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Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies

# **An Iraqi insight of the upcoming Iraqi-American strategic dialogue**

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**Al-Bayan Center Studies Series**

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# An Iraqi insight of the upcoming Iraqi-American strategic dialogue

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## Preface

The United States of America called on Iraq for “a strategic dialogue”<sup>1</sup>. With no doubt the United States has an interest in Iraq, which may vary from an American administration to another, from time to time, but it does not exceed the fact that Iraq is important to the United States at all levels.

The American interest in Iraq dates back to 1876, through the “missionary movements” in Iraq and the Arab Gulf region Mosul in 1889 and the city of Basra in 1891, as well as the educational activities in Basra in 1910 and the establishment of the American School in the same city in 1911”<sup>2</sup>. Later, the American interest turned to Iraq’s oil, which started from 1908–1926, especially the oil of Mosul. Perhaps the “Red Line Agreement in 1928”<sup>3</sup> was established to lead this interest. In

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1. Back to the future on US–Iraq strategic dialogue

Read more: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/04/iraq-us-troop-iran.html#ixzz6L36jmYwB>

2. أرشد مزاحم مجبل الغريزي، تطور العلاقات العراقية – الأمريكية، مركز الكتاب الأكاديمي، الإمارات، 2013، ص: 21.

3. محمود شاكر، موسوعة تاريخ الخليج العربي، الجزء الثاني، دار أسامة للنشر والتوزيع، الأردن، 2005، ص: 725.

1930, a trilateral treaty was signed between the United States, Britain, and Iraq; to ensure some American interests in Iraq.

After the independence of Iraq in 1932, the United States signed the first agreement with Iraq on April 10th, 1951, which provided Iraq with (limited) military assistance. In 1954, the Mutual Security Agreement was signed between the two parties, without being presented to the Iraqi parliament and Upper House, as well as the establishment of the first military seaport by the United States in Umm Qasr- Basra Governorate.<sup>4</sup>

Since then, the Iraqi-American relations have witnessed interlinked, contradictory, cooperative, and conflicting political interactions and awaiting the strategic dialogue to determine what the next interactions are, is it a partnership? or is it an alliance? or is it a friendship? When we recall the nature of the relations between the two countries at various stages in the past, we find that the Iraqi-American relations have taken many forms. Starting from considering Iraq as being “the fortress of stability and peace in the region, after that, Iraq was representing a geopolitical importance for the American project in the Middle East. Finally, Iraq faced the era where it was removed from the countries supporting terrorism list by Reagan administration in 1982”<sup>5</sup> The country was then considered as being one of the “axis of evil”, as being the obvious enemy after the invasion of Kuwait, this remains for

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4. نقلاً عن: محمود الدرة، حياة عراقي من وراء البوابة السوداء، القاهرة، 1976، ص: 102-103.

5. عبادة محمد التامر، سياسة الولايات المتحدة وإدارة الأزمات الدولية (إيران-العراق-سوريا-لبنان أنموذجاً)، المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات، الطبعة الأولى، قطر، 2015، بدون صفحة

the next thirteen years of siege. Iraq then became the major goal (along with Afghanistan) for the American administration after the events of September 11. Finally, Iraq was subjected to a significant change, the period between (Liberation and Occupation).

After a century and a half of diverse political interactions, the American administration announced its desire to the Iraqi government for a strategic dialogue. Shortly, the American desire was welcomed by the resigned Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi.”<sup>6</sup> This request comes after the increased rocket attacks on the American military bases and the American diplomatic, economic, and military in Iraq. As well as the continuing demand for the departure of American forces as a decision directed by the House of Representatives but not as law, which was opposed by the Kurdish and Sunni constituents for several reasons.

### **Strategic Dialogue: the American Goals:**

The United States has a set of strategic dialogues with many Arab countries (Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Tunisia, Kuwait, Morocco, Sudan, Bahrain) “These dialogues come to strengthen the network of American relations with these countries by the diversity of political or economic purposes that depend on energy, investments, markets, etc...”<sup>7</sup> However, it does not stray from the major goal of preserving

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6. بغداد ترحب بموافقة واشنطن على فتح حوار استراتيجي:

<https://bit.ly/3bW7MVv>.

7. جميل مصعب محمود، الحوار العربي الأمريكي: رؤية سياسية معاصرة، دار ومكتبة الحامد للنشر، الطبعة الأولى، عمان، 2012، ص: 279.

American influence in the region, whether to counter Russian–Chinese influence, combat terrorism, confront and rein in Iranian influence, or even the desire to create a new coalition (MESA).”

For Iraq, the strategic dialogue with the United States is more important for several considerations, including:

- The United States is the one that brought about change in Iraq in 2003 through the military instrument.
- The change was costly in political, economic and military terms, as the “material cost reached \$2 trillion”<sup>8</sup>, besides the human losses (deaths and wounded) among the American forces.
- The United States has two previous agreements with Iraq. The first one is the American forces withdraw agreement which was ended legally in 2011. The second agreement: the strategic framework agreement which was ambiguous in terms of mechanisms and legal duration that may need to be reconsidered either in terms of amendment, or development, or replacing it with a new agreement where possible.
- The future of American forces in Iraq, their security, and the safety of their bases.
- Confronting and undermining Iranian influence, as the Trump administration believes that Iranian influence is strengthened

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8. <https://www.businessinsider.com/us-taxpayers-spent-8000-each-2-trillion-iraq-war-study-2020-2>

after the nuclear agreement held with Obama administration.

- The termination of some Iraqi armed factions operations who targeted the American interests in Iraq, whether directly or indirectly.
- Repositioning its forces away from the anti–American missiles.
- The United States urge to tighten its sanctions against Iran and monitor their implementation from Iraq at all financial, arms and oil levels.
- The desire to avoid the costs and losses of its soldiers and pensioners in Iraq; Because of the missile attacks against their bases.
- The United States desire to run the upcoming presidential elections in a comfortable and safe manner.
- The United States’ attempt to control the paths of the Saudi–Iranian tense interactions, despite controlling the extent of this interaction with the proxy wars, the most important of which are (Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon).
- Ensuring a strong Iraqi government – an active and visible partner in the highest positions – working to:
  - The possibility of activating strategic framework agreement or replacing it with a new agreement (away from the effects of the Parliament).

- Protecting American employees and workers.
- Protecting the American currency and not flowing to Iran (as part of some attempts to evade sanctions).
- Fully protect US diplomatic headquarters and bases.

### **Strategic Dialogue: the Iraqi Goals:**

The official Iraqi welcoming to the American request for a strategic dialogue is not sufficient on its own. It is necessary to define the Iraqi goals in a clear manner, taking into account the existence of an official unwillingness to this dialogue from “some Iraqi political parties, including the armed factions.”<sup>9</sup>

Some of the Iraqi goals can be cited as follows:

- Ensuring the unity of Iraq and not violating its sovereignty.
- Implementing the Iraqi parliament decision relating the departure of the American forces in case of the continuity of pressure on the Prime Minister (Mustafa Al-Kazemi).
- The ability to search for a new agreement that regulates the work of the American forces, and this is what the Trump administration seeks after reassuring the opposing parties. This requires appropriate regional and local conditions.

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<sup>9</sup>. العراق من الزرفي إلى الكاظمي: التبعات على السياسات الأمريكية:

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/ar/policy-analysis/view/iraq-goes-from-zurfi-to-kadhimi-u.s.-policy-implications>.



- Managing balance in regional relations with Iraq and reassuring regional countries.
- Stop using the (joint) American bases in any military combat operations against targets inside Iraq or for the benefits of other countries (Iran).
- Focusing on joint management and joint coordination in managing American bases and the military combat operations and restricting them to countering ISIS terrorist group.
- Providing support and military advice to Iraqi forces to fight ISIS by offering intelligence information and equipment.
- Searching for acceptable and reasonable options to achieve the principle of restricting weapons to the state.
- Joint work between the two parties to train Iraqi forces with the international coalition, according to a transparent agreement that shows the number, and whereabouts of the trainers.
- Developing and supporting the Iraqi economic aspect.
- Assisting in the financial and administrative anti-corruption file, and providing consultations according to a joint agreement between the two governments.

## **An Analysis of the US–Iraqi Goals in the Strategic Dialogue:**

Conflict and cooperation are features of any international relations, and the sovereignty of one of these elements depends on: the nature of this interaction, the orientations and goals of the state, and how it is preserved and by what means.

It is necessary to go towards reducing the means of conflict, when we talk about a strategic dialogue, and expanding the means of cooperation, as well as seeking to achieve the interests of both parties as strategic values in the context of negotiation. Noting the need to take into account the available capabilities, and the nature of the local, regional and international environment.

Moreover, any strategic dialogue must start from the base of strategic thinking and strategic decision –and not from personal impulses or subjective judgments– for calculating the expected costs of any dialogue in terms of gains and losses objectively and away from any random or unorganized accounts.

**When analyzing the US–Iraqi goals of the strategic dialogue, the following can be cited:**

**1– The Time Factor:**

This factor has an important and vital impact for the dialogue from two basic aspects: The first is time pressures on the United States and Iraq. The United States has the pressure of electoral time and preparation for the presidential elections with multiple options. the first of which is Trump’s loss of elections, which Iran bets on for many reasons, including the effects of the Corona virus and the pressure of some Iraqi armed factions and Iraqi political forces regarding the departure of American forces from Iraq. This will change the course of the dialogue, or even abort it, or may lead for resorting to other options after knowing the goals and programs of the new democratic president. Which will result in the possibility of easing the time pressure on everyone.

As for the second aspect. Trump will most likely win the second presidency, for several reasons: “the main issues of the United States under the slogan of America first, which are: trade disputes with China, the European Union, the future of NATO, and interventions in the Middle East and Afghanistan, the Iranian nuclear program, and the nuclear crisis with North Korea.”<sup>10</sup> Many researchers believe that

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10. تعرف على حظوظ ترامب في انتخابات 2020،

<https://arabic.euronews.com/2019/10/31/trump-chances-and-obstacles-of-winning-for-next-elections-2020>

these files are all important for President Trump to settle, but no one can predict the outcome of these issues. At this point, the options for the Iraqi government will be less when dealing with sensitive files, besides tightening the expansion of US sanctions against Iran as well as some leaders in Iraq. Iraq may search for escalation options for the military confrontation and carrying out military operations against specific targets in Iraq and Iran, which is what “Henry Kissinger indicated about the World War III in the region.<sup>11</sup>

As for Iraq, the political forces have wasted a lot of time in looking for qualifications of the new prime minister to be assigned. The delay in naming a new prime minister for the government put Iraq in the losing position for the opportunity to agree on the strategic decision to define clear objectives of the strategic dialogue. Besides, finding solutions to the political, economic, social, and health problems facing Iraq.

Moreover, it is not in the interest of Iraq to bet on the time factor and awaiting the results of the upcoming US elections. Not only because of the complexities of regional and political interactions taking place, but waiting for too long brings the Iraqi decision-maker farther apart from the basic elements of strategic thinking.

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11. هنري كيسينجر ومخاوفه حول فترة ما بعد الحدث الإيراني.. هل تنبؤاته عن الحرب العالمية صحيحة؟  
<https://bit.ly/2StHORj>

## **2– Defining the Nature of the Dialogue:**

It is important for the Iraqis to determine the type, nature, and scopes of the dialogue. Will the dialogue be limited to the military–security aspect? Represented by the US military bases in Iraq – whatever their number – and protecting them from threats and dangers, as well as protecting diplomatic headquarters and economic interests in Iraq. This leads to several questions, including: Is Iraq’s role only protection? Or will it be a multi–dimensional and inter–disciplinary dialogue?

The authors feel that it is better to have a comprehensive, multi–dimensional and inter–disciplinary dialogue. Because if it was confined to the military–security aspect only, it would achieve the unilateral interest. In other words, the US interest is primarily, and similar interests may predominate interests such as the continued US support for Iraq to confront ISIS, which has begun operating in several regions in Iraq, although its operations are limited, but it needs deeper study and analysis.

In the event that the dialogue is limited to keeping the bases, it will lead to the emergence of obstacles to the new Iraqi government, and may expose it to tensions that may hold the government from continuing strong performance. These tensions are divided into two parts: the internal domestic part, which is represented by political and legislative tension of some Iraqi political forces, as well as the continuation of missile attacks by some armed factions. And the

regional part, it concerns Iran, which originally opposes the strategic dialogue unless it is only for the sake of US armed forces withdrawal. For example, Former Iranian Ambassador Hassan Kazemi Qomi stated: “A new strategic dialogue will not take place between Washington and Baghdad. America seeks to undermine the Iraqi defense strategy.”<sup>12</sup> And, in addition to the Iranian statements similar to that which have been announced repeatedly, saying that Iraq is able to protect itself without the presence of foreign forces on its lands.

On the other hand, the strategic dialogue can be comprehensive and multidisciplinary, only if the Iraqi government managed to define clear goals, aspects and scopes for this dialogue. The following are some important questions arise for the Iraqi decision-maker to find solutions for:

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages associated with the dialogue?
2. What are the expected costs of a successful or failed dialogue? Whether they are political, economic or security costs. Coupled with the health crisis costs and its negative effects on the countries' economies, including Iraq.
3. Does Iraq seek to find alliance? Or partnerships? Or a friendship?
4. What are the options and alternatives that Iraq has with regard to the elements of the dialogue and its results?

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12. محاولة واشنطن للحوار لن تنجح ما لم تحترم مصالح العراق،

<https://www.faceiraq.org/inews.php?id=7672261>

5. How can Iraq maintain the supreme Iraqi interest through this dialogue?
6. Will the dialogue be an Iraqi–American dialogue, or is it a proxy dialogue on behalf of other countries?
7. Does the Iraqi government have a clear vision backed by a unified negotiating team to conduct the dialogue technically, politically, and economically?

**To answer the questions above, three tracks can be identified regarding the strategic dialogue:**

**The first track:** Not participating in or postponing the dialogue for reasons:

- The possibility of Iraq being subjected to US financial, economic, military, and information sanctions, and narrowing the options for Iraqi government to isolate it, on the pretext of its lack of response and cooperation regarding the sanctions imposed on Iran.
- The increasing ISIS terrorist operations in some areas of Iraq, and the American response of providing military–security and intelligence support to Anbar, KRG region, and other limited governorates.
- Isolating areas politically and geographically on constitutional articles and exploit those articles to establish permanent military

bases in Anbar (for example). Besides, exploiting security aspect in the KRG region to keep the US military bases there. This may lead to using the bases in offensive military operations against targets Inside Iraq, if the US interests were in risk.

- Adopting or perpetuating the tactic of divisive events in the Iraqi parliament, and disrupting the unification of positions regarding US military bases or their political interests.
- Hitting the oil financial revenues of Iraq, whether deposited in the sovereign fund or targeting them with lawsuits seeking compensation. Which will help to increase the severity of the economic crisis internally in the face of low oil prices or a health crisis due to the spread of Corona virus.

**The second track:** Participation in the dialogue under the title: (A dialogue based on the US forces withdrawal from Iraq)

According to this track, the dialogue will be limited to one topic only. This unilateral focus comes in response to local or regional pressures, or both.

In this track, the Iraqi decision-maker must realize all the expected costs, and predict their results in a good way, whether political, security or economic. This track can be achieved only if the US president Donald Trump wins the upcoming elections, and the insistence of the Iraqi government on the US forces withdrawal.



**The expected costs in this path are:**

- The possibility of lifting American or Gulf–Arab political support from the Iraqi government while rewarding those opposing American withdrawal from Iraqi political forces, be they Kurdish, Sunni, or even Shiite.
- Increasing the burdens on the Iraqi government, increasing its difficulties, and impeding the government’s performance, which may require more Iranian influence or thinking about Russian–Chinese support.
- To support and expand the idea of (regions) in Sunni areas, especially in Anbar, as it is a constitutional right even if this occurs within the framework of a policy; The fait accompli if the Shiite political forces are exposed to this trend.
- Removing the popular mobilization forces from areas where potential US bases may take place in the western and northern regions.

The results of this path are not positive and some points can be cited:

- Disrupting state building options and losing the foundations of the official government decision in favor of interference by other regional or internal entities.
- The emergence of a conflict (not competition) among the Shiite

political parties that have armed factions, and on several files at the economic and political levels, or at the level of the other nine provinces.

- A crack in the legitimacy of the Iraqi political system after 2003 based on the principle of components, as well as the loss of democratic solutions for paths that spanned 17 years.
- Iran's attempt to increase its influence to fill the possible void and perhaps even directly enhancing military influence in the "framework of confrontation with the United States."
- The occurrence of military frictions in the areas bordering the KRG region and the potential Anbar province.

**The third track:** The participation in the dialogue under the title: (A dialogue while maintaining the US military bases in Iraq)

This track requires the Iraqi acceptance for entering into a strategic dialogue with the United States, while maintaining the US military bases, whether by force or by choice. The difference is clear between accepting to keep the bases or forcing Iraq to keep them – this is coupled with holding a comprehensive dialogue and not exclusive to one subject.

Upon following this track, Iraq will reap of if the local, regional and international benefits are achieved, on the expense of the local and regional harms as well. The Iraqi government should study other

strategic dialogues with the Arab countries, especially Qatar, which has good relations with the United States and Iran and then analyze them objectively for the purpose of forming a set of conclusions that can serve Iraq in terms of articulating political, economic, military, security, and health demands.

**The benefits that Iraq can achieve with this track:**

Arab and Gulf investments by activating Arab–Iraqi friendship and partnership agreements at economic, health, and educational levels, and handling loans, grant, and investment files.

- Supporting infrastructure projects related to the Iraqi citizen lives, providing banking facilities to the investing parties, and overcoming obstacles facing their investments in terms of legislative, legal and security within joint agreements, while emphasizing Iraq’s right to open up to all countries as required by the supreme interest of Iraq.
- To employ the American role as a compressor or a final guarantor without compromising the future of Iraqi financial returns in a long-term manner.
- The Arab countries, especially the financial and political indicators, are pushing for greater cooperation with Iraq and strengthening their support for it in several aspects, including health, education and services, as well as intelligence information support in mutual security affairs.

- Continued international, American, intelligence, and military support for combating terrorism.
- Continued support from the NATO and the European Union to Iraq in all aspects.
- Reclaiming Iraq's regional and international standing, as well as international reputation in dealing with issues of protecting diplomatic headquarters.
- Overcoming the issues of US sanctions and the possibility of imposing regional and international isolation on Iraq.
- Preserving the unity and sovereignty of Iraq, without being violated, and the possibility of finding appropriate solutions to prevent such violations or abuses in the future.
- Strengthening the position of the government and its federal apparatus, alleviating the burdens, to focus on performing their duties and accomplishing their agendas and goals.
- As for the expected harms of this track as a result of local and regional rejection:
  - Implementing and maintaining some Iraqi armed factions targeting American interests in Iraq. This would complicate the situation and weaken the Iraqi government position.

- Targeting diplomatic headquarters in Iraq, will put the government in a helpless position, which will lead to extreme American reactions that may affect Iraqi leaders of the armed factions, as in the U.S attack in the Baghdad airport at the beginning of this year.
- The American response to the Iraqi armed factions attacks will weaken the Iraqi government and undermine its work. This will also weaken the Iraqi position in the international community, which will help in pushing some European and Arab countries to reconsider their approach towards Iraq at all levels. Because the presence of these countries within the international alliance depends on the presence of the United States.
- A large number of the Iraqi Council of Representatives members will seek to oppose to the work of the Iraqi government and its orientations in cooperating with US forces to find the necessary and appropriate support. The opposing members will try to pass a law regulating the work of the US military bases in Iraq as a kind of pressure on the Iraqi government and the American administration.
- Iraq was subjected to wide Iranian pressure. Iran supported the parties who rejected the American presence in Iraq financially, especially after the recent escalation of tensions between the United States of America and Iran.

- American benefits within this track of dialogue:
  - Investing the outcomes of the strategic dialogue and the continued American presence in Iraq as a positive element for President Trump during his upcoming election campaign. Trump's opportunity increases especially after the airport operation at the beginning of this year. As well as targeting the Syrian–Iraqi border as an effective method not only to reduce the influence of Iran and its allies, but rather to reassure the Arab countries and Israel of a clear American presence, to ensure security in the region.
  - Achieving the American goals and demands of undermining Iranian influence in Iraq. This can be achieved by tightening the economic embargo on Iran, and limiting the role of armed factions in Iraq as an effort to end their presence.
  - Send a clear message to both Russia and China that Iraq is a vital area for the United States as a zone of influence just as Syria is a Russian area of influence, and that the United States will not leave Iraq as an arena to exploit opportunities and investment.
  - Reassuring the Arab neighbors who support the American existence in Iraq as a factor that provides balance and security in the region.
  - The United States obtaining economic benefits for its various oil and non-oil companies.

- Investing its presence in Iraq to reformulate the equation based on the security and political dualism in all its dimensions.

### **The Strategic Dialogue within the Framework of the Unity of the National Decision and Preserving the Iraqi Interest**

In his inauguration speech, Prime Minister Mustafā Al-Kazemi declared; “We will have a serious dialogue with the United States regarding the nature of their presence in Iraq, and most importantly, what I must deal with firmly is that Iraq is not an arena for settling accounts.”<sup>13</sup> The continued focus on the content of this announcement means that Iraq is an arena for settling scores, and not a place for convergence of interests. This is because of the political geography of the Iraq site, as well as the weakness of previous governments in dealing with the issue of conflicts in a balanced manner.

On the other hand, the Iraqi political decision-makers shall propound the idea that it is not the United States and Iran do not have the right to deprive Iraq of establishing balanced and normal relations with everyone. They also need to make it clear that Iran will not be in danger when Iraq start a strategic dialogue with the United States. The strategic dialogue between Iraq and the United States will be welcomed domestically and internationally. What matters for Iraq is its internal security, infrastructure projects, and political and economic programs that would help Iraq in light of the economic and health crises that the country suffers from.

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13. <https://twitter.com/makadhimi/status/1248569930523475969?s=12>

As for the seriousness in Mr. Al-Kazemi speech, it can be said that the matter is not related to seriousness –despite its importance– but rather it is related to the nature of the Iraqi political system foundations that Al- Kazemi himself opposes. Furthermore, the pressures in the internal and external environments, aside from the nature of awareness of political forces, their trends and attitudes towards the dialogue. More importantly, is there unity in the Iraqi decision on the institutional aspect?

When speaking about the dialogue, we stand before an important question regarding the negotiating delegation. Will it represent the independent governmental viewpoint or the component views? Due to the division between the leaders of the components about the American presence in Iraq, we notice the opposition of the Sunni and Kurdish constituents to the decision taken by the Iraqi parliament on the departure of American forces from Iraq. They have positions differ from the official government position. In addition, what is the opinion or role of the religious authority –who monitors the general performance of the state– in such a forthcoming dialogue?

The division between the Iraqi components will put the Iraqi decision-maker (the negotiator) in a weak position. We do not think that any attempt by Prime Minister Al-Kazemi to start a dialogue between the components will be feasible, neither in terms of timing, nor in terms of results, as confidence is still not fully embodied between



Iraqi political forces. On the other hand, the position of the United States and its state in the dialogue is not ideal, as it also suffers from “partisan division, and bureaucratic institutional division”<sup>14</sup>, as well as a division in the defense and foreign institutions and the CIA<sup>15</sup>. Although these divisions does not resemble those in Iraq, the American president can take executive decisions to avoid the pressure of Congress, as well as having a clear vision with a set of goals and demands to reverse the Iraqi situation. Besides, there is a difference in capabilities between the two countries.

### **The Imbalance of Interest in the Strategic Dialog?**

In any strategic dialogue, the paramount concern is how to preserve the national interests of each country. It is necessary for the Iraqi decision–maker to know the ultimate goal of the dialogue and define their goals and means necessary to reach it. This is achieved with a pattern of strategic management and strategic thinking accompanied by institutional work, to prepare clear plans, and set alternatives.

**On the upcoming Iraqi–American dialogue, some important observations can be noted, including:**

- There is no role for a mediator in this dialogue. It is a direct bilateral dialogue between the two countries.

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14. <https://bit.ly/3bhz5Zl>

15. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/ar/fikraforum/view/the-dangerous-consequences-of-u.s.-withdrawal-from-iraq>

- In this dialogue, it is difficult for Iraq to ask the United States to play the mediating role between it and Iran.
- It is very difficult for Iraq to be neutral in the midst of the conflicts taking place on the Iraqi scene.
- One of the reasons the United States asked for this dialogue is the difficulty in achieving some goals in Iraq, and it needs to overcome the obstacles in such a way that it can achieve its goals in Iraq and the region.
- There are basic, fundamental and vital interests of both countries, and it is necessary to work to strengthen compatible interests and reduce conflicting interests, which will ultimately lead to positive results.
- Iraq's supreme interests are represented in this dialogue by territorial integrity, respecting its sovereignty, combating terrorism, promoting political stability, preserving democratic experience, as well as maintaining oil prices at a reasonable rate in the market, and enhancing the fighting capabilities of Iraqi military institutions in terms of combat requirements and intelligence.
- American interests in the dialogue are to undermine and reduce Iranian influence in Iraq and the region, protecting American diplomatic headquarters and not to be attacked by Iraqi

armed factions, implementing US sanctions against Iran, and rebalancing powers and roles in the region regarding Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and the Gulf. As well as establishing US military bases in Iraq –regardless of their numbers– approved by the new Iraqi government.

- Through the dialogue, the American administration seeks to work with the Iraqi government to control the armed factions' course of action in coordination with Iran. To ensure that American interests in Iraq are not threatened. Therefore, Iraq will need to coordinate with the United States not to violate Iraqi sovereignty.
- Perhaps it would be better for Iraq to seek military bases under the banner of NATO, with effective joint management, and to agree on guarantees that these bases will not be used for any military action against targets inside and outside Iraq.

**Conclusion:**

Terms governing the strategic dialogue paths between the two countries:

1. The necessity of a healthy political climate represented by the presence of an Iraqi government that represents everyone in harmony with its propositions and visions, especially with regard to issues related to state administration, not power.
2. The search for perpetual friendships as a basis for Iraq's regional and international relations, and not seeking alliances, is preferable to Iraqi national security.
3. Iraq does not have the capabilities to be a buffer state in the midst of the current conflict in Iraq and the region.
4. Iraq cannot, directly or indirectly, compulsively or voluntarily enter into proxy wars on its territory. This is no longer an acceptable option for the international parties, and Iraq will suffer great loss if it happens.
5. The Iraqi effort should focus on how to build relationships that go beyond bilateral ties towards joint collective exchanges, such as the harmonization of joint Iraqi-American relations and Iraqi-Iranian relations (geography and religion) and Iraqi-Arab relations (geography, sociology and religion).

6. It is important that the Iraqi government to not consider the dialogue as a mere dialogue with the Trump administration, but also seeks to find ways to enhance Iraqi options in the security, political, health, economic, and services aspects so as to ensure the sustainability of comprehensive security.
7. The adoption of the objective point of view – and with a high abstractness – and not the sectarian point of view, will lead to misunderstanding of Iraq’s regional and international relations.
8. The Iraqi government must realize that the dialogue with the United States is not to discover intentions and know the goals of the other party, for it is clear and well–defined, also it is not to calm the current situation and gain time. Rather, the dialogue seeks an agreement that serves the interests of both parties.
9. It is necessary for the Iraqi decision–maker to realize that the conflict in the region is a problem that cannot be solved between Iraq and the United States only, and not by a third party as well.
10. The United States and Iraq must realize that the relations between them cannot be reduced to military bases. Rather, the level of relations must be in accordance with the level of interests between them.
11. The Iraqis must realize that any dialogue should be that the interlocutors must get rid of illusions, and that the basis of the dialogue between the parties is to make concessions at different levels.

12. People who think that it is time to replace American influence with Russian influence in Iraq, or changing the currency from the dollar to euros are delusional. Because the status-quo in the world or in the region in particular is the principle of sharing influence according to the interests of the major powers.
13. People who think that the pressures imposed on Iraq (or its components), whether regional or international pressure, will not affect the Iraqi geography and the socio-political are delusional. Since the change of geography will be the inevitable outcome, and then we will not see a unified Iraq concerning security, geography and politics.