-	Hemn Hawrami	Deputy Speaker of the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament	Face to Face	13-Apr-2021
4-	Falah Mustafa Bakir	Former Foreign Minister of the KRG Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to Nechirvan Barzani, President of Kurdistan Region of Iraq.	Face to Face	16-June-2021
5-	Sadi Ahmed Pira	PUK politburo member - Responsible in foreign relationship of PUK	Face to Face	21-July-2021
6-	Dr. Mahmud Ahmed Al-Harbo	KDP-Syria politburo and Member of ENKS Kurdish National Council	Face to Face	23-June-2021
7-	Ibrahim Khalil Biro	Former Head of ENKS - Responsible of the foreign relationship-ENKS	Face to Face	30-June-2021
8-	Sinam Mohamed	The USA representative of the Democratic Self Administration of Rojava	Email	27-March-2021
9-	Qubad Jalal Talabani	Deputy of KRG prime minister	Face to Face	07-July-2021
10-	Dr. Janroj Yilmaz Keles	Senior Research Fellow "researching on peace and conflict"	Online via Zoom	12-April-2021
11-	Dr Wesi Ciya	Independent scholar of ISRF - Foundation for Social Science-Germany - Research fellow in Kurdistan Issues at Jerusalem University	Online via Zoom	Sunday, April 11, 2021, 2:36:34 PM
12-	Adil Bakawan	Sociologist and Director of the center for Sociology of Iraq (Soran University), associate researcher of the French institute of international Relations and Member of the institute of Research and Studies on the Mediterranean and the Middle East.	Online via Zoom	Wednesday, July 07 2021 10:00 Am
13-	Dr. Karokh Khoshnaw	President of the American-Kurdish Research Institute (AKRI)	Face to Face	Monday, July 05, 2021, 02:00 pm

14-	Professor Dlawer Ala'Aldeen	Founding President of the Middle East Research Institute, former Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Kurdistan Regional Government (2009-2012), and Professor of Medicine in Nottingham University, UK.	Face to Face	Thursday, July 8, 2021, 10 Am
15-	Salih Muslim Muhammad	Former YPG President	Online via Zoom	Sunday, 4 July 2021 11 pm
16-	Dr. Nawzad Abdullah Shukri	PhD in international Relations Lecture at Salaheddin University-Erbil	Face to Face	Sunday, 4 July 2021 10 am
17-	Omar Sheikhmous	Independent Analyst and Consultant Meddle Eastern and Kurdish Affairs, Executive Member of SCCCK	Face to Face	Saturday. 10 July 2021 5 pm
18-	Dr. Abdulkarim Omer	Co-Chair of Foreign Relations Department in North and East of Syria	Email	23 Aug 2021
19-	General Council Office	The Questions are answered by the office of the General Council of the Syrian Democratic Forces in North and East Syria	Email	23 Aug 2021