

Review Article

THE IMPACT OF WESTERN POWERS ON THE CONFLICTUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ (1980-2016)

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Abstract

This article aims to address the politics of conflict between Iran, Iraq and the west from 1980 to 2016. In this study, we analyse the history of western impacts in light of Western foreign policies, and seek solutions for preventing Western impositions. Dynamics responsible for the politics of this conflict and its exacerbation include the role of Western hegemony as played by various actors. A classical realist approach reveals that Western Powers pursued their interests at all costs. We offer an approach to rapprochement between deeply wounded neighbours. These recommendations are offered for strategic considerations with the express purpose of ending or minimizing conflict and promoting peaceful coexistence. Building Iran-Iraq detente will contribute to regional peace and has potential to foster wider confidence and reduced levels of conflict in other regions. Both countries can then dedicate much needed revenues to developing their countries; monies that are currently bled by Western and Israeli arms industries.

Key words: Conflictual Relationship, Iran, Iraq, The West.

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INTRODUCTION

Pierre Razoux described the Iran-Iraq War as the longest conventional war of the twentieth century from which consequences are still being realized (Razoux & Elliott, 2015). He cites the killing of child soldiers, of chemical weapons use, the targeting of civilian centers and cities, and of shipping in the Gulf; all of which added fuel to deeply rooted sectarian Sunni-Shi'a enmity. He further suggests that the war fostered Iran's nuclear ambitions and that American, Soviet, Arab, Israeli, Chinese and European entities had allied with either party, sometimes switching alliances. Razoux also tips the lid on US involvement but does not show impacts, especially beyond the war.

Tabatabai and Samuel write that the war had great influence on Iran's sense of national security, with a particular focus on the development of a nuclear program (Tabatabai & Samuel, 2017). The war pushed Iran out of its isolation towards defensive self-reliance within an international system they perceive as being unjust. The authors also suggest the war shaped Iran's strategic regional and global visions, which later determined its nuclear energy policies and behaviour during international negotiations, culminating with the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Iran's policy makers drew lessons from the war that informed a framework of references for future decision-making. This presumably explains contemporary Iranian attitudes. They further suggest the entire nuclear issue received insufficient attention and was generally misunderstood, suggesting long-term resolutions depend on appreciating essential lessons learned from the war. Their discussion focuses primarily on the war with this in mind and they did not investigate the wide-reaching American role either during or after the war. This article aims to address the politics of conflict between Iran, Iraq and the west from 1980 onwards.

WESTERN IMPACTS

America placed Iran on its Terrorism List on 19 January 1984 (Dept of State *Bulletin*, 1984). The US claimed that Iran had resorted to state-sponsored terrorism by targeting US and Allied interests since the Algiers Accord (1981) and following the mutual release of hostages and lifting of trade sanctions. This included threats against Iranians living abroad like Salman Rushdie, and against nationals of other States. The

situation warranted ways and means to curb Iran. Hence, the US "called for a series of gradually increasing economic and diplomatic measures to convince Iran to halt these dangerous activities" (Murphy, 1996: 3). These measures included a ban on chemical weapons components for both Iran and Iraq, with a view to prevent them from developing and/or using chemical weapons for war.

On 29 October 1987, President Reagan issued Executive Order 12613, which prohibited imports from Iran. This order banned the importation of most Iranian goods and services. President Reagan rationalized the Order as follows:

The Government of Iran is actively supporting terrorism as an instrument of state policy. In addition, Iran has conducted aggressive and unlawful military action against US flag vessels and merchant vessels of other nonbelligerent nations engaged in lawful and peaceful commerce in international waters of the Persian Gulf and in territorial waters of non-belligerent nations of that region (Reagan, 1987).

The Executive Order claimed the US resorted to its import ban following several attempts to dissuade Iran from aggression. Ostensibly America wished to prevent funds gained from Iranian imports from aiding terrorist and aggressive activities. This measure followed Iran's recovery of territories captured by Iraq. However, no US Executive Order was issued when Iraq initiated its aggression against Iran. To the contrary, Iraq was encouraged with arms supplies in addition to financial support. President Clinton issued Executive Order 12959, on 06 May 1995 (Clinton, 1995a), which re-enforced Reagan's Order as follows:

Exportation from the United States to Iran, the Government of Iran, or to any entity owned or controlled by the Government of Iran, or the financing of such exportation, of any goods, technology (including technical data or other information subject to the Export Administration Regulations.

In a letter to Congress (06 May 1995), Clinton wrote that he invoked Section 204(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act [50 USC 1703(b)], and Section 301 of the National Emergencies Act (50 USC 1631), both in response to Iranian actions and policies. This order "prohibited United

States persons from entering into contracts for the financing or the overall management or supervision of the development of petroleum resources located in Iran or over which Iran claims jurisdiction” (Clinton, 1995b).

America was supposedly responding to Iran's continued support of international terrorism, which undermined Middle East (ME) Peace efforts and intensified efforts by all parties to acquire Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). Closely linked to Executive Order 12959 was the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996, signed into law by President Clinton on 05 August 1996 (Clinton, 1996). While enacting all such measures, no supportive evidence for purported Iranian Terrorist actions or policies were ever provided. Moreover, all US Government policy documents failed to show the extent of American activities in support of the Iran–Iraq conflict.

A US General Accounting Office (GAO) report on WMDs in Iraq states that sanctions were initially imposed in August 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait. The UN Security Council (UNSC) later declared Iraq a threat to international peace and security in 1991. International sanctions sought to prevent Iraq from securing or producing biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. The UNSC banned all countries from buying and selling Iraqi oil or other Iraqi commodities excepting for sales of food and medicine (Office 2002). The GAO report cited the creation of a weapons inspection team to destroy all of Iraq's WMDs and related manufacturing capabilities. The report further discussed Iraq's obstruction of inspectors from viewing certain sites; the manhandling of inspectors; the endangering inspectors' helicopters; and the specific expulsion of Americans from inspection teams. Similarity between UN and US export controls to Iraq were noted along with successful measures that reduced Iraq's military expenditure and capacity to invest in WMDs from an annual average of USD \$18.8 billion, between 1980 and 1990, to 1.4 billion annually since the imposition of additional sanctions in 1995 (GAO, 2002: 14–15).

Adam Taylor wrote, *“It's not just Hiroshima: There are many other things America hasn't apologized for” (The Washington Post, 26May2016)*. He discusses the US downing of Iran Air Flight 655 (03July1988) over the Persian Gulf, that killed all 290 passengers (Taylor, 2016). This civilian flight from Bandar Abbas International Airport was bound for Dubai and shot down by the USS Vincennes during the Iran–Iraq war in which the US supported Iraq. Taylor notes, *“Despite the tragic nature of the incident, Washington offered little contrition”*. Another incident is the overthrow of “PM Minister Mohammed Mossadegh” in 1953 (Ebrahimi, 2016). In a related article, Fred Kaplan states the US offered no sign of remorse over Flight 655 (Kaplan, 2014). The then Vice President George H. W. Bush, who was vying to replace Ronald Reagan as the president, remarked during his campaign trail: *“I will never apologize for the United States—I don't care what the facts are.”* A 53 page Pentagon Report absolved Iran's pilot of any error, as mentioned in an official Pentagon press conference (03Jul1988): *“Yet the August report concluded that the captain and all other Vincennes officers acted properly”* (Kaplan, 2014). Kaplan, *Boston Globe's* national defence correspondent, was brushed aside by Secretary of Defence Frank Carlucci during the press conference. Kaplan also reported that Admiral GB Crist, head of US Central Command, had issued a *“non-punitive letter of censure”* to the ship's anti-air warfare officer. However, Secretary of Défense Carlucci withdrew the letter. Captain Rogers was later issued the Legion of Merit *“... for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service”* as Commander of the Vincennes *“from April 1987 to May1989”* (Kaplan, 2014).

Clinton's administration conveyed “deep regret” over the incident and “paid the Iranian government \$131.8 million in compensation, of which \$61.8 million went to families of the victims. In return, Tehran dropped its case in the International Court of Justice (Kaplan, 2014). For many years Iranians believed the incident was a deliberate act of the *“Great Satan”*.

Nobody believed the sophisticated US Navy had made a mistake. Kaplan and Taylor also did not query America's role in Iran–Iraq conflicts.

AJ Bacevich, retired military historian with twenty-three years as a commissioned Army Officer, examined failed American policies and military involvement in the ME (Bacevich, 2016). He claims that no American soldiers had been killed in the ME from WWII to 1990. He critically asks if the US 1990 intervention essentially continued a policy of permanent regional war and recalls US involvement in *“permanent ... open-ended wars”* in Islamic countries, especially following post-Cold war failure to pay the famous ‘Peace Dividend’. He cites milestones that directly end with the second Gulf War in 2003. The author is described by the *The Washington Post* as *“one of the most articulate and incisive living critics of American foreign policy.”* Having had direct frontline experience in Vietnam, Bacevich offers a compelling narrative and calls on the US to rethink the militancy of its ME policy.

Jeffrey Record queried contradictions proffered by GW Bush (Jr) regarding any necessity to eliminate alleged Iraqi WMD threats as the real reason for his 2003 invasion (Record, 2010). Following assessments by key Bush administration decision makers, Record concludes the war was more of a post-cold war *show of power* than necessity. He argues the legacy of the 2003 invasion will serve as a cautionary tale for all “hawks” who advocate the projection of US military power.

In “US Adherence to the Rule of Law,” Chapter 7 in *International Law and Armed Conflict: Exploring the Faultlines*, M Schmitt and J Pejic discuss the legality of the invasion under a Coalition banner. In addition to debating the premise for ‘pre-emptive self-defence’, and although they agree with policy reasons, they found US arguments unpersuasive (Schmitt & Pejic, 2007). Both authors disagree with the American notion that UN Security Council Resolution 687 (cease fire) became automatically inoperative in the event of any Iraqi breach to justify the use of force (Schmitt & Pejic, 2007: 209). They argue the ceasefire was not agreed on between warring parties but only by UN resolution as formally accepted by Iraq. Hence, the agreement was between the UN and Iraq and not between Iraq and Coalition parties. Similarly, the situation remained unchanged for Resolution 1441, which they called:

“A masterpiece of diplomatic ambiguity that masked real differences of opinion between the United States and Britain, on the one hand, and France, Germany, and Russia on the other, in how Iraq's failure to fulfil its obligations under Resolution 687 should be handled”.

Neither author agreed that the use of force was anywhere implicit in cited UN resolutions.

The 2003 US-led Iraqi invasion caused grievous harm and insecurity leading to the virtual collapse of the country, culminating in civil war. The net result wrought militant factionalism with several actors, including foreign governments. Previously unknown groups sprang up like mushrooms, including Al Qaeda's off-shoot, the so-called Islamic State (ISIS), and other notorious terrorists who perpetrate heinous violations of human rights and war crimes. Some of these militants are armed by foreign authorities. Their activities have rained hell on the innocent and caused unimaginable loss of life and property in addition to a mass exodus of Iraqi refugees.

Addressing the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2006, Condoleezza Rice voiced surprise over what she called *“warping diplomacy”*, referring to states that *“otherwise have very little power”* except as energy producers, yet wield influence in ways inimical to the international system (Luft, 2009). This sentiment demonstrates frustration and envy regarding a concentration of wealth and resources badly needed by Western powers. Such gushing concerns endlessly colours careless Western reactions and ME policies. Nonetheless, increasing carbon energy consumption (up 42%

by 2010) over the last forty years indicates that the ME is key to global energy security (Cooper & Yue, 2015). These authors also concluded that Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia, Turkey and Egypt had finally entered the ranks of the world's top 25 energy consumers.

The largest share of global hydrocarbon energy is in the ME. US geological surveys indicate "Over 50% of the undiscovered reserves of oil and 30% of gas are concentrated in the region, primarily in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, UAE, and Libya." Non-ME states "pump at full speed", while ME OPEC countries stick to quotas far below capacity. Hence, the spectre of "non-OPEC oil running out almost twice as fast as OPEC's" (Luft, 2009: 2). The chief economist of the International Energy Agency sums it as follows: "We are ending up with 95 per cent of the world relying for its economic well-being on decisions made by five or six countries in the ME" (Luft, 2009: 2). Hence, Western powers keep a keen eye on ME oil and gas reserves and will not hesitate to use all possible means to control supply].

Apart from the Arab-Israeli conflict, Luft claims that wars between Muslim are costlier in causalities and resources. Moreover, the situation is exacerbated by deepening Sunni-Shia rifts, both in Iraq and Syria. While Iran's nuclear program was opposed by the West, Luft claims the prospect of an Iranian nuclear power threatens the region and could lead to a nuclear arms race. At the same time, he remains silent on Israeli Nuclear power and weapons while signalling a possible conflict between the US and China. China wants an energy security foothold in the region to support its growth through relations with Saudi Arabia. The Chinese were helped in this effort by emerging post 9/11 tensions. India also wants in, her only access geopolitically being through the ME, unlike China, who can tap Russian reserves. China and India also purchased Iranian resources when Iran was isolated. All of this points to potential conflicts of interest among large consumers and holds grave global security concerns.

Luft draws further attention to the huge ME windfall in oil revenues between 2005 and 2007. This occurred when OPEC refused to increase supply despite political instability, hurricanes and growing Asian demand, when the price per barrel ranged between USD \$60-90. This enabled economic makeovers in the ME and purchases of businesses, equity firms, banks, stock exchanges, and media conglomerates with unprecedented influence in the West.

The ME also shifted towards dependence on imported goods from Europe and Japan rather than America, and this at a time when the dollar weakened in parallel with rising national debt. The prospect of ditching the USD for Euros then threatened the US economy. Luft says the capacity to cover the shortfall in supply lessened after 2002, which also reduced liquidity, and was then exploited by terrorists who were intent on blunting Western hegemony. Osama bin Laden said: "We bled Russia for ten years until it went bankrupt and was forced to withdraw [from Afghanistan] in defeat... We are continuing the same policy, to make America bleed profusely to the point of bankruptcy" (Luft, 2009: 7). In addition, economic damages from targeted energy resources and politically motivated attacks on pipelines in Iraq have led to a shortage of supply; thus underlining the importance of energy security. Although Luft argues the "oil weapon is obsolete" he also notes "the use of energy as a political weapon is a legitimate strategy".

Regarding chemical WMDs, Mahdi Balali-Mood discussed "Early and Delayed Effects of Sulphur Mustard in Iranian Veterans After the Iraq-Iran Conflict", Chapter Five in *The Handbook of Toxicology of Chemical Warfare Agents* (Balali-Mood, 2015). Sulphur Mustard (SM), a chemical warfare agent, was widely used during WWI (1915-1919) and also during the Iran-Iraq War. This gas affects DNA synthesis and has potential use for terrorists. The author examined "delayed complications of sulphur mustard poisoning in different organs and severity in Iranian veterans". LA McCauley investigated the Epidemiology of Chemical Warfare Agents (McCauley, 2015). She observed intermittent use for decades in various conflicts,

with increasing frequency over the last two decades, noting "acute and chronic health effects associated with exposure to these agents." McCauley recorded epidemiological investigations of affected cohorts from before WWII through to the Gulf Wars, including Japanese terrorist attacks in the mid-1990s.

Sick and Urquhart, in "Douse the Spreading Iran-Iraq Flames" (*NY Times*, 19May1987), which was reproduced as an appendix in RPH King's *UN and the Iran-Iraq War* (Sick & Urquhart, 1987). The authors claim a moment for pause came after an attack in the Persian Gulf on a US Frigate that caused the death of 28 crew members, as well as another attack on a Soviet ship. They say Iran and Iraq were war weary and claim that a dedicated international intervention might have brought peace at this moment. The authors charge that the UNSC failed to act at the right moment to secure peace, and that when it did act, Resolution 479 fell short of putting an end to Iraqi aggression and the withdrawal of its troops from Iran. Instead, they called for a cease-fire that elicited Iranian mistrust and non-cooperation.

Sick and Urquhart thought peace was achievable if the UN Secretary General called for the establishment of an International Commission comprising respectable parties from both sides: "Parties to observe cease fire and to refrain from substantial changes in the military status quo pending completion of the Commission's report". The authors personally called on UN member states to suspend arms sales to both countries. Although they were conscious their proposal might generate unavoidable differences, they concluded that some measure of international action was needed to bring the situation under control and achieve peace. King writes that the UNSC faltered and was late to issue its resolution at the war's outbreak. When they did issue Resolution 479, they failed to condemn Iraqi aggression or to demand Iraqi withdrawal from Iranian territories, asking only for a cease fire. Accordingly, this instigated Iranian distrust and subsequent non-cooperation with the UN. Hence, a shift in the UN Secretariat's mediation role followed. Nevertheless, King concludes the UNSC mismanagement of the entire affair raises issues regarding Security Council integrity (King, 1987). King, Sick and Urquhart limited their discussions to UN involvement prior to the war's end in 1988.

As for humanitarian concerns in the next decade, the GAO report cited previously indicated that the UNSC's "Oil For Food Program" (OFFP, 1995) allowed the UN to control sales of Iraqi oil in return for food, medicine and essential civilian goods to buffer deleterious effects of sanctions in the aftermath of the First Gulf War. With dwindling support for Iraqi sanctions by 2001, the UNSC initiated new sanctions to simultaneously tackle humanitarian concerns and prevent Iraq from restructuring its WMD programs. However, the GAO did not report on gross abuse of the OFFP by US companies and corporations or of impacts on Iraqis.

Chapter Three of the OECD report on corruption in Iraq gives a comprehensive report with particular reference to the OFFP and roles played by Western companies. It recounts that the corruption was induced by UNSC sanctions (1995-2003) after the First Gulf war. Limited access to international goods and services subjected Iraqi oil revenues to gross abuse and smuggling. From 2003, revenues accrued from the sale of oil exports, oil products and natural gas were deposited in a UNSC 'Development Fund' for Iraq. These monies were then subject to gross mismanagement by way of poor record keeping and ineffective monitoring (OECD, 2010: 105).

The report further mentions the work of the Independent Inquiry Commission (IIC), which noted that sanctions were easily subject to manipulation and abuse. The IIC report observed that OFFP operational procedures were beset by complexities that opened doors to criminal exploitation. The then Iraqi regime raised illicit revenues amounting to USD \$10 billion through illegal oil smuggling outside the OFFP ambit: IIC "Documented a vast network of illegal surcharges connected

to oil contract for the benefit of about 140 companies, as well as payments of over USD 1 billion in kickbacks in the form of after sales services and land transportation" (OECD, 2010: 105). The Iraqi Government filed law suit in June 2008 in the US Federal Court, Manhattan, against 94 US companies alleged to have defrauded Iraqis under the UNSC's OFFP cesspool, demanding compensation of USD \$10 billion. The OECD report did well to highlight the corruption and fraud but did not shed any light on the US Government's role in the Iran-Iraq conflict.

The aftermath of the 2003 Western invasion of Iraq fueled deep-rooted mistrust between *Sunni* and *Shi'ia* sectarians. This gave rise to factional militants with various agendas in a devastating vacuum created by the removal of Saddam's iron fisted regime. Al Qaeda soon entered Iraq and began operations. Then came the Syrian civil war in which the West played havoc following several Arab Springs. The world also saw the rise of Al Qaeda affiliated groups like ISIS (Islamic state) and others. The Syrian War thus characterizes a "great game" played by great powers which masquerade under humanitarian flags in hot pursuit of their interests while sowing seeds of Muslim discord. The international refugee crisis shows that Muslims lives are cheap. Moreover, this pitiful saga leaves an indelible mark of shame on the entire Muslim world.

PREVENTING WESTERN IMPOSITIONS IN IRAN-IRAQ AFFAIRS

Following Iran's revolution (1979), territorial disputes, particularly over Shatt al-Arab, led to war with Iraq and unimaginable consequences. Dynamics responsible for the politics of this conflict and its exacerbation include the role of Western hegemony as played by various actors. We now offer an approach to rapprochement between deeply wounded neighbours. These recommendations are offered for strategic considerations with the express purpose of ending or minimizing conflict and promoting peaceful coexistence.

BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS

Bilateral negotiations led to the Algiers Agreement and rapprochement, which lasted until Iran's 1979 revolution (Abdulghani, 2012). Abdulghani refers to institutional negotiations that established an independent Iraqi nation in 1929. The proceedings acknowledged a necessary partnership between historical rivals. Hence, the present rekindling of a similar diplomatic effort could possibly prevent further US involvement (Abdulghani, 2012).

A JOINT IRAN-IRAQ COMMISSION

Rekindling a spirit of bilateralism requires permanent structures that advance mutual agendas. We therefore propose periodic policy summits at the 'Head of State' level to institute and govern a Joint Iran-Iraq Commission. This would comprise all relevant sectors and agencies (i.e., Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Security, Immigration, Border Control, Education, Health, Transport, Maritime Resources, Energy, etc.). The Commission should especially attend emerging issues.

The proposed commission would promote rapprochement and mutual understanding within a context of the theory of political realism. Meetings are to be conducted on a rotational geographic basis with periodic Summits between Heads of State for policy approval. A permanent structure with diplomatic status and protocols will oversee the implementation of all agreed upon programs. Each country is to be represented as sovereign equals per Westphalia convention to decide how this structure will operate.

Joint Commissions have been used in international diplomatic relations to guide, support and reach solutions for critical bilateral and multilateral issues. This includes sensitive matters such as borders and common resource pools (land or maritime). An example is Canadian-USA International Joint Commission, 2013. Joint Commissions have also promoted reconciliation after establishing common grounds through

shared history following notorious conflicts and wars such as between France and Germany:

Joint Commissions can further contact and address important [sensitive] issues between groups. After World War II, a joint commission of French and Germans worked on shared history to show aspects of bilateral relations that were peaceful. Also, a Czech-German commission worked on issues that needed to be resolved to promote reconciliation (Staub, 2011).

Even small states use Joint Commissions to promote mutual interests (The Government of Mauritius, 2017).

MUSLIM DIALOGUE

Unfortunately, and for no obvious reason, Muslims do not encourage or engage the thoroughly classic Islamic practice of dialogue. This reality manifest as a recent umbrage-filled crisis in which ME rivals identified each 'other' as "terrorists" to satisfy Western whims, especially the US (Dorsey, 2017). Prophet Muhammed (SAW) showed us how to talk with enemies and pursue Muslim national interests by making necessary compromises. The *Sulh Hudabiyah* is a classic example. The Prophet also accepted what his companions deemed unfavourable in the agreement. The example shows the richness of the Islamic diplomatic practice historically (Abu Sulayman, 1993). If the Prophet engaged *Kuffars* (unbelievers) in dialogue, why is it that Muslims refuse to engage other Muslims in brotherly talk despite grave differences? Furthermore, why is it that Muslims (Countries) ally with non-Muslims against fellow Muslims in clear conflict with Qur'anic injunctions?

SUNNI AND SHI'ITE RAPPROCHEMENT

From the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war, US policy makers were fully aware of shared cultural and religious affinities between both countries: "No one can possibly benefit from the continuation of bloodshed between peoples who are linked together through the strongest cultural and spiritual bonds" (State Dept. *Bulletin*, 1984). We propose that Sunni and Shi'ite believers come to realise that promoting dialogue and is required for the benefit of both factions.

Even the US Government's 9-11 Commission reported that Muslim scholars like Hassan al-Turabi tried to persuade Shi'ites and Sunnis to put aside their differences and join hands against a common enemy, i.e., against Israel and America (Hamilton, 2004). Why would the 9-11 Commission be concerned over strained Sunni-Shia relations if it was not in the interests of both the US and Israelis? The sooner Iran and Iraq realise their need for compromise the better.

We therefore propose a forum for the convergence of governmental and non-governmental groups, including community opinion leaders, youth and women groups, and scholars (religious and not), all to engage in a dialogue for the benefit of both countries on a range of non-sensitive but shared interests held in common. Begin with matters that promote convergence rather than divergence These will gradually spill over into more sensitive and contentious issues. The assumption being that mutual confidence and trust is built along the way.

The essence of convergence is to create avenues of interaction and dialogue that enhance understanding. If Iran can successfully partake in challenging P5+1 international talks on nuclear matters, she can also host a dialogue of healing with Iraq with a view to positively affect regional third parties. Such a venue has no need or room for rivals to rattle respective sabres, especially since the ME is the principal buyer of lethal arms in the third world, which, to this writer, has been a purposed 'set up' to scam and harm Arab and Muslim marks from the beginning (USD \$100 billion annually for the past two decades; Brynen & Korany 1995).

The arms race is therefore of no use to our search for rapprochement and peace and purely alarming in the light of

the spread of WMDs (conventional, nuclear and chemical). Building Iran-Iraq detente will contribute to regional peace and has potential to foster wider confidence and reduced levels of conflict in other regions. Both countries can then dedicate much needed revenues to developing their countries; monies that are currently bled by Western and Israeli arms industries.

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