

General Analysis of the Impact of US Humanitarian Response to Iraq's Instability

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Abstract

The issue of humanitarian intervention is widely discussed in the field of international relations. While the issue of humanitarian intervention is necessary for hegemonic states, it is defined as the justification for “occupation” for states with more idealistic discourses. According to critics of “humanitarian intervention”, the clearest example of the criticized occupation issue is the US-Iraq war. The concept of humanitarian intervention has been discussed in the international system for a long time, and its status under international law still remains unclear. The USA carried out a military operation in Iraq under the pretext of humanitarian intervention, because of this, the Saddam regime was overthrown, furthermore, had other devastating consequences. The USA has labeled some states including Iraq as “rogue” states that “brutalize their own people and squander their natural resources for the personal gain of their rulers”. In this study, the humanitarian intervention by the USA, which has a negative impact on Iraq, is examined.

Keywords

Humanitarian, Iraq, International, Middle East

1. Introduction

Political, economic and security crises experienced by states in the Middle East geography negatively affect both the geography of the Middle East and the security of neighboring countries. This can be exemplified during and after Iraq's Saddam era.

It has been seen and experienced internationally that regimes use force against

their own people and violate human rights in this direction (Arënliu et al., 2021). Especially during Saddam's regime, Saddam carried out the Massacres of Altinköprü and Halapja against his own people. With the overthrow of Saddam's regime, the US invasion of Iraq in the region, the existence of many independent illegal armed organizations, has not been able to distract the Iraqi people from violence and carnage.

Although international humanitarian intervention sometimes takes place against dictatorial regimes by the hegemonic state(s), sometimes it takes place under the pretext of "Humanitarian Intervention" in various interests.

Researcher Alex J. Bellamy (2005) asks following questions in his research, quote in quote,

"Do states and regional organizations recognize that they have a 'responsibility to protect' civilians at risk, as the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) argued? Or is humanitarian intervention perceived as a 'Trojan horse' used by the powerful to legitimize their interference in the affairs of the weak?" (Bellamy, 2005)

As a result of humanitarian intervention, the fate of the intervening state is discussed. Iraq, the clearest example of our time, and the overthrow of Saddam's regime are examples of this.

In this study, it was tried to examine whether the chaos experienced in today's Iraq was due to the humanitarian intervention carried out by the United States in the past. While the study was carried out with literature reviews, national and international press was also used.

2. Conceptually Human Intervention

Humanitarian intervention or humanistic intervention is defined by general definition as the use of force by one state to prevent widespread human rights violations against another state. This concept, which occurred during the Cold War, was introduced to prevent oppressive regimes and internal conflicts. According to Dr. Filiz Çulha Zabci, humanitarian intervention is defined as follows:

"After the cold war, the era, named "new world order" began with the "great promise" of the United States, which emerged as a hegemonic power: "Spreading democracy around the world". This "great" promise came in the form of building a world of poverty, injustice and violence and was based on two "political/military" means: Humanitarian intervention and governance.

"Humanitarian intervention" formed the "cover" of every intervention by the United States and other powerful countries to other countries since the "90s, along with NATO and the UN. Military operations and invasions under this name were shown as a 'universal' contribution to the humanitarian values, justice and freedom." (Zabci, 2005)

According to international community theory, humanitarian intervention is

necessary. Proponents of this theory consider humanitarian intervention necessary for the provision of international order (Jemirade, 2020). Theorists are divided into two in this direction: solidarists and pluralists. Solidarists advocate the humanitarian intervention. Pluralists, on the other hand, attach more importance to the sovereignty of the country and the international order. The important thing is to examine the values of justice and order that constitute “basic dialectics”. It is defined by the state as the use of force as a result of acts contrary to human rights that pose a threat (Boztaş, 2011; Murphy, 2014).

The theory of “Humanitarian Intervention”, which also falls within the field of study of International Community Theory, was also studied by Hedley Bull. Bull, who conducted studies at the Frankfurt school, argued that neo-realism could be dangerous to use in combination with controlled use of force and liberation. Subsequently, the meaning of a military force or intervention is largely established by the international community (structural thoughts). With a simple observation, the existence of military power makes no sense and/or cannot determine the behavior of states. The emergence of a military intervention as an invasion, attack, legitimate-defense, cross-border pursuit, peacekeeping movement or humanitarian intervention is the result of international common knowledge, collective understanding and expectations (Bull, 2000; Küçük, 2014).

As a result of the conceptual explanations mentioned, humanitarian intervention is examined from a neo-realist perspective as it covers the field of study of “International Community Theory”. Humanitarian intervention is stated as the intervention of another state as a result of the failure of the state to provide its people to have the safety of life and property. However, the cause, limitations and size of military intervention should be examined with the sensitivity. Sometimes the justification for the invasion of a country by the hegemonic state(s) can be “humanitarian intervention”. Although this situation has been criticized by “idealistic” approachers in the international field, it is stated in the international literature that “humanitarian intervention” should be carried out in undeveloped countries such as Africa (Boztaş, 2011).

In Aidan Hehir’s “Humanitarian Intervention after Kosovo: Iraq, Darfur and the Record of Global Civil Society”, he explained the intervention term as the participation of one state as interference in the internal affairs of another state. He stated that the issue of humanitarian intervention was the meddling of the x-state in the internal affairs of the y state. He also explained that the issue of humanitarian intervention is a controversial issue. According to Hehir, the issue of humanitarian intervention can be considered an effective tool for countries to abuse intervention within the scope of humanitarian intervention in another country in their own interests or to maintain international order. However, when the concept of intervention is considered as a violation of international law, it emphasizes that in accordance with Article 2 of the United Nations Convention, UN member states should respect the territorial integrity of another state and refrain from using force (Hehir, 2008; Pazarcı, 1999).

France is sensitive to humanitarian intervention and advocates the humanitarian intervention in the international system. In 1987, French academics Bernard Kouchner and Mario Bettati wrote in their book *Le Devoir D'ingérence* that humanitarian intervention should be in the French constitution (McQueen, 2005).

Humanitarian Intervention in International Law and Iraq

From the early 1970s to the present day, NATO has decided to intervene in humanitarian intervention around the world. Interventions were made in East Pakistan in 1971, Cambodia, Uganda, and Africa in 1978-79, Northern Iraq in 1990 and Kosovo in 1999. However, there are differences between these interventions. On 05.04.1991, the Security Council also convened and took resolution 688 (1991). In this resolution, the Council focused on the resolutions on the prohibition of interference in the internal affairs regulated in Article 2/7 of the UN Convention. After expressing the pressures on the Kurdish people in Iraq and the resulting flow of refugees, a flight ban was imposed on the Iraqi government in the north on the basis of the 36th latitude. In the agreement reached with the Government of Baghdad, Iraq on April 17, 1991, the government adopted the UN, the creation of a humanitarian autonomous zone for the Kurdish people living in northern Iraq and its existence accordingly. As a result, an autonomy agreement was signed between the Kurds living in northern Iraq and the Iraqi government. Accordingly, it can be argued that the Security Council has not taken coercive measures. It can be said that the UN has set the limits of humanitarian aid with the "Memorandum of Understanding" agreement with Iraq. However, it is stated that this approach is incorrect if the whole text of the decision is evaluated (Demirel, 2013).

3. Saddam Hussein and the Massacres of Iraq

Many massacres were carried out in Iraq during Saddam Hussein's rule. As a result of these massacres, the United States invaded Iraq with the emphasis that it would bring "humanitarian intervention" and "democracy" to Iraq by overthrowing the totalitarian regime. This section will touch on Saddam Hussein's massacres of his own people in Iraq:

3.1. March 28, 1991 Saddam's Armies and Altinköprü Massacre

On March 28, 1991, 84 people were massacred by Saddam's armies in Altinköprü, Iraq. It is the remarkable point that Turkmens are among those massacred. In the massacre, 84 Iraqi citizens were shot in Altinköprü with sacks over their heads. Children are among those who died.

Turkmeneli Human Rights Association describes the "1991 Altinköprü Massacre" as follows:

...The Shiites, who wanted to take advantage of Saddam's situation, started an insurgency in the south and the Kurds in the north. Kurdish militias,

supposedly rebelling against Saddam's persecution, entered Kirkuk and looted Turkmen houses; they had stolen cars, money and jewelry....

After a while, the innocent 102 Turkmens were brought to the village of Dibis, near the town... Who knows, they were fallen martyr by bullets from the weapons of the executioners consisting of three drafts, without giving them the opportunity to recite the shahadah... Suddenly 102 bodies were lying on the ground... Suddenly the earth was painted red... They were stacked on top of each other... The bloodthirsty murderers once again shot themselves in the head with a gun (!) out of concern that the work would not be unfinished... (Zabci, 2005).

The Altinköprü issue has had a negative impact on the Iraqi people, especially the Iraqi Turkmens. The sociological trauma resulting from the massacre in Altinköprü also negatively affected Iraqi security. It has resulted in the loss of public faith in the Iraqi state.

3.2. Saddam Hussein 1988 Halapja Chemical Weapons Use

Saddam Hussein, who caused one of the greatest human dramas in history, carried out the Halapja massacre using chemical weapons in Iraq on March 16, 1988. On March 16, 1988, it cost the lives of at least 5 thousand Kurds, accompanied by planes and helicopters belonging to the Iraqi Baath Regime. At least 5000 Kurds, mostly women, children and the elderly, were killed and between 7000 and 10,000 others were injured in the Halapja Massacre on March 16, 1988, at a time when the Iran-Iraq War was towards its end. Survivors of the massacre suffered from many diseases. Thousands of people suffer from nervous system, skin and lung diseases, and the tumor formation and disability birth are among the disorders seen in many others (Murphy, 2014).

It is also stated that not only Kurds died in the Halapja massacre. It is stated that Turkmens were also killed. In the book "Black Money: Illegal Financing Source of Terrorist Organizations and PKK Example, Iraq Field Survey", a 2014 field survey conducted in Iraq provided interviewers with stunning insight into the Halapja massacre:

"When I was in Kirkuk, Iraq, in December 2013, I had a series of meetings with Turkmens there. I found out that they were subjected to a lot of persecution by Saddam. Especially the Altinköprü case and the Halapja massacre before it are not erased from the memory of Turkmens here. According to locals, the attack with chemical weapons was carried out and leading Turkmen leaders in the region were either thrown into acid pools or tortured in the outposts..." (Karabulut, 2014).

Saddam Hussein and Saddam's armies destroyed the citadel of Kirkuk during the US war (2006). However, US military forces continued to carry out this destruction. Kirkuk citadel, which is the cultural heritage of Iraq, became a symbol of the Turkmens and the legacy of the Ottoman Empire.

4. US Humanitarian Intervention in Iraq against Saddam's Atrocities in Iraq

Iraq, which has an oil reserve of 505 billion barrels, has always been of interest to states from the time of the historical process to the present day. In particular,



Iraq Kirkuk Citadel Authorship: Karabulut. A., "Black Money: Illegal Financing Source of Terrorist Organizations and PKK Example, Iraq Field Survey" Bilgeoğuz Publishing House, İstanbul 2014, p. 159.

US hegemony has always been interested in Iraq in this direction.

Saddam Hussein, on the other hand, was able to risk fighting the United States by relying on underground resources. Then-US president Bush cited Saddam's massacres of the Iraqi people as reasons for the invasion of Iraq. The Bush administration also gave an additional justification for the invasion, saying that "we will bring democracy to Iraq." (Eyüboğlu, 2014). The participation of 230,000 US troops in the war also imposed a multibillion-dollar cost burden on the United States.

The United States wanted to justify the military intervention within the scope of humanitarian intervention internationally. For this reason, the United States required a series of intelligence activities. After Saddam was captured, an FBI agent named George Piro forwarded Saddam's confessions to the US authorities. In these confessions, Saddam stated:

"I've never used a stuntman. I admired the Americans. Especially Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan... But I've always hated Father and Son Bush. I ordered the killing of the Kurds by chemical attack (Halapja Massacre). I wanted thousands buried in mass graves. Before 9/11, I thought that UN sanctions will be lifted one day and that I could have a nuclear bomb. I pretended to have mass destruction weapons before war. I wanted to look strong against Iran." (Vatan Newspaper, 15.11.2017).

According to US General Norman Schwarzkopf, the military operation on the grounds of humanitarian intervention in Iraq would last 100 hours. It is stated

by US General Norman Schwarzkopf that the Iraqi Republican Guard increased its violence against Kurds living in Iraq following a US military operation. In response, US troops have built and maintained Humanitarian Response and Safe Zones in Safwan, Iraq, especially for the Kurdish people living in Iraq. However, the US military has not provided security for other Iraqis except the Kurds (McQueen, 2005).

The 1995 report of the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States (CIA) stated that Kurds living in Iraq are under pressure, especially by Shiites. However, they could not prevent massacres of the US-backed PKK terrorist group, which spread rapidly in the region as a result of the US invasion of Iraq, against Yazidi Kurds in Sinjar region (The CIA on Global Humanitarian Emergencies, 1995: 913; Alkhaleejonline, 05.01.2017).

The Actual Result of US Humanitarian Intervention in Iraq

Reminiscent of World War II, the US campaign in Iraq took place with a small number of allies. In the opinion of the CIA, the US intelligence service, there was a very centralized and personified regime in Iraq. Saddam reportedly fled before the operation with people who were similar to him. Accordingly, the United States also put “information operations” in the war operation. The information operations center is now run by the Center for Joint Information Operations in San Antonio. In this unit, they carried out propaganda and anti-cyber hackers activities. With this multidimensional operation, the United States has increased its effectiveness in Iraq as part of the so-called humanitarian intervention (Friedman, 2014; Erkmén, 2010).

Iraq, which repaired its electricity system in a year after the Gulf War in 1991, is still struggling with electricity shortages despite seven years after 2003. A significant number of Sunni and Shiite Arabs do not trust each other, or even see each other as enemies. In the north of the country, even the United States accepts that it is only a matter of time before a new conflict breaks out between Arabs and Kurds. The invasion did not go well for the United States. The US military, which believes it has proven its strength after defeating the Iraqi army in 3 weeks, has lost 4417 soldiers and more than 30,000 soldiers wounded as a result of resistance activities, according to official statements (Erkmén, 2010).

According to the 2008 security agreement between the United States and Iraq, the withdrawal schedule was announced by President Obama in his February 2009 speech. Within the framework of both developments, the authority and effectiveness of US forces in Iraq has decreased as much. Once again, as in previous periods, the US military will not be able to operate on its own initiative where it deems necessary. The Iraqi government will make the decisions of all operations and ask the United States for help if necessary. The United States withdrew the military equipment \$1.25 billion worth, 120,000 soldiers, 40,000 vehicles from Iraq and transferred 900,000 pieces of military equipment to Iraqi forces. At one time, 82% of up to 600 US military installations were either closed or

transferred to the Iraqi government. The number of US bases remaining in the country dropped to 124 in July 2010 and 97 by the end of August (Friedman, 2014).

Together with these statistical data, the US military used disproportionate and immoral force against the Iraqi people on the grounds of “Humanitarian Intervention”. US Brigadier General Janis Karpinski and CIA agents have been publicly involved in torturing prisoners and executing 100 - 150 people a month at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq (Korkmaz, 2013).

Oil and oil production policies, which have a significant share of the Iraqi economy, were reorganized after the US invasion in 2003. Apart from this situation, the share of agricultural GDP in Iraq is on average 9%. The manufacturing industry is still in the process of being reconstituted, and tourism activities are limited to visits to religious sites such as Karbala in Iraq and Kirkuk citadel in Iraq due to security problems. Since the private sector has not yet made sufficient progress, most of the economic activities are driven by the public sector. While the unemployment rate in Iraq was 28% during the war, it is stated to be around 16% as of the end of 2013 (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26.11.2014).

As mentioned above, the results of the “humanitarian intervention” in Iraq have been versatile. Supporting Iraqi Shiites by Iranian intelligence, the unpredictable preparation of Saddam’s guerrilla war, and the inability to find any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq were the reasons why US intelligence made mistakes in Iraq. The disintegration of the region led to the influence of Shiites in Najaf and Karbala, the influence of the Kurds in the North of Iraq, and the intimidation of Turkmens. These situations have led to irreversible sectarian and ethnic conflicts in Iraq. Although most of these issues were reflected in Iraq, negative consequences were reflected in the United States. The total US military in the Gulf War in 1990 was 230,000. It was 250,000 in March 2003 and 150,000 in August 2006. Such intense military action and activities, sensational events in the public have harmed the United States. According to Brzezinski, the result of these situations is as follows:

- 1) The Islamic world’s hostility towards the west has increased,
- 2) A Middle East has been created ready to explode,
- 3) Shiite and Iranian influence has increased in the Persian Gulf,
- 4) Pakistan increases its nuclear weapons,
- 5) Confined Russia
- 6) China establishing Far East unity,
- 7) Disarmament regime deterioration are negative consequences reflected in the United States internationally (Friedman, 2014; Brzezinski, 2007).

The military operation, which was justified by the US humanitarian intervention in Iraq, made Iraq a free country, but it also damaged political stability. The presence of illegal armed organizations in the region, the inconsistency of the Baghdad and Erbil administrations, and the presence of the PKK terrorist group in the region are an indication that the US justification for humanitarian intervention is only the cause of the occupation. Incidents of arbitrary arrests and

torture of US soldiers are evidence of the occupation movement rather than humanitarian intervention (Hehir, 2008).

5. Conclusion

In human intervention, the state that intervenes in the context of supporting the people of the intervened state and helping to fulfill the conditions worthy of human dignity should be carried out by taking a systematic, controlled, planned and respectful attitude to the people of the region. In general, international relations theorists, academics and researchers criticize this situation (humanitarian intervention).

While criticizing humanitarian intervention, the biggest justification for criticism is mentioned in the literature as “excuse for occupation” (Leveringhaus, 2021). However, “humanitarian intervention” is also seen as necessary for countries such as Africa against such criticism.

The United States has conducted military operations in Iraq on the grounds of “bringing democracy, destroying the oppressive regime, humanitarian intervention”. The justifications, which began with a romantic discourse, were carried out in person by the state, which intervened in real life, in case of “new oppression, persecution, murder”.

After the murder of Saddam, who inflicted such grave events as Fallujah and Alinköprü on the Iraqi people before the intervention, the sensational Abu Garib prison events in the United States were on the agenda of the world public for a long time.

According to these situations, “humanitarian intervention” is planned, systematic and within the framework of the rules of law, it is ideal to take place in the observation of the international delegation. “Humanitarian intervention” can lead to new massacres, as planlessness can lead to indiscipline in the intervening state. The United States intervened in Iraq, causing it to be unable to prevent internal conflicts, chaos such as looting, etc. after Saddam’s overthrow, and also chaos made internal conflicts more systematic.

The imperialist policies of the United States are provided in idealistic discourse and are also active in a realist way. The United States seeks to lay the groundwork for its colonial policies by emphasizing international law and the importance of international decisions.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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