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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)**

Budapest 2022

CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST

**Political science and international relation
Sub-Program: International and Security Studies**

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Budapest 2022

Abstract

Kurds have played an significant role in the Syrian conflict since the 2011 crisis, mainly through their strong participation in the fight against ISIS. During the war against ISIS, the U.S. made significant gains both under President Obama and President Trump’s administrations but did not strive to establish long-term strategies about Syria, especially the Syrian Kurds. After the collapse of the ISIS caliphate in 2019, Trump’s decision to withdraw the U.S. forces from Syria left the Syrian Kurds with tough domestic and external challenges. This decision raised the question of whether the United States has a clear policy and strategy for dealing with the Kurds in Syria. Thus, the objectives of this study are to find reasons and factors that have led to shifts in US foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds. 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. In this regard, semi-structured interviews were conducted with politicians, policy makers, academics, and journalists, mainly in Syria and Iraqi Kurdistan. It can be inferred that changes in the US foreign policy from direct military intervention to “no boot on the ground” and “America First” alternatives arose from accomplishing the primary objective of defeating ISIS. Under the presidencies of Obama & 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. It is vital for the United States to regain its reputation as a reliable 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. – United States
- UN – United Nations
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- UNICEF – the United Nations Children's Fund,
- UNSC – The United Nations Security Council
- USA – United States of America
- USD – United States Dollar
- USFP – the United States 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

It would have been difficult for me to complete this study without the unwavering support and encouragement of my family, friends, and supervisors. First and foremost, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Dr. Rostoványi Zsolt and my co-supervisor Assistant Professor Dr. Zubir R. Ahmed who guided and supported me throughout my PhD Journey. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Csicsmann Laszalo and Dr. Tomas Dezso, who encouraged me to pursue my PhD at Corvinus University.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my closest friends, who never failed to support and encourage me during my PhD journey. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to my closest friends, especially Darbaz Kosrat Rasul, who encouraged me to study in Hungary and later supported me in working hard on my PhD project. I cannot thank enough my friend and University of Raparin Assistant Professor, Dr. Araz Ramazan, for encouraging, guiding, and supporting me in my PhD journey. Meanwhile, I would like to express my appreciations to Dr. Ardalan Khwshnaw and Assistant Professor Dr. Paiman Ramazan, who encouraged me to do PhD at Corvinus University in Budapest. Likewise, I would like to express my gratitude to my friends, Dr. Muhammad M. Saleh and Mr. Sangar Rasul. My special thanks also go to Dr. Shoresh Ismael, PUK's representative in Hungary, who helped me as a friend both in the process of applying for my PhD study and during my PhD journey.

I should not forget to thank my friends who helped me arrange and conduct the interviews. Riyadh Zainaddin, Araz Zainaddin, Karwan Hussein Saed, Jovan Jahwar and Sarkawt, I am very thankful for your support and help. My gratitude also goes to all the interviewees who kindly agreed to share their knowledge and insights and enhanced the depth and critical input of this research.

Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

Events following the Syrian war helped the emergence and solidification of Kurdish self-rule in Syria. After the spread of the war, by the end of July 2012, Syrian forces withdrew from many Kurdish-populated areas in northern Syria. 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, due to 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, pp. 81-90 (Article)).

In July 2012, Kurdish political parties overtook most Kurdish cities and areas in the north of Syria. This control was achievable by a commission established by most of the Syrian Kurdish political parties, which governed the areas and retained borders and security. For the first time, these highly factionalized political parties were trying to take control of their future. Their objective was to safeguard their situation and the Kurdish people in the middle of the larger crisis in Syria. This extraordinary situation was the consequence of the specific dynamics of the Syrian uprising, the internal machinations of Kurdish politics and the history of decades of state control of Kurdish identity and struggles to secure political reason (harriet Allsopp, 2015, p. 14).

The Syrian uprising shifted the exchange requirements of the Kurdish political parties, starting significant shifts in Kurdish politics in Syria. During the uprising, the state withdrew from Kurdish areas enabling the Kurdish political parties to develop as a unified and cohesive society focused on securing Kurdish rights. At the same time, the

Kurds were able to create a form of self-rule in many areas and the Kurdish issue in Syria became internationally significant, particularly in regional matters (Harriet Allsopp, 2015, p. 14). Both the George H.W. Bush and Clinton administrations have been criticized for too much U.S engagement with Syria, while critics of George W. Bush's administration complained that the U.S did not engage enough. This second position was reinforced in the 2006 Iraqi Study Group (ISG) Report, co-chaired by George H.W. Bush's secretary of state, James Baker, who defended cooperating with Syria during the first Persian Gulf War. The ISG report called for "a robust diplomatic effort" with all countries interested in the stability of Iraq, in particular Iran and Syria (Sadat and Jones, 2017, p.8). However, the U.S. policy through both Obama and Trump has become one of tolerating Assad over the alternative while not saying so and looking the other way (Hirsh, 2019).

It can be argued that from 2012 until President Donald Trump's order to withdraw the U.S. troops from Northern Syria, the US foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds was a cause of their foreign policy in Syria. Trump's last decision in October 2018 to leave some 200 U.S. troops in Syria cannot change much from the multifaceted Syrian crisis. This might be mainly because of their commitment to Kurdish allies (SDF). This is particularly after Turkey insisted on interfering in Syria. Turkish attacks and the U.S withdrawal may lead to more violence in Syria. Meanwhile, both Moscow's anti-Kurdish and pro-Turkish stance largely stems from the attempts to deprive the U.S. of local allies and to drive a wedge between the NATO powers (Teke, 2020).

Since the 2011 Syrian crisis, Kurds have been crucial factors in the Syrian conflict, especially in their active role in the war against ISIS. Their active role paved the way to make alignment with the number of regional and superpowers in Syria. Thus, Syrian Kurds have been backed militarily and logistically by the US. The U.S. involvement in Syria has not been stable and so far, Trump's administration does not have a clear foreign policy in Syria. USFP has shifted from working quietly behind the scenes with SDF to overt displays of the U.S. force and towards widening its footprint in an attempt to shape the fight.

So, whether the U.S alliance with Syrian Kurds is a long-term strategy or tactical ploy, that does not change from the fact that US foreign policy has changed towards

Syrian Kurds from neglecting (2011-2014) to cooperation (2014-2019) and later desertion (October 2019).

1.1 Aim and Objectives

In the problem statement above, it is evident that Syria and other parts of the Middle East are experiencing shifting alliances which points to a power vacuum. The danger of this delicate or vulnerable situation, as avowed by Rubaii (2019), is that there might be a resurrection of the “Kurdish Movement.” From the perspective of the European countries as possible regional factors on which the U.S. could rely on its quest to re-stabilize and reconstruct Syria. Scholarly insights suggest that the countries are neither willing nor prepared to fill the vacuum (Salloum, 2017). Russia’s capacity to invest in the Middle East is also doubtful. Thus, these developments in Syria demand an urgent update of the U.S. foreign policy approach towards addressing the Kurdish dilemma, especially one that might enable it (the U.S.) to cope with the evolving geopolitical and regional challenges with which Syria and other nation-states in the Middle East continue to grapple.

In a quest to contribute to this subject, which is yet to be conclusive, the main aim of the study was: to investigate the changing dynamics of the U.S. foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds. The study’s specific objectives are stated as follows:

- To determine the key reasons influencing and changing U.S. policy towards the Syrian Kurds from 2011-2020.
- To examine factors that have led to a change in the foreign policy dynamics of the U.S. towards Syrian Kurds
- To investigate the outcomes of recent fluctuations in the relationships between the U.S. and the Syrian Kurds
- To demonstrate that post-2011, has been a significant 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 central research question 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

A combination of domestic, regional, and international factors in US politics might influence its relations with the Syrian Kurds. However, the emergence of ISIS has been the main driver of the US foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds. There are other factors which this research addresses especially, the US-Russia rivalry, the policy of containing Iran, protecting US allies in the region, and preserving the US hegemony in the Middle East, which has shaped the USFP towards Syrian Kurds. In addition, the U.S. domestic factors, such as the leader's perception and the institutional dynamics, have influenced the US- Syrian Kurds' relation. Although the US-KRG alignment may not be the same as the U.S support to Syrian Kurds, it can be seen in the same context. This is especially in the case of the US involvement in Syria. It could be argued that the USFP has engaged with non-state factors or militia groups to protect its regional hegemony.

It could be argued that the approach of "Building Partner Capacity for Stability" (Jefferson P. Marquis, et. al, 2010), can be helpful in understanding the US - Syrian Kurdish alignment in 2015. The security assistance has contributed to the intensity and frequency of proxy wars—such as those underway or recently wound down in Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq. Several studies are concerned overwhelmingly with the issue of whether or not the United States has achieved its goals through the provision of security

assistance, a key component of which is referred to as “building partner capacity” (BPC). According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), these goals include victory in war or war termination; managing regional security challenges; indirectly supporting a party to the conflict; conflict mitigation; building institutional and interpersonal linkages; enhancing coalition participation; and alliance-building (McInnis and Lucas, 2015). Thus, the US-Kurdish alignment in Syria can be security assistance to enable the US to achieve its objectives at less cost in personnel and materiel than through direct military intervention in Syria.

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

The U.S. has altered its foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds through the ‘America First’ motto and other national slogans. This study is deemed important since it seeks to answer whether the U.S. should stick to this foreign policy while contemplating on alternative options of allies to back (such as Israel), or it should abandon this policy (of backing allies rather than direct military intervention) and exploit a new path towards re-stabilizing and reconstructing Syria. By examining some of the factors responsible for the changing foreign policy dynamics or changes on the U.S.’ side, the proposed study is also important because it will ensure that even as an ideal path is recommended, factors that might have contributed to changes in tactics and possibly ended up working against the intended goals of the U.S. in the Middle East are countered within the proposed path accordingly. It is also notable that through the examination of some of the outcomes that have accrued from recent fluctuations in the relationship between the U.S. and the Syrian Kurds, a path that will be recommended one that will be out to ensure that the foreign policy implementation policy is tailored in a manner that accommodates positive outcomes that might have accrued during the foreign policy change – while encountering

problems that might have emerged from the foreign policy change. The following chapter provides a literature review of some of the scholarly studies that might have contributed to this subject, as well as the theoretical framework on which the proposed study will rely 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

In all literature reviews, one can conclude that , given the mixed issues associated with the current approach to the U.S. foreign policy, one of the argued positions is that with Israel and Saudi Arabia's new alliance emerging, the U.S. could use them as regional partners while seeking to realize its current foreign policy, which comes in the wake of a trend of desertion, as depicted by the "no boots on the ground" slogan (Cetorelli and Ashraph, 2019, p. 4). According to Dewachi (2017), if the U.S. decides to spearhead the latter approach, it might end up replacing its strategic alliance with Turkey, especially when indicators hold that Turkey is likely to close ranks with Iran and Russia.

The situation in Syria 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, the Iranians wish to create a land link with Hezbollah and to open another front with Israel on the Golan Heights. 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.

Thus, in the literature review one can say: On the one hand, it can be perceived that the Saudi Arabia-Israel new alliance could be promising relative to supporting the United States' foreign policy. While indications from the initial signs tend to suggest that if a three-fold alliance between the U.S., Israel, and Saudi Arabia is formed, that alliance, the beneficiaries might be the Kurdish political factors (Dietrich and Carter, 2017; Nader, Hanauer, Allen and Scotten, 2016). Donabed (2015) made similar observations and stated that this alliance might benefit Kurdish political factors because even in the recent past,

neither the Israelis nor the Saudis have declared their positions against the aspirations of the Kurdish people. In the study by Johnston, Alami, and Clarke et al. (2019), these observations were confirmed, whereby it was observed that where the Syrian Democratic Council holds some areas that the Kurds dominate, where the stabilization projects have been established.

Another aspect that complicates the equation of Kurdistan concerning the changing dynamics surrounding the U.S. foreign policy towards Syria's Kurdish people is that if on the side of the U.S., Turkey is absent, Iraq' Kurdish political factors might benefit from the U.S.-Turkey divergence or division significantly – relative to the U.S. anti-Iran policy. In particular, the Kurds in Iraq might reduce their reliance on military and economic support from Turkey (Millare, 2019). Also, there might be a collaboration between the Sunnis of Iraq and Kurdish political factors towards Shia dominance mitigation, both in disputed areas and in Kurdistan (O'Driscoll, 2017).

It is also worth indicating that in the Middle East, Syria included, the Kurdish political parties are vulnerable but continue to occupy crucial positions, especially in areas populated by the Kurds. The eventuality is that without the Kurdish political parties' provision of consent, the current U.S. foreign policy of backing allies in a quest to re-establish and reconstruct Syria might be jeopardized significantly. Specifically, the capacity to unite could be lacking among the Kurdish political parties, but they exhibit the capability of upending regional and domestic balances in Syria, a similar trend that has been witnessed in Iran and Turkey. In the latter nation-states, Robinson, Egel and Johnston et al. (2017) stated that for success in Kurdish-populated regions' central authority control, major determinants have included forces aimed at strengthening the role of the Kurdish parties, especially that which involves the parties' existence and role as representatives of the will of the Kurdish people. In case United States' new foreign policy of backing allies during this period of desertion falls short of considering the consent of the Kurdish parties, that exist in Syria and exhibit some degree of ability to upend regional and domestic balances in this nation-state, it remains inferable that a conclusive policy option capable of responding to these dynamics and yielding success in the U.S. foreign policy is yet to be documented vividly.

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. According to Dewachi (2017), some states include Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. The era of the Cold War shaped this perception, as the affected states' central authorities would be supported by Western powers to ensure that their political borders were controlled (Ali, 2019). In doing so, there was a clear difference between foreign and domestic policies regarding the Kurds that were restricted to national boundaries. Dietrich and Carter (2017) asserted a question concerning the situation, which is approached in a way that depicted it as a security concern affecting and requiring solutions from within the respective affected nation-states.

In concurrence with the observations above, Donabed (2015) noted that due to the treatment of their question as a security issue within national boundaries, the Kurds would become culturally, economically, and socially disconnected from each other. Also, Johnston, Alami and Clarke et al. (2019) stated that this approach ended up differentiating and reshaping the identity of the Kurds so that in different constituent states, these people would end up conforming to nationalist projects that dominated mainstream society (Millare, 2019). Even for Kurdish national movements seeking to respond to the perceived nationalist projects, their evolution remained inclined to Kurdistan's geopolitical fragmentation, which arose from national and identity or linguistic differences (O'Driscoll, 2017). At the time, within the respective nation-states, these minority groups became vulnerable (Robinson, Egel, and Johnston et al., 2017).

2.1.2 Significant changes in the state of affairs

In the last ten decades, there has been a significant change in the state of affairs. For example, in 1992 an autonomous region established in northern Iraq, a Kurdish zone. By 2012, northern Syria saw a Kurdish rule evolve, attracting the Kurds' cross-border mobilization (Rubaii, 2019). According to Salloum (2017), recent observations suggest that the Kurdish reorganization has transformed into four major elements. These elements include the media, border business or trade, armed struggle, and immigration. With increasing migration, the UNHCR (2019) reported further that there had been a dramatic reconstruction in such a way that former Kurds' identities that were strictly

separated from the remainder of the respective nation-states have changed and converged into a common Kurdish identity, a trend complemented by the factor of shared ethnicity.

In a quest to fight and defeat ISIS, one of the significant militaries and political factors in the Middle East was Kurds, globally considered as vital to this regional crisis. Given this question, a crucial consequence has been when and how the Kurdish question could be transformed. Kurdish parties have ended up altering their strategies and perceptions following frustrations witnessed due to efforts that have proved largely fruitless, especially concerning their effort to realize equal political footing and equal rights in countries that host them (Ali, 2017). Underway, a remarkable change is evident. According to Ali (2019), initial situations were marked by the fight for equality, freedom, and justice within a targeted nation-state. However, Cetorelli and Ashraph (2019) documented that in the recent past, the shift has seen most of the efforts concerned defending Kurdistan to ensure that the political territory is shielded from external forces. An emerging theme is the initial fragmented approach in which events surrounding the Kurds were treated as domestic and required national concern is fading. Events in Syria reflect a complicated situation. For more than five years, the UNHCR (2019) reported that, based on the foreign policy of the United States, the common approach was to collaborate with Kurdish-led forces, motivated by two major objectives. One of the objectives lies in limiting Russia and Iran's influence, especially because these foes (of the U.S.) supported the Syrian government. Another objective was to fight the Islamic State (ISIS). The collaboration between the Kurdish-led forces and the U.S., therefore, sought to ensure that some degree of leverage was maintained, especially if, in the future, there arises a need to settle the conflict (Zaman, 2016).

2.1.3 Based on Low (2015)

According to Low (2015), the "no boots on the ground" complementation of this motto suggest that in Syria and the rest of the Middle East, there is a looming situation in which there might be a notable decline in the military presence of Americans. Rather than foster direct military interventions, Porker (2018) stated that the role of the U.S. is continuously diminishing and, instead, has resorted to backing allies. However, even when its strategic change seeks to conform to the aforementioned motto relative to the events in Syria, it is important to note that strategic allies' support is lacking in this region (Mueller, T. et al., 2017).

For example, American alliance with Turkey has continually been eroded by tense relationships with Turkey, implying that even if the quest to back allies dominated the United States' foreign policy in the region, a series of crises might be felt. In the observation by Ali (2017), it was stated that tense relations have arisen from the main driver in the form of the United States' support provision to Kurdish fighters in the Syrian context. However, Ali (2019) made a different observation and stated that based on the reports by Pastor Andrew Brunson, the U.S.-Turkey tense relationship is more profound, reflected in sanctions that have not only compounded Turkey's economic crisis but also weakened efforts to use Turkey as an ally. With Turkey proceeding to negotiate with Russia to buy an S-400 surface-to-air missile system, America's strategy of backing allies rather than engaging in direct military intervention has been undermined significantly. In the wake of phases of ignorance, cooperation, and desertion, the extent to which the changing foreign policy employed by the U.S. in Syria, especially for the Kurds, remains an inconclusive debate.

However, more recent events depict a scenario in which President Donald Trump and decisions in Washington have been those that involve abandoning this approach. This abandonment, as indicated by Low (2015) and Gunter (2014), suggests that Russian and Iranian backers, alongside President Bashar al-Assad, 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 crucial aspect of the conflict in Syria has been the development of a form of pan-state Kurdish identity, which rely mainly on the political parties in Syria and Iraq. (Allsopp and Van Wilgenburg, 2019).

It is evident that the fragile peace has been upended at a time when the Kurdish fighters have been left at the mercy of the Turks, accused the U.S. of betrayal, and struck a deal with Damascus to have forces assist in countering them the Turkish invasion. An additional risk is that the Islamic State's resurgence might be witnessed with the fragile peace upended. A specific example is that, following the Turks' bombardment of a prison run by the Kurds in Qamishli, five ISIS captives escaped (Porker, 2018). However, even in the wake of the Kurds' cry of betrayal by the U.S., having collaborated to defeat ISIS, Mr. Trump's position is that the need to ensure that endless wars in which the U.S. has been engaging needed to be extricated. A question that arises is, whereas the abandonment

aids in achieving this goal, especially by deviating from a direct military intervention such as that in which the U.S. backed the Kurdish-led militia (the Syrian Democratic Forces), how best should the current foreign policy of backing allies be developed and implemented to ensure that the endless wars are curbed while also ensuring that with the Kurds in the equation, the pressure is kept on Mr. Assad, his forces are kept out of the territory, and the influence of Russia and Iran stemmed?

According to Dewachi (2017), during its war against ISIS, the U.S. made significant gains both under President Trump and Barrack Obama but did not strive to establish long-term strategies for Syria, especially the Syrian Kurds. After mixed outcomes that marked the initial years of the war and uprising, Obama's administration focused on a single policy of ensuring that on the battlefield, ISIS was defeated (Dietrich and Carter, 2017). This sole focus on the defeat of ISIS as the primary objective, as avowed by Him (2017), arose from the affirmations that the flourishing of ISIS in Syria arose from root causes such as the presence of discriminatory, corrupt, and oppressive regimes that were in power. He (2018) stated that, given that these root causes were so complicated that they could not be mitigated or addressed easily, the Obama administration resorted to an objective deemed more practical and achievable, defeating ISIS. Based on this scholarly observation, it can be inferred that the U.S. change in its foreign policy to deviate from direct military intervention to a "no boot on the ground" and "America First" scenario arose from accomplishing the primary objective of defeating ISIS. Thus, the assertions are informative because they increase understanding some factors that might have motivated the desertion. However, it is also worth indicating that despite the informative nature of these observations, they do not give insight into how, while implementing the new foreign policy that strives to avoid direct military intervention, the fate of Syrian Kurds, renowned U.S. allies, could be streamlined. It is also notable that the observations above lead audiences to understand possible motivations behind the U.S. abandonment of Syria but fail to unearth some of the events that might have accounted for the previous ignorance of the crisis in Syria.

Given that the United States' withdrawal from Syria has been abrupt, many studies contend that significant spillover effects were expected in the near and far future affecting several players involved directly or indirectly in the conflict, Iran unexceptional (Allsopp and van Wilgenburg, 2019). However, Ali (2019) observed that even in the wake of the perceived spillover effects, the minority groups, typically the Syrian Kurds, might be the

worst hit and experience the biggest short-term impacts linked to the United States' changing foreign policy marked by its abrupt withdrawal from Syria. The study by Cetorelli and Ashraph (2019) documented that while Syrian Kurds have offered crucial assistance relative to the fight against ISIS, their survival in the war zone has relied heavily on American protection. At this stage, it becomes critical to review some of the events that surrounded the United States' initial moment of ignoring the Syrian crisis, the moment at which it intervened up to 2019, and the period of departure or abandonment in late 2019.

Apart from scholarly insights that have focused on the causes of the U.S. abandonment of Syria, following the defeat of ISIS, other studies have examined the consequences of the new foreign policy, especially about America's longtime ally, the Syrian Kurds or SDF. In the investigation by Johnston, Alami, and Clarke et al. (2019), it was stated that given the speed and suddenness of the shift or the abandonment, the changes in American foreign policy have resulted in several challenges towards Syrian Kurds. In similar observations as those made by MacDonald (2018), the study indicated that with the exit of the U.S., one of the broader implications is that Kurdish nationalists might be defenceless, finding themselves at the crossroads due to the abandonment by America. Hence, these scholarly observations are informative because they aid in understanding some of the broader consequences of the shift in American foreign policy towards the Syrian Kurds.

In light of the Millares's (2019) thesis, most of the Syrian Kurds might end up ceding regions that are under the Syrian regime's control. Overall, these assertions contribute to this study because they increase the understanding of the volatile situation in which Syrian Kurds have found themselves after the speedy and sudden departure of their ally and patron.

Despite the informative nature of these assertions, however, several gaps remain unaddressed. For example, the observations increase the audiences' understanding of the negative broader implications of the U.S. departure, but they do not point out some of the strategies that the U.S. could still, have to ensure that at a time when dynamics in its foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds are changing fast. The Syrian Kurds continue to push their agenda from a national interest level rather than cede areas where the Syrian regime controls. Also, the scholarly reports above falter in such a way that they do not highlight

consequences that the U.S. departure might have on Arab forces linked to Kurdish militiamen; neither do these assertions clarify the impact that the changing dynamics of the U.S. foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds might have on Arab tribes that Mueller et al. (2017) observed that they have continually resented Arab-majority cities' control by Kurds in Syria. In the proposed study, it becomes important to stretch beyond the analysis of the impact of America's abandonment of Syrian Kurds on the ability (of Kurdish militia) to defend themselves and also examine or propose new directions through which the new foreign policy could be implemented while ensuring that Syrian Kurds do not lose grip of their previously controlled cities, even in the patron's absence. 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.

According to Mueller et al. (2017), the shift in the United States' foreign policy of tactical changes in combating methods and the motto of "America First" implies that for Syrian Kurds, devastating consequences are expected. The study documented that Syrian Kurds have strived to have their autonomous rule in areas where they have captured land from jihadists, yet the U.S.' abandonment puts this project at a risk of collapsing. As Ali (2017) stated that the situation is compounded by uncertainties regarding whether the Kurds might retain some rights (if any), should they fall back under the government of Mr. Assad. Several times, it is also notable that several factions have exchanged hands in vying with the government to assume control in northern Syria. Some of these factions include the Kurdish, extremists, Islamists, and rebels (Cetorelli and Ashraph, 2019; Philips, 2015; Werz and Hoffman, 2014). However, when the Kurdish forces joined American troops for combating the ISIS, they have proved to be a dominant force in the region, especially in terms of guarding former ISIS fighters and taking control of territories formerly under ISIS (on behalf of the U.S., as well as other allies around the world). What complicates the situation is that there is a combination of the Pentagon's decision to withdraw forces and a hardening Kurdish animosity after aligning themselves with Assad (America's key foe), with the latter move aimed at securing the government's support to fight the invading Turkish troops. With the Syrian government backed by Russia, Dewachi (2017) observed that it is evident that the United States' initial goal of

limiting the influence of Russia and Iran (while maintaining some leverage regarding future conflict settlements) is at the crossroads, especially because the abandoned Kurdish forces, having been abandoned by the U.S. at a time when Turkish troops are invading, have resorted to government assistance, which Russia also backs. Overall, this review of the literature has established that while the new foreign policy of the U.S. involves backing allies (such as monetary-related stabilization assistance to Syria's civil society organizations and human rights defenders to advance human rights and protect prosecuted religious and ethnic minorities), this abandonment of America's Kurdish allies via the other new emerged policy of how the US should conduct military intervenes and "America First" motto have unleashed a humanitarian and military crisis for Syrian Kurds. A question arises: What is the most feasible approach that should be used to spearhead the changing dynamics of foreign policy while achieving the West's intended goals in the Middle East and averting the Kurds' crisis simultaneously?

Since, the US reduced dependence on Middle Eastern petroleum, the United States still tries to guard energy flows that remain vital to the world's financial system. Among threats to allies, intra-state conflict and violent extremism have hugely eclipsed the danger of inter-state conflict, and the one capable state adversary the United States needs to worry about in the region—is Iran which often acts through asymmetric tactics. The instability these threats pose also has knock-on impacts on the U.S. and its European allies. For instance, the complicated civil war and rise of ISIL in Syria have led to massive refugee flows to Europe, exacerbating the domestic economic, political, and security issues facing critical European allies. Moreover, the rise of ISIL resulted in "lone wolf" terrorists has raised the threat of terrorism to the U.S. homeland and allies around the globe.

Meanwhile, new threats that were not anticipated in the traditional expression of American interests in the greater Middle East have emerged. Therefore, the rise of ISIS and the active role of Kurdish influence have influenced the depth of Americans aim and commitment to keeping the state structure in the area as represented by physical borders drawn a century ago. Moreover, while the US has long worried about the Arab Gulf states' "checkbook diplomacy," only now is it faced with these states independently deploying military power, including in ways uncoordinated with their traditional security guarantor (Mueller, et al.: 2017).

If we go back to the above-mentioned point, we could find that there are many things to the disclosure of how the US foreign policy towards the Syrian Kurds was built, and what are the main barriers to keep on such policies?

Even though few researchers have published research on, the question of the Kurdish problems, especially about US-Kurdish relations in the Middle East, such as (Charountaki) in 2001, who has research that discussed the relationship between Americans and Kurds in the Middle East. The researcher discussed the Kurdish role as a nation that has a (non-state) country (Charountaki, 2011) and their role in American politics in the Middle East and presented important information on US and Kurdish relations from 1946 and 1945 until now in the Middle East. However, her study only focused on the KRG. It only addressed a limited period following the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, as she submitted her study in 2009 and did not have any chance to see what was happening regarding the US policy towards Syrian Kurds following 2011, which can be addressed as a new era of US foreign policy towards both Kurds and non-state factors. Charountaki argued (2011) that there were good relations between the United States and the Kurds (non-state), but an official relationship followed the first secret relationship. It can be argued that the US policy towards Syrian Kurds has not been in a secret relationship. Opposed to the other regional players, such as Russia, Turkey and Iran, the U.S avoided getting involved directly at the beginning of the Syrian crisis.

2.1.4 Relations between the United States and the Kurds in the Middle East

One more thing which is worth mentioning that Gunter's (2011) study is a fruitful study regarding relations between the United States and the Kurds in the Middle East. In his article (2011, Insight Turkey) he criticized the United States because he thought that the United States did not support the Kurds in the Middle East (Gunter, 2011). Thus, he believed that the United States favoured these countries (sovereign states) more than the Kurdish in Syria and Iraq.

However, others argued that there have been relations between the United States and the Kurds in the Middle East, but these studies are not enough, because these studies have not addressed the type and level of these relations, especially after the advent of the Islamic State in 2014. This period has been a new era of regional and international transformation. The Kurds played an important role in this era which mainly had a vital role in the fight against ISIS in the Middle East. Meanwhile, Kurds in both Iraq and Syria

directly coordinated with US's formal institutions against terrorism; this could be a new start for the US engagement with non-state factors and armed groups. Moreover, they could keep Kurdish areas safe in Syria and Iraq.

2.1.5 Based on Syrian Kurds, history, politics and society

The previous abovementioned studies, Tejel (2009) (Syrian Kurds, history, politics and society) has addressed the history of Kurds in Syria from the beginning of Syria to the present day. In addition to the history of the Kurds in Syria, he discussed the Kurdish society in Syria and their relations with the Syrian government. At the same time, he presented vital information about the PKK and its President Abdullah Ocalan until he was arrested by Turkey in 1998. It is also worth mentioning that he presented important information on the PYD (Democratic Union Party) in Syria and its role in Syria against ISIS. However, his study has not engaged with the US foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds, particularly after 2011.

Gunes's (2011) study (The impact of the Syrian War on Kurdish politics Across the Middle East) is another work that has addressed Syrian Kurds. He mainly examined the debilitating Syria routine and Kobane war, which was, according to his study, an open door for Kurds in the fields of military and politics to get experts in some zones. However, it does not imply that law-based Syria powers will be competent to choose these areas due to its identified connection with Syria inverse and Assad routine and even remoting police of superpower and neighbor regions. Because of this vision, there are some issues with diverse Kurdish gatherings (PYD, KNC). This identifies strife between PKK and PDK in Iraqi Kurdistan setting; we cannot disregard the meddling involvement of Turkey and Iran in that condition.

An analyst has been examining PKK's job in establishing PYD, which cannot disregard PKK on their control and philosophy (Abdulla Ocalan Ideology). Abdulla Ocalan's belief system is self-independent, staying away from the National and building a country state (Low, 2015). To every single diverse country, culture, ethnicity, religion could live respectively under PYD expert. Besides, it was examined about the advancements in Rojava in the political and military. These advancements stressed Turkey because of growing PYD in Rojava undermining on Turkish security circumstances. That is the reason Turkey is dependably forced against Kurdish improvement around there. So Turkish strategy is continually driving the Kurdistan

district of Iraq to cut their association with PYD. Another factor is the unique belief system among PDK and PKK. Additionally, he talked about global help after the Kobane war, particularly in changing USA outside arrangement regarding PYD, which was diverse contrast with its past strategy with the Kurdish approach.

Moreover, a deeper look is required to find some proper answers to these questions related to our study as the US did what they thought they needed to do to degrade and defeat ISIS sometimes without Turkey and, once again, allied with the Kurds. Thus, what is Washington's motivation in its policy vis-à-vis Syrian Kurds? The other real questions are about Ankara's motivation.

Maybe there are some speculations about the US' plans to redraw boundaries in the region to make a more stable Middle East or examine the consequences of the new US approach to Iran following negotiations on the nuclear program. But, this is a serious problem in the case of the Kurdish question, the back story signals how the policy rift developed between these two allies. In short, the US tried numerous times to obtain Turkish cooperation, and Turkey resisted it. Ultimately, moving off that specialist could not examine that profoundly changing the US outside arrangement with the Kurds in which its procedure is changing or utilizing Kurdish warriors against ISIS.

However, Johan W. Parker (Between Russia and Iran: Room to pursue American Interests in Syria) examined the triumph of Russia and Iran in securing the Syrian Regime in the wake of an uprising of Syrian residents in 2011. This study considers Shia side triumph in that region. This would obstruct joining expressed outside strategy in the Middle East. It clearly showed up among Putin and Trump on 2018 talks of helping, which was about the contention of Syria and Israel's security.

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

Some scholars have examined the connection between Russia and Turkey on toll long war because Turkey abhorred connection among the USA and PYD (Rojava). The examination clearly dealt with the connection between Russia and Iran on Syria and the US and Russia. However, the analyst was not ready to concentrate on Kurdish power factors in (Rojava) which has impacted the outside arrangement of the US and Russia.

Thus, the US remote strategy concerning the Kurdish development in Rojava has been changed.

Another issue that might be important to consider regarding the US engagement in Syria is related to the nation-states or nation-building process, which had gone through a different path than what we see in the west. The process of nation or state-building in the Middle East, which has mostly been carried out by foreign powers and most of the cases of state-building have been imposed by the imperialist powers without any social contract between the state and civil society. The fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Sykes-Picot agreement following WWI, made the Near East Balkanized with the new creatures like Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and Iraq. Furthermore, the term of Lebanonization is explained as a final stage of Balkanization, introduces a state's decay in a civil war and the external factors play a decisive role in its reconstitution process. In Lebanon's case, for instance, it is clearly demonstrated that these external factors include Israel (withdrew its military there in 2000) and Syria (withdrawal of its military in 2005), as well as other factors like Saudi Arabia and Iran (quoted from Corm, 2007).

At the End of the civil war, after 25 years, many regions of Lebanon stay far from the state's control. Going beyond Lebanon's borders, the hypothecation of Lebanonization can be applied to Syria and today's situation in Iraq. Moreover, another effective impact is the rivalry and conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which weaken the Middle East states, effectively undermining the Sykes-Picot boundaries.

Through a closer examination, there is evidence that other literature has not adequately covered the U.S. foreign policy towards the Syrian Kurds. Most of the studies ignored addressing the fundamental question of why the U.S policy has been changed from ignorance to cooperation with the Syrian Kurds. (Humud, 2022). For the West and U.S., interventions were possible to encounter ISIS.

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.

Additionally, the studies that have focused on some factors necessitating the changing dynamics of the U.S. foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds. Some have stretched beyond the documented factor of the realization of the goal of defeating ISIS.

Accordingly, during Trump's administration and Obama's era, it has been stated that given that most of the objectives in Syria were not within reach of many Western countries, especially the U.S., America's abandonment of Syrian Kurds remained one of the options at its disposal. According to O'Driscoll (2017), some of the objectives that have remained out of reach by the U.S.'s initial foreign policy include the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime, accountability for mass murder, and the safe return of refugees. Porker (2018) concurred that this failure of objectives comes when the UN diplomatic track has yet to achieve its objective in the region, primarily via the Geneva process. These observations, as highlighted by Rubaii (2019), suggest that most of the Western countries' objectives in Syria have proved unrealistic and that the dire state contributes to the decision by America to abandon Syrian Kurds. Indeed, the contributory nature of these affirmations to the literature about the situation in Syria could not be overemphasized because they increase the understanding that due to a mismatch between the Western country's previous objectives in Syria, especially America, accounted for the abandonment, as they proved out of reach. However, it is imperative to state that these scholarly reports are important because they highlight the defeat of ISIS and the unrealistic nature of most of the remaining objectives (such as the ones mentioned above) that played predictive roles in the United States' change in its foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds. They overemphasize factors that motivated the abandonment, failing to shed light on some of the reasons that might have prompted the U.S. to ignore the crisis in Syria in the very initial moments before the dominance of ISIS.

In the end, despite the presence of research dealing with American policy in Syria and toward Syrian Kurds, the absence of comprehensive research explaining and assessing the evolving relations is felt. To respond to this gap, specific areas that the proposed study strives to address, include the reasons why the U.S. ignored Syrian Kurds at the beginning of the Syrian crisis, why the U.S. worked with and supported Syrian

Kurds or SDF up to 2019, and why there was a foreign policy change in which the U.S. deserted or abandoned the Syrian Kurds.

2.2 Theoretical Framework – The Theory of Neoclassical Realism

The complexity of the region is pronounced by a series of political turmoil and wars, the presence of formidable oil reserves, and a set of religious and ethnic conflicts (Halliday, 2005). An essential starting point for reaching a thorough understanding of the nature of the U.S foreign policy in this complicated region is a construction of an adequate theoretical framework. A comprehensive examination of the international relations of the Middle East, however reveals an apparent lack of studies dealing with the theoretical aspects of this field of study. Despite the various attempts by several researchers, such as Halliday, Fawcett, Hinnebustch & Ehteshami, Korany&Dissouki, Brown, L.C, and others. There is still a significant absence of theoretical works elaborating on some issues related to international relations in the Middle East.

Notwithstanding the abovementioned deficiency of scholarship regarding the pertinent topic, several factors related to international relations have been studied, albeit to a varying degree, and it should be considered in analyzing both international relations and foreign policy of the Middle Eastern countries. These factors can be summarized into the following points:

- The regional factors: this is a crucial set of factors for comprehending the nature of the international relations of the Middle East because of the historical, social, and religious ties between most Middle Eastern countries. Besides, the region remains affected by the remnants of the colonial heritage, which have embedded these countries in a perpetual circle of “durable patterns of amity and enmity,” (Buzan, 2003, p.45).
- The international factors: The Middle East has been under the aegis of greater transregional powers, such as the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain after World War I, and then the U.S. after World War II. Thus, to a large degree, the Middle East cannot be understood entirely without considering the impact and influence of external powers, especially the US.
- The internal factors: the importance of local factors related to the international relations of the Middle East might be understood in two ways: firstly, when the domestic political disorder begins to threaten the authority of rulers, and secondly, in

the case of the presence of strong historical and political ties between ethnics or religious groups between two or more countries, for instance, the ethno-sectarian bond of Sunni and Shiite communities in Iraq, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Jordan or the Kurdish communities in Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey.

One crucial characteristic of international relations and foreign policy theories is their tendency to focus on one aspect whilst often neglecting others. For example, classical realism has highlighted the role of the state and power distribution of national interests, whereas it has overlooked the role of domestic factors (Lobell, et al, 2009). Similarly, neo-realism or structural realism has concentrated more on the anarchic world system, yet at the same time ignored the importance of domestic realities (Dunne, et al., 2007). The same form of deficiency might be ascribed to other theories, such as liberalism, neo-liberalism, Marxism, constructivism, or the English school.

Therefore, regarding the Middle East, realism and hegemony are two theoretical frameworks that might be more appropriate to understand the nature of the USFP towards the Middle East. More specifically, given several reasons, realism seems like a more useful theory in dealing with the leverage of the super and regional power in Syria: firstly, since realism is considerably focused on the distribution of power, which is at the same time a great concern of the USFP in Syria. Secondly, realism provides a better understanding of the sectarian tensions that have emerged in Syria, as these tensions can be related to the re-ordering of power structures following the Syrian crisis. Thirdly, realists assert that issues related to security are perpetually shape relations between regional powers (Paul, 2012).

Considering the abovementioned brief analysis of the fundamental points of the theory of realism as applied in the study of international relations, this study will employ a new version of realism theory labelled 'neoclassical realism', which is based on theoretical assumptions of other theories of realism, such as classical realism and neo-realism. Neoclassical realism gained prominence in the mid-1998s as an independent theory with an ability to account for various cultural aspects of foreign policy while providing a new framework for the analysis of both foreign policy and international relations (Hadfield, 2010).

Regarding the distribution of power, neoclassical realism provides a comprehensive understanding of the reasons for the existence of a strong coalition of

predominantly Sunni countries against Iran's growing hegemony in the region. In this context, neoclassical realism might be an excellent tool for analyzing the regional rivalry of middle powers that has its root to disrupt the power equilibrium in the region for a middle power's benefit.

Furthermore, neoclassical realism might be a valuable theory to understand and analyze USFP towards the Syrian Kurds through several factors:

- Balance of power and security factors: neoclassical realism has discussed the relative distribution of power in detail. It considers regional systems as stable where there is some sort of power balance among the units of this system (see: Romanova, 2012; Dunne, et al; Hadfield, 2010). It should be noted that one of the main transformations after the Syrian crisis in 2011 was misbalancing the power equilibrium. Consequently, the balance of power has tilted in favor of Iran and Russia at the expense of others. This outcome of the invasion has spurred the other US allies to exert considerable effort to counter the rising power of Iran by exploiting the ethno-sectarian divide in Iraq. Applying the theory of neoclassical realism helps to understand the force mentioned.
- The role of non-state actors: neoclassical realism has added a new element to the study of foreign policy that other realists previously ignored. In the case of the Syrian Kurds, neoclassical realism offers in its postulation room for non-state actors that are perceived as an intervening variable able to explain the state's behavior (Laksmana, 2013). Moreover, the role of non-state players has had a substantial impact on the political process in Syria after 2011 because of the weakness of political institutions, whereby each power interfering in Syria's domestic affairs was patron of a different proxy group.
- Therefore, this thesis focuses on the objectives of the U.S. and examines the U.S. strategy towards the Middle East and Syrian Kurds. It will also demonstrate how and why these driving factors pushed the U.S. to work with the Syrian Kurds (SDF).

According to the proponents of neoclassical realism, given international systems, their structure affects the behavior of foreign policy (Foulon, 2015). However, the theory suggests that this structure does not determine foreign policy behavior. Instead, other factors are worth considering (He, 2017). With the proposed study, this theory is appropriate because it increases the understanding that the changing dynamics of the U.S.

foreign policy could not be explained solely based on the balance of power and a multi-polar international system. Instead, the factor of the structure is worth considering due to its influential role. In particular, the theory's usage in real-world scenarios leads to a path in which the foreign policy behavior of the U.S. could be attributed to the moderating role of the impact of factor, which only affects the behavior, but does not necessarily determine it (the behavior).

Despite its explanatory power, neoclassical realism is criticized for having the following weaknesses:

- By including the domestic factor, neoclassical realism has become closer to constructivism and Liberalism, reducing the “analytical purity” of realism theory.
- It is unable to explain international processes at a systemic level.
- Neoclassical realism is more a theory of foreign policy rather than of international relation. As a result, the neoclassical theory can provide a clearer explanation of states behavior but cannot predict and justify the origins of war and peace.

It is also worth noting that the theory of neoclassical realism posits that states tend to behave rationally because, in the wake of anarchy on the international platform, they strive to survive (He, 2018). Furthermore, the theory demonstrates that in situations where a state declares war against its citizens, especially due to religious, ethnic, and other differences, the resultant conflicts are irrational (MacDonald, 2018). One of the basic assumptions of the theory is that in world politics, key factors constitute states. Another assumption is that states are out to pursue their interests (and end up behaving altruistically), they act rationally, and that interstate relationship regulation is not shaped by supranational authority (Nye, 2015). With anarchy characterizing the state of international politics, the theory affirms further that survival is not guaranteed. Concerning the subject under investigation, these observations, especially the latter, are important in understanding the volatile situation facing Syria's Kurds, pointing to the relevance of the theory to the analysis of the results that will be obtained in the proposed study. In particular, it can be observed from the literature that Kurdish forces collaborated with the U.S. to defeat ISIS and also achieve the goal of the U.S., limiting the influence of Russia and Iran in the region. Washington's abandonment of its ally (Kurds) in Syria translates into what the selected theory suggests, holding that given the anarchy dominating international politics, the resultant tension does not guarantee the survival of

organizations or states. Thus, the theory is important because it will aid in analyzing further some of the factors that threaten the survival of Syria's Kurds in the wake of the humanitarian and military crisis, especially relative to the perceived "betrayal" by the U.S. However, it is worth acknowledging that despite the highly contributory nature of these assertions and insights from the theory, it fails to suggest some of the paths that the affected states have their survival threatened by the anarchical nature of international politics could adopt to arrive at lasting or feasible solutions.

This theory suggests further that in most cases, state systems tend to offer insecure and incomplete information and, as a result, end up working against cooperation. Through the resultant uncertainty as a consequence of compromised cooperation, the theory demonstrates that states end up lacking information about the future and current intentions of others (Schweller, 2018). In the case of the Kurdish equation in Syria, the theory's assumption can be seen to operate practically, whereby the possible intention and impact of Turkey's invasion of Syrian Kurds on the rest of the government in its future operations remains uncertain. Also, the selected theory assumes that all the time, there will be power struggles (Foulon, 2015). In the selected research context, there is evidence of power struggles. For instance, Russian and Iran can be seen to align themselves with Assad's regime, while the U.S. can be seen striving to limit the influence of these state factors in Syria. For Turkey, power struggles are also evident relative to its invasion of the Syrian Kurds, whereby it is documented to be out to limit the powers of the group, having perceived it as an ally to Turkey's internal resurgent groups.

The implication is that the theory of neoclassical realism is deemed relevant to the proposed study because it seeks to aid in understanding the possible role of a power struggle as one of the factors that might have motivated the interest of state factors and accounted for the resultant tensions between the Middle East and the West, especially the U.S. However, it remains notable that whereas this insightful and contributory nature of the theory is evident and acknowledged, it falters in such a way that it ends up emphasizing the role of political factors in attracting state factors' interest. As such, it fails to discern whether issues such as economic forces could be moderating in shaping the interest of the state factors. Neither does the theory clarify whether factors such as economic reasons or interests might promote or compromise the political goals responsible for various state factors' interest in a region. For the case of the Syrian Kurds, however, the theory remains important because the study will seek to extend or challenge

the theory based on primary and secondary data outcomes that will be obtained. For instance, should the role of politics in terms of power struggles be confirmed or evolve as a dominant force behind recent dynamics regarding the U.S. foreign policy towards the Syrian Kurds, the resultant inference will be these events surrounding the experience of the Kurdish forces in Syria conform to the selected theory of neoclassical realism. However, suppose the proposed study establishes that there have been factors outside the parameter of power struggles that have informed the dynamics and change of strategy in relation to the U.S. foreign policy, which involves backing allies rather than engage in direct military intervention. In that case, the resultant inferences might challenge or extend the theory of neoclassical realism rather than simply conform to its basic assumptions.

Also, the neoclassical realism framework has been chosen because various realism manifestations regard non-state factors as vehicles through which higher states could participate in power politics or fail to accord adequate attention to non-state factors. However, the selected model (neoclassical realism – NCR) acknowledges or recognizes the critical role that non-state factors play at various analytical levels and includes them in its analyses (Caverley, 2010). Given that the proposed study involves a foreign policy (by the U.S.) that touches on a non-state factor (Syrian Kurds or SDF in this case). It remains inferable that the choice of the neoclassical realism theory is an informed decision because it aligns with this study’s central subject of investigation, which involves the changing dynamics of the U.S. foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds, the non-state factors. Given that the NCR model includes non-state factors (Lobell, 2009; Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro, 2009), it is well-suited to guide the proposed study’s analysis by explaining threat assessment variations from the perspective of the U.S.; how the assessments might have shaped its foreign policy decisions; the pros and cons of the new foreign policy; and the future of the ties between the U.S. and Syrian Kurds.

It is worth mentioning that being a foreign policy theory has made neoclassical realism more appropriate for this research as this study focuses on American foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds, in contrast to explaining the phenomenon of war at a systemic level. Below, it is further discussed why this research is not using the other major theories of international relations.

Furthermore, it is important to benefit from Waltz's (1979) concept of an alliance. Waltz contrasts balancing with bandwagoning, in which weaker states ally with the stronger. Waltz argues that "because power is a means, not an end, states prefer to join the weaker of two coalitions." (Waltz, 1979, p. 126). The structure of the international system and the necessity of survival dictate this behavior. Waltz defines bandwagoning as the opposite of balancing alignment with the periodic balancing of would-be leaders among states. For Kenneth Waltz, a state's decision to balance against or bandwagon with another state is mainly based on the strongest state. In Waltz's argumentation, determining which state or group of states appears strongest is vital (Waltz 1979). Based on the Waltz theoretical explanation, the alliance with the US for the Syrian Kurds was mainly because of their hegemonic power in the region that can protect them from strong regional powers, especially Turkey. And, for security, as Waltz (1979) argued, states are willing to align with anyone (even Satan!).

- However, through opting for neoclassical realism, this research does not deny that other theories may have the potential to illuminate some aspects of the American policy towards Syrian Kurds. However, it argues that their explanations are not convincing and cannot explain the complexity of the relations. Liberalism and its neoliberal version are strong contenders for realism. Neoliberalism focuses on the role of international organizations and interdependence in fostering peace and cooperation at the global level (Tarzi, 2004, p. 119). Free trade and liberal-democratic principles are viewed as decisive factors in promoting interdependence and peace. However, in the case of the Syrian crisis, these factors are absent and instead of the liberal rhetoric of peace and cooperation, there is a tragic presence of rivalry, war and balance of power (Mearsheimer, 2018). Therefore, the American stance towards Syrian Kurds can be better explained in the framework of the American balancing act and regional and international competition rather than in the context of the liberalism argument for increasing cooperation and promoting peace through utilizing democratic principles, free trade and international organizations whose absence in Syria is easily felt. The other reason behind the use of neoclassical realism theory is: first, the failure of the US foreign policy in the middle east to spread liberal democracy for instance, failing in changing Iraq and Afghanistan regime to democratic countries under the US hegemony after the end of the Cold War. Secondly, International relations changed from unipolar to multipolar because Russia returned strongly by interfering in the

Syrian conflict and China has grown economically. Therefore, the US foreign policy will not lead the world in international relations alone. For the above reasons, in this study, the possibility of using liberal theory was not taken to consideration (Mearsheimer p146-147).

- Meanwhile, Marxism theory, with its focus on the class struggle and its Neo-Marxist versions of dependency theory and Immanuel Wallerstein’s World System theory, with their focus on dividing the world into core and periphery countries, may be helpful in explaining the injustice inherent in international trade and political relations that favors the developed core states and works against the aspirations of underdeveloped periphery states. However, these theories have little to do with explaining the complicated situation of regional and international rivalry in Syria and American policy towards Syrian Kurds that has little if anything to do with class struggle or core-periphery relations (Barrow, 1993).
- Constructivism, as another dominant theory of international relations, focuses on social construction of reality and the role of domestic factors such as identity in directing the foreign policy of states. This theory can be useful in explaining aspects of the developments in Syria related to conflicting identities of the involved actors, such as Sunni versus Shia actors or Turkish versus Kurdish actors. However, it cannot be very useful in clarifying the intricate balancing acts and power relations in Syria, particularly American policy towards Syrian Kurds. Meanwhile, the neoclassical realism this research implements accounts for the domestic factors involved in assessing international relations (Hopf, 1998).

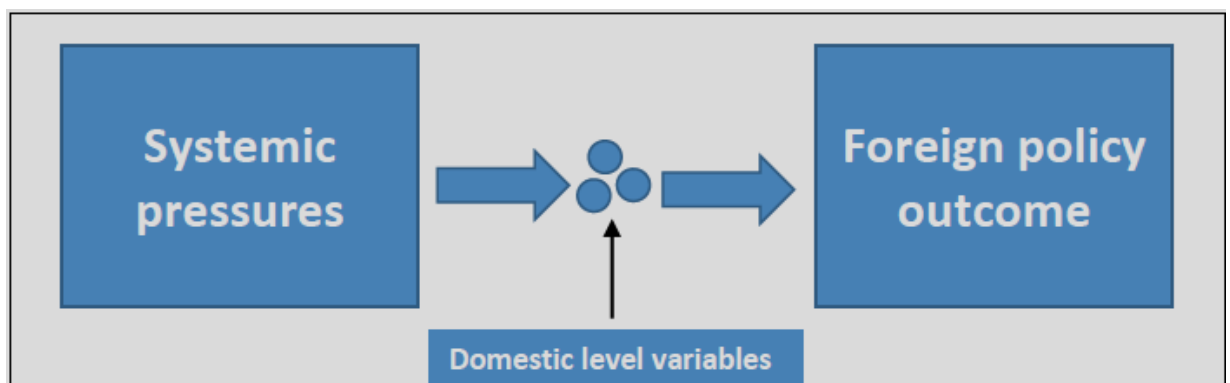


Figure 1: A summary of the model of neoclassical realism

The following chapter describes the methodological approach employed during the data collection and analysis processes.

Chapter Three: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

From the literature review above, mixed issues characterize the current state of the U.S. foreign policy in Syria and other parts of the Middle East. Remarkably, the U.S. is experiencing changing dynamics in its foreign policy, but the dynamics demand a balance because the country is out to preserve its hegemony in the Middle East, protect its allies in the region, and limit the influence of foes such as Iran, Russia, and Mr. Assad. Given these interplays, the need to recommend an ideal approach to implement the changed foreign policy without compromising the United States' goals in the Middle East could not be overstated.

In this chapter, the main aim is to describe the methodology the proposed study adopted while seeking insight into the subject under investigation. Notably, the chapter aims to justify why the study relied on specific research methods and data collection and analysis methods. Similarly, the chapter provides the demographic features of the selected population or sampling frame from which participants were drawn and information collected concerning the aim and objectives of the research. Apart from the primary data, information from secondary sources of data was used to complement the results obtained. Some secondary data sources that aided in complementing primary data include books, e-books, journals, newspapers, magazines, and institutional and government reports.

3.1 Data collection

As highlighted earlier, the proposed study is qualitative. This simulated behavioral differences in USFP towards Syrian Kurds. This helped the researcher to get enough details on why USFP dynamics fluctuated in certain ways. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), qualitative studies aid in collecting detailed or in-depth data by recording the participants' behaviors, feelings, and attitudes. Additionally, qualitative research has been documented to yield detailed information worth generalizing to the rest of the sampling frame, target audience, or demographic group on the focus (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Other studies contend that qualitative research is important because it yields openness. In particular, the research technique encourages participating individuals to expand their answers or explain why they respond in certain ways. Merriam and Tisdell

(2015) observed that this trend ensures that qualitative research creates new subjects and, in turn, steers research continuity by recommending future research that is informed by new subject areas accruing from the participants' responses.

It is imperative to highlight that most previous studies avow that qualitative research is flexible (Punch, 2013). This attribute makes it applicable to the proposed study because it is poised to enable the researcher to collect information in new directions, especially when the selected participants fail to provide reliable or desirable data.

Despite these merits, qualitative research has been associated with various disadvantages. For example, Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) observed that qualitative research gains application if the researcher seeks to collect data from a smaller sample size. As such, the research technique is less applicable or unreliable if the research context involves a demographically complex and large sampling frame. According to Savin-Baden and Major (2013), studies that focus on smaller sample sizes are also prone to adversities such as researcher bias and compromised validity and reliability because the outcomes are unlikely to be representative of the larger target population in the entirety. Given that part of this present study employed qualitative research, it becomes important to acknowledge that it could be prone to the abovementioned limitations.

It has also been established that it becomes difficult to make systematic comparisons when qualitative research is employed. In the study by Antwi and Hamza (2015), it was observed that situations where participants in qualitative research give widely differing and highly subjective opinions, are likely to prove difficult to establish common themes or patterns of response. Further, Bernard and Bernard (2012) observed that such scenarios complicate the researcher's intention to draw valid conclusions or inferences. Other studies caution that the extent to which qualitative research can be successful depends on the researcher's skills, especially his familiarity with the cultural and political factors regarding data collection in the proposed study (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014). However, the merits of qualitative research outweighed the demerits and made the selected research approach worth applying.

3.1.1 Data collection methods

Regarding the specific instruments of data collection, the proposed study used semi-structured interviews. The participating individuals and organizations were presented with direct links to the interview questions. The researcher's plan was to

conduct 30-40 interviews in both Northern Syria and Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Elite interviews provided opportunities to enhance the reliability and validity of generated data. As Beamer (2002, p.95) argued, properly conducting elite interviews can offer a “rich and cost-effective component in a research design that can produce a valid and unique data resource for state politics studies”. Interviews are advantageous in various ways. For instance, interviews are cost-efficient, especially when conducted via mobile or online platforms — and can reach many participants in a given sampling frame (Creswell, 2014). The interviews have also been documented to be practical because of the flexible nature that enables them to be managed in various ways and tailored to groups of the researcher’s choice. In doing so, they lead to the collection of vast data amounts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Speedy or real-time results have also been associated with interviews. In particular, mobile and online tools imply that interviews do not necessarily require other firms to deliver the needed answers. Scalability forms another merit. As avowed by Gholamreza and Hasan (2010), surveys conducted through interviews ensure that the researcher gathers data from large audiences, having reached out to different participants anywhere and at any time.

The eventuality is that interviews can be performed at a relatively low cost but target a vast demographic and geographical zone (such as a country or community). Given the resource and time constraint on the researcher’s part, interviews became appropriate. Interviews have also been documented to cover numerous aspects of the topic. Specifically, the instrument ensures that the researcher asks as many questions as possible (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). However, Merriam and Tisdell (2015) cautioned that each interview session needs to be kept short to avoid complex themes or patterns of responses that could make it difficult to make inferences.

From the perspective of drawbacks, interviews have been associated with dishonesty. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), respondents are unlikely to be 100 percent truthful. Some reasons behind the provision of dishonest responses include the participants’ quest to protect their privacy and social desirability bias (especially in multicultural settings, including the Kurdish region in this case) (Punch, 2013).

In the proposed study, participant anonymity was assured to ensure that any dishonest responses were avoided. Pseudonyms such as codes were used in place of the

participants' details (including their names, professions, and physical addresses). Dishonest responses were also minimized by assuring data privacy and confidentiality. Specifically, the collected recorded or printed interview materials were stored securely. Regarding the data collected electronically, strong passwords were used to secure the raw data, barring any unauthorized access that might compromise the participants' privacy and anonymity. Participants were also informed about these steps, and the aim was to collect honest responses while increasing their chances and their willingness to participate in the study.

In this study, it is notable that differences in interpretation and understanding of interview questions might contribute to the instrument's drawbacks. Specifically, failure to present questions to participants face-to-face implied that the respective participants might interpret the items differently. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), such a scenario threatens to yield subjective responses. To avoid these misunderstandings and misinterpretations, links to the interview questions were provided to the participants in advance for familiarization purposes.

To ensure ethical conformity, the study secured informed consent from the participants. Imperatively, permission was sought from the participants and other relevant authorities. These authorities included institutions charged with political and military assistance to the Syrian Kurds, the Syrian Kurds' community leaders, and international relations agencies in Syria.

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.

The semi-structured interview was a suitable data collection method for this research; the semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection approach in which the researcher asks informants a series of predetermined, however open-ended questions (See Appendix 1). Correspondingly, semi-structured interviews are based on a semi-structured interview guide, which is a schematic presentation of questions or topics and need to be explored by the interviewees (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006) semi-

structured interviews are often the sole data source for a qualitative research project (Adams W, McIlvain H, Lacy N et al, 2002). The interview guide may be very specific, with carefully worded questions, or it may be a list of topics to be covered (Given, 2008).

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 U.S. foreign policies towards 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 collection method, which was a semi-structured interview 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, especially those in the decision-making circles and who have a role in the political process in northern Syria. Finally, the methods used for data collection in this study 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 policy towards 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 participants' responses were classified and summarized based on the objectives formulated in the first chapter of this project. Upon the data analysis process, the researcher moved from the qualitative data collected into some form of explanation or interpretation of the subject under investigation. Furthermore, data presentation was done in the form of graphs, charts, and statistical tables. Indeed, the main aim of these data analysis approaches was to obtain possible similarities between the responses obtained from the participants before presenting some of the themes that emerged — relative to the subject being investigated. Upon analyzing the primary data, the study discerned whether parallels could be drawn between the primary results obtained and secondary data contained in documents such as government reports, e-books, and journals. Imperative to note is that graphs and charts aided in presenting quantitative or numerical data involving the demographic characteristics of the participants (including their age, length of stay in Syria, and gender) while a content analysis approach aided in presenting and analyzing qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews.

3.3 Ethical Issues

In the proposed study, ethical conformity was assured in different ways. For example, all the participating individuals and organizations were informed that participating was voluntary. Similarly, the individuals and institutions involved were informed that there is freedom of participation and withdrawal from the study at any stage of data collection. In particular, participants were informed that withdrawing would not attract any penalty. Furthermore, they were informed that the decision to withdraw could arise due to potential adversities such as psychological harm and trauma on their part. It is further notable that permission was sought from the participants and other relevant authorities. Another step that sought to ensure ethical conformity involved the explanation regarding the sensitive nature of the subject being investigated and possible psycho-social and emotional consequences and adversities that might accrue during the data collection process.

Regarding the anonymity of participants and the confidentiality and the privacy of the data collected, codes were used in the place of the participants' personal information. Also, the information was secured via strong passwords to avoid unauthorized access. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) documented that such a decision to assure participant anonymity stretched beyond collecting honest information to curb the

possible adversity of victimization. Regarding the secondary sources of data, the proposed study achieved the aspect of ethical conformity by collecting and analyzing data based on the specifications of intellectual property rights. Lastly, the secondary data was collected and analyzed in original form without the researcher's interference and manipulation.

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

4.0 Introduction

The Middle East has been a focal point of US foreign policy since World War II (WWII henceforth). After WWII, the Middle East has increased in importance due to global, geographical, and political influences. Many cultural relations exist between the region and the West, stretching back to the Middle Ages and extending into modern history through the efforts of Western missionaries and their educational activities (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).

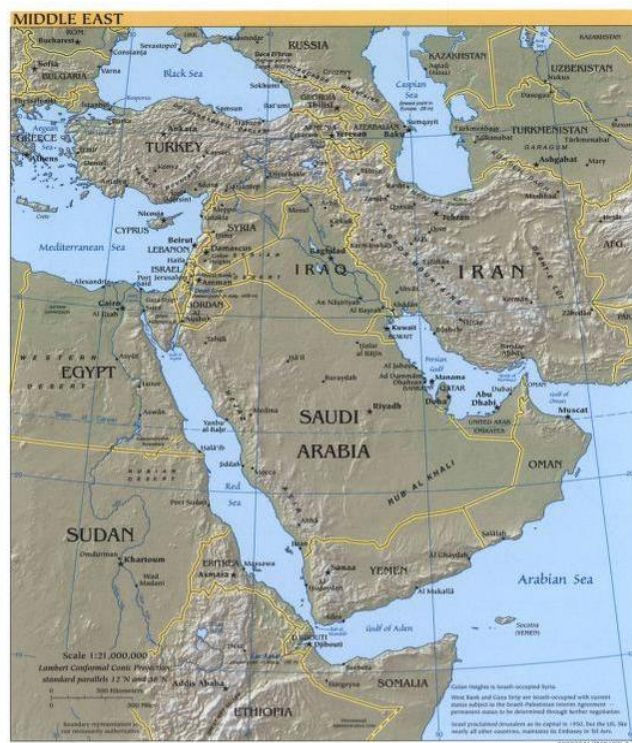


Figure 2: Map of Middle East (Source: The US Central Intelligence Agency)

The Iraqi-Syrian border remains one of the Middle East's most geopolitically volatile places, 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. Two dynamics in particular deserve to be discussed. First, the Syrian government has lost access and secondly, the Iraqi government's position has been contested. As a result, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the Kurdish-dominated Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria have come to control new border crossings in this area effectively. 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).

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 anti-Assad opposition's Islamist factions (Federici, 2015). The US is attempting to maintain its commitment to the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces), its main ally in Syria's fight against the Islamic State, as well as its alliance with the KRG. However, KRG is a partner in the fight against the Islamic State and a host to US military troops operating across the border. Both the US and Turkey believe that the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) must be expelled for the autonomous administration in northeastern Syria to be legitimated, or at the very least for hostilities between Turkey (and its Syrian allies) and the SDF to end. Their efforts might assist in defining the frontiers of the Kurdish areas in Syria more precisely and therefore underline the reality of the border with Iraq if they used their leverage to that effect (Hasan & Khaddour, 2021).

The United States, as is well known, does not officially favor establishing a Kurdish state. In actuality, however, the US strategy is uncertain and ambiguous. Because of its previous participation in Iraq, where the KRG was viewed as a threat to Iraq's unity, Washington was initially hesitant to engage the Syrian Kurds, particularly the PYD/YPG (Democratic Party Union/Protection People's Units) forces (Küçükkeles et al., 2014). The Obama administration's reluctance to engage in the Kurdish problem stemmed largely from its desire to end the Syrian crisis. The US was forced to adopt a firmer stance on Syrian Kurdish aspirations as the civil conflict erupted. As a result, the US has never stated a foreign policy toward the Kurds, who live in four distinct countries (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 United States 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 United States 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).

If one goes back to the history of the existence of US forces throughout the Arabian Peninsula and other near Eastern regions, one can clearly see that the main reasons are generally still the same. Making assure stability and free commercial access to the vast oil reserves of the Middle East, As Djerejian (1992, p:16498) stated during his speech, is one of the main basics and clear objectives of the foreign policy of the USA towards this area. He also argued that any instability in the Gulf is damaging not only our national interest but also the economic security of the whole international community.

Besides, Djerejian (1992, p:16497) mentioned that protecting vital resources and conflict resolution are not only interests to our foreign policy agenda. He claimed that the US foreign policy has other pillars, including support for human rights, pluralism, women's and minority rights and popular participation in government, and our rejection of extremism, oppression and terrorism. According to him, these global perspectives constitute a very potent section of the US strategy to engage with this part of the world. And this kind of visions in the past, still could apply to the current situation in the Syria and other parts of the region.

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 United States 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 Bin Laden in Sudan (Milbank, 2004).

To combat terrorism worldwide, the George W. Bush administration adopted a National Strategy for Combating Terrorism in February 2003. The far-reaching plan included methodologies to crush fear-based oppressors and their gatherings, decline terrorists' sponsorship, help, and safe house, diminish social and financial conditions that terrorists misuse, and ensure US individuals and public safety at home and abroad (National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, 2003).

Consequently, the US invaded Iraq on March 19, 2003, and overthrew Saddam Hussein's regime. The Bush administration accused the Iraqi government of violating human rights, possessing weapons of mass destruction, and harboring terrorist leaders. Furthermore, US officials said that the Iraqi regime was the source of threat to the entire Middle East region's security and stability. The United States formed a global alliance to battle ISIS in August-September 2014. The United States and different countries, including a few Arab nations (Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates), directed air strikes against ISIS lodging in Syria on September 23, 2014, determined to undercut "the assailant gathering's capacity to request, train, and resupply its warriors" (Fantz & Pearson, 2015).

ISIL, a new jihadist organization that regards the Kurds as ideological opponents and enemies for controlling The YPG, the PYD's military wing, began forcefully defending Kurdish towns and villages for the first time, and they appeared to be a more effective actor on the ground than their Iraqi Kurdish counterparts, the Peshmergas (Gunes et al., 2015).

The militarization of the Syrian-Kurdish struggle has undoubtedly shaped a new dynamic in the region as a result of the Syrian war. The city of Kobani was attacked for the second time by ISIL on September 13, 2014; this onslaught signalled 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 launched air strikes against the Jihadists for the first time, resulting in widespread media coverage of the Kobani battle and the Kurdish case in general. Furthermore, it demonstrated to the rest of the world the fruitful cooperation between the US and the PYD/YPG, which continued despite Turkey's opposition. The Kurds were able to not only defeat ISIL, but also take control of the majority of Syria's border with Turkey, thanks to US assistance. The US, the PYD/YPG, the Peshmergas, and the Free Syrian Army (FSA) worked together in Kobani to show worldwide support for the Kurdish case. The PYD's standing as an official US partner has been elevated as a result of its achievements over ISIL on the battlefield, enhancing the YPG's legitimacy (Plakoudas, 2017).

The United States 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, and the US has bolstered ties with historically ignored countries such as Algeria. The administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama strongly affected 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-Qaeda (Rudner, 2004).

These insurgencies have killed thousands of civilians and continue to destabilize the countries involved. Mali, Nigeria, Syria, and the Sinai Peninsula are all possible al-Qaeda hotspots. The Islamic State is also attempting to create 'provinces' with help from groups in Nigeria, North Africa, Sinai, and Afghanistan, among others. With the exception of Libya, it has only used these alliances for prestige and has not contributed enough money to keep them going. In the war on terror, everybody benefits from interdependence. The US gains access to vital information through joint efforts, local services use their agents and resources to track and destroy terrorists at home, and the US gains physical access to execute drone strikes in some situations, such as Yemen. The Saudis were instrumental in foiling an AQAP plot to bomb a US airliner in 2010, and a joint US-Saudi operation against the group in 2011 foiled similar plots (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, for instance, are two well-known militant groups that also play an important political role in Lebanon. Both are hostile to the United States, although, unlike al-Qaeda, neither is planning operations against 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 is evident that US foreign policy has something to do with dealing with them.

Similarly, the fight against terrorism frequently contributes to the development of democracy. The US strengthens its security forces, often the least democratic aspect of an undemocratic regime, by partnering with allies to combat terrorism. 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 United States' 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 United States generated a two-tiered sense of insecurity among regional actors. On the one hand, 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, Washington's foreign policy has been replaced between policies aimed at maintaining the status quo and steps aimed at disrupting the status quo in the region. Following the 2011 Arab uprisings and the Iraqi regime change activity, US foreign policy has followed several transformative agendas against some of its traditional allies, apparently contradicting Washington's long-standing defence of the regional status quo. This has caused extraordinary uncertainty among regional players about what to expect from the United States, as shown in figure 2 below. Since the early 1980s, the US seems to have moved down the vertical axis from higher to lower degrees of interference, broadening the scope of its actions from predominantly status quo strengthening acts to encompass a variety of instances along the horizontal axis as well (see figure 2 below). This point is reinforced by a multitude of cases of George W. Bush and Barack Obama's foreign policy actions (Queroa and Dessì, 2019).

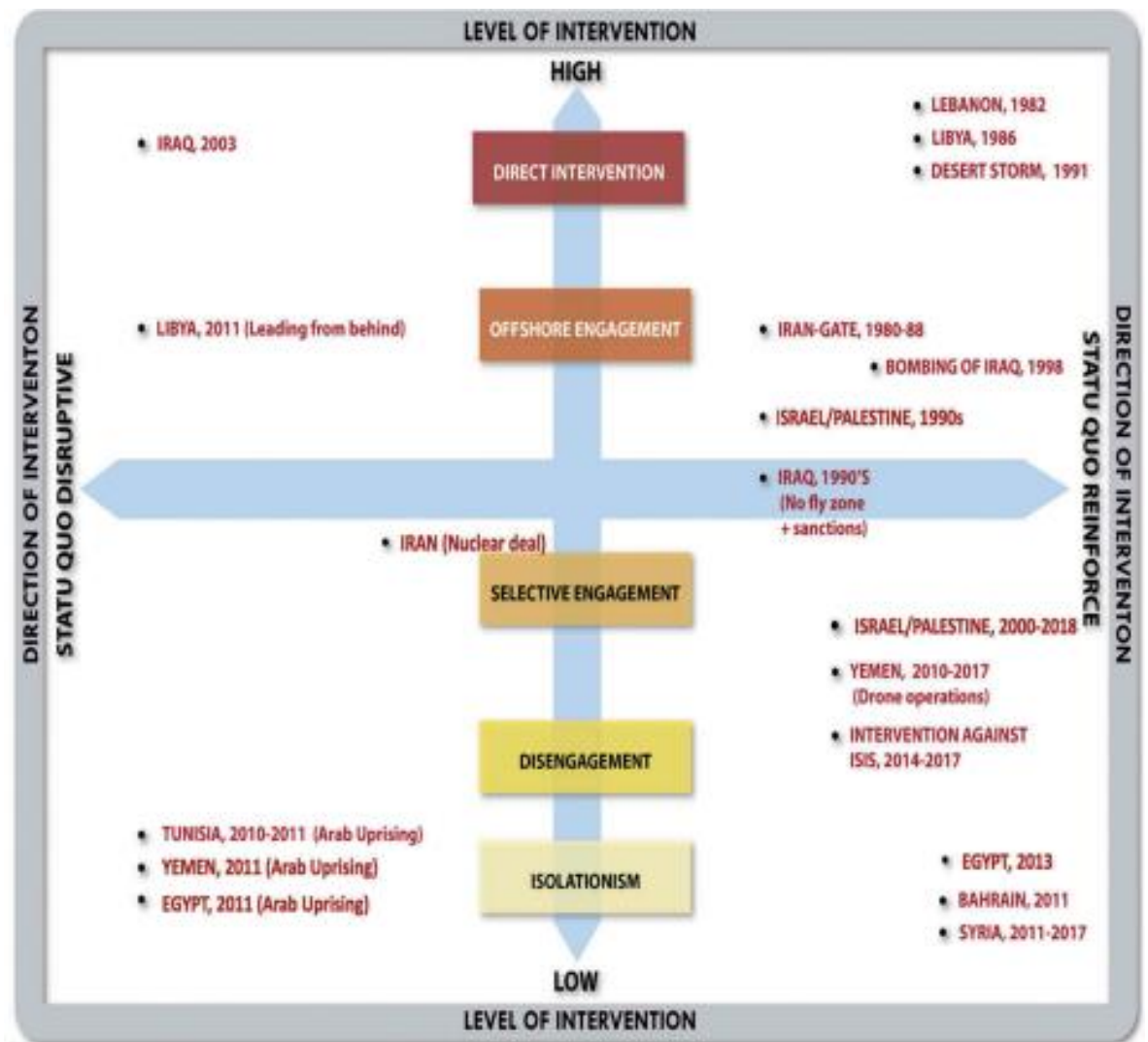


Figure 3: US foreign policy in the Middle East- An uncertain matrix, Source: (Queroa and Dessì, 2019).

4.2 Regional Stability

The United States has a long history in the Middle East, and its influence has only increased since the end of the Cold War. Despite this, trade and cultural ties are strained, and the region's military strength pale compared to Europe, a long-standing concern, or Asia, where the US hopes to 'pivot' in the coming years. The Middle East's oil fields and other communist-leaning governments acted as a chessboard between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. In the 1990s, the US expanded its military presence in the region in order to keep Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Iran's clerical rule in check. On the other hand, Washington was involved in and kept its efforts to achieve peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, but it was largely unsuccessful (Byman and Moller, 2016).

Preserving inclusive Middle East alliances is vital to the United States' international security priorities. One of their collaborators is the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC); 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 (GCC) for exchange and security openings. However, late territorial insecurity has stressed relations among individuals. In any case, Oman has been encouraging worldwide tact specifically.

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 United States 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 United States, 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 United States 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 United States' second-biggest wellspring of imported oil from the Middle East (U.S. Crude Oil Imports, 2021).

Initially, the US strategy was to bolster the Kurdish National Council while persuading the PYD to join the anti-Assad resistance. Despite these efforts, the PYD maintained a firm grip over Rojava and enjoyed the support of the bulk of armed Kurdish groups (Küçükkeles et al., 2014).

The PYD was quickly seen by the US as a bulwark 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 ally against Russia and Iran. 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 Syrian regime and its Iranian partner. Even if the Kurds proved to be the most successful allies in the fight against ISIL, they had already driven ISIL out of almost 99 percent of the region it had taken; the US needed to avoid an ethnic conflict in northern Syria. Indeed, the Arabs were opposed to a power shift in favour of the Kurds, and it was unrealistic to expect the PYD/YPG to dominate Arab districts (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 United States, 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).

On the other hand, on May 8, 2018, US President Donald Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

unilaterally (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 United States' 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).

Only a few weeks prior, on April 13th, 2018, President Trump authorized airstrikes against Syrian regime positions in response to a suspected chemical weapons attack on civilians in the Ghouta region near Damascus. This was just the latest in a long line of chemical weapons attacks—US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley estimated at least 50 previous incidents—it was the first time the US government took such (re)action during the eight-year-long Syrian conflict. While President Barack Obama proclaimed the use of chemical weapons to be a "red line" that would prompt immediate US intervention in 2012, the US had previously refused to act on this threat, only to do so this time. 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 United States 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 United States' 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 United States' 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 United States 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 United States' 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).

With the finish of the Cold War and the crumbling of the Soviet Union, another American era in the Middle East started. Shockingly, it started with a fight. After Iraq attacked oil-rich Kuwait toward the beginning of August 1990, the US intervened rapidly by entering an American-drove military union and applying tension on Iraq to withdraw. Over seven years after the fact, in December 1998, the US dispatched a four-day besieging effort to debilitate Iraq's capacity to create and utilize weapons of mass annihilation and power it to maintain UN Security Council Resolutions.

After the 9/11 terrorist assault in the US and charges that Afghanistan reinforced the fear-based oppressors who did the assault, the United States' subsequent huge presence in the district had been an attack on Afghanistan. After two years, the United States participated in the most troublesome conflict of the twenty-first century: the Iraq attack in 2003. The Iraq War, then again, did not end US impact or contribution in the Middle East. Instead, the war led to a new era of US Middle East foreign policy, which remains today with direct military action against ISIL in Iraq and Syria and diplomatic cooperation with Iran and other regional powers (Brands, 2016).

While many blamed the Iraq War on President Bush's neoconservative policies, others hoped that his replacement, Barack Obama, would take an alternative approach to the region. Obama announced as a presidential candidate that the Obama Doctrine would be 'as doctrinaire' as the Bush Doctrine, resulting in the controversial principles of unilateralism and prosecutorial immunity. He ran on a platform of 'mutual peace' and 'shared prosperity' with other countries. He also vowed to end fear-based politics and change the mindset that has swept the United States into countless conflicts and wars around the world (Ackerman, 2008).

Obama stressed the need for a new period of foreign policy against the Middle East and the Muslim world during his early days as president. As part of this goal, the president travelled to Turkey, one of the region's most powerful states and a long-time US ally, for the first time. In a speech to Egyptian representatives and women shortly after leaving Turkey, President Obama vowed a 'New Beginning' in US foreign policy toward the region (Holzman, 2009).

Given this divide, it is reasonable to ask if President Obama's foreign policy is a continuation or a deviation from President Bush's. Nonetheless, the significance of the answer to this question will be limited unless it clarifies whether US foreign policy under President Bush is a continuous or a shift from past Middle East strategies. As a result, the experience of pre-Bush foreign policy characteristics will be included in this mission. Indeed, the more one studies US foreign policy, the more precise and detailed one understands foreign policy trends and behaviors as they affect change and consistency in the field over time (Collinson, 2014).

According to President Ronald Reagan, US foreign policy is based on constant international influences and is intended to ensure the country's survival and vital principles (National Security Strategy Archive 1988, 1–3). President George H. W. Bush made the same point in his 1991 National Security Policy, claiming that the strategy for US national security has not altered since the Cold War started. (National Security Strategy Archive 1991, 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).

Since the Iranian revolution in 1979, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of Islamic republics in Central Asia, the events of September 11, 2001, at the turn of the new millennium, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, have all significant impacts on the Middle East. These events occurred in the area surrounding Iran, leading to a tightening of the US blockade of the country, which included the establishment of US military bases in Central Asia and the deployment of American fleets in the Gulf region, where Iran is largely isolated from the rest of the world (Habashneh, 2008).

The Iranian nuclear program was the source of the dispute between Iran and the United States (Farhani and Qamadi, 2016). According to Zoueiri and Suleiman (2018), former President Barack Obama took a different approach to Iran (where the American interest has achieved in the first place). During Obama's presidency, Nunlist (2016) advocated for keeping open channels of contact and dialogue between the US and its antagonists, such as Iran; this could be achieved by leaving space for negotiation on the Iranian nuclear problem. Furthermore, Castiglioni (2013) proposed that political rather than military means should be used to convince Iran to stop its nuclear program.

Obama's foreign policy with Iran was guided by the notion of 'diplomacy first', which he espoused throughout his election campaign and has since been the foundation of his foreign policy. Obama recognized that employing diplomatic solutions rather than military intervention to persuade Iran to stop its nuclear program was in the best interests of the United States. As a result, Obama declined to follow his predecessor's lead in obstructing communication with Tehran to exert pressure on the Iranian regime. In his speech at Cairo University, Obama emphasized the significance of initiating a long-term diplomatic effort in the Middle East and the importance of escaping the 'Trap of the Past' and proceeding toward a future of mutual respect with Iran (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 United States, 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).

As a result, former President Barack Obama approached the relationship with Iran from a different perspective. In exchange for Iran's vow to terminate its nuclear program and avoid the development of nuclear weapons capabilities, he removed the US and Western international economic sanctions imposed on the country since 2006. After the agreement went into effect in 2016, restrictions against Iran were lifted, particularly financial and economic penalties, and hundreds of billions of dollars in Iranian funds locked abroad due to economic sanctions were released (Zoueiri and Suleiman, 2018, p. 14).

According to Katzman (2019), the Obama administration's Iran nuclear deal resulted in a convergence between the US and Iran (starting from achieving the national interest). According to Abdul Fattah (2014), this agreement would put an end to the ideological war between the two countries, allowing Iran to integrate into the global system.

With the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, the foreign policy trends in the United States 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 United States' interventionist foreign policy. He advocated for the United States to be free of the burdens

of global leadership; as a result, the United States will embrace a partner-paying attitude (Branda, 2018, p. 162).

Trump grew hostile to Iran during his administration, according to Badawi (2018), and accused it of being a corrupt dictatorship government. Trump realized that confronting Iran and siding with the Gulf States would benefit the United States. The impetus for the US-Iran confrontation, according to Masters and Hunt (2017), was Trump's isolationist posture and his invitation to free the US from the pressures it bears as a result of its global leadership status. Similarly, Katzman (2019) argued that Trump started challenging Iran by pulling out of the nuclear agreement and placing economic sanctions on the country because of Iran's unstoppable road to becoming the world's biggest terrorist supporter, as shown by its funding for the Houthis in Yemen, which it provides with money and weaponry, and its emphasis on expanding the long-range missile system.

In terms of US foreign policy toward Iran, after winning the election, Trump began targeting Iran, accusing it of always financing terrorism by supplying money and weapons while allowing the development of its long-range missile system to continue (Katzman, 2019, p. 21). In his first speech to the United Nations General Assembly, Trump accused Iran of being a corrupt dictatorship. Then he announced the US's departure from the Iran nuclear deal, followed by the imposition of additional economic penalties on Iran, from which the US President will free Tehran every 90 days. Trump, on the other hand, rejected the exception and began imposing economic sanctions on Iran. The first set of sanctions targeted non-oil sectors and currency trading, followed by a second set of penalties targeting Iranian ports, the Iranian energy industry, and corporations that import Iranian oil (Badawi, 2018, p. 2).

As a result, Iran has resumed its nuclear weapons development, increasing its political vulnerability to US military intervention by assisting Saudi Arabia and Israel while standing against European and Russian interests. Pompeo, the US foreign minister, stated in May 2018 that the US is willing to restore diplomatic and economic relations with Iran, but only under certain conditions, the most important of which is the complete disarmament of Iran's nuclear program, the halting of the ballistic missile system, and the end of Iranian intervention in the region, particularly in Yemen, Syria, and Iraq (Thompson, 2018, p. 2).

President Trump has openly encouraged dialogue with Iran's officials, as Secretary of State Pompeo said in his May 21, 2018 speech, and the administration has set detailed conditions for a significant change in US-Iran relations. Many of the requests would complicate Iran's revolution and national security policies, and Iran is unlikely to accept them. A number of potential direct talks between the two countries have fallen apart. President Rouhani reported in December 2018 that the US demanded negotiations with Iran on eight occasions in 2017 and three times in 2018 and that the US 'indirectly' ordered negotiations on three occasions in 2018. He added that Iran had declined these attempts to be open to changing its national security policies (Mousavian, 2018).

As a result, three poles of American foreign policy toward Iran have emerged under Trump. The first pole is 'Delegitimization', which focuses on Iran's support for terrorism and the development of a ballistic missile system. The second is 'Penalties', which entails escalating economic sanctions against Iran. The third is 'Containment' which encourages the policies of the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. All three aim to limit Iran's influence in the area (Alcaro, 2018, pp. 6–9).

The US administration appears to have had some success in weakening the Iranian regime's authority by attacking its economy, and the most recent announcement of sanctions seems to be returning US Iran policy to that model. Oil is without a doubt the primary source of revenue for Tehran's treasury and what it requires to have a long and contentious presence in the Middle East, so the current US administration's method of making Iran's hard currency sources completely dry by going straight for the country's oil revenues is particularly effective. Meanwhile, sanctions targeting Iran's steel, iron, aluminium, and copper industries have reduced Tehran's non-oil revenue sources. Iran's economy has been targeted, which has had genuine consequences for Iran's regional policy of boosting its power. Iran's capacity to pay its regional proxies' bills and salaries has been hindered by a lack of foreign currency, limiting the funds available to continue Iran's crafty propaganda business, which has been essential in advancing Iran's regional agenda to fight America's friends (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).

The primary objective of the United States as a regional superpower in the Western Hemisphere is to prevent any regional dominance or hemispheric influence from rising in other areas. Using the offshore balancing grand plan, the United States has achieved this diplomatic objective (Mearsheimer, 2001). To begin first, the grand strategy is described as "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" (Prifti, 2017). Put another way, the degree to which intelligence and diplomacy collaborate with the military might shape international foreign policy outcomes. (Luttwak, 2009).

Second, 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. The United States' status determines offshore balance as a continental hegemon and its geographic location. It is reasonable to conclude that this approach has remained unchanged as the United States' 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 United States' 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).

During Ronald Reagan's presidency (1981-1989), the United States was focused on balancing power between Iran and Iraq. The United States preferred Iraq in its balance of power plan, but it also sided with Iran to achieve specific foreign policy goals, such as delivering armaments in exchange for American hostages held by Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon. Following Reagan, ties between the United States and Iran remained unchanged

during President George H.W. Bush's presidency (1989-93). Overall, Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, American hostages held by Iranian allies in Lebanon, and a fresh round of Arab-Israeli peace talks impacted the Bush administration's Iran policy. President Bill Clinton's Iran policy, which prioritized isolating both Iran and Iraq politically, economically, and militarily from 1993 to 2001, might be defined as dual containment (Richards, 2015).

According to the classic realization of the balance of power, supported by the US and conservative Gulf Arab regimes, the Islamic Republic of Iran is the region's primary source of insecurity. Any regional deterrence policy should focus on preventing risks posed by Iranian actions. Based on this view, the main controlling policy should be undertaken against actors, such as Iran, who are incompatible with the West's political-security goals and objectives and the current reality. As a result, one could argue that the 'dual containment' policy, which targeted both Iran and Iraq at the same time, and the 'axis of evil' thesis, which painted Iran as the region's primary source of instability, are both founded in the 'balance of power' system (William, 1995).

The next foreign policy key point is Syria, where it is evident that Islamic State terror, which has acted as the Sunni bloc's diamond tip in combating Shiite expansionism, cannot be contained and stopped without a comprehensive agreement, particularly with forces allied to the Assad government. In turn, moderate rebel forces allied to the Muslim Brotherhood, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia, and other Arab and Western powers, as well as the United States, will have to reach an agreement too. The current military campaign is ineffective, and progress can only be achieved through extensive diplomacy. Despite their differing perspectives on Syria and Erdogan's ambition to overthrow Assad, Turkey, concerned about the possibility of Kurdish independence and has economic and financial ties with Iran, might be one of the biggest beneficiaries of the Iranian accord. (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).

On the other hand, the term ‘liberal hegemony’, is a concept coined by some other experts to describe a grand plan aimed at preserving US hegemony, strengthening liberal international institutions, and spreading democracy throughout the world (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 United States 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 United States, 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 involvement of many countries as regional players with varying preferences aids the buck-passing strategy. With more players in the game, regional states are less likely to cooperate, making it easier for the US to find a regional power to counter any aggressive state. The United States has favored buck-passing on two occasions. First, it protects the US military capability. Secondly, it is weakening the military capabilities of adversarial countries too. The buck-passing technique can be dangerous at times because

the aggressor would be able to interrupt the buck-catcher and gain enough leverage to break the power balance (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 United States 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.

In case of failure of the buck-passing strategy, the US has a direct intervention policy through diplomatic warnings, forming an alliance that opposes the aggressor or deploying its own economic and armed forces. In specific circumstances, it will consolidate direct shuffling with the buck-passing procedure to avoid a clear clash with the attacker (Prifti, 2017).

4.5 Conclusion:

For most of the twentieth century, even well into the twenty-first, the United States has had multinational aspirations and a global footprint. By using diplomatic, economic, and military power to further its national interests, the United States 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 United States, 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 United States' 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 United States' 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 United States 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 United States' 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)

The United States has intensified its attempts to gain or sustain world influence since the conclusion of the Cold War. The United States' main interventions in the Middle East have focused on bolstering regional dominance as part of a broader effort to rule the globe. The Middle East is viewed as one of the world's most insecure regions for a number of reasons. The United States considers maintaining stability and prosperity in

the Middle East one of its highest priorities. Combating terrorist groups in the Middle East has been one of the most critical foundations of US strategy in the twenty-first century, especially since September 11, when as a result of the terrorist attack, the Bush administration announced a “global war on terror” (Shukri, 2017).

Hence, the findings of the study illustrate that terrorism, civil wars, and instability in the Middle East have had a significant influence on the United States’ economic, national security, and diplomatic interests in the region. Maintaining strong ties with allies and comprehending the nature of conflicts is critical to attaining US foreign policy objectives in the Middle East.

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).

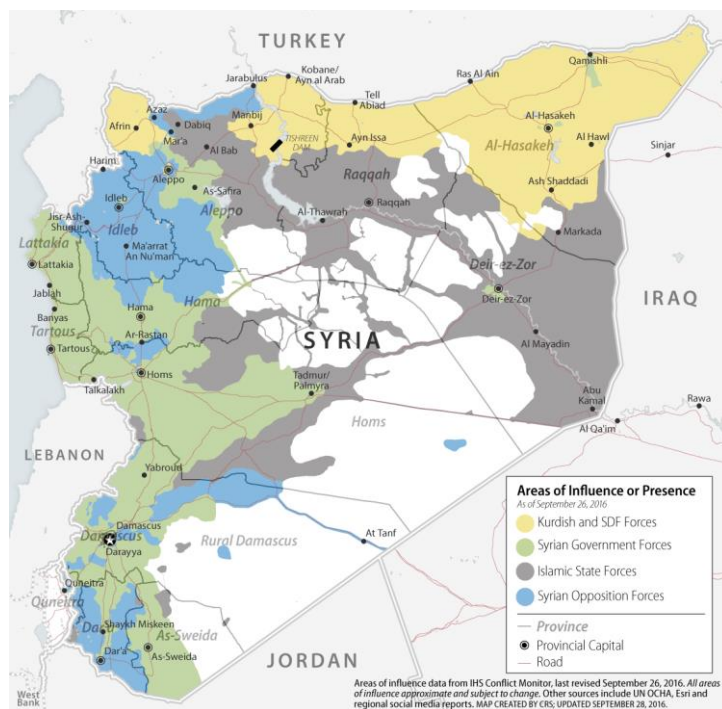


Figure 4: Syria’s areas of influence (source: Humud, Blanchard and Nikitin, 2016)

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

government demonstrations erupt. Similar protests in the Middle East as a result of the Arab Spring, inspired these demonstrations. The Assad regime reacted violently to the peaceful demonstrations, exacerbating the situation. He used the security and intelligence services to disperse rallies and marches, often with live fire, and to apprehend dissidents (Khan and Khan, 2017). In spite of expectations, the Syrian system has withstood tireless pressing factors and surged from abroad for almost five years. A closer look at the situation in Syria in 2010/2011 will help explain why the regime has survived, the complexities of the situation in Syria, and why searches for a stable political settlement are so difficult (Ottaway, 2015).

The complication of the Syrian emergency that has extended over years doesn't appear to be resolute at present or near future. It was overseen on three distinct levels, which were national, topographical and global. It demands the national level of the crisis in addition to the global level (Rabinovich, 2017).

5.0.1 The Domestic Crisis

The Syrian civil conflict 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. By then, the emergency could presumably have been contained had Bashar al-Asad and his lieutenants reacted gently and astutely to the underlying exhibits. All things being equal, they decided to subdue the dissent ruthlessly and set off a steadily extending pattern of brutality that soon turned into an undeniable common conflict. At the centre of that war are various complaints against a bad and tyrannical system, generally significant of which is the Arab Sunni dominant part's refusal to acknowledge Alawite authority. The Alawites establish 12 per cent of the province's populace and, as a branch of Shiite Islam, are not seen by traditionalist Sunnis as legitimate Muslims (Dostal, 2014).

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. Under Bashar al-Asad, the Iranian-Syrian relationship has been changed from organization and partnership to reliance. As the common Syrian conflict heightened and the risk to the system's presence developed, Iran had to expand its interest in Syria. It could not examine the possibility of losing its Syrian base, let alone Syria going under Western or traditionalist Bedouin impact (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 Syrian opposition groups 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, in 2012 the participation of other countries or foreign groups in the direct conflict started when Hezbollah, with the support of Iran, fought on al-Assad's side. Though, this was undoubtedly to counter the indirect involvement of other countries like America, Saudi Arabia and Qatar that have been providing arms 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 United States 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. To establish an Islamic State and Caliphate, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) became involved in 2014 in their drive. Direct attacks on ISIL station demonstrated Russia's engagement in the last quarter of 2015. This was reported to be at the offer of the Syrian government. Turkey shot down a Russian jet on November 24, 2015, resulting in a diplomatic spat between the two nations and NATO. Russia reacted by beefing up its military presence in the Middle East. Although China is not directly involved in the conflict, it has chosen to utilize its veto authority in the UN Security Council to take a diplomatic stance. Despite the desire of many countries to intervene militarily in Syria, this has prevented international military participation (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. From Colombia to Iraq to the Philippines, military assistance is deployed to strengthen states against terrorists, drug and other violent, non-state actors. 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).

Syria's civil war has attracted the attention of foreign states, as shown by the various interventions the conflict has seen. Intervening powers choose sides in the dispute and make logistical, diplomatic, and financial arrangements. One of the most notable aspects of the dispute is the multiple interventions. Thirty thousand foreign fighters had flown to Syria to fight for either side of the conflict as of 2015 (Giacomini, 2016). One of the reasons may be the multiple interventions in the conflict's high points. The United States is one of the leading powers involved in the Syrian war, and it has expressed military and other support for the rebel groups (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 United States was profoundly associated with wars that must be succeeded at the common military level, and where understanding the profound inside divisions and strains of the host country, and the pressing factors from outside states, were basic. Except if the United States 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 United States is currently battling. The United States 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).

Until now, the United States has neglected to perceive the sheer size of the common issues it faces in leading military activities. It has neglected to comprehend the requirements to complete unrest in common military issues if it has to be fruitful in attacking dissolved state wars, including significant counterinsurgency missions and dependence on having country powers. The U.S. military job in Syria was key, for example, and it outlines plainly that any military exertion to try not to manage the full outcomes of the common side of a war can be a formula for disappointment (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.

On the other hand, the American military started participating in the conflict started in September 2014; for instance, the US government had been involved in the conflict for some time before that date. These involvements ranged from demands for Bashar al-resignation Assad as President of Syria to providing nonlethal and lethal aid 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 Syria prior 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 United States' 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 United States 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 United States 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".

As indicated by certain examiners, the US international interests in the Middle East are to control the production and exchange of oil and gas items around there and to guarantee the assurance of ethnic and strict confinement of Israel around there. 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 United States, assumed responsibility for the northeastern pieces of the country. The United States 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 United States '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 United States' 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 United States' 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).

However, despite their usefulness, these findings do not provide insight into how the fate of Syria's renowned US allies, the Syrian Kurds, could be simplified when enforcing the current foreign policy that aims to avoid direct military interference. It's also worth noting that the preceding findings contribute to an interpretation of possible reasons for the United States' withdrawal from Syria; however, fail to uncover any of the incidents that could have contributed to the country's previous ignorance of the crisis (Phillips, 2016).

There are a lot of circumstances and issues that the United States 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 United States' contradictory foreign policy complicates the situation. From the Asia-Pacific to the Middle East, the presence of US troops has caused a stir among residents (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 United States 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 US goal and dedication to maintaining the state structure in the region as defined by physical borders drawn 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 United States 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 Lahouaiej 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).

For more than 50 years, the United States has had a political, economic, and military relationship with the Central East. The United States non-stop involvement in the district continued in the foreseeable future, despite the public's fatigue with the dispute and growing support for a fantastic restriction strategy. Regardless of the hitches in recognizing (not to mention seeking after and accomplishing), the United States has numerous center interests in the Middle East, including the Syrian popular conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian war, and the unwanted tension in promoting democratization and power. The rise of a local hegemon, nuclear expansion, and large-scale terrorist attacks on the region needs prevention; moreover, ensuring access to oil and the safety of provincial partners were also mentioned (Altunışık, 2013).

These vested interests serve as a background to most of the serious provincial dangers to arise in recent years: ISIS, or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Fortunately, ISIS poses little threat to the United States most vital territorial interests, such as preventing the rise of a provincial hegemon and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The bad news is that ISIS poses a significant threat to a number of other US interests, including the stability of local allies and the prevention of militant psychological attacks (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 Hüppi 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).

To defeat ISIS as a state, more than simply removing them from power in the country is needed. The competitive authority must be involved and gained to ensure that the "Islamic State" does not return and is not accepted by the citizens of the pounded provinces. Local governments must meet residents' basic needs, such as safety and transportation, as well as necessities such as employment, health care, and schools. Most importantly, they should make civilians feel secure in this country, regardless of whether they are a minority ethnic or religious group. If governments fail to meet citizens' basic needs, terrorist groups such as ISIS, which promise safe streets, free schools, and an end to fraud in return for increased restrictions on liberty, would become more vulnerable (Krause, 2018).

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 with strong provincial alliances and if the war isn't entwined with larger foreign-imposed regime change and democratization initiatives, which have had a bleak history

and a bleak future. The secret to defeating ISIS was the recognition of its three aspects, as well as to exploit the vulnerabilities that such a dynamic organization poses.

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 eduuced, 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 United States 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 Committee meetings as 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-Nusra). 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-Nusra. 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).

So far, finding a reasonable middle ground for Assad's future has proven difficult. There are huge schisms over the Assad regime, with some (such as the Syrian opposition, the US, the EU, and most Arab states) demanding his removal and others (such as Iran and Russia) finding the structure to be equally essential. 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 determined that Assad could not consolidate his authority over the entire country, and given the disparities in positions of anti- and pro-government forces on various issues, it is unclear if Syria can be safeguarded in its current form. Future efforts

at post-conflict reconstruction in Syria may be based on the simple assumption that "Syria" no longer has a political substance that can be resurrected in any meaningful form (Tuck, 2016).

Whatever the case, Syria's disintegration or secession poses a significant threat to the Middle East's overall power. The agreement could now include maintaining Syria's current structure, significant political and monetary decentralization, and a special status for Kurdish areas (however, this last point could confront resistance from Turkey) (Zaarour, 2018).

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

The economic and political presence of the United States in the Middle East constituency before, during, and after World War I and World War II aid in understanding how the United States developed itself in the region and what its goals were following its manifestation. The current article also emphasizes the US's critical interests in the Middle East, including ensuring deliberate access to oil in the Gulf region, promoting and defending Israel's supremacy, maintaining US military bases, securing client-states and supportive regimes, and combating Islamic movements and terrorist organizations. The synthesis of research based on this literature review shows that the United States' foreign policy has continued in a region vital to its national security interests due to available oil, its impetus to protect Israel, to support security by retaining military bases, to preserve the position of the protectorate of client states and friendly regimes, and to resist Islamic movements and terrorism. These five forces have pushed US decision-makers to take control of the area, and they continue to be essential to the US today.

Students and scholars of international affairs need to consider the importance of the history of the Middle East importance, as well as insight into the motivations and desires of American decision-makers to influence and establish policy (Al Sarhan 2017).

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

6.0 Introduction

An ethnic group 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).

Following World War I and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the Kurds were granted their own country under the terms of the 1920 Sevres Treaty, only to have the pledge revoked under the 1923 Lausanne Treaty. Kurds, at least 25 million people, are spread over Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. They occupy an area of about 230,000 square miles, about equivalent to Germany and the United Kingdom combined. Kurds are the world's largest ethnic minority without a state. In Iraq, the name "Kurdistan" refers to the Kurdish region in northern Iraq, while in Iran, it refers to the Kurdish region of northwest Iran. Turkey and Syria, on the other hand, avoid using this phrase for political reasons, despite the fact that it was frequently used throughout the Ottoman period (O'Leary, 2002).

It is believed that 3 million Kurds live in Syria, accounting for 13% of the country's 23 million people. They mainly live in the country's northwestern area, which shares borders with Iraqi Kurdistan to the east and Turkey to the north and west. Kurds also populate some important districts in Aleppo and Damascus. Aleppo's Ashrafiya and Shaykh Maqsoud districts, as well as Damascus' Hay Akrad and Rukn al-Din districts, are among them (“Syrian Kurds and the Democratic Union Party (PYD),” 2012). The Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish is spoken by the Kurds in Syria, and it is the most widely spoken dialect in Kurdistan. The emergence of de facto autonomy in Syria's Kurdish majority areas has elevated the Kurds to a crucial player in the Syrian conflict. 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 Kobani. All these started during the era of Baath. The denial of rights to Syrian Kurds dates back to 1958 when Syria officially adopted Arab nationalism against non-Arab ethnic minorities, including the Kurds. In October 1962, Syrian authorities conducted a so-called special

census in Hasakah province, which is located in northeastern Syria and is home to the majority of Kurds. The authorities then generated statistical reports to locate those who may have infiltrated Syria illegally (Ziadeh, 2009).

The Baath dictatorship established the so-called Arab-belt from the Jazira region in northeast Syria to the northern Kurdish city of Kobani as a result of its Arabisation initiatives in the 1960s and 1970s, in an attempt to undermine the Kurdish region's contiguity ("THE RESURRECTION OF SYRIAN KURDISH POLITICS," 2013). The Syrian Kurds have long been antagonistic (opposed) to the Ba'athist dictatorship, having been subjected to 'Arabisation' (Arab Belt policy) and marginalization, which has kept the region's agricultural condition poor. An intentionally low-yielding agricultural production was maintained. It focused on producing staple food crops, particularly wheat and beans, while underutilizing a fertile territory that had been purposefully established as a "bread basket," and employing landless Kurds as cheap labor (Lowe, 2014). The regime's hydro-civilizational goal in the river valleys, particularly along the Euphrates, featured higher-yielding agriculture and the settlement of Sunni Arabs where economic possibilities were better. As a result, about 20% of Syria's Kurdish population has been denationalized, losing all citizenship rights, including the right to vote and participate in public life, the right to travel outside the country, the right to private ownership, and the right to public sector work (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).

In the postwar years, the Kurds lacked a uniting figure who could credibly claim to represent all Kurdish people (Akyol, 2015). The few leaders who emerged did not enjoy significant support among Kurds, and in some cases, alienated the British by being viewed as unduly aggressive in their ambitions to establish an independent state. The British also failed to propose a credible alternative to the Sykes-Picot Agreement and hence could not provide a clear picture of the Kurds' future (Silitonga, 2019). As a result, the Kurds lacked leadership capable of working with the British to find a political solution to the issue of Kurdish independence or autonomy 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 United States 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).

In the mid-1970s, the US likewise abandoned the Kurds, deciding to sponsor peace talks between Iran and Iraq instead. In the pre-Saddam era, a divided Kurdish leadership hampered efforts to attain autonomy and independence. In the 1930s, Kurds showed very rudimentary political organization, and Baghdad crushed what little fledgling political activity there was (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 United States 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) in the Syrian uprising, the topic of the nation is not being asked in the context of nationalism and nationalist politics, which are viewed as a search for a nation-state that will give voice to a previously stateless national group. Rather, the revolt has sparked national imaginings that have become a "form of politics" in which seemingly established concerns of peoplehood, identity, and national community have been reassessed. Bliesemann de Guevara, (2014) stated that it began in early 2011 with a series of seemingly unrelated acts and incidents that converged into a broad national movement for freedom and the abolition of security services domination, ultimately upending a crucial pillar of the al-Asad administration. 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.

Violent crackdowns on public demonstrations, arrests, imprisonment, and torture in custody were among the security techniques employed to quell the protests, but they were met with even more resistance. 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).

The terms of rule of Bashar al-regime, Asad which were inherited and preserved from Hafez al-regime, Asad's are important for understanding some of the dynamics at play in the current confrontation between the regime and its supporters on the one hand, and the protest movement and uprising participants on the other. During the reign of Hafez al-Asad, public discourse and the worship of the leader were crucial processes of government and control, as Lisa Wedeen (1999) reveals.

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. The slide in meaning between leader and nation equating the leader with the Syrian or Arab people began with Hafez al-Asad and was exhibited and underpinned in the making of Suriyya al-Asad (or 'Asad's Syria') is being repeated in the current revolt. 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. The visual twinning and blending of the national flag and the president's visage also contributes to the equating of nation and leader. 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.

After the Assad regime ended its support for the PKK in 1998, the Syrian Kurdish minority began to experience a political reawakening (under threat of war from Turkey). Following its expulsion from Syria and Syrian-occupied Lebanon and Ocalan's capture, the PKK stopped forcing Kurdish activists to silence criticism of the Baathist regime. 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.

After their release, they fled across the border to Iraqi Kurdistan, vowing to continue the fight. The Kurdish revolt last month caught many people off guard, both inside Syria and overseas. 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 United States. "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 Dêmkokrat 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).

Two major parties now dominate Kurdish politics in Syria's Kurdish region: the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the Kurdish National Council (KNC) (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).

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 Dêmkokrat 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 mobilisation among Syrian Kurds remained far weaker throughout the twentieth century (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).

By making ethnic insurgencies more robust and feasible, the presence of ethnic groups transcending international borders increases the probability of civil war. 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 Öcalan 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 Öcalan'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.

The PKK gained political credibility as a result of its war against the Turkish state, especially in comparison to other Kurdish parties that remained largely inactive. 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).

The PKK also enlisted thousands of Turkish volunteers to help defend the border town of Kobanî, which was besieged 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. During the second half of the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century, the PKK continued to recruit from Syria's Kurdish districts. Among Syria's Kurds, militant families integrated into the organization's networks. Similar to sociocultural dynamics in Turkey, these families form the backbone of PKK grassroots mobilization. As a result, when the regime withdrew from largely Kurdish areas in the summer of 2012, the PYD had a large pool of cadres and established networks to fill the power vacuum (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). Following the PKK's cease-fire in 2010, the state and the PKK and Ocalan held new talks. Ocalan prepared and submitted to the state another road map involving three protocols during these new meetings: "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).

Only a few months later, the peace effort faced another severe problem. Kurdish people took to the streets on the 6th and 8th of October to protest the IS's week-long siege of Kobani in Syria and the government's "apathy" or even "contentment" with the siege and the potential surrender of Kobani. The Kobani events, which resembled a civil war, resulted in the deaths of over forty civilians, most of whom were HDP sympathizers. 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)

Since the announcement of the Islamic State's (IS) Caliphate (Khilafa) in late June 2014 and the start of US-led coalition airstrikes against IS targets in northern Iraq in August 2014 and Syria in September 2014, the terrorist group has grown into an increasingly global phenomenon. In the following weeks and months, an increasing number of jihadist fighters pledged their allegiance (bay'a) to IS, responding to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's demand for international allegiance to his self-declared authority. IS and its "Leader of the Faithful" (amir al-mu'minin) Baghdadi – also known as Caliph Ibrahim – had accepted groups operating in Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Nigeria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan-Afghanistan (Af-Pak), and Russia's North Caucasus into the fold by early August 2015, in addition to its already existing force in Syria and Iraq. While some of the new IS affiliates known within the Caliphate as "provinces" (wilayat) are operationally smaller than others, they have all carried out attacks since joining the IS banner (Knights & Mello, 2015).

IS's clear and present threat warrants, if not necessitates, a response by international powers and local governments who are directly confronted with IS on the battlefield. Nonetheless, it's unclear to what extent each foreign component and each of the 36 provinces in Syria and Iraq have formed and consolidated robust command and control (C2) linkages with the IS central leadership. Several tactical successes over IS have been scored in areas of Iraq and northeastern Syria after nine months of coalition operations, but these do not appear to amount to strategic progress in weakening and defeating IS as an organization. In fact, several aspects of the accepted techniques may be harmful in the long run. Given the scope of IS operations in Syria and Iraq and the dubious nature of its command and control (C2) links with other countries, the international community's strategic priority should remain combating IS in its Iraqi and Syrian heartlands. 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. Despite this, the Kurdish militia Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (YPG) has been consistently effective, with its forces recapturing as many as 200 villages and towns in northeastern Syria in May 2015 alone, often in coordination with coalition airstrikes. Furthermore, in mid-June, it captured Tel Abyad, a border town with significant strategic relevance to IS and the nearby 93rd Brigade base on 22 June suggested Kurds had the military potential to threaten IS' de facto capital of Raqqa, provided coalition air support continued. However, it is uncertain how dedicated the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) would be to expanding military operations and allocating crucial resources outside of core Kurdish territory (Al-Kadhimi, 2015).

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. Although Turkey has sometimes made subtle distinctions between the YPG and PKK, the Syrian faction is nonetheless structurally part of the PKK's broader organizational umbrella. Should Turkey-PKK hostilities continue to escalate, dynamics across northern Syria could fundamentally transform. Moreover, reports that the Assad regime has begun using the predominantly Kurdish northeastern Hasakah governorate as a new base for Iranian military personnel and avowedly pro-regime Baathist Sunni militias could serve to open new conflict fronts that may neutralize the potential for Kurdish progress against IS altogether. 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. IS has operationally changed in order to maintain an internal sense of momentum on the battlefield, in addition to its international growth and declared management over 36 "provinces" across ten countries. While control of population centers is unquestionably important in providing the group with its most important source of revenue (tax and extortion, worth an estimated \$600 million in Iraq alone in 2014, 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. 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)".

However, while it is crucial that IS' proven ability to adapt and endure amid concerted attack is acknowledged, the lengthy duration of any fight against the group should not remove the urgency of ensuring the strategy is right from the start. Recapturing villages and towns on IS' periphery are an important first step, but only if it comes as part of a broader strategic appreciation of the challenge ahead. Slowing IS momentum does not necessarily mean the group has been placed on the road to defeat, just as the destruction of makeshift oil refineries does not mean IS finances have been dealt an existential blow. 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. Iraq's central government and security forces must be pushed hard to become more representative of the country's diversity. Meanwhile, nationalist Iraqis and, if necessary, the international community should curb Iran's increasingly dominant involvement in shaping paramilitary groups in Iraq. In Syria, the international community must finally acknowledge that Bashar al-Assad does not represent anything resembling a unifying figure for his country. Syrians can only begin to reclaim control of their territory from groups like IS through a political solution in the form of a managed transition. A successful Syrian rebel training and equipping program that envisages success in years and not months is miles from a recipe to success (Nichols, 2015).

The ascension of al-Syrian Qaida's affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra, has been accompanied by adopting pragmatic attitudes on the ground, ensuring its place as a recognized vital component of the larger rebel insurgency against the Assad regime. Since late 2014, Jabhat al-Nusra has used this advantage, which contrasts strongly with the Islamic State's unabashed unilateralism, to establish a formidable base in the northwestern 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. Turkish-Kurdish relations have been built on business, which has helped to break down various taboos surrounding the existence of a Kurdish state in the Middle East. Businessmen are at the origin of a new phenomenon, in addition to contributing to the Turkish government's soft power efforts in the Middle East. Turkey's Kurdish businesses have gained a new standing among state actors as a result of their operations' fit with Turkey's recent foreign policy strategies. Their operations have been "legitimized," and they can now improve their negotiating skills regarding their political and social demands concerning Turkey's Kurdish issue.

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.

A group of Kurds established a secular, ethnically inclusive, bottom-up democratic government in Rojava, Northern Syria, in 2012, in which all ethnic and religious groups can live in peace and cooperation. Seven years later, in 2019, the region they govern has expanded into the General Council of the Self Administration in Northern and Eastern Syria (NES). It now controls around one-third of Syria's land, thanks to civic councils in cities freed from Islamic State (Rojava in Syria – Growing Local Democracy and Defending Ecology in the Midst of Conflict, 2019). Women have full access to their human rights, grassroots democracy is the norm, and the economy is cooperative and environmentally conscious.

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 great powers like the U.S. are unstable.

In the second section, following the incidents that happened during the revolution throughout Syria, how the Kurds as a non-state actor, 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

First, Relations between the US and the Kurds date back to the First World War. With the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, American President Wilson called for autonomy to the non-Turkish peoples of the Ottoman Empire, such as the Kurds or the Armenians. Rejected by the new Turkish nationalist regime, the Treaty of Sèvres was substituted by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, and the plan of Kurdish independence was rapidly aborted, leaving the Kurds without their promised country (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 proceeding of ISIS in the city of Kobani, as the resistance of Kurdish fighters 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.

Therefore, 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 it did not realize that it was only fighting a proxy war on behalf of the US. The US exploited the Kurds repeatedly. However, according to observers, the surprising truth is that the Kurds never learned “to restrain themselves from being pawns of interests for the US” (Meho et al., 2004). 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 interviewees make 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

In the first six months of 2014, the Syrian Kurds were deeply harassed by ISIL, a new jihadist group that views the Kurds as ideological opponents as well as enemies for control of territory and resources. For the first time, the YPG, the PYD's military organization, began engaging militarily in the defence of Kurdish towns and villages, and it appeared to be a more efficient actor on the ground than their Iraqi Kurdish neighbors,

the Peshmergas (Gunes et al., 2015). The Syrian war has definitely shaped a new dynamic in the region was the militarization of the Syrian Kurds' struggle (Aziz, 2020)

All of the interviewees, 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 United States 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 United States 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 United States' involvement in the Kurdish issue dates back to the end of World War I, when President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points advocated for the Ottoman Empire's non-Turkish peoples to be granted autonomy. Despite the fact that the Treaty of Sevres permitted for a Kurdish state, the Turkish Republic's consolidation, which rejected the Treaty of Sevres, and the League of Nations' decision to give the Kurdish-majority Mosul vilayet to Britain's new Iraqi mission put an end to that option. The United States'

interest waned until the early Cold War, when Kurdish ambitions became a handy weapon for destabilizing pro-Soviet administrations in Iraq.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the United States, in collaboration with its allies Israel and Iran, offered major military and financial assistance to Kurdish insurgents in Iraq, particularly to Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP).

However, one of the interviewees 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 United States 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.

Thus, in the 13th of September 2014, the city of Kobani was targeted for the second time by ISIL. This attack predestined the end of the Kurdish presence in the region for the Jihadists. The abrupt loss of a dozen villages during the first days of the fight immediately put the YPG in a difficult position (Desoli, 2015). The rise of ISIL was one of the main factors changing the Middle East political map, but thanks to an international coalition, the Kurds quickly benefited from the Siege of Kobani. Indeed, the US targeted the Jihadists with air strikes for the first time, which led to the media coverage of the Kobani fight and the Kurdish cause in general.

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 interviewees 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)

By early 2016, the future for the Syrian Kurds was very encouraging: they had banished ISIL, benefited from US protection and created a political project in Rojava. Before the Syrian uprising, the notion of Kurdish autonomy was inconceivable, but since 2013, local self-governance by Syrian Kurds has become a reality. Benefiting from a weakened regime and a divided Kurdish opposition, the PYD could govern authorities in northeastern Syria (Federici, 2015). After establishing control over the Kurdish regions,

the PYD proclaimed the creation of Rojava, gathering 1.5 million inhabitants (Desoli, 2015)

Some interviewees 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.

So, this rise to power is explained by the party's organization, discipline and ability to take advantage of the Syrian crisis dynamics. The PYD owes much of its influence and power to the fact that it is the only political organization with its own militia, the YPG with its 65 000 fighters (Thornton, 2015). The close relations between the PYD and the PKK have also permitted necessary training, well-trained fighters and weapons supplies. The success of the PYD has driven the Syrian Kurds to support the political organization that offers security, services and employment (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.

Relations between the US and the Kurds date back to the First World War. With the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, the American President Wilson called for autonomy to the non-Turkish peoples of the Ottoman Empire, as the Kurds or the Armenians. Rejected by the new Turkish nationalist regime, the Treaty of Sèvres was substituted by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 and the plan of Kurdish independence was rapidly aborted, leaving the Kurds without their promised country (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 United States 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 United States.

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.

So, first, the American strategy was to strengthen the Kurdish National Council while convincing the PYD to join the anti-Assad opposition. Despite these efforts, the PYD stayed largely in control of Rojava and had the faithfulness of the majority of armed Kurdish militias (Küçükkeleş and Mankoff, 2014). Rapidly, the US saw the PYD as a bulwark against the Islamist 14 groups as ISIL or Jabhat al-Nusra. That is how the US quickly faced a delicate position: cooperating with the PYD/YPG, which is crucial for the political transition in Syria while preserving Turkey as an indispensable ally against Russia and Iran. Therefore, the main question for the US was to find a plan to keep Turkey in the American camp without losing the Kurdish military support. If the US loses the YPG, they would be forced to leave the north of Syria, leaving the arena open to the Syrian regime and its Iranian ally. Even if the Kurds proved to be the most effective allies in the fight against ISIL, they had ousted ISIL from more than 99% of the territory it had occupied; the US had to avoid an ethnic conflict in northern Syria. Indeed, the Arabs did not support the inversion of power for the benefit of the Kurds and it was not realistic to think that the PYD/YPG could rule Arab provinces (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 interviewees, 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 United States. So the United States 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 United States 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 United States 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 Demnasq'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 United States want to come to terms with a joint agreement for the future of Syria within the Geneva framework under UN.

Thus, alignment with the US allowed the PYD to be safe from the Turkish threat. Being an American ally permitted the Kurds to increase their influence in Rojava despite Turkey's worries over the Kurdish issue. Indeed, Turkey was deeply reluctant to see a continuous Kurdish belt along its border. Turkey shared fears that the PKK aims to form a second base of operations in neighbouring Syria. This would allow the PKK to increase its power as a regional actor and put weight on Turkey to make political concessions to

its Kurdish minority. The YPG's military efficiency and the PYD's strong links to the PKK were seen as a direct threat to Turkish national security. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made it abundantly clear that Ankara considered the fight in Kobani as including not one but two terrorist organizations. Even if the US 15 bypassed Turkey's opinion about the US-YPG alliance, the US decision in 2016 to side with Turkey when Syrian Kurds attempted to cross the Euphrates was a reminder that the international community is more likely to choose Turkey's interests over the Kurds' aspirations (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 United States did not like the fact that Iran was overwhelming this region. Iran has big influence in Syria and Iraq in Lebanon 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 United States 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 United States and Russia greatly influences the behaviour . That does not mean United States is prepared to confront Russia for the Kurds no United states 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 interviewees 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. Turkey, as a country, does not want the Kurds to establish their own state. PKK's presence in Syria is not Turkey's concern; in reality, PKK has had a strong presence in Syria since the beginning. Turkey shares a 930-kilometer border with Syria, with over 600 kilometers of that border with the Kurds. Despite Turkey's dislike for the Kurds, the United States, Russia, and the European Union do not refuse Turkey on purpose.

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 United States, 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 interviewees 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 Kurds. 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 United States 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 interviewees 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 interviewees 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.

The US-Kurdish alliance also discouraged Assad's forces from invading the Kurdish region even as they regained major areas elsewhere from anti-Assad fighters. Indeed, Russia wanted to see Assad regain control of Syria's oil fields to help fund the country's reconstruction, while Iran wanted to geographically connect the forces it supports in Syria and Lebanon with those in Iraq (Hubbard, 2018). But on the other hand, Moscow, Teheran and Damascus needed the PYD/YPG in order to exert a threat on Turkey. That is how the Syrian civil war became definitely vulnerable to foreign interference. The different proxy battles between these main powers complicated the situation. However, while Russia, Turkey and Iran have a clear goal in Syria, the US policy goal remained unclear (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 interviewee , 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 United States 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 United States 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 interviewees, around 90%, are sure that Kurds can play a crucial 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 interviewees 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 interviewees'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 United States.

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 role of the political parties of South and Kurdistan Regional Government 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 interviewees 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 interviewees were well. One hundred percent

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 Kurds 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 Russia. 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 notably, is that at the beginning of Syrian revolution, the Kurds as a non-state actor, 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 interviewees 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 long history in the Middle East, and its influence has only augmented from the end of the Cold War. Despite this, trade and cultural ties are strained, and the region's military might pale compared to Europe, a long-standing concern, or Asia, where the US hopes to "pivot" in the coming years. The Middle East's oil fields and other communist-leaning governments acted as a chessboard between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. In the 1990s, the US expanded its military presence in the region in order to keep Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Iran's clerical rule in check. On the other hand, Washington was involved and sustained in its efforts to achieve peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, but it was largely unsuccessful.

The United States does not have a grand plan for the Kurds because of their geopolitical status in the region; they are divided between four states (Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria). Each state demands its own specific concerns. Furthermore, the Kurdish-majority governments are all more significant to US foreign policy than the Kurds themselves. However, because of its interest in Middle East security and human rights, the US has grown to believe it bears some responsibility toward the Kurds. Nonetheless, the US opposes their independence since it would undoubtedly result in the split of the countries in which they live, causing unwelcome instability in the Middle East.

Based on the literature, it can be inferred those scholarly reports point to mixed outcomes, with some assertions acknowledging that the decision by the U.S. to abandon Syrian Kurds was informed. In contrast, others suggest that without caution, the decision, which has been implemented, is likely to do more harm than good to America's long-term ally, who played a critical role during the fight against ISIS. Particularly, the results indicate that America abandoned Syria due to a two-fold outcome in which ISIS was defeated successfully and that most of the other objectives (such as the safe return of refugees) were out of reach, pointing that the presence of American troops in the region might have been unwarranted. However, even as these factors tend to justify America's departure, the Syrian Kurds end up at a crossroads in which they are confronted with external and internal issues. Externally, the threat that faces the Kurds is the possibility of being forced to leave areas controlled by the Syrian regime. Internally, the Syrian Kurds find themselves in a delicate situation due to possible rebellion by Arabs in Arab-

majority cities where the Kurdish are in control. Initially, in the presence of America, the Syrian Kurds' patron, some degree of assurance was felt.

However, the literature above demonstrates a highly delicate or volatile situation facing Kurds in Syria. A question arises how and why America altered its foreign policy towards the Syrian Kurds. Moreover, what are the main factors that derived USFP towards Syrian Kurds? By examining reasons why there were these changes, why the U.S. intervened, and factors that prompted its abandonment of Syrian Kurds, the proposed study is projected to shed light on how and why the U. S's foreign policy has been designed towards Syrian Kurds since 2011. Through a closer examination, it is evident that other literature the previous literature did not offer cover the U.S. foreign policy towards Syrian Kurds. Most of the studies thus ignored to address extremely the important question of why the U.S. policy has changed from ignorance to 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.

The U.S. Military only decided to support the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Subsequently, every other option failed. After Syrian rebel groups' training and equipment programmes failed miserably and there were no longer any local partners, the U.S. decided to back the SDF. Although the U.S. military supported Kurdish-led groups, this never translated to political endorsements of Syrian Kurdish administrations. The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) was never invited to any international platform to discuss Syria's political future. Therefore, when the U.S. partnered with the Syrian Kurds, the engagement was strictly military and focused on one and only one aim, enduring defeat of IS.

The formation of a Kurdish state is not supported by the United States. 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 United States 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 United States 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 United States due to the Arab Spring. On the other hand, the Kurds had two fundamental expectations from the United States: 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).

Consider Trump's decision to keep the US military in charge of the country's oil to protect the US against 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 maintain the US as the world's leading power (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 United States 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 United States, and European States (Darwich, 2021).

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 launched air strikes against the Jihadists for the first time, resulting in widespread media coverage of the Kobani battle and the Kurdish cause in general. Furthermore, it demonstrated to the rest of the world the fruitful cooperation between the US and the PYD/YPG, which continued despite Turkey's opposition. The Kurds were able to not only defeat ISIL, but also take control of the majority of Syria's border with Turkey, thanks to US assistance. The US, the PYD/YPG, the Peshmergas, and the Free Syrian Army (FSA) worked together in Kobani to show worldwide support for the Kurdish cause. The PYD's standing as an official US partner

has been elevated as a result of its achievements over ISIL on the battlefield, enhancing the YPG's legitimacy.

The United States 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 United States' 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.

The primary objective of the United States as a regional superpower in the Western Hemisphere is to prevent any regional hegemon or hemispheric influence from rising in other areas. The United States has achieved this diplomatic objective using the offshore balancing grand plan. To begin, grand strategy is described as "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". To put it another way, it's the degree to which intelligence and diplomacy collaborate with military might to shape international foreign policy outcomes. Every state is expected to have a master plan, and they all do, whether they realize it or not.

For the past four decades, the United States' 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 United States 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. 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 United States' constructive interaction with Iran has shown that a pragmatic approach to dispute resolution without partisan attachment is not only possible but 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. 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 defending its own interests in regional crises could drive the country toward a power-balanced arrangement (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).

Insiders and ISIS deserters who have seen firsthand the harsh realities of life under the Islamic State and in ISIS-controlled areas are the most credible voices raising their voices against ISIS. 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 United States. 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 United States, 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).

The economic and political presence of the United States in the Middle East constituency prior to, during, and after World War I and World War II aid in understanding how the United States developed itself in the region and what its goals were following its manifestation. The current study also emphasizes the US' critical interests in the Middle East, including ensuring deliberate access to oil in the Gulf region, promoting and defending Israel's supremacy, maintaining US military bases, securing client-states and supportive regimes, and combating Islamic movements and terrorist organizations. The synthesis of research based on this literature review shows that the United States' foreign policy has continued in a region vital to its national security interests due to available oil, its impetus to protect Israel, to support security by retaining military bases, to preserve the position of the protectorate of client states and friendly regimes, and to resist Islamic movements and terrorism. These five forces have pushed American decision-makers to take control of the area, and they continue to be essential to America today. Students and scholars of international affairs need to consider the history

of the Middle East's importance and insight into the motivations and desires of American decision-makers to influence and establish 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 United States 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 course. 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.

Moreover, regarding the alliances between states and non-state actors, which is another main issue in this research, this research finds that the alliances between states

and non-state actors are usually less institutionalized than alliances between states, as they do not follow formal arrangements or accords and do not oblige the parties to constitute shared institutions. As such, there is nothing that keeps them from collapsing. So it could be argued that the alliance between the US and Syrian Kurds was not strategic but tactical. Strategic alliances are characterized by high levels of cooperation and are usually based on shared values and ideology. Hence, these alliances are usually more sustainable and durable. Tactical cooperation occurs when the parties pursue a number of common short-term interests and do not necessarily rely on durable interests and affinities. In an era of instability, tactical alliances seem to have become more prevalent in current Middle East conflicts, with parties aiming to gain power, influence or economic revenues. The case of USA and Syrian Kurds alliance in Syria can be exemplified in this context.

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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 Dlauer 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 Sheikmous	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