

Iraq from 1972-1975: A Case Study of Power Dynamics in the Cold War

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The relationship between the Soviet Union and Iraq in the 1970s represents the perfect case study of the power politics of the period. Iraq's master politician Saddam Hussein ushered in a new era of economic growth in his country using Cold War politics for Iraqi national interest. Economic arms trade data records the minute details of this curious friendship. Looking through the lens of Development Theory and economic interactions, the Iraqi-Soviet bond reveals why the proxy wars of the Cold War ultimately failed. Conventional thinking of this period often led others to believe that the Soviet Union and the United States always held the power. The bilateral world that they created featured their power politics and their control. However, through the study of Iraq, it becomes evident that the balance of control was often held by the supposedly compliant state. This equally exploitative system shows the intensely calculated movements and developments of all alliances. It is important to be thought of both politically and economically as they were completely intertwined. The Iraqi case study also highlights the flaws in the Soviet Union's plan for developing compliant states. Their inability to effectively retain these alliances may have contributed to their downfall.

***"Iraq's present pragmatism is a means toward ultimate hegemony in the Persian Gulf and perhaps throughout the Middle East, inevitably at the expense of both superpowers."*¹**

"As the world now knows, it was a disaster for Saddam, a triumph for American diplomacy and military might, and a centerpiece of George Bush's legacy. Saddam's brutal invasion of Kuwait also provided the unexpected opportunity to write an end to fifty years of Cold War conflict with resounding finality,"² reflected James Baker III, Secretary of State under President George H.W. Bush, on the legacy of the Gulf War. The relationship between the Soviet Union and Iraq began in 1958, solidified in 1972, and dissipated at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War. This culminated in Saddam Hussein becoming the aggressor to first test the new post-Cold War alliances. The combination of weapons stockpiling, possession of oil riches, and intense egomania fueled the tumultuous history of Iraqi-Soviet relations. This relationship gives tremendous insight into the nature and importance of relations with superpowers during the Cold War. Iraq's ultimate control of the alliance resulted from their

leverage as a successful trading partner and the Soviet Union's disproportionate need for a geo-strategic outpost in the Middle East to counter the United States' allies in the region.

Thousands of studies and books explore the power maneuvering of Cold War relationships between the United States, the Soviet Union and their respective client states. Yet few delve into the day-to-day changes that both evolved and threatened these alliances. The relationship between the Soviet Union and Iraq in the 1970s represents the perfect case study of power politics of the time period. Iraq's master politician, Saddam Hussein, ushered in a new era of economic growth in his country using Cold War politics to benefit Iraqi national interests. Economic arms trade data records the minute and intriguing details of this curious friendship. Looking through the lens of economic theory and utilizing trade data, the Iraqi-Soviet bond reveals why the proxy wars of the Cold War ultimately failed.

The Cold War in the Middle East

Russia had long held an interest in the Arab world. After the conclusion of World War II the Soviet Union sought to have a larger presence in

¹ Michael T. Klare, "Fueling the Fire: How We Armed the Middle East," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 47, no. 1 (1991): 19.

² James Addison Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace 1989-1992* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), 52.

the Middle East and to greatly reduce the strength of the Western powers in the region, particularly the British.³ The Soviet Union's policies in the Middle East reflect the, "total foreign policy which draws no principal distinction between diplomatic, economic, psychological, or military means of operation."⁴ In the period immediately following World War II, the Soviet Union refused to withdraw troops from Iran citing a misinterpreted 1921 treaty, made territorial claims to two Turkish straits to receive access to the Black Sea, and switched from support from Israel to Palestine. All of these moves and decisions can be easily attributed to the Soviet Union's desire for increased strength and sway in the Middle East, as well as areas where they could subtly incite Marxist tendencies in current governments or nationalist movements.⁵

During the 1950's, Cold War rhetoric and ideology in the Middle East rose to a new level. Possibilities for Soviet strategic alliances progressed during this time frame due to the regional security alliance developed in the Baghdad Pact of 1955 and a split between pan-Arabists and nationalists. Contributing to the reorientation towards the Soviet Union was the lack of a Soviet colonial history in the Middle East. Additionally, Soviet anti-imperialist rhetoric appealed to neutral nations and leaders in the Cold War, such as Gamal Nasser of Egypt and Jawaharlal Nehru of India.⁶ The Soviet-Egyptian relationship started with arms trade and continued with similar commercial interests. Nationalization of the Suez Canal was inspired by Western disappointments, not by Soviet influence. To some, the Suez Canal crisis elevated the influence of the Soviet Union in the region, but Egypt remained frustrated that the Soviet Union took credit for the perceived defeat of the West. Serious issues developed between the two allies after the Egyptian-Syrian unification, which formed

the United Arab Republic (UAR), and the perceived repression of Communist parties in the region. The Egyptian case particularly foreshadows the Soviet relationship with Iraq.

The Soviets remained active in the Middle East in all events from the Six Days War of 1967 to the Yom Kippur War years later. The Soviets also attempted to develop strong Communist parties in all Middle Eastern countries, and tried to remove British and American influence in the region. It is not by accident or lack of effort that the Middle East region is the region where the Soviets had the most relative successes and the United States faced the most challenges.⁷ With knowledge of the Soviet stance in the Middle East, and these highlighted examples of proxy wars involving both American and Soviet superpowers, the case study of Iraqi-Soviet relations becomes even more intriguing and clear. Although the Soviet Union remained involved with other countries in the region, few were given the same attention and weight in foreign policy as was given to the Iraqi government.

The Kurdish Question

The first large-scale diplomatic issue between the Soviets and Iraqis involved the Kurdish area of Iraq. The Kurdish region in Northern Iraq holds a Kurdish minority with a separate language that has long sought political autonomy from Baghdad. The Kurdish struggle against the central government for autonomy has continued on and off throughout Iraqi history. Following the 1958 revolution overthrowing the Iraqi monarchy the Soviet Union backed demands for Kurdish autonomy within the Iraqi state.⁸ A document written by Peter Ivashutin to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union divulged in detail the extent that the Soviet Union supported the Kurdish uprisings. He described the Soviet's three-pronged approach, which began with step one: "use the KGB to organize pro-Kurdish and anti-Kassem protests in India, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Guinea,

³ Galia Golan, *The Soviet Policies in the Middle East: From World War II to Gorbachev*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 29.

⁴ Richard Pipes, "Some Operational Principles of Soviet Foreign Policy," in *The USSR and the Middle East*, Edited by Michael Confino and Shimon Shamir, (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1973), 9.

⁵ Galia Golan, *The Soviet Policies in the Middle East: From World War II to Gorbachev*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 38.

⁶ Galia Golan, *The Soviet Policies in the Middle East: From World War II to Gorbachev*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 45.

⁷ Ivo J. Lederer and Wayne S. Vucinich, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East: The Post-World War II Era*, (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1974), 12.

⁸ Oles M. Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 65.

and other countries,”⁹ and continued in stage two to, “have the KGB meet with Barzani to urge him to ‘seize the leadership of the Kurdish movements in his hands and to lead it along the democratic road,”¹⁰ and to advise him to “keep a low profile in the course of this activity so that the West did not have a pretext to blame the USSR in meddling into the internal affairs of Iraq.”¹¹ The Soviets wanted full reign over this small civil based proxy war and did not want the Americans to gain strength in the country. The third phase also involved illicit espionage, “assign the KGB to recruit and train a ‘special armed detachment (500-700 men)’ drawn from Kurds living in the USSR in the event that Moscow might need to send Mustafa Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), ‘various military experts (Artillerymen, radio operators, demolition squads, etc.)’ to support the Kurdish uprising.”¹² This phase was key because the Soviets were willing to back the Kurds with Soviet-based troops, not merely send support nominally or economically. This willingness demonstrates extreme dedication by the Soviets. The support developed partially because the Soviets had a deep relationship with Barzani, which developed from 1947-1958 while he was exiled from Iraq. Barzani studied political science in Moscow, met Stalin, and had a relationship with the KGB and Soviet military.¹³ The Iraqis suspected the Soviet Union of supporting the Kurds and accused them of such. After this accusation, the Soviet Union and Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) denied the accusations and claimed that the Kurdish uprisings were due to the policies of the central government and not foreign involvement.¹⁴ Despite the Soviets’ continual show of support for the Kurds in the 1960s through diplomatic statements, and the outward desire for compromise between the Kurds and the Iraqi central government, the Soviets inwardly did not want the two parties to come together peacefully.

⁹ Peter Ivashutin to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, September 27, 1961,

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Kamal Said Qadir, “The Kurds and the KGB: The Secret History of the Barzani Family,” August 31, 2006, <http://www.antiwar.com/orig/qadir.php?articleid=9629>.

¹⁴ Oles M. Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 66.

Iraq and the Kurdish resistance groups reached a temporary peace in 1970 with the adoption of the March Agreement, which offered the Kurds a measure of autonomy, as inclusion in the cabinet, demarcated borders, and banned the mistreatment of Kurds based on their ethnic status. The slow process of implementing changes led to a return of subtle tensions. The Soviet Union; however, received a commitment from the Kurds that hostilities would not resume, so the Soviets restarted the weapons trade with Iraq. By the end of 1971 some aspects of the March Agreement still remained that had not been affected. As part of the 1972 Iraqi – Soviet Friendship Treaty, the Soviet Union dropped all involvement with Kurdish uprisings. Without Soviet support, the Kurds (and more specifically Barzani, a notorious flip-flopper) turned to the United States for support, which refrained, sensing it was a losing battle. The Iraqis subsequently squelched all uprisings in the Kurdish area with force and returned relations to the previous status quo.

Forming Alliances

Although the relationship between the two countries first developed in the late 1950s, they solidified the bond with the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in April 1972. Iraq approached the idea of a treaty with motivations of nationalizing the oil industry and increased weapons trade. The Soviets desired another Middle Eastern/third world ally and had high hopes for their strategic aims in Iraq. The Ba’th position as a “staunch opponent of ‘imperialism, colonialism, and Zionism,’”¹⁵ was comparable to that of the Soviets. However, other similarities between the two countries appear to be sorely lacking. It has been previously reported that Saddam Hussein (at this point Second in Command in Iraq) very much admired Joseph Stalin and his ability to put down enemies and dissidents.¹⁶ However that is where the ideological similarities end: there is little ideological connection between either Hussein and Stalin or the Soviet Union and Iraq. According to international affairs theorist Francis Fukuyama,

¹⁵ Oles M. Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 18.

¹⁶ Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World* (New York: Basic Books, 2005) 141.

“Soviet and Iraqi objectives overlap most fully on the issue of anti-imperialism and opposition to Western influence in the Middle East but differ or are irrelevant on the subjects of pan-Arab nationalism, domestic development, and external economic relations,” and he continues, “this somewhat narrow doctrinal basis for Soviet-Iraqi relations has grown even more circumscribed by the coming to power of a Ba’th party faction, led by Saddam Hussein, that has followed a policy of rhetorical toughness coupled with noninvolvement in military confrontations.”¹⁷ Due to these differences, Iraq did not merit the ideological protection and funding that the Soviet Union offered their other communist allies. Those countries did not have the same freedom to receive funding from non-communist countries, specifically the United States.

In the 1972 Treaty, the Soviets requested political autonomy for the Kurds and freedom for the ICP, while the Ba’th party wanted to establish a close working relationship with the Soviet Communist Party not to implement communist ideology, but rather, to learn the Soviet Union’s techniques for imposing party control both in the Kremlin and in the military.¹⁸ The Kremlin also supported Iraq’s goal of nationalizing the oil industry. They recognized the benefits of Iraq having control over their own petroleum and the potentially enormous amounts of oil they could receive as a result. According to Oles M. Smolansky, the Soviet Union anticipated receiving large amounts of oil or hard currency in exchange for their technological and personnel assistance setting up the initial stages of a nationalized oil industry.¹⁹ The treaty appeared to be beneficial for all parties and involved various sectors of economic and political interaction. Hussein and the Ba’th government; however, developed economic success from the nationalization of the oil industry. This very communist decision of nationalization by the Ba’th led to immense oil fortunes and reserves.

Table 1.1 Iraqi Oil Production in Millions of Barrels per Day²⁰

| 1950 | 1965 | 1975 | 1980 |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 0.136 | 1.322 | 2.262 | 2.514 |

In Table 1.1 it is clear that efficiency and productivity increased greatly, allowing Iraq to produce many more millions of barrels a day. By 1975, Iraq increased its production of barrels by 2.126 million barrels a day on average.²¹ This made Iraq one of the highest producing oil states in the world. Due to the nationalization, the government retained the revenue and soon became a wealthy state. With the aid from the Soviet Union, Iraq set up a successful state owned company that greatly improved their country’s economic fortunes. It gave them more international political power and made them a more attractive potential ally and/or commercial trader. The nationalization of the oil industry allowed Iraq to become economically independent, and gave access to arguably the biggest bargaining chip in modern politics, petroleum supplies.

Arms Proliferation in the Cold War

Economic development, like the growth in Iraq, underscored an important and unfolding aspect of the Cold War. Both the United States and the Soviet Union attempted to forge relationships of influence through arms sales. According to an unidentified State Department official in a 1983 *US News and World Report* article, “arms sales are the hard currency of foreign affairs, they replace the security pacts of the 1950s.”²² Although at the time they appeared to create “security pacts” in reality they empowered and armed almost every third world country. Political scientist Michael T. Klare described the political game that came with the arms trade by asserting that both the United States and the Soviet Union tried to earn loyalty from each other’s clients using the sale of arms.²³ The United States and the Soviet Union possessed such a strong

¹⁷ USA, The United State Air Force. The Soviet Union and Iraq since 1968, By Francis Fukuyama, Rand, 1980, Print.

¹⁸ Oles M. Smolansky, The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 18.

¹⁹ Oles M. Smolansky, The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 18.

²⁰ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001) 231.

²¹ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001) 231.

²² Michael T. Klare, “Fueling the Fire: How We Armed the Middle East,” The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists 47, no. 1 (1991): 23.

²³ Ibid, 23.

desire to win over each other's allies and to gain strategic ground that there was no limit to the amount of arms a country could request. Klare asserts that by the 1980s, several countries in the Middle East possessed "arsenals comparable or superior to those found among the front-line states in NATO and the Warsaw Pact."²⁴ The sheer amount of weapons and money generated from the arms trade is astounding.

Table 1.2 World Arms Deliveries 1963-86, Four Year Averages (Millions of 1981 USD)²⁵

| Country | 1963-6 | 1967-70 | 1971-4 | 1975-8 | 1979-82 | 1983-6 |
|------------------------|--------|---------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| United States | 3,660 | 6,504 | 7,877 | 8,456 | 7,968 | 9,034 |
| Soviet Union | 3,238 | 3,206 | 6,399 | 8,275 | 11,143 | 14,806 |
| France | 364 | 384 | 1,116 | 1,673 | 3,019 | 3,596 |
| Great Britain | 421 | 303 | 824 | 1,207 | 1,971 | 1,045 |
| West Germany | 273 | 249 | 366 | 1,047 | 1,261 | 1,249 |
| Italy | 56 | 62 | 231 | 623 | 890 | 763 |
| Other Developed | 328 | 403 | 744 | 1,253 | 1,358 | 1,143 |
| Other Eastern European | 668 | 655 | 935 | 1,701 | 2,230 | 2,910 |
| Developing | 413 | 450 | 868 | 1,207 | 2,790 | 3,680 |
| World | 9,421 | 12,216 | 19,360 | 25,442 | 32,630 | 38,226 |

Through the data presented in this chart, it is clear that the United States and Soviet Union had a huge market share of the weapons trades. Furthermore it illustrates the extremely large amount of economic resources devoted to the purchasing of weapons. In a twenty-four year time period, countries earned \$137,295,000,000 (USD 1981) dollars from the sales of arms. For the Soviet Union in particular, arms sales comprised a huge source of currency. Keith Kraus described the Soviet arms economy of the 1970s: "Matters are somewhat different for the Soviet Union because arms sales are a source of hard currency. Between 1970 and 1978, such sales represented an average

of 8.6 per cent of total hard-currency exports."²⁶ The percentage of arms trade increased greatly in the 1970s, which correlated with the newly rich, and sought after, Middle Eastern countries.²⁷ As Middle Eastern oil revenue increased, so too did their ability to purchase arms. Since these countries held hard currency due to sales of oil, they became popular clients for arms suppliers. This gave them more freedom of choice, and eventually allows them the upper hand in all of their alliances. This dynamic thrived during Cold War bilateralism.

Specifically for the Soviet-Iraqi relationship, the Friendship Treaty encouraged high levels of the trade of arms. Although, Iraq had received their first weapons shipment from the Soviets in 1958, after 1972 they began developing a cache. After the signing, Iraq received SA-3 Surface to Air missiles, TU-22 Medium Range bombers, Scud surface-to-surface missiles armed with conventional warheads; and MIG-23 Fighters.²⁸ This enormous increase in arms purchasing and distributing represents the biggest difference between Soviet-Iraqi relations in the 1950s and Soviet-Iraqi relations in the 1970s. Although, there was some smaller scale arms trade in the 1950's, the massive shift in the 1970's demonstrated the tying bond of economics. In an effort to ensure Iraqi strategic support the Soviets continued to supply them arms, yet the reasoning on the Iraqi side was far different.

Table 1.3 Soviet Arms Supplies to its Chief Arab Clients, 1964-78 (Millions of USD)²⁹

| | 1964-73 | 1974-78 | Total |
|-------|---------|---------|-------|
| Egypt | 2,305 | 430 | 2,735 |
| Syria | 1,153 | 2,700 | 3,853 |
| Iraq | 742 | 3,600 | 4,342 |
| Libya | -- | 3,400 | 3,400 |

²⁴ Ibid, 23.

²⁵ Keith Krause, "The Political Economy of the International Arms Transfer System: The Diffusion of Military Technique via Arms Transfers," International Journal 45, no. 3 (1990), 702.

²⁶ Keith Krause, "The Political Economy of the International Arms Transfer System: The Diffusion of Military Technique via Arms Transfers," International Journal 45, no. 3 (1990), 702.

²⁷ Keith Krause, "The Political Economy of the International Arms Transfer System: The Diffusion of Military Technique via Arms Transfers," International Journal 45, no. 3 (1990), 702.

²⁸ Oles M. Smolansky, The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 19.

²⁹ Oles M. Smolansky, The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 29.

Table 1.3 shows how Iraq became the Soviet Union's best client shortly after the Friendship Treaty came into effect. Iraq quickly became one of the world's largest producers of oil in a short period of time. By 1978, 5.8% of all state employees worked for the Ministry of Oil,³⁰ and Iraq and the Soviet Union traded 1,084,000,000 rubles annually, the most of any of the Soviet Union's allies.³¹

While tracking this particular historical narrative it becomes clear that the Soviet Union traded with Iraq on the whim of the client. Western countries equally craved Iraq's hard currency, and Iraq often reciprocated with its commercial partners. It is important to remember here that Iraq and the Soviet Union lack ideological similarity. Their relationship developed through desire for money and through geo-political strategy. Iraq was the only non-communist country in the Soviet Union's circle of "close" allies. Iraq's lack of commitment to Communism was highly unusual for a Soviet partner and gave them a freedom from dealing solely with the Soviet Union, a possibility the Soviets feared. Neutral states in the Cold War often played all sides against each other; however, none accomplished this with the ease of Saddam Hussein. Iraq's freedom from the Communist sphere gave them the leniency to find new, better deals with non-Communist countries and have states monetarily and politically indebted to them to a certain degree. Klare described Hussein's effortless acquisition of an extensive cache of arms, which revealed the overall danger of the arms trade.³² Published in 1990, Klare reflects from a post-Iran-Iraq War perspective, stating, "Saddam Hussein has collected the most modern arsenal in the Third World – With help from the United States, the Soviet Union, the French, the British, the Germans, the Chinese..."³³ The ability for leaders like Hussein to purchase this many weapons had large and unknown consequences. As just one example, in the twenty years after the signing of the

1972 Friendship Treaty, Iraq went to war with Iran and tried to annex the small country of Kuwait. It is likely that the psychology of the weapons trade influenced those decisions.

Demise of the Alliance

The Soviet-Iraqi relationship was multi-layered and steeped in historical and political drama. Only three years after signing the Friendship Treaty the relationship began to take a downturn for a wide variety of reasons. In 1975 two key turning points took place: the signing of the Algiers Accord between Iraq and Iran, and the crushing of a Kurdish revolt by Baghdad. These two interconnected events forever changed the Soviet-Iraqi alliance and displayed Hussein's pursuit of national interest at all cost.

By 1974, Kurdish leader Barzani had armed a paramilitary Kurdish security force, received enormous amounts of funding from the United States and Iran, and declared the very rich Kirkuk oil fields as the property of Iraqi Kurdistan.³⁴ Kurds remained upset about the complete lack of implementation of the March Agreement by the central government. Hussein's regime and the Kurds held negotiations; however, the negotiations failed to produce results. This deadlock, coupled with violence on the Iran-Iraq border, caused the situation to deteriorate rapidly. Full out warfare began in the spring of 1974, and Barzani's Peshmergas and volunteer forces from throughout the country equaled the number of Iraqi soldiers in the field.³⁵ However, Iraq held superior arms and established successful raids,³⁶ both made possible through arms purchased through the Soviet trade. Through a State Department memo reflecting on a conversation with Soviet Counsellor Avenir Khanov, it is clear to see that this particular show of force with Soviet arms displeased the Soviet Union greatly: "Soviets do not like the fact that their arms are being used against a 'nationalist' movement even if it is a reactionary one, but once the arms are

³⁰ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001) 249.

³¹ Brian Pockney, "Soviet Trade with the Third World," In *The Soviet Union and The Third World*, ed E.J. Feuchtwanger and Peter Nailor (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981) 37.

³² Michael T. Klare, "Fueling the Fire: How We Armed the Middle East," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 47, no. 1 (1991): 19.

³³ Michael T. Klare, "Fueling the Fire: How We Armed the Middle East," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 47, no. 1 (1991): 19.

³⁴ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001) 165.

³⁵ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001) 168.

³⁶ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001) 169.

in hands of a country, the donor loses control.”³⁷ Although Iraq used Soviet arms in a less than admirable way for the Soviet Union, Iran and the United States continued to fuel the Kurdish uprising completely. The Soviet Union, however, ostensibly had to support Iraq because of the looming Cold War threat if the United States and Iran gained power with a Kurdish victory. Many had attempted to bring Hussein and the Shah together to negotiate their differences, but no one succeeded until King Hussein of Jordan brought together representatives of both countries in October 1974. The negotiated result of these continuing talks was the Algiers Accord.³⁸

The Algiers Accord directly led to the end of the Kurdish Rebellion, increased tension and distance from Moscow, and, later, led to the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war. The Algiers Accord made two very significant settlements. First, it defined the border of the Shatt al-Arab waterway, which had long been contentious and would later be a major cause of the Iran-Iraq war. Secondly, the Accord closed the Iranian border, which effectively made it impossible for Iran to continue to support the Kurds. While this Treaty temporarily solved several controversial issues, Iraq never consulted on the issues with the Soviet Union. A State Department memo discussed its interpretation of Evgeny Pyrlin, Soviet Deputy Chief Near East Countries department:

“Some of Moscow’s reticence about the Iraqi-Iranian rapprochement can probably be put to the Soviets’ apparent total exclusion from a role as mid-wife. However, we suspect that there may be deeper Soviet concerns about the negative effect an improvement in Iraqi-Iranian bilateral relations can have on Soviet Relations with Iraq. A reduction in Iraqi-Iranian tensions and Baghdad’s apparent success in dealing with the Kurdish Rebellion (in a manner which most report indicate Moscow has opposed) will almost certainly reduce two of Moscow’s major sources of leverage with Baghdad.”³⁹

Moscow’s exclusion from the negotiating process, and complete lack of consultation, shows the independence of the Iraqi government from the Soviet Union. Had Iraq been a Communist state with the Soviet Union omnipresent in all of its activities, this treaty would likely have never been signed or would have been radically different.

Shortly after signing the Algiers Accord, Saddam Hussein made a highly anticipated visit to Moscow. This 1975 visit included several topics of interest between the two countries. Hussein bragged about the Algiers Accord as a “major Iraqi achievement”⁴⁰ and assured the Soviet Union that both Iran and Iraq were “implementing it by joint efforts and cooperation.”⁴¹ The Soviets still worried about the conclusion to the Kurdish uprising. They feared that if changes were not made the Kurds would again attempt to overcome Iraq in a violent manner. Ironically, according to the United States State Department, the Soviets “waxed pedantically eloquent about the Soviets’ ‘rich experience’ in resolving nationality problems. He assured Iraq that a policy directed at a ‘democratic solution’ of the national question will always meet ‘understanding’ from the Soviet people.”⁴² Although the Soviets hoped Iraq would take a more humanitarian and “democratic” stance to the Kurds, Iraq did not oblige. For the Soviets, their lack of involvement and the lack of credence paid to their suggestions demonstrated their miniscule political influence over Iraq. For Iraq, the signing of the Algiers Accord opened up possibilities for a new regional security network. This potential regionalism also loomed negatively over the minds of Soviets.

Although these regional issues weakened the Soviet Union’s presence, the treatment of the ICP upset the Soviet Union to its core. During the Kurdish hostilities, the ICP worked to consolidate power and made major gains in membership and publications throughout Iraq. After the completion of Kurdish hostilities Baghdad began to arrest ICP members, imprison them and then release them. In the spring of 1976, the ICP held their Third Party

³⁷ USA, Department of State, Soviet Disagreement with GoI over Kurdish Policy, Moscow, 1975, Print.

³⁸ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001) 170.

³⁹ USA, Department of State, Soviet Views on Iraq-Iran Relations, Moscow, 1975, Print.

⁴⁰ USA, Department of State, Saddam Hussein Visit to Moscow, Baghdad, 1975, Print.

⁴¹ USA, Department of State, Saddam Hussein Visit to Moscow, Baghdad, 1975, Print.

⁴² USA, Department of State, Saddam Hussein Visit to Moscow, Baghdad, 1975, Print.

Congress and increasingly complained about government oppression. After this intensification in rhetoric, the two parties' tense relationship began unraveling quickly. Baghdad implemented a "vitriolic propaganda campaign against the Communists."⁴³ By this point the Ba'th Security Apparatus, including the Mukhabarrat (secret police) and Amn al-Amn (general security police), had grown immensely and consolidated their power. The government was purged of non-Ba'thi, no matter the rank of their position, and the government became omnipresent in all spheres of life. Arguably, Hussein and the Ba'th used what they had learned from the Soviets and what they had admired in Stalin to reach this point. Soviet armament and party preservation techniques had completely infiltrated the Ba'th. Their desire for immense power and political control in the shape of the Soviet Union led to the crackdown on the ICP. It became increasingly dangerous to be of another political party in Iraq. In 1978, the Revolutionary Command Council (the leadership of the Ba'th) made non-Ba'thist political activity illegal for any former military men.⁴⁴ Since, Iraq required conscription, this ruling applied to every man over the age of eighteen. To be clear, these purges and consolidations affected more than just the Communist party. However, for a country with such a close relationship with the Soviet Union this treatment of the ICP was particularly antagonistic. The Soviet Union supported all communist parties during the Cold War monetarily and strategically. Arguably, the Ba'th knew that if it went after the ICP, that would be the end of the already much deteriorated Soviet-Iraqi Alliance.

Economic Theory

The Soviet-Iraqi history is full of strategic movements and the desire to develop alliance and economic partnership. The power in their relationship was held by Iraq and is evidenced through a specific economic theory. Although there is no hard evidence to describe the psychological effect of this dangerous political game, this economic theory demonstrates the power struggle in the relationship. To fully appreciate

this, a background in the dependency theory is first necessary. The dependency theory developed toward the end of Imperialism in the 1940s. As colonized countries started becoming independent they met a new set of economic challenges. The development theory attempted to describe their underdevelopment, which, according to the theory, was due to continual reliance on old economic structures. Insinuating that the power and influence still lied with the former colonizing country because of the formally colonized country's remaining dependence.⁴⁵ The dependency theory asserts that the same controller and controlled relationship exists after official independence. This reliance on the controlling country for economic goods, or trade markets, functions as a form of Neo-Colonialism. Fernando Cardosa and Enzo Falleto, dependency relationship experts, describe the attempted independence as "the contradiction between the attempt to cope with the market situation in a politically autonomous way and the de facto situation of dependency characterizes what is the specific ambiguity of nations where political sovereignty is expressed by the new state and where economic subordination is reinforced by the inter-national division of labor and by the economic control exerted by former or new imperialist centers."⁴⁶ Scholars cite this form of nominal independence as the cause for the Third World's twenty-first century underdevelopment.

However, it would be imprudent to consider this status quo as unchanged by the Cold War. The nature of the bilateral world during this period pitted the United States and Soviet Union directly against each other. Ingenious countries used their desired alliance as a bargaining chip to receive the best deal possible for either themselves (as corrupt leaders) or for their countries (what could be considered benevolent leaders). As the Cold War waged, the dependency theory slowly developed into the reverse dependency theory. Desperate powers seeking footholds into strategic regions often bowed to the demands of the "subordinate" party. But these relationships shifted daily and on the whim of the client. After all, strategic alliance and development affected Soviet and American

⁴³ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001) 183.

⁴⁴ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001) 186.

⁴⁵ I. William Zartman, "Europe and Africa: Decolonization or Dependency?" *Foreign Affairs* 54, no. 2 (1976), 325.

⁴⁶ I. William Zartman, "Europe and Africa: Decolonization or Dependency?" *Foreign Affairs* 54, no. 2 (1976), 325.

assets far more than the foothold countries. First and second world countries, particularly the United States and Soviet Union, became relatively dependent on the huge influx of money associated with the arms trade. These underdeveloped countries held all the power because they could simply turn to the other side and find an even better deal. Klare, author of "Fueling the Fire: How We Armed the Middle East," details this paradigm using arms sales. He wrote using the Client-Supplier relationship,

"By agreeing to provide arms to a client, the supplier seeks a local ally for its ongoing struggle against the other superpower. Once the relationship has been forged, however, the recipient comes to expect continuing and even expanded arms deliveries in exchange for its continued loyalty to the supplier – and any reluctance on the part of the supplier will be condemned as evidence of inconstancy and unreliability, the result is 'reverse dependency'. The patron finds itself beholden to the good will of the client, and must satisfy the client's appetite for modern arms."⁴⁷

With all the power effectively in the hands of the client state there would be exponential gains for them. Each side's loss is the other's gain, and therefore the client will always have a supplier. The notion that every movement in the Cold War was strategic and bilateral allowed this reverse dependency to thrive and the clients benefited from the superpowers' tactical interests. This particular case developed in Iraq as the Soviet relationship flourished and then quickly faltered. Yet, Iraq never bemoaned the loss of the alliance because it easily found other suppliers.

Although this relationship turned into a prime example of the reverse dependency theory, the Soviets had their own economic and political ways of developing strategic relationships. The Soviets started formulating this bond by giving a third world country military or economic aide that would in turn develop into a level of import and export dependence that would culminate into political

compliance with the Soviet Union's policies.⁴⁸ This plan relied on the third world country's trade dependence changing the outlook of its foreign policy. Iraq became an example of the reverse-dependency theory, rather than a Soviet trade-induced dependency, because of the economic freedom afforded to it through its wealth. For example, the NATO report on the Mediterranean Situation in 1975 noted, "According to certain reports the USSR has suspended arms deliveries to Iraq as a sign of its displeasure over certain steps taken by Baghdad."⁴⁹ However, this backfired. When Iraq wanted to assert its independence, or was threatened by the Soviet Union, it often turned to the West, in particular France for trade and the sale of oil. Of non-communist countries in 1976-1979 France led Iraqi exports with \$8,099,000,000 (1980 USD) and also was Iraq's largest non-communist commercial partner with \$10,094,000,000 (1980 USD).⁵⁰ Other Soviet satellites did not possess the same ability to change alliances. They were either smaller, ideologically Communist, or under more constrictive economic auspices with the Soviet Union.

The Soviet-Iraqi relationship provides an interesting and rich case study of strategic armament and proxy wars during the Cold War. Conventional thinking of this period often led others to believe that the Soviet Union and the United States always held the power. The bilateral world that they created featured their power politics and their control. However, through study of Iraq it becomes evident that the balance of control was often held by the supposedly compliant state. This equally exploitative system shows the intensely calculated movements and developments of all alliances. It is important that they be thought of both politically and economically as they were completely intertwined. The Iraqi case study also highlights the flaws in the Soviet Union's plan for developing compliant states. Their inability to effectively retain these alliances may have contributed to their downfall. Most importantly

⁴⁷ Michael T. Klare, "Fueling the Fire: How We Armed the Middle East," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 47, no. 1 (1991): 21.

⁴⁸ Philip G. Roeder, "The Ties that Bind: Aide, Trade, and Political Compliance in Soviet-Third World Relations," *International Studies Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (1985), 192.

⁴⁹ USA, NATO, Draft Report to NATO Ministers on Mediterranean Situation, 21 October 1975, Print.

⁵⁰ Oles M. Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 32.

however, Iraq had several abnormalities, including the shrewd politician Saddam Hussein and immense crude oil reserves. Iraq may not be the rule, but it could be a dangerous exception to the norm. If Iraq's circumstances would have been less favorable, or if Hussein had not been in power, there is no guarantee that Iraq would not have complied with the Soviet's requests and turned to Communism. Based on this revealed and analyzed history it is clear that Iraq was the dominant power in this relationship, which caused the Soviet's attempts to develop a compliant state to be completely futile. In reality, the Soviet efforts gave Iraq every tool it needed to flourish on its own and play both sides of the intensely bilateral world of the 1970s.

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