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Iraqi-Saudi Relations in light of the Discussions of the Iraqi Parliament 1945-1955 AD

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ABSTRACT: This research examines the discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies concerning Iraq's foreign policy and its relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the areas in which these relations developed politically, economically, and in matters of security during the period 1945–1955. The temporal framework of the study was set at 1945–1955: the first date marks the end of the Second World War and its impact on issues concerning Saudi Arabia and its relationship with Iraq, while the second date marks the conclusion of the Baghdad Pact between Iraq, Turkey, and a number of regional and international states, and the repercussions of that pact on the nature of Saudi–Iraqi relations. The research relies on the descriptive-analytical historical method. The material of the research is distributed over an introduction, three axes, and a conclusion. The first axis addresses the Chamber of Deputies' discussions of Arab and international issues and the Saudi position on them (1945–1947); the second axis addresses the problems of borders, movement, and trade between Iraq and Saudi Arabia in light of the discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies (1946–1948); and the third axis discusses Iraq's foreign policy and the Saudi position on it in light of the discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies (1950–1955). The research draws on a variety of sources, foremost among them the published Iraqi documents preserved in the House of Books and Documents, represented by the minutes of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies for the years 1945–1955.

INTRODUCTION

The research arrived at a number of important findings, most notably that Saudi Arabia occupied a considerable share of the discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies in various economic and political fields during the period 1945–1955. A number of deputies in the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies praised the efforts of the Iraqi government in seeking to establish good relations between Iraq and Saudi Arabia and to consult with it on many issues and matters of concern to all Arabs, including the Palestinian question, the French occupation of the Arab Maghreb, and the importance of establishing Arab cooperation in confronting emergent issues.

The discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies also focused on Saudi Arabia's relations with the Western states and the impact of this on its relations with Iraq, including the convening of the San Francisco Conference in the United States of America. The Iraqi Chamber of Deputies was also concerned with the independence gained by many Arab states, and the Chamber's discussions in 1945 showed that there was a pressing need to establish Arab unity projects to strengthen Arab solidarity, in addition to praising Saudi King Abdulaziz Al Saud's rejection of United States policy toward the Palestinian question, particularly the promises made to establish a national homeland for the Jews in Palestine, which both Iraq and Saudi Arabia considered to be the foremost Arab cause.

The Iraqi Chamber of Deputies also discussed, in 1946 and thereafter, the border disputes between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, the demarcation of the border between the two countries, the resolution of the problem through diplomatic means, and support

for the Iraqi government's position of encouraging Saudi Arabia's accession to the Charter of the Arab League. In addition, many sessions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies addressed matters common to Iraq and Saudi Arabia, including the pilgrimage route to the holy places in Saudi territory, the issue of rising wheat prices in Iraq, and the encouragement of trade activity between the two countries and the combating of smuggling.

After 1950, the discussions of the Chamber of Deputies turned to discussing Iraqi–Saudi relations and their relations with other states, including the United States of America, and the deputies' sympathy with the state of the Arab Maghreb against French aggression on Marrakesh (Morocco) and how to confront that aggression by various means, including sending telegrams to Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, to take the necessary measures to curb the aggression. Among the measures proposed by the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies were economic and political boycotts.

During its discussions of Iraq's foreign policy in 1951, the Chamber of Deputies also addressed the meetings of the Commonwealth Conference, as well as the discussion of ratifying the general agreement on the Point Four Program, which concerned technical cooperation between the United States of America and Iraq, and Saudi Arabia's approval of that agreement. The Chamber of Deputies also expressed the desire of the Iraqi people and their government to raise the level of diplomatic representation with Saudi Arabia to the rank of ambassador, and fruitful cooperation with Saudi Arabia, along with Iraq's desire for Saudi Arabia to be a member of a unified Arab defense command responsible for protecting the independence of Arab countries. Monitoring the political and military developments in Syria and the repeated coups there, and the position of the Saudi government on them, was among the priorities discussed by the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies.

Among the important issues of shared concern was the Chamber of Deputies' discussion of the Iraqi–Turkish Pact and Saudi Arabia's position on it in 1955, as the Saudi position rejected the pact, despite the support of many deputies for the Baghdad Pact, who criticized Saudi Arabia, which had been bound to the United States of America by an alliance agreement since 1951.

The research examines the discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies regarding Iraq's foreign policy and its relations with Saudi Arabia and the areas of their development during the period 1945–1955. In their discussions, the deputies expressed what was circulating among Iraqi public opinion regarding the development of relations with Saudi Arabia, which is linked to Iraq by geographical and historical ties.

The temporal framework of the research was set at the period 1945–1955, an important historical phase in the history of Iraq and Saudi Arabia, since the first date marked the end of the Second World War and its impact on issues concerning Saudi Arabia and its relationship with Iraq, while the second date marked the conclusion of the Baghdad Pact between Iraq, Turkey, and a number of regional and international states, which was reflected in the nature of relations with Iraq. The research problem was defined by answering its hypothesis, represented by the following question: Did the discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies play an important role in the development of Iraq's foreign policy toward Saudi Arabia?

The research relies on the descriptive-analytical historical method. The material of the research is distributed over an introduction, three axes, and a conclusion. The first axis addresses the Chamber of Deputies' discussions of Arab and international issues and the position of Saudi Arabia on them (1945–1947); the second axis addresses the problems of borders, movement, and trade between Iraq and Saudi Arabia in light of the discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies (1946–1948); and the third axis discusses Iraq's foreign policy and the Saudi position on it in light of the discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies (1950–1955).

The research relies on a diverse set of sources, foremost among them the published Iraqi documents preserved in the House of Books and Documents, represented by the minutes of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies for the years 1945–1955. University theses and dissertations, Arabic books, and published research and studies also played an important role in contributing the basic information for the research, the details of which are documented in the research's footnotes and sources.

FIRST: THE DISCUSSIONS OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES ON ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND THE POSITION OF SAUDI ARABIA ON THEM, 1945–1947

Relations between Iraq and Saudi Arabia received special attention from Iraqi public opinion, and Iraq was keen to improve those relations either through bilateral relations or within the framework of the League of Arab States. Saudi Arabia occupied a considerable share of the discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies in various economic and political fields. A number of deputies in the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies referred to the efforts of the Iraqi government to establish good relations between

Iraq and Saudi Arabia and its keenness to consult with it on many issues and matters of concern to the Arabs as a whole, including the Palestinian question and standing alongside the Arab brothers in the Arab Maghreb against French occupation, proceeding also from Iraq's vision of the importance of establishing Arab cooperation in confronting emergent issues.

In the same context, the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies discussed, during its sessions and deliberations in the aforementioned period, Iraq's relations with other Arab states and its desire to establish Arab cooperation; therefore, those discussions also touched on Saudi Arabia's relations with the Western states and the impact of this on its relations with the rest of the Arab states, especially since that period in the history of the Arab region witnessed many political transformations. In the twenty-sixth session of the Chamber of Deputies, held on 24 May 1945, and following the convening of the San Francisco Conference in the United States of America, the Chamber of Deputies discussed the foreign policy of the Iraqi government. During the session, Deputy Salman al-Shaykh Dawud, deputy for Amara, said: "It is a source of pride that the Arab governments of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq are participating in the greatest conference for world peace; we deeply regret that other Arab states that made a serious contribution to the war effort did not participate, and we hope this mistake will be remedied and that the Arab states will unite in urging other states to invite our dear Syria, Transjordan, and Lebanon."

After many Arab states gained their independence, the colonial powers sought to bind the Arab states through numerous colonial treaties and alliances, including the Baghdad Pact and the Greater Syria scheme, and these issues relating to Saudi Arabia and its Arab positions were on the agenda of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies' discussions. In February 1945, a session of the Chamber of Deputies was held under the chairmanship of Muhammad Hasan Kubba, and during the discussion, the deputy for Baghdad, Mahmoud Ramzi, asked about the Iraqi government's political position toward those movements, as the Arab region was witnessing a major transformation, most notably the attainment of independence by most Arab states — Syria gained its independence in 1946, and Lebanon in the same year — and as a result of the changes that occurred in the world following the Second World War and the change in the world's political and military map, the need became pressing to establish Arab unity projects to strengthen Arab solidarity. The same deputy also directed a question to the Iraqi prime minister, Hamdi al-Pachachi, requesting an oral clarification of the government's position before the Chamber.

The Palestinian question had a prominent effect on Iraqi foreign policy, and this was perhaps one of the points of convergence between Iraqi and Saudi policy, as Saudi Arabia felt resentment at the increasing rate of Jewish immigration to Palestine and the extension of the Zionist danger to other Arab states, including Saudi Arabia. During the discussion of the United Nations Charter and the Statute of the International Court of Justice in the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies, in the second session held in October 1944, chaired by Deputy Muhammad Hasan Kubba, Deputy Nazif al-Shawi, deputy for the Baghdad district, expressed that position, saying: "The Palestinian question is not a simple or ordinary question but a complex, general, and intricate one, and it does not concern the Palestinian lands alone but also extends to the lands of Saudi Arabia." The same deputy considered that any change in "the population ratio in Palestine will turn the Arabs there into a minority, and this affects not only Palestine but the rights of all Arabs."

It is worth noting that in April 1945, Saudi King Abdulaziz Al Saud received a letter from American President Franklin Roosevelt in which he expressed his country's position toward the Palestinian question, assuring the Saudi King that his country would not take any step or decision regarding the political situation in Palestine without consulting the rest of the Arab states as well as the Jews. One week after sending that letter, President Roosevelt died and was succeeded by Truman. In August of that same year, Truman sent a letter to the British Prime Minister — Britain being at that time the mandatory power over Palestine — in which he supported opening the doors of Palestine wide to Jewish immigrants. Truman also supported a proposal to grant Jews one hundred thousand immigration certificates to Palestine. Truman's statements provoked Arab indignation everywhere and prompted Arab governments to submit official protest notes to the government of the United States of America. As a result of these events, a number of members of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies submitted a sharply worded protest against the statements of American President Truman, and Deputy Muhsin Abu Tubaikh asked: "Was Palestine an unknown continent that has just been discovered, that Truman wants to divide it up? Does he not know that Palestine is an Arab country?" The Iraqi Chamber of Deputies sent a memorandum to the American and British governments condemning the previous statements and Britain's failure to abide by the text of the White Paper, in addition to protesting and recalling previous British promises, and the Chamber declared its solidarity with the Palestinian people.

In the same context, Truman sent a message to Saudi King Abdulaziz requesting that he support the United Nations resolution to partition Palestine, issued in 1947. A few months before the establishment of the State of Israel, President Truman asked

King Abdulaziz to intervene to stop what he termed "the Palestinian aggression" against the Jewish minority in Palestine, in a war he considered "civil," and Truman warned that if King Abdulaziz did not do so, this could negatively affect the extraction of Saudi oil by American companies. The text of the message read: "You wish to bring this matter to my attention, and I have attended to it, and I recall the discussions that took place between us not long ago, during which I had the opportunity to form a strong impression of Your Majesty's feelings on this question. I believe you recall what I conveyed to you regarding the position of the American government on the Palestinian issue — that there will be no decision without consultation with both Arabs and Jews. You will also recall that during our last conversation I assured you that I would not take any decision that would appear hostile to the Arab people. I am pleased to renew to Your Majesty the assurances you have received concerning the position of my government and my personal position on the Palestinian question, and that my government's policy on this matter has not changed."

However, the Saudi King's reply was firm, and he said: "I am utterly astonished that your keenness to establish the falsehood of the Jews should reach the point of thinking ill of an Arab king such as myself," adding that the position he held among the Arabs was one he had attained by "adhering to the rights of Arabism and Islam, and that this decision is rejected by all Arabs." Here, Iraq's foreign policy converged with Saudi Arabia's policy toward the Palestinian question, as both states considered it the foremost Arab cause.

SECOND: THE PROBLEMS OF BORDERS, MOVEMENT, AND TRADE BETWEEN IRAQ AND SAUDI ARABIA IN LIGHT OF THE DISCUSSIONS OF THE IRAQI CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, 1946–1948

In its parliamentary sessions in 1946, the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies discussed the border disputes among the Arab countries — borders which the Chamber considered to have been drawn up by Western colonialism as a means of weakening the Arabs, dividing them, and stirring up problems among the sons of a single nation. Among these border disputes was the problem of the border between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, which was taken up in the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies, as most of its members called for the demarcation of the border between the two countries. Deputy for the Baghdad district Abd al-Majid Alawi referred to this dispute, saying: "I would like to point to certain precise matters that touch upon the external standing of the state, including the question of border demarcation. There is a border between Saudi Arabia and Iraq, but this border is recorded only on paper and has not been practically settled." The same deputy called on the Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, Tawfiq al-Suwaidi, "to make every effort to resolve the border problem with Saudi Arabia through diplomatic means, in accordance with the provisions of the Al-'Asir Agreement."

In that same session, the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies read out the draft law ratifying the Charter of the League of Arab States. Iraq and Saudi Arabia were among the Arab states that signed the founding charter of the League, alongside Syria, Jordan, Yemen, and Egypt. The League's charter had been signed in Cairo in March 1945, and the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies voted to accept the charter with the approval of 48 out of 68 members — that is, unanimously — and the single article was accepted, which stated: "His Majesty the King shall ratify the Charter of the League of Arab States between Iraq, Syria, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Egypt."

Although Iraq had joined several alliances with non-Arab regional states, such as the Sa'dabad Pact, it was at the same time keen to establish good relations with other Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia. This was reflected in the proceedings of the twenty-fourth session of the Chamber of Deputies, held on 7 June 1947, in which Iraq affirmed its keenness to establish good and strong relations with Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, as Iraqi Prime Minister Salih Jabr stated, in response to deputies' questions regarding the friendship treaties between Iraq and Turkey on the one hand, and Iraq and Saudi Arabia on the other: "Iraq has been and remains a member of the Sa'dabad Pact, and it is also a member of the treaty of Arab brotherhood and alliance concluded between Iraq and Saudi Arabia."

In addition, many sessions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies addressed matters common to Iraq and Saudi Arabia, including the pilgrimage route, in the session held on 21 June, when the deputy for Baghdad, Dhabyan al-Ghabban, asked about the caravans of pilgrims traveling to the holy places in Saudi territory, and called for attention to the roads taken by pilgrims toward Mecca and Medina. Prime Minister Salih Jabr responded to the deputy's question and demand, stating that the matter raised by Deputy al-Ghabban was of great importance to Iraqi citizens, and that he himself had contributed to preparing the road referred to by the deputy: "This road allows pilgrims to travel on it before the ruined sections are repaired, and this depends on the

approval of the government of Saudi Arabia; we will pursue this matter with the Saudi government to see whether it would be easy for pilgrims to travel on that road, since it is closer than any other route."

The discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies also paid clear attention to the issue of rising wheat prices and Saudi Arabia's role in this matter, since Iraq is geographically adjacent to Saudi Arabia, and there was ongoing trade activity between the two countries, which gave rise to talk of smuggling carried out by certain individuals — that type of illicit trade having a negative effect on the supply market in the other country. A number of Iraqi deputies then reviewed, in their discussions, the issue of rising wheat prices in Iraqi markets and its negative effect on the lives of Iraqi citizens, and attempted to investigate the matter of wheat smuggling to neighboring Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia. In the session held on 14 July 1948, the deputy for the Basra district, Hasan Abd al-Rahman, spoke on this problem, saying: "As for Saudi Arabia, there is a vast distance between us, and we cannot imagine wheat being smuggled to that kingdom from Basra because of the distance; therefore, I believe that smuggling, or the possibility of smuggling, does not exist." Thus, the deputy dismissed the information circulating in Iraqi markets that wheat prices had risen due to smuggling operations from Iraq to Saudi Arabia, which removed suspicion from Saudi Arabia in this matter. It appears to the researcher that this was the result of speculative activity in Iraq's internal commercial markets among the merchant class at that time, seeking to secure private benefits for themselves, without ruling out the possibility that behind these rumors lay political motives aimed at pressuring Saudi Arabia to align with Iraq's regional and international policy.

THIRD: IRAQ'S FOREIGN POLICY AND THE SAUDI POSITION ON IT IN LIGHT OF THE DISCUSSIONS OF THE IRAQI CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, 1950–1955

In 1950, on the occasion of the anniversary of King Faisal II's accession as King of Iraq, the King delivered a speech before the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies, as was customary in Iraq, and in that speech the King explained Iraq's domestic and foreign policy. Regarding Iraq's policy at the Arab external level, his speech stated: "Honorable Senators and Deputies, these general and specific dangers surrounding us oblige us to consult with our sister Arab states to find solutions and agreed-upon plans to address these dangers, aimed at ensuring the safety of our country and fulfilling the desires and aspirations of our Arab peoples."

Following the King's speech, the proceedings of the first session of the third regular sitting of 1950 began on 2 December, chaired by the deputy for the Kut district, Ahmad Halat. In that session, Deputy Muhammad Mishhin al-Hardan spoke, saying: "If the Western states guarantee our just demands on a basis that safeguards the interests of the country, there is no objection to dealing with whichever camp guarantees our interests." Discussions of Arab relations took place in that session. On 28 December of the same year, the third session of the Chamber of Deputies was held, chaired by Ahmad al-Amir, who held the position of First Deputy Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies. The purpose of that session was to deliberate and give opinions on what King Faisal II had said in the throne speech he delivered before the Chamber of Deputies, as well as the speech delivered by Nuri al-Said, the Iraqi prime minister at the time. The session also addressed Iraqi–Saudi relations and Saudi Arabia's relations with other states, including the United States of America. Deputy Rizouk Shammas, deputy for Baghdad, commented that he "estimates that Arab states such as Saudi Arabia maintain special relations with the United States of America, which makes the task of unifying Arab efforts a difficult matter."

Prime Minister Nuri al-Said attempted to clarify the policy and approach of the Iraqi government at the external level with regard to Arab and international affairs, and opened the floor to members of the Chamber to express their observations and proposals concerning that policy pursued by the Iraqi government and to present proposals regarding it. There was also discussion of what the Iraqi government could do in the event of the outbreak of a new world war, and whether the Iraqi government would remain neutral or side with one of the warring parties, and what measures the Iraqi government would take in such an event. Among the various proposals raised in the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies following the throne speech was that of Deputy Arkan al-Abbadi, deputy for the al-Muntafiq district, who said: "Are we neutral or participants in this war, especially since Iraq is bound by relations and friendship treaties with many Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia?" The same deputy then added: "He prays to God to spare Iraq the calamities of this war and to save humanity from its calamities."

The same deputy continued, saying that deputies had the right to ask such questions and that the Iraqi government must answer with complete candor and clarity, since Iraq was bound to sister Arab states by treaties of friendship and alliance, including the treaty of friendship and brotherhood with Saudi Arabia. Deputy al-Abbadi asked whether the Iraqi government had thought about what could be done "if war broke out, whether unilaterally or in agreement with the allied and friendly states with which

we are bound by ties of friendship and brotherhood, including Saudi Arabia — are we neutral, and who guarantees us this option? Are we belligerents? And if we are belligerents, what steps has the government taken in preparing weapons, equipment, ammunition, and supplies?"

Deputy for the Baghdad district Rizouk Shammās then spoke, explaining the importance of the Iraqi government taking a unified stance alongside other Arab governments in the event of the outbreak of a new world war, and noted that he estimated that some Arab states maintained special relations with the United States of America, citing Saudi Arabia as an example, which makes the unification of Arab efforts a difficult matter, in the deputy's words: "I wish only to speak of an important matter — the future of our country and the future of the Arab nation. Our current situation is not enviable; we cannot remain neutral, and at the same time we cannot join either of the two warring allies, so our situation is a painful one. We cannot remain neutral for several reasons... including that the Western camp led by the United States of America has not taken Iraq's interests into account, so we cannot join it, and if we join the Eastern camp we may expose ourselves to the danger of total annihilation or complete domination. Because of this painful situation in which we find ourselves, we hope that the Arab states will adopt a general and unified high policy, and if we look at the Arab states we find that each state has taken a direction that does not match the other." The deputy meant by this the position of Saudi Arabia, allied with the United States of America, which embarrassed the position of other Arab states, including Iraq, despite the latter's entry into the Western alliances mentioned earlier.

During the third regular sitting of the Chamber of Deputies in 1951, in the eighteenth session held on 1 March 1951, Deputy for the Karbala district Sa'd Umar spoke, presenting a proposal on the manner in which the Iraqi people, through their deputies, could express their sympathy with the state of the Arab Maghreb and their pain and grief over the French aggression against Marrakesh (Morocco) and how to confront that aggression. The deputy called "for a strong condemnation of the French aggression against Marrakesh." During the same meeting, Deputy for Baghdad Fa'iḳ al-Samarra'i also spoke, presenting to the deputies and the Chamber the points contained in his colleague the Karbala deputy's proposal, saying: "The proposal has two parts. The first is to cable the United Nations and the great powers, through which Iraq lodges a protest against the French aggression; the second is to cable the Arab states and the political councils in Arab countries so that those councils may urge their governments to take the necessary measures to curb the French aggression against Marrakesh." Among the measures proposed by the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies were measures of economic and political boycott. Undoubtedly, Saudi Arabia was among the Arab states referred to by Deputy al-Samarra'i.

In another session held on 5 March 1951, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Ahmad al-Amir opened the minutes of the session by reading out numerous telegrams received from a number of Arab states and from official and popular figures. Among those telegrams was one received from the Saudi commissioner, containing King Abdulaziz Al Saud's thanks to the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies and his gratitude for the national and pan-Arab positions it had expressed regarding the Marrakesh issue. The Saudi King's message also referred to the fraternal relations linking Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Telegram No. 488, dated 4 March 1951, read as follows: "His Majesty my master Abdulaziz Al Saud has honored me by instructing me to inform you that he has received your telegram containing the decision of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies to act on his behalf in condemning France's actions in Marrakesh. I present to Your Excellency and to the Chamber His Majesty's thanks and gratitude for the fine sentiment and noble zeal shown by the Chamber toward this issue. I inform you that the Saudi government is concerned with this matter in coordination with the states of the Arab League to take whatever measures the situation requires, and please accept the highest respect."

In the twenty-seventh session, held on 25 March, the Chamber of Deputies, in the course of its discussions of Iraq's foreign policy, referred to Saudi Arabia. In response to a question posed by the deputy for Baghdad, Fa'iḳ al-Samarra'i, regarding the Iraqi government's position on the meetings of the Commonwealth Conference and its resolutions — particularly what was mentioned concerning the draft defense of the Middle East (meaning by this term Saudi Arabia and other countries) — Prime Minister Nuri al-Said answered: "The states of the British Commonwealth always meet periodically to discuss matters they deem necessary to discuss." Al-Said noted in his remarks that the deputy's question in the Chamber was drawn from Reuters news agency, and said: "The term 'Middle East' and 'eastern Mediterranean' includes governments such as... Saudi Arabia, so how can they consider that Iraq alone constitutes the Middle East or the eastern Mediterranean basin?"

When the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies discussed, on 12 April, the draft law of the second amendment to the Tribal Disputes Regulation, Deputy Isam al-Rawi, deputy for the al-Dulaim district, asked in an intervention before the Chamber of Deputies

whether the tribal disputes system "existed in the days of Ottoman rule... or whether Saudi Arabia has a tribal system different from the one existing in Iraq." The deputy pointed to the necessity of abolishing that regulation, considering that its abolition would represent a step forward for Iraq's progress and prosperity.

On 17 May of the same year, the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies held its fifty-first session to discuss ratifying the general agreement on the Point Four Program, concerning technical cooperation between the United States of America and Iraq. Abd al-Wahhab Marjan, then Speaker of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies, invited the members present to give their observations on the agreement and to discuss its provisions. At the time, Iraqis' wishes tended toward not establishing close ties with Western states, particularly the United States of America, since Iraqi public opinion did not trust the policy of those states, which had previously occupied Arab countries and plundered their resources, in addition to fears that Iraq would once again be subjected to a new, undeclared form of colonialism. These fears of the Iraqi people were expressed by Deputy Fa'iq al-Samarra'i, but Prime Minister Nuri al-Said, who attended that session, attempted to reassure the members of the Chamber by pointing to Saudi Arabia's approval of that agreement, saying: "The draft law concerning this matter has been studied by other Arab governments, not only Iraq, and they have accepted it, including Saudi Arabia. I hope the honorable Chamber will accept this draft as it stands."

In the same context, a number of members of the Chamber of Deputies expressed their desire for Saudi Arabia to be a member of a unified Arab defense command, with that command responsible for protecting the independence of Arab countries and keeping Arab countries away from what were then called the Western alliances. This wish of the members of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies was voiced by the deputy for Baghdad, Tawfiq Mukhtar, through a question directed to Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Said in the twentieth session on 22 April 1953. The text of the question inquired about what had been reported on Radio Baghdad at the time — that General Muhammad Naguib, then Egyptian prime minister, would discuss the establishment of an Arab defense command in the Middle East region, with headquarters in the city of Suez, and that discussions to establish that command would take place with Lebanese President Camille Chamoun and Prince Faisal Al Saud, representing Saudi Arabia as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Their mission was defined as directing Arab policy toward the states providing military and financial aid to Arab countries in order to improve their economic conditions. The deputy's question read: "Is this command that has been discussed different from the command stipulated in the joint defense agreement among the member states of the League of Arab States, previously ratified by the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies, or what?"

On 19 May 1953, the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies, chaired by Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamali, held its twenty-ninth session, in which Iraqi Foreign Minister Tawfiq al-Suwaidi addressed the Chamber following a wave of concern and discontent that had swept the Iraqi street after statements by British Prime Minister Churchill announcing Britain's full support for the Zionists in the occupied Palestinian territories. The members of the Iraqi Chamber called on their government to strengthen its relations with other Arab countries to confront "this danger that threatens the future and present of the Arabs." Among what the Foreign Minister stated to reassure the members of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies, and through them the Iraqi public, regarding these developments, was: "Relations of brotherhood and amity between Iraq and Saudi Arabia continue in good form."

The Iraqi Foreign Minister also referred to the attendance of Saudi Crown Prince Faisal bin Abdulaziz at the coronation ceremony of King Faisal II, held on 2 May 1953, and the Iraqi Foreign Minister said: "This participation in the coronation ceremony was a factor in strengthening and reinforcing the fraternal ties between Iraq and Saudi Arabia." Thus, the nature of Iraqi–Saudi relations and the unification of their ranks regarding the Palestinian question, as well as alignment toward the Western alliances, occupied a large part of the discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies during the period 1950–1953.

On another front, the political and military developments in Syria, and the second coup carried out by Adib al-Shishakli on 29 November 1951 — in which he deposed the President of the Republic and dissolved the government and the parliament, and the Saudi commissioner in Damascus hastily left for his country to inform the Saudi King of the developments in Syria and to receive instructions from him — were discussed by the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies on 2 February 1954, during the seventeenth session, when Deputy for the Baghdad district Abd al-Karim Kanna referred to these developments in Syria and directed a question to the Iraqi government asking whether any reply had been received by the Foreign Ministry from the Iraqi chargé d'affaires in Damascus clarifying the true situation in Syria, as the Saudi minister had done when he traveled swiftly to inform his king of the true state of affairs and to receive instructions from him. The Chamber did not receive a reply from the government at that time.

In its session held on 15 February, the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies expressed the desire of the Iraqi people and their government to raise the level of diplomatic representation with Saudi Arabia to the rank of ambassador, as documented in the minutes of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies at the opening of that session. The first item on the session's minutes included a question from the Speaker of the Chamber, Abd al-Wahhab Marjan, to Prime Minister Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamali, the text of which was: "Why is diplomatic representation between Iraq and Saudi Arabia not raised to the level of an embassy?" The researcher considers this evidence of the desire of the Chamber of Deputies, the Iraqi government, and its people for close and fruitful cooperation with their brothers in other Arab countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, which is linked to Iraq by very extensive geographic, historical, social, and economic relations.

The Iraqi government's response to the Chamber of Deputies' request to raise the level of diplomatic representation between Iraq and Saudi Arabia was given by the Iraqi Foreign Minister at the time, Abdullah Bakr, who attended the aforementioned session of the Chamber of Deputies. In his address before the Chamber, the Foreign Minister reviewed Iraq's relations with Arab countries and stated that "Iraq's foreign policy is based on the principle of strengthening the bonds of brotherhood and cooperation with Arab countries, and Iraq is very keen to establish good relations with all Arab brothers, but raising the level of diplomatic representation cannot be done unilaterally or by one party alone; rather, both parties must agree on it." The Iraqi Foreign Minister confirmed "that Iraq, for its part, is ready to raise the level of diplomatic representation if agreement is reached on this."

Deputy for Basra Abd al-Razzaq al-Hamoud commented on the Foreign Minister's response to the deputies' questions and their request to raise the level of diplomatic representation with Saudi Arabia to the level of ambassador, saying: "Diplomatic representation indicates the extent of a state's interest in the states with which it has representation, and the higher the level of representation, the more it demonstrates the state's interest in other states." The same deputy expressed surprise at the Foreign Minister's statement that the exchange and elevation of diplomatic representation would result from negotiations between the two parties or mutual understanding, and said it was necessary for Iraq to take the initiative in strengthening its relations with Saudi Arabia, and also asked: "Why should Iraq not be the one to initiate the request to raise the level of diplomatic representation?" In the same session, the visit of Iraqi Prime Minister Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamali to Jordan was also part of the discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies. That visit aimed to strengthen relations between the two countries and the Hashemite leaderships in both. Some Iraqi deputies at the time asked whether that visit was merely to strengthen relations between the two Hashemite families in Iraq and Jordan, or whether the reason was related to the meeting held between the King of Jordan and the King of Saudi Arabia in the period preceding the visit of the Iraqi Prime Minister to Jordan. Deputy for Baghdad Abd al-Karim Kanna asked, addressing the Iraqi government, whether that visit to Jordan "was related to the meeting of the Saudi King with the Jordanian King, or whether it was related to his invitation to the union called for by the League of Arab States."

Following this, the government submitted the draft constitution of the Arab Union for discussion and approval, and the Chamber of Deputies ratified that draft unanimously, with 142 members present. Nuri al-Said's government remained the first ministry of the Arab Union in power for about two months, ending with the fall of the monarchy in Iraq in 1958.

On another front, the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies discussed the Iraqi-Turkish Pact and Saudi Arabia's position on it, in the session held on 6 February 1955, convened to discuss the political situation in the region, especially since Iraq was, during that period, a focal point of numerous Arab and international political movements — particularly after Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes made an official visit to Iraq and concluded a cooperation pact between Turkey and the Iraqi government led by Nuri al-Said on 24 February 1955. Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamali, who was a deputy in the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies for the al-Diwaniyah district, was assigned to visit Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, and Iraq also participated with an official delegation in a meeting of Arab governments. There were various views among those present at the Cairo meeting regarding Iraq's move toward Turkey. The Saudi position was expressed by Prince Faisal bin Abdulaziz, Saudi Prime Minister, who said: "The matter is simple; why did they not inform Saudi Arabia of this beforehand?" — while Gamal Abdel Nasser, head of the Egyptian delegation, accused Iraq of "seeking to divide the Arabs."

Thus we find that there was Arab opposition to Iraqi-Turkish cooperation, particularly from Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and some members of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies declared their support for the agreement and criticized the Arab governments that opposed it, especially since some of the states that opposed the Iraqi-Turkish agreement had cooperative relations with other foreign states and also had foreign military bases on their territory, including Saudi Arabia. Among these deputies was

Muhammad Mishhin al-Hardan, deputy for the al-Dulaim district, who, in the same session, defended Iraq's policy of establishing relations with other states, particularly those relations aimed at ensuring Iraq's independence and sovereignty. Among what the aforementioned deputy said regarding Saudi Arabia's position on the Iraqi–Turkish cooperation pact: "Saudi Arabia proceeded to conclude the Dhahran Airfield agreement in 1951 and gave it to the United States of America, and no one among the other Arab countries spoke about this matter, so why is there talk about Iraq's agreement with Turkey? It is Iraq's right to conclude agreements that secure its interests."

Among the deputies who declared their support for the Iraqi–Turkish agreement was the deputy for the Baghdad district, Sadiq al-Bassam, who said in his address: "Saudi Arabia concluded an agreement with America, and American military bases are present on Arab borders, and the statement of the Saudi Prime Minister at the Cairo meeting, when the Iraqi delegation asked him about the Dhahran Airfield matter and its being given to America — that he could take back the airfield at any hour — is a statement that contradicts the military agreement concluded between Saudi Arabia and the American government."

Saudi Arabia and Egypt led the Arab opposition to the Iraqi–Turkish agreement, and the discussions of the Chamber of Deputies regarding this Arab opposition continued. On 14 February 1955, the twenty-third session of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies was held, in which some deputies, including the deputy for Kirkuk, Mahmoud Baban, commented on the positions of Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, regarding the Iraqi–Turkish agreement, saying: "Gentlemen, Saudi Arabia, I believe, despite all this indignation and clamor, agreed to America's establishment of a land, sea, and air military base on its territory." He was supported in this by the deputy for Kut, Abd al-Aziz al-Khayyat, who said: "The agreement was made to unify the bonds among Arab countries."

Iraqi–Saudi relations witnessed extensive discussion in the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies after the conclusion of the Baghdad Pact during that stage, as Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Said pursued a policy of alliance with the Western states, believing this to be important for protecting Iraq from external dangers and helping it resolve its social and economic problems, which led to Iraq's move toward joining the Baghdad Pact in 1955. This Iraqi orientation was opposed by Saudi Arabia, along with both Egypt and Syria, but the Iraqi Prime Minister praised the pact and called on other Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, to join it, noting that the United States of America might "soon" join the pact.

In the session of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies on 26 February 1955, Prime Minister Nuri al-Said explained that Article Five of the pact showed that accession to it was open to Arab states wishing to join, and that Iraq would establish its relations with Britain on the basis of the pact, and that the 1930 treaty with Britain had been abrogated, and that relations between the United States of America and Saudi Arabia might allow the former to join the pact. A number of deputies expressed their support for Iraq's accession to the Baghdad Pact, including the deputy for al-Diwaniyah, Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamali, who held the view that the pact would contribute to consolidating the independence of Iraq and the other Arab states that had joined it, and he appealed to officials in Saudi Arabia to join the pact, which would enhance the standing of the Arabs on the international stage, saying: "We address a call to our brothers in Saudi Arabia and say to them: this is the way, so walk with us, and let no oppressors wrong you."

Thus, the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies took important positions on Arab and international issues, as the deputies' discussions had a clear effect in pressuring the Iraqi governments to adopt a policy supporting Arab causes, especially in Palestine and Marrakesh (Morocco), in addition to refraining from interfering in Syria's internal affairs. On the other hand, the members of the Chamber of Deputies were divided between those who supported the policy of the Iraqi governments of allying with the great powers, particularly the United States of America, and their acceptance of the Truman principle (Point Four), which also received Saudi approval, and deputies who urged the Iraqi government to avoid disputes with Saudi Arabia, particularly regarding its position on the Baghdad Pact and its repercussions on the Arab region in general and Saudi Arabia in particular.

CONCLUSION

Saudi Arabia occupied a considerable share of the discussions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies in various economic and political fields during the period 1945–1955. A number of deputies in the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies praised the efforts of the Iraqi government to establish good relations between Iraq and Saudi Arabia and its keenness to consult with it on many issues and matters of concern to the Arabs as a whole, including the Palestinian question and standing alongside the Arab brothers in the Arab Maghreb against French occupation, and the importance of establishing Arab cooperation in confronting emergent issues.

The discussions also addressed Saudi Arabia's relations with the Western states and the impact of this on its relations with Iraq, including the convening of the San Francisco Conference in the United States of America, in which the governments of Saudi Arabia and Iraq both participated. The Iraqi Chamber of Deputies was also concerned with the independence gained by many Arab states, and the efforts of colonial powers to bind the Arab states through numerous colonial treaties and alliances, including the Baghdad Pact and the Greater Syria scheme — issues related to Saudi Arabia and its Arab positions — and the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies' discussions in 1945 showed that the need was pressing to establish Arab unity projects to strengthen Arab solidarity.

It is worth noting the Chamber of Deputies' discussion of Saudi King Abdulaziz Al Saud's rejection of the policy of American President Franklin Roosevelt toward the Palestinian question — the same policy continuing under his successor Truman, particularly regarding the granting of a national homeland to the Jews in Palestine — and Iraq's foreign policy converged with Saudi Arabia's policy toward the Palestinian question, as both states considered it the foremost Arab cause.

The Iraqi Chamber of Deputies also discussed, in its parliamentary sessions in 1946, the border disputes between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, with most of its members calling for the demarcation of the border between the two countries and the resolution of the problem through diplomatic means. Iraq was among those encouraging Saudi Arabia's accession to the Charter of the Arab League. In addition, many sessions of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies addressed matters common to Iraq and Saudi Arabia, including the pilgrimage route to the holy places in Saudi territory, the issue of rising wheat prices in Iraq and Saudi Arabia's role in this matter, and the encouragement of trade activity between the two countries and the combating of smuggling.

After 1950, the discussions of the Chamber of Deputies turned to Iraqi–Saudi relations and their relations with other states, including the United States of America, and Prime Minister Nuri al-Said's attempt to clarify the policy and approach of the Iraqi government at the external level regarding Arab and international affairs, and the deputies' sympathy with the state of the Arab Maghreb over French aggression against Marrakesh (Morocco) and how to confront that aggression, through cabling the United Nations and the great powers in protest against the French aggression, as well as cabling the Arab states to take the necessary measures to curb the French aggression against Marrakesh. Among the measures proposed by the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies were economic and political boycott measures.

During its discussions of Iraq's foreign policy in 1951, the Chamber of Deputies also referred to the Iraqi government's position on the meetings of the Commonwealth Conference and its resolutions, particularly what was mentioned regarding the draft defense of the Middle East, which included Saudi Arabia, in addition to discussing the ratification of the general agreement on the Point Four Program concerning technical cooperation between the United States of America and Iraq, and Saudi Arabia's approval of that agreement.

The Iraqi Chamber of Deputies expressed the desire of the Iraqi people and their government to raise the level of diplomatic representation with Saudi Arabia to the rank of ambassador, and the desire of the Chamber of Deputies, the Iraqi government, and its people for close and fruitful cooperation with their brothers in Saudi Arabia, which is linked to Iraq by very extensive geographic, historical, social, and economic relations. A number of members of the Chamber of Deputies also expressed their desire for Saudi Arabia to be a member of a unified Arab defense command, responsible for protecting the independence of Arab countries and keeping Arab countries away from what were then called the Western alliances. On another front, the political and military developments in Syria and the second coup carried out by Adib al-Shishakli in 1951, and the position of the Saudi government on them, were among the priorities discussed by the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies.

On another front, the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies discussed the Iraqi–Turkish Pact and Saudi Arabia's position on it in 1955, as the Saudi position rejected the pact, while some members of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies declared their support for the agreement and criticized the Arab governments that opposed it, particularly Saudi Arabia, which had concluded an agreement in 1951 with the United States of America.

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