

## American strategy towards Iraq in Obama's second term between fixed and variable (2013-2016)

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**Abstract:** The Obama administration repeated that its promise to withdraw from Iraq on time was one of its most important achievements in the first presidential term. In fact, this withdrawal was within a broader and broader context that began to emerge in Obama's second term: withdrawal from the Middle East, In the so-called Asia "Rebalance", but the growing international chaos and the explosion of many crises in the face of the US administration such as the Syrian crisis and Iraq, especially after the so-called Arab Spring revolutions, cast a shadow over the region, and turning Iraq from the success story of the Obama administration and a benchmark for its achievements in foreign policy, a story Failure and a standard of confusion in foreign policy, and critics of the Obama administration, the American withdrawal "arbitrary" created a vacuum in Iraq filled by the opponents of the United States and lose control, or at least affect the course of the arena, both at the level of local players or regional.

**Key words:** Obama, US administration, American strategy, Syrian crisis and Iraq,

### The importance of the subject

President Barak Obama's winning a second presidential term in the United States of America represents an opportunity to raise a question on the limits of continuity and change in his strategy towards Iraq. There is no doubt that president Obama's first presidential term witnesses important changes in his strategy in the United States towards Iraq. The most import of such changes is the American withdrawal from Iraq according to a timetable laid down by president Obama within certain phases. This withdrawal leads to many repercussions which resulted in the fact that Obama revisited his strategy in Iraq during his second presidential term [1, 2].

Therefore, the main question of the study is raised: what are the limits of change in the American strategy towards Iraq and its different issues in Obama's second presidential term? What are the aspects of continuity in that strategy?

This main question has many sub-questions:

1-Is the American withdrawal from Iraq a part of a more comprehensive withdrawal of the United States from the Middle East or is it related to the very Iraqi status?

2-Is Obama's Administration serious to apply democracy in Iraq during Obama's second presidential term or the retreating of this option before other options more realistic in

relation to the issues of terrorism and security?

3-What is the attitude of Obama's Administration towards Iran and the reflection of such attitude to Iraq?

Therefore, we will try to show the most important changes and to what extent they are continued and changed in Obama's second presidency through three titles: U. S disengagement from Middle East, its topic is democracy and to what extent the U. S. Administration is committed to apply it in Iraq and, finally, the stance of the U. S. Administration in Iran and its reflections on Iraq.

### **First: Disengagement from Iraq as part of the disengagement in the Middle East:**

By the time Barack Obama came to office in January 2009, the Middle East had a priority in his foreign policy and announced his intention to adopt an active policy on Middle East issues. In the first weeks of his term as President, he set a timetable for the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq and appointed a negotiator In order to seek a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to open a new page with the Muslim world. He then sought to adopt policies that support the aspirations of the peoples of the region and raise the US commitment to send troops to Afghanistan. , Obama extends his hand to Iran in a presidential message on the occasion of Christmas Day including explicit mentioning Islamic Republic of Iran [3].

In fact, these policies were not the beginning of the gradual withdrawal from the Middle East, for several reasons:

1. This region in the world is no longer attractive for U. S. decision makers as they

used to. The region is no longer having the relative importance which it had in the past in relation to U. S policy as a result of the tremendous discoveries of rock oil in the United States. It leads to the fact that the United States will reach self- sufficiency of energy in the close future. Consequently, there is no need for oil imports from abroad especially from the Middle [1] East Therefore, the decrease of the need of the United States for the oil of the region becomes having an effect on the level of attention and relation to the region.

2. The withdrawal of the United States from the Middle East under Obama was also a reflection of the attitudes of American public opinion is no longer enthusiastic about US intervention in the region, or excessive activity, as a result of the economic and human price paid by the United States in the invasion and occupation of Iraq. In addition, Obama and many US policymakers are convinced that the ability of the United States to influence the Middle East has become limited and unwelcome by the majority of the political forces in this region, especially in the post-Arab spring period. Of skepticism and lack of credibility. That is, there is a US recognition of the limited role it can play in the region, and not welcome, and therefore some American government circles reached realistic convictions, that there is no need to play such a role [4].

3. Finally, it cannot separate between Obama's Administration orientation to limit its association to the Middle East and its seeking, in consideration, to increase attention to the Asian Continent, which many analysts consider behind decreasing the interest of the U.S.A in the Middle East and its eastern orientation to Asia as a result of the increasing importance of the South and South East of Asia in the global economy [5].

In January 2012, an important strategic document issued from the White House on the change of the priorities of the United States of America from the Middle East and Europe to the area of the Pacific Basin and Asia. Consequently, the American attention of the Middle East witnesses a retreat especially in the second term of president Obama Administration. In contrary, the American interest in the Asian Continent increases whether for participation in the fruits of growth in such economically promising continent or for confronting the rise of the Chinese strategic influence in Asia. The Chinese influence threatens the American existence in the Asian continent and becomes the main source of threat for the United States of America. Therefore, we become before what is known as the strategy of “rebalance to Asia and Pacific Area [6].

On the other hand, the United States redefined its role and engagement in the Middle East in the form of a new strategy in fear of the economic and military consequences of direct engagement in the region and the rejection of American public opinion of this engagement [7].

The administration of President Barack Obama implements a plan for the restructure of the American role in the Middle East in the context of the transformation from the Middle East to the Pacific Basin and Asia in two phases. The first phase is within the first term from 2008 till 2012. The second phase is during the second presidential term from 2012 – 2016 of which the nuclear agreement with Iran is [8].

The analysis of the American treatment with the Middle East during the two phases reveals general features and directions of such change. They can be shown in the following aspects [9].

**1. The First Stage:** President Obama starts his first term by trials to bridge the gap between the United States and Islamic world especially the Middle East. This orientation, if highlighted, in Obama’s historic address at Cairo University in 2009 and the campaign of general relations made by the American Administration to communicate with the peoples of the Middle East in addition to steps taken on the course of ending the American involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan through gradual withdrawal and the plans of Obama to close Guantanamo detention camp which is not completed up till now. In addition to this, it is adopted the techniques and tools of the direct military non-engagement in confrontation of terrorism in the region, basically depending on Unmanned Aerial War and intensification of intelligence and security dealing with the countries of the region [10].

**2. Second Stage:** this stage is related to Obama’s Administration seeking to make structural adapting to the change of strategic environment in the Middle East as a result of Arab revolutions which many Arab countries witnessed. These protests lead to the collapse of the national state in a number of states in the region and the rise of transnational terror movements.

Therefore, Obama’s administration re-phrased its dealing with the crises and issues of the Middle East in the framework of a comprehensive vision associated to avoiding engagement in new wars, trying to push the region’s states to deal with their crises directly, decreasing depending on the American role in addition to adopting a different dealing strategy with [11].

With regard to Iraq, the Obama administration in its second term has shown little interest in the Iraqi situation and as part of the decline in US public interest in the region,

Throughout the years of the rule of Nuri al-Maliki, the Obama administration has been silent about its sectarian practices and the corruption that has shaped its rule. President Obama has been limited to withdrawing from Iraq and getting rid of the heavy legacy of the Bush administration. In this context, the Obama administration has supported the survival of al-Maliki for a second term (2010-2014), although the results have yielded little progress to the Iraqi List led by the Prime Minister Former Iyad Allawi on a coalition of state law headed by al-Maliki, on the pretext that he could not be able to form a majority government [12].

The administration decided to continue its non-interference approach to Iraq's internal political affairs, but failed to find an alternative to the US military presence there with a solid set of civil, economic and other partnerships to maintain US influence in the face of the influence of regional powers that have begun to expand within Iraq. Obama even authorized his deputy, John Biden, to run the Iraqi file on his behalf, which in turn did little to restrain Maliki, but began to derail initial political deals between Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds within the federal Iraq. Obama's mistake was not only a military withdrawal from Iraq, but also a decline in diplomatic momentum and influence, which, if properly used to make the collapse of Iraq's political experience less likely [13].

Not only have that, but the Obama administration sought to employ the success of the withdrawal scenario from Iraq to justify its decision to withdraw its combat troops from Afghanistan. The administration responded to the criticisms it accuses of rushing to withdraw from Iraq and Afghanistan, leading to a vacuum that Iran, the Taliban and al-Qaeda and its affiliated organizations would complete. The withdrawal is not a change in the rules of

engagement. Instead of direct military involvement, The "Obama Doctrine" [2]. in foreign policy is based on special operations, drone attacks, as well as advising, training and arming the army and local security forces in the countries concerned [13].

The United States has maintained a certain amount of interest in Iraq for two reasons: First, oil. Despite the decline in the US need to import oil, it will remain keen on the continued flow of Iraqi oil to its allies at moderate prices because any tremors affect production or the export of Iraqi oil will lead to a rise in the price of oil in world markets. The other reason is the moral responsibility of the United States of America resulting from its occupation of Iraq in 2003, and its responsibility to maintain the political system it created [14].

The development of the situation in Iraq has led to the rise of extremist organizations and its president to organize a "preacher" as the Sunnis to detail, put the "principle of Obama" in front of a serious test, the US training does not benefit the Iraqi army,

However, Obama's Administration conclusively announced that it was not drawn in new military engagement in Iraq especially under an opposed American public opinion, but Obama's Administration found itself in critical situation which does not allow to condone strengthening the grip of ISIS on a wide area of Iraqi lands which represented threatening to its interests in the region in addition to the threat which was represented to the interests and security of its allies especially Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Kurds, and Turkey. America returned to Iraqi arena. The United States regained its influence and power, which it lost when withdrew in late 2011. This regaining which is resulted from the fact that ISIS controls wide parts of

countries after 9 June, 2014 [15], made all political aspiring and in need to American support to confront ISIS. Iraqi government can support America to regain the initiative to confront ISIS and Kurdish leaders which is supported by America to stop ISIS extension to Kurdistan and Sunnis who are aspiring that the American pressure contributes to correct the path of the government in Baghdad. Iran aspires that the confrontation of the United States with ISIS contributes to save it from having to wage war of attrition on ISIS on a wide area extending from Iraqi – Iranian borders to Lebanese-Syrian borders, Arab countries and Turkey which aspires that the American support contributes to stop the extension of ISIS bomb to the whole region.

Therefore, this collective need was the access that enabled the United States exceptionally to restore the source of its power which in its role enabled it even in imposing its perceptions on the formation of Iraqi government after 2014 elections on Iran on the one [16]. On the other hand, president Obama launched a comprehensive strategy including air attacks against the sites and fortresses of ISIS, supporting and enhancing Iraqi Special Forces, sending American military advisers to provide aid and consultations to Iraqi government and accelerating delivering weapons and equipment on which it was previously contracted between Baghdad and Washington. The U. S. strategy included also cooperation with international and regional allies to form an international alliance to take political and military actions against ISIS which Obama called “long-term campaign” to defeat this organization [17]. It was remarkable that Obama’s language changed from diplomatic language focusing on opening a new page in the relation with Islamic world which he started in his first presidential term as he said in his address in Cairo in June, 2009 to the

language of war and threat with launching a war against ISIS which prompted the U. S. media and many political analysts to make comparisons showing the similarities of words of Obama’s speech and words of speech of his ancestor Bush. Obama and his supporters do not like these comparisons [18].

Obama tried to convince the world that the war declared on ISIS was a necessary and not optional war as the war launched by his ancestor Bush the son on Iraq on 2003 and the sole goal of this war is to combat global terrorism. Because the war against ISIS may continue for long years, it is necessary to combine all international efforts to confront this terrorism.

## **Second: the position of the Iraqi political process.**

In its first term, the Obama administration took a stand against the ideas of its predecessor, George W. Bush, on promoting democracy and regime change in the Middle East. Obama did not prioritize the issue or make it a condition for developing its relationship with the region [19].

We have explained how he overlooked the survival of al-Maliki in the post of prime minister after the 2010 elections, although the results resulted in a slight progress of the Iraqi List led by former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, a coalition of state law headed by al-Maliki, on the pretext that he could not form Allawi Majority government [12].

However the events of the so-called Arab Spring in 2011 led to a shift in the Obama administration's position on the issue of democracy in the Middle East. It supported the demonstrations calling for change in the Arab countries and demanded that its allies give up the government, as happened with the

two presidents: Ben Ali in Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt [4].

Barack Obama is above all a pragmatist who does not accept the attempt to develop or implement a broad vision for a region like the Middle East, and for this, he adopted patterns of clear disparities and a changing approach to each case according to the situation. Tunisia and Egypt. At the same time, it is more inclined to maintain the current situation, especially in the case of conservative monarchies. From this point of view, Obama has taken his stand towards events in Iraq during that period.

As from February, 2011, Iraq witnessed a number of protests in Tehran Area in the center of Baghdad to mend the political process after it had reached a blind alley. Some considered that they were from the most tremendous protests since America occupied Iraq in 2003, affected by revolutions broken out in a number of Arab countries which succeeded in toppling the ruling elites peacefully as it was in Tunisia and Egypt, or by a civil war and a foreign military action as is the case in Libya, or by the intervention of a third party as is the case in Yemen.

At the end of 2012, these protests were renewed with the detention of Iraqi Minister of Finance then, Rafee Al- Eisawi, a leader in the Iraqi list, to the extent that they issue an arrest warrant accusing him of terrorism prompting such group of tribes and Iraqi Sunni powers to organize revolutions and protests in governorates of Sunni majority in the west, north, and middle beginning from Anbar governorate. The continuation of these revolutions is related to the effects of progress made by Sunni powers in Syria which clearly appeared that the balance of powers of them and Assad's regime began to tend to them. In 2013, these protests reached their climatic point when Iraqi government, leaded by Nouri

Al- Maliki, exercised violence to end the clashes which resulted in Fallujah accident on 25 January, 2013. It led to the killing of seven persons because the army shot the protesters during performing Friday prayer [20].

On the other hand, Mr. Al- Maliki sought to distort revolutions when he warned in his declaration of the conspiracies of regional intelligence and remains of the previous regime and Qaeda Organization to drag the army to confront the protesters. On the third hand, Al- Maliki resorted to distance himself from responsibility of Iraqi Council of Representatives for meeting protesters' demands. Also, he formed a ministerial committee comprised of seven ministers headed by Hussein Al- Shahrstani, dupty prime minister, to discuss the demands of protesters [21].

The Obama administration's position came from those protests and demonstrations, contrary to its support for the so-called Arab Spring revolutions. It continued to support Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and ignored his exclusionary policies and his rejection of the protesters' demands. The Obama administration's refusal to support the "moderate rebels" in Syria against Bashar al-Assad's regime allowed the organization to "expand" into Syria and then move to Iraq. The Obama administration therefore found it in its interest to support al-Maliki and the Iraqi army and security forces to counter any protests for fear of a resurgence in Iraq after its achievements on Syrian soil. Especially, after he began to be reluctant due to some members holding extreme slogans in these Iraqi protests. Therefore, Obama's Administration hoped that Al- Maliki's forces could defeat this organization. Therefore, it would be the best answer to the critics of Obama's administration and evidence that "Obama's Principle" in the foreign policy is still operative especially in its part that is

related to supporting, arming and consulting allies without need to intervene directly [22].

In return for supporting Maliki politically and militarily, the Obama administration has repeatedly asked him to open up to his Arab and Kurdish political opponents, even within his Shiite coalition, and make changes in favor of the political process, but Maliki continued to stubbornly and refused to provide any goodwill gestures towards the formation Consensus Government [23].

### Shift in Obama's position

Many factors played a role transforming the attitude of Obama's Administration towards these events that Iraq witnessed. After turning the blind eye to Al-Maliki, his policy and ignoring popular protests, Obama's Administration found itself in a dangerous trouble represented in a sudden progress of ISIS forces and Sunni clans allied with ISIS at the outset of June, 2014. ISIS forces defeated Iraqi forces and controlled Masul, cities and small towns in the north west of Iraq. ISIS forces unified themselves in Syrian and Iraqi regions on both sides of the border to be under their control. They approached Jordanian and Saudi borders and increased risks of their marching towards Baghdad which they controlled and declared it "Islamic Caliphate".

It was clear that years of marginalization, repression and targeting of Sunni Arabs had created a favorable environment in their ranks to accept a "push" at the expense of the sectarian system established by Maliki and the sectarian army he is sponsoring. Thus, Maliki, who closed the ways to keep any US force on Iraqi soil in late 2011, found himself pleading this time to US military support to confront the march of

"da'ash" and the Sunni clans. This was followed by granting US forces the judicial immunity he rejected years ago. However, Maliki's move came too late. The issue seemed more than just providing US military or air support. It was related to his authoritarian and authoritarian rule [24].

It is the matter which made Obama's Administration this time to make any military assignment to Al- Maliki as a first step to form a participatory consensus government that does not exclude anyone especially Sunni Arabs and Kurds. The matter reached to ask Al- Maliki to step down. The lateness of the American military intervention aimed at exercising pressure on Al- Maliki to accept such expanded format or to go out of the whole political scene and replace another character which is less attractive from inside the ruling Shiite coalition. In spite of the fact that Shiite National Alliance (which the block of state law led by Al- Maliki is considered its biggest constituents in Iraqi parliamentary elections in April, 2014) received a thin majority which did not enable him to form the government severally, Al- Maliki, was not able to form a government till the day of the declaration of his withdrawal as a candidate for prime minister. It is because Sunni and Kurds refused to work with him owing to his policies of exclusion against them and because many constitutes of Shiite alliance itself rejected the very Al- Maliki because he marginalized them in the past [23].

President Obama considered the political system based on democracy and broad participation In the presence of a comprehensive government that includes all sectors of the people is the main guarantee to solve the problems of countries such as Iraq, which suffered and suffers from infighting and internal conflicts. In addition that the exclusion of any major party or component from contributing to the political process

would threaten the security and future of those countries [25].

The US is convinced that Maliki's departure is a condition to address the root causes of the crisis in Iraq. The broader base of Sunni insurgents is not a "preacher." They are Sunni tribal fighters who have rebelled against sectarianism and secessionism and are no longer tolerated. Many of the Sunni tribal rebels were awakening fighters who helped the United States defeat Al-Qaeda in 2006-2007, and Maliki refused to integrate them into the Iraqi army and security forces [26].

Thus, the US military intervention in favor of the Maliki government would appear to be standing with the Shiites and Iran against the Sunnis and America's allies in the region, especially Saudi Arabia resentful of Maliki and his Iranian patron. Obama said in an interview with The New York Times that he would not accept US fighter jets to become an air force for the Shiite government. He also stressed that Iran must understand that seeking absolute control over Iraq through its Shi'ite ally would have adverse consequences [27].

With the pressure on Maliki in particular, especially by the religious authority, and externally by Washington as well as Tehran, which lifted the cover by blessing Haidar Abadi to prime minister, was finally forced to announce the waiver of the installation of a third mandate. Thus, Maliki's paper has folded America in coordination with Iran, which some officials confirmed that the consensus on Abadi came after US-Iranian talks.

### **Third: the position of Iran and its implications on Iraq:**

Obama at the beginning of his first presidency adopted the policy of openness to

Iran, and defended the policy of engagement or diplomatic option with them, and explained that diplomacy with Iran could serve US interests better than sanctions, and that these sanctions succeeded in bringing Iran to the negotiating table, Iran's nuclear program has been reduced, but it has expanded under sanctions. The use of the military option in dealing with Iran will have devastating consequences in the Middle East region and therefore, the diplomatic option is best to deal with Iran [28].

In addition, began a series of political rapprochement with her in the message of congratulations on the "Nawruz" directed by Obama to the Iranian people and his leadership, and was in the background of his thinking to seek a tangible convergence with Iran. This was followed by personal messages exchanged between Obama and Supreme Leader Khamenei in 2009, and secret bilateral negotiations before Hassan Rohani's election in Iran in the spring of 2013 [29].

With Obama's second presidential term, negotiations were changed gradually to bilateral negotiations between Washington and Tehran and culminated at the end by concluding a comprehensive agreement on Iranian Nuclear Program in October, 2015. President Obama personally explained his idea that the Nuclear Agreement is part of security arrangement in the region. He considered this agreement the "Arc Center" and main focus of his regional policy. It has become variable on which is difficult to jump in the regional U. S. approach for the balance of power in the region [30].

Obama's second Administration is characterized by transforming from the stage of quiet diplomacy to the stage of cooperation declared with Tehran especially in relation to Iraqi and Syrian issues. U. S-- Iranian relations had a strong boost when Hassan Rohani was



presided over on third of August, 2013. He started his era with an initiative to rapprochement with Washington. The U. S. President, Barack Obama, responded to this initiative by sending a friendly message to his Iranian counterpart followed by another letter to Rohani asking him to make a written commitment in which he declared that his state was not desirous to produce nuclear weapons in preparation for direct negotiations and achieving a breakthrough in bilateral relations between the two countries. On 20 April, 2014, following such correspondence Washington Institute's study said that there was a transformation in the U. S. attitudes towards the evaluation of the Iranian role in the region. The study noted that there were new orientations of the White House to formulating a comprehensive security strategy for the region in understanding with Iran [31].

Lessons learned from the history of US policy in the Middle East indicate that behind every US coalition or agreement related to any of the region's files is a hidden agenda that is often directed against Arab interests.

In this context, Obama ridiculed all his efforts and possibilities in Iraq to conclude a nuclear agreement with Iran. The head of the Iraqi opposition office in Washington during the occupation of Iraq, Intifad Qanbar, which was considered the right arm of Ahmed Chalabi, the godfather of the US occupation of Iraq, "When the agreement was signed With the Obama administration, there were two secret agreements Janabitan did not announce to the American people and the world on the coordination of US - Iranian inside Iraq, which means that the Obama administration has given Iraq to Iran on a plate of gold, "in order to achieve that agreement [32].

In fact, Iran does not trigger crises in the region, but exploits its crises in managing

its foreign relations. It is "ingenious" in using "soft power" to manage regional conflicts. It may have benefited from the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003, respectively, and directed its results and results to serve their interests in the region.

Iran does not seek nuclear weapons, if it seeks to possess them, for use in any possible military battle. This is not an end in itself, but an instrument to maximize its influence in the region and to entice the West to recognize the Iranian regime as a regional force in its geographical environment [33]. The political system in Iran has obtained western approval after the nuclear agreement, to shake it or remove it. The Obama administration has realized that the regional files, especially the Iraqi file, which is considered the "crown jewel" in the Iranian project and the Syrian file, which is the sole guarantor of this Dora, are more important to Iran than its nuclear program. The relations between Iran and the West will undoubtedly influence these two countries over the Iranian nuclear file in the future [34].

The rise of ISIS Organization and controlling wide areas in Iraq and Syria pointed to American- Iranian rapprochement to mutual and indirect intelligence and logistic coordination in Iraq in spite of the exclusion of Tehran starting from the international coalition against ISIS Organization under the need of its influence on the parties of the Iraqi political equation towards unifying its efforts against ISIS due to the failure of the U. S. Air Force alone to defeat ISIS and the refusal of sending ground military forces there in addition to Washington's concerns about its military consultants in Iraq due to any potential tension with Iran that adversely affected them [35].

American- Iranian cooperation has started to take political, security and military dimensions since 2014. Politically, removing Al- Maliki from the political process and forming a new Iraqi government expressing better about the closes of Iraqi people. It was necessary for the American side to communicate with the Iranian side which has clear effect on Iraqi political arena, that is, the American recognition of Iran as a main player in the issue and area's affairs [36].

Security and military, in March 2015, Frederick Hoof, who is, previously, in charge of the Syrian file in the U. S. Department of State, leaked details on a series of secret American- Iranian meetings held in the past months to discuss the Iranian role in confrontation of mutual security risks between Washington and Tehran. Hoof spoke about the importance of the fifth round in the past February. The two parties agreed to evaluate risks that the region might confront if the Syrian regime collapsed.

Hoof's leakages coincided with the emergence of Iraqi militias of Hezbollah associated to Iranian Quds Force in video clips supplied with American heavy weapons and equipment including M1 Abrams tanks, Mm3 troop carriers, Hurnvees, and Mine- Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles MRAP in light of news that Shiite militias obtained American weapons like Aseib Al- Haq, Badr Organization and Promised Day Brigade which carries out hostilities in Iraq and Syria under the supervision of Major General, Qasaem Soliman, the commander of the Quds Force.

The website of Bloomberg published dangerous information that weapons, which had been sent by the American Administration to Iraqi army, went to the hands of militias associated to Iran. According to a top official in the American Administration, the website said" the U. S. Administration realized that the

recently formed bridges in Iraqi army were composed of militias working under the control of the Iranian Quds Force, but they turned a blind eye to that, Senator John McCain asserted that the U. S. army was aware that Iraqi leadership had delivered militias associated to Iran many equipment and weapons shipped by Washington to Iraqi army. It is because they believe that Iraqi will needs a long time and hard exercise to reach the level of combat readiness although the factor of time did not help to do that.

It is evident that the U. S. attitude represented in Barack Obama's Administration is no longer hide its appreciation to Iran's firmness against wars and pressures which the West was behind them, building a state in spite of embargo imposed on it, its success in its adaptation to the result of Gulf war against it and its acceptance to work with the U. S. Administration in the fields in which the interests intercept (Afghanistan, Iraq, war on terrorism). Therefore, president Obama's readiness to allow Iran to transform to be a very successful regional power if it reaches a long- term agreement on the nuclear file with the West [36].

Obama expresses "we experienced everything with Tehran. We become having two choices: war or agreement. We choose agreement. It was reached to this agreement after more than three decades of difficult negotiations and trials to control Iranian regime and become before new variable and approach for the region according to Obama's vision. It means that the U. S. A. allows Iran to stabilize its influence in Iraq and its surroundings, enable Iran to play a main role in the political settlement in Iraq and Syria, and enable Iran to divide the influence with Turkey as it is the other face of political Islam [30].

## Conclusion

We conclude from the above that the limits of continuity and change in Obama's strategy in his second presidential term show much continuity with some change from the first presidential term as a result of circumstances and developments during his second presidency. In relation to disengagement in Iraq, Obama showed a limited attention to Iraqi status which is part of the retreat of the general U. S. interest in the Middle East. Obama was interested in the withdrawal from Iraq and getting rid of the heavy legacy left by his ancestor Bush the son, but the developments of the situation in Iraq and the rise of extreme organizations and on top of them is ISIS Organization helped the U. S. A. to come back to Iraqi arena without direct intervention. In relation to the attitude towards the political process in Iraq, Obama's Administration gave the topic of combating terrorism and issues of strategic and security the utmost importance at the expense of the political process and its requirements from the balances across consensual democracy which ruled Iraq since 2003. Therefore, this administration went back to adopt a realistic approach in dealing with Iraqi issues. Obama's administration continued its policy of opening up to Iran which it started in the first presidential term and culminated it by the nuclear agreement which Obama considered the most important of his achievements in the second presidential term which was on the account of Iraq when Obama's administration allowed to Iran to play more important roles in Iraq and the region. It helped to maximize Iran's influence in Iraq.

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