The Future Of Iraqi-Turkish Relations In Light Of Water Variable

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**Abstract**

The study of the future involves scientific and practical feasibility at the same time. It is scientifically feasible because it leads to anticipating future possibilities, with the availability of preoccupation with its customary requirements. It is also practically feasible as it recommends prior preparation, which is a start from the present to adapt it towards the future to achieve the desired aims. Therefore, seeking to anticipate the future is an attempt to draw approximate pictures of the scenario that will be the case in the future based on the data of the present, and thus the future picture will be a reflection of what is the case, in addition to the surrounding changes.

Therefore, the opinion agrees on the association of the concept of future foresight and the concept of scenario with a direct relationship, because the origin of every future foresight ends in crystallizing future scenes, which will turn to the continuation and development of subsequent trends in the later time from the above, the realization and analysis of the past and reading and analyzing the variables imposed by the present make us plan for what will happen in the future while developing several strategies to confront the unknown future fluctuations. Since water resources are one of the most important issues that have imposed themselves on the international arena, and therefore future forms of dealing with them at all political, economic and security levels, and since water resources are among the most important human resources in the region, which carries with it increasing hopes regarding its centrality as a future source of cooperation, it is one of the most important human resources in the region. Another aspect can be a cause of conflict, which may amount to the use of military force. This is due to the severity of the contradictions in the strategic interests of the countries concerned, which is expected in the event of a lack of these resources that the policies of the watercourse countries will turn into a tendency to conflictive behavior, and this will raise the possibility of resorting to violence. Accordingly, we will try to anticipate three future scenarios for the nature of the expected relations between the riparian countries that will seek one of the three scenarios, either cooperation to realize the need for these resources, or the conflict scenario and the decline of relations due to the lack of this resource, which may threaten their national security, sometimes, tension and conflict at other times, or the survival of the situation for what it is.

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**Introduction**

How will the future of relations between Iraq and Turkey be in light of the issue of water sharing

Hypothesis:
The research stems from the premise that water is always a factor in conflict as a result of the scarcity experienced by most countries in the world.

In addition to the lack of equitable and reasonable use of the watercourse countries, as well as the absence of binding international agreements to determine the demand for water, the Iraqi-Turkish relations have gone through several stages and according to those relations, we are trying to explore three axes of the nature of the expected future relations.

**Structural:**
Accordingly, the research is divided into three axes:
1- The first axis: the improvement of Iraqi-Turkish relations in light of the water variable.
2- The second axis: the decline of Iraqi-Turkish relations in light of the water variable.
3- The third axis: the continuation of Iraqi-Turkish relations in light of the water variable.

**The second requirement:** the future of Iraqi-Turkish relations in light of the Water variable
The study of the future involves scientific and practical feasibility at the same time. It is scientifically feasible because it leads to Foresight future possibilities, with the availability of preoccupation with its customary requirements. It is also practically feasible where it recommends prior preparation, which is a start from the present to adapt it towards the future to achieve the desired aims. Therefore, striving to Foresight the future is an attempt to draw approximate pictures of the scenario that will be the case in the future based on the present data. Thus, the future picture will be a reflection of what is the case, in addition to the surrounding changes, so the opinion agrees on the association of the concept of future foresight and the concept of scenario with a direct relationship because the original in every future foresight, it ends with crystallizing future scenes, which will focus on the continuity and development of subsequent trends in the following time. From the above, the realization and analysis of the past and reading and analyzing the variables imposed by the present make us plan for what will happen in the future while developing several strategies to confront the unknown future fluctuations. Since water resources are one of the most important issues that have imposed themselves on the international arena, and hence the forms of future dealings with them, at all political, economic and security levels, and since water resources are among the most important human resources in the region, which carries with it increasing hopes for its centrality as a future source of cooperation, on the other hand, it can be a cause of conflict, which may amount to the use of military force. This is due to the severity of the contradictions in the strategic interests of the countries concerned, which is expected in the event of a lack of these resources that the policies of the watercourse countries will turn into a tendency to conflictive behavior, and this will raise the possibility of resorting to violence. Accordingly, we will try to anticipate three future scenarios for the nature of the expected relations between the riparian countries that will seek one of the three scenarios, either cooperation to realize the need for these resources, or the conflict scenario and the decline of relations due to the lack of this resource, which may threaten their national security, sometimes, tension and conflict at other times, or the survival of the situation for what it is.

Thus, we will divide the demand into three possibilities (scenarios), the first of which is the possibility of an improvement in Iraqi-Turkish relations, the second of a decline, and the third that will ensure the possibility of their continuation.

**The first scenario: the improvement of Iraqi-Turkish relations in light of the water variable**

This scenario assumes that water contributes to strengthening cooperation between the riparian countries through joint efforts, which contributes to the development of relations between them, especially after water has become an important commodity like oil, as it has become a factor of power and influence and a method for the purpose of controlling those who own it. In fact, the most important thing that contributes to enhancing this possibility is the following:

1- Reaching agreements that include sharing water among the riparian countries in accordance with the principles of justice and equity, and signing agreements that include the equitable distribution of shared waters in accordance with the data and needs of countries, and in line with international norms and laws.

2- Activating the work of the joint technical committees between the two countries to expedite the conclusion of an agreement that guarantees the distribution of water according to a fair division of the joint between the two countries (Naji, Sarah Hamed, 2020).

3- Inclusion of economic and trade relations, which are among the best and even the first dimensions that contribute to strengthening cooperation and ensuring the sustainability of what is reflected in the improvement of relations between the two countries. Today, Iraq has become the second market for Turkish products after Germany, and thus economic relations are indispensable, and through Those relations in Iraq are more appropriate to include the issue of water within those relations, as well as to establish other tourism and cultural partnerships with preference given to Turkish capital (Refaat, Abbas Saadoun, 2017). In this context, the Iraqi political decision maker can propose many initiatives, including expanding the volume of trade exchange, as well as reducing tariffs customs within specific controls and in a way that contributes to reviving the economy, as well as giving some concessions to Turkish investments in various sectors, and also it is possible to invest in the Turkish water projects themselves by Iraq, which will give a real opportunity to ensure a fair water share, and will also enhance mutual trust between the two parties (Mohammed, Osama Qassem, 2020). Turkey wants to increase the volume of trade exchange to twenty-five billion dollars, and thus open new horizons for peace, prosperity and stability. There are those who see that these relations are one of the best ways to consolidate cooperation, where these projects are indispensable to rehabilitating common understanding, and it seems that there are several areas that can serve the development of this cooperation and expand the circle of common interests and then create an appropriate ground, the most important of which are (Jalal, Muhammed Munther, 2014):

a- Establishing a number of joint institutions in the economic, cultural and tourism fields with a preferential position for the employment of Turkish capital.

b- Encouraging the construction of railways for tourism projects and attempting to link the historical and archaeological cities between Iraq and Turkey, as well as the commercial transportation project, which links Turkey, passes through Syria and Iraq, and reaches the countries of the Arabian Gulf.
C- Attempting to strengthen the interconnection of electricity distribution networks and energy reciprocal sales, where Turkey produces a large amount of energy as a result of hydroelectric projects, and in return, Turkey depends on Iraq's oil and employs it to benefit from it in this regard. Thus, Turkey will find in Iraq a great opportunity to address its economic crises, where the latter is the largest economy in the Middle East and can be a direct source of goods and services that Iraq needs.

4- The Iraqi government prevented the Turkish opposition movements (the Kurdistan Workers Party) from using Iraqi lands against Turkey, and agreed to expel the party's elements outside the Iraqi borders. Which Turkey considers a threat to its national security, as well as the Kurdish issue and the Iraqi Turkmen issue, and it is possible that the political decision-maker in Iraq can take the initiative to participate with the Turkish military forces, and eliminate the armed groups affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers Party, which enhances bilateral cooperation (Mohammed, Osama Qassem, 2020).

5- Activating the talks through mutual visits between officials of the two parties. Indeed, many visits have taken place, including the repeated visits of the Ministers of Water Resources by both parties, thus creating a desire for agreement and cooperation in all fields, including water (Naji, Sarah Hamed, 2020).

6- The principle of cooperation and the improvement of relations between the two parties helps the international trend, which is moving increasingly towards the application of development and integrated management of water resources, which makes the possibility of cooperation compatible with the global trend in the development of shared river basins (Al-Samarrai, Muhammad Ahmad, 2010). Also, development projects that take place within the framework of regional cooperation is the most acceptable entrance to obtaining international financing, which is based on financing individual projects within specific frameworks that have no impact on water resources. Moreover, the financing institutions stipulate when financing water projects that the project and financing require that the water projects obtain the approval of their neighbors, especially estuary countries (Al-Samarrai, Muhammad Ahmad, 2010).

7- One of the issues that contribute to achieving cooperation in the field of water between Iraq, Syria and Turkey is the formation of pressure factors by the League of Arab Countries and the Gulf Cooperation Council in the field of economic, commercial and tourism relations for the purpose of influencing the Turkish position, or pushing for a response to achieve common interests. (Younes, Bilal Abdullah, 2017).

With regard to coordination between the two Countries of the watercourse (Syria) and the Countries of the estuary (Iraq), it can be said that the issue of water for them is a central issue, because they agree in the same positions regarding the policy of the watercourse Countries (Turkey) because they are affected by the same effect as a result of the policies of the watercourse Countries. The arrangement of positions between them is very important, and all of this requires (Al-Mansour, Abdel Aziz Shehaza, 2000):

1- The necessity of coordination between the two countries, and avoiding any differences, which is an urgent necessity to deal with Turkey on the water issue.

2- Continuing technical cooperation between the two countries to prepare the necessary studies, and then build compatible positions to deal with Turkey.

3- The Countries of the watercourse and the estuary Countries to international forums on their important issue, which is the need to reach a just and equitable agreement to share the waters of the two rivers between the three parties.

Thus, water can be used to enhance cooperation through joint efforts between the riparian countries in the Tigris and Euphrates basins, and then it will be transformed into a link and a catalyst for political rapprochement, and in confirmation of this role, what the former Turkish Minister of Countries (Qamaran Anyan) said that we consider Water is a means of cooperation and we do not consider it a means of political pressure or a political weapon ((Bagish, Ali Ehsan, 1995). However, this does not mean that the continuation of the status quo is comfortable or positive. Therefore, the most important issue for water cooperation projects is solving the issue of sharing the waters of the two rivers, and this requires cooperation according to the principle of good faith in the distribution of this wealth, and that mutual distrust may generate tension and conflict. (Al-Majzoub, Tariq, 1995).

The second scenario: the decline of Iraqi-Turkish relations in light of the Water variable

The issue of water is one of the important issues, which is always a source of conflict between the riparian countries, and in many accounts almost led to an armed clash between them, and thus, the future policies of these countries will be formed based on the water needs of the basin countries and for various agricultural, industrial and domestic uses ((Khaddam, Munther, 2003). The two main drivers of the conflict over fresh water are the patterns of unsustainable use and issues of access and quality, and through the follow-up, we see that there are three main dimensions that combine to create the problem of scarcity and the possibilities of encouraging it to the outbreak of conflicts, namely the depletion or deterioration of the resource, population growth, inequality in distribution, or freedom of access To the resource, which means that some people get a greater part of what others get, as well as climate changes, and although these forces or dimensions play a role in the direction of this problem, it is clear that inequality in distribution is the most influential factor among them. ((Hashem Nawar Jalil, 2009). Based on the foregoing and for the purpose of foreseeing the future in this
context, this scenario assumes that the Iraqi–Turkish relations will decline in light of the continuation of Turkey’s water policy, which contributes to strengthening this scenario:

1- The countries of the basins of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers were not able to reach a complete and comprehensive formula for sharing, controlling and distributing water, and then increasing revenues in a collective and binding framework and on the rules of international law and the interests of all parties. Turkey’s positions, especially in the Euphrates River issue, were embodied in the lack of recognition of the international character of the river, as it considers it a cross-border river. It passes through the border / on the considerations of the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. It is a national cross-border water and is not a shared water, and therefore it is not subject to division, and Turkey also considers that it has the right of absolute sovereignty over the waters of the two rivers that flow on its territory as a national resource such as oil (Hashem Nawar Jalil, 2009).

2- The occurrence of most of the major rivers outside the scope of Arab control, and this specification is linked to the geographical conditions of the region, as the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers are located outside the borders of Syria and Iraq, which makes the water resources under the control of Turkey, and then it can use it whenever it wants against the interests of both the watercourse and estuary Countries. Was this within the context of political differences or in light of conflicting economic needs (Al-Jumaili, Hamid Jassim, 2001).

3- Turkey’s continued construction of dams and reservoirs, which led to a reduction in water levels in the shares of both Iraq and Syria, and beyond that the declared dimensions of development to covered geopolitical dimensions, as Turkey uses water as a weapon to threaten water security in Iraq and Syria, and by establishing these projects, Turkey implements its projects without any regard to the natural and acquired rights of the two countries to water (Al-Sammarrai, Muhammad Ahmad, 2010).

4- Because Turkey sees that it is one of the richest countries in the world with water, which it really is, and because it realizes that water is a more lethal weapon than nuclear and biological weapons, the least noisy and the cleanest, it desires to achieve the greatest degree of regional hegemony in the future, and all of this is through the use of Al-Wa’i Securities, which allows a wide scope to create a suitable environment for the emergence of conflicts between the watercourse and estuary countries (Salama, Ramzy, 2011).

5- The existence of a number of border and non-border conflicts, regardless of their level of severity, which represents an element of tension that may escalate in the future ((Al-Sammarrai, Muhammad Ahmad, 2014).

6- The issue of water is included in what is known as (the science of power), which has become one of the main topics in international relations, and this is a fact that can be realized according to the opinion that if the energy sources have sufficient capacity to ignite the fuse of war, then water is able to play the same role, noting The difference between the two ((Jassim, Nassif, 1995).

7- The escalation of the Kurdish problem in southeastern Turkey, especially since the file of the PKK and the Kurdish issue is one of the most prominent outstanding issues between Iraq and Turkey, and Turkey often uses it as an excuse to interfere in Iraqi affairs .

8- The decline of the Justice and Development Party and the rise of hard-line nationalist options such as the Republican People’s War, the Motherland Party, or the Nationalist Workers’ Party, and then the paths to deal with the water file will differ ((Naji, Sarah Hamid, 2020).

9- Turkey’s desire to join the European Union, and requires rapid economic development, and in turn requires the maximum use of water in order to obtain advanced agricultural development. Turkey also shows itself as a prominent regional power in the water level as it exerts more pressure on its neighbors for provisions The control you now have over this resource (Abbas, Ahmed Abdel-Badi, 1988).

10- Turkey’s continuation of its quest to obtain influence in the areas of northern Iraq so that it is close to all the changes that are taking place in these areas, based on its interests aimed at not establishing a Kurdish Countries in northern Iraq, and thus the survival and continuation of the water problem, which is a strong factor for Turkey to impose its policy and then forcing Iraq not to interfere if Turkey tries to protect its interests if it is exposed to any threat ((Mohammed, Osama Qassem, 2020).

All of these dimensions may lead to a wide space for creating a suitable environment for the emergence of conflicts between the countries of the source and the countries of the watercourse and the estuary, and what deepens the chances of conflict between the countries of the Tigris and Euphrates basins is also the official nature of the statements of Turkish officials, Determining the direction of the water issue is to understand that such statements tend to be a cause for cooperation and the strengthening of regional collective action and that Turkey is constantly trying to abide by the agreed water quotas, but on the other hand, it proceeds and continues to direct its water projects without notifying Iraq and Syria, or even Providing them with detailed information about these projects and what they will lead to (Jalal, Muhammad Munther, 2014).

The third scenario: the continuation of Iraqi-Turkish relations in light of the Water variable
This possibility assumes that the Iraqi-Turkish relations remain as they are, and most of the data indicate that Turkey will continue its water policy, which is based on the establishment of water projects without consulting with Iraq, and the most prominent contribution to this is the following:

1- The Turkish side will maintain its policy of evading the signing of any legal agreement to share the waters of the two rivers.

2- Continuing its quest to complete its projects within the “Al-Ghab” project on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers within the framework of its strategic plans to achieve a number of political, economic, and security aims, and that it will continue to keep the situation as it is until it ends in completing all its water projects on the two rivers, and then impose a policy. The situation in the other basin countries ((Naji, Sarah Hamid, 2020).

3- Turkey's desire to show itself as an effective and influential force in the Middle East.

4- Turkey’s ability to control the waters of the two rivers, in addition to its international status, where it is a member of NATO, and its relations with the United States of America and Israel prompted it to aspire to occupy a regional role for it in the region, which earned it pressure and bargaining chip in its relations with the states of the watercourse and the estuary.

5- The keenness of Turkish politicians, with their different political orientations, on the Turkish national interests and the necessity of investing the economic factor, as well as their keenness on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, and at the same time penetrating into Iraqi territory through its military operations, which reflects the desire of the Turkish political decision-maker to take advantage of the existing conditions. Thus, it is expected that Turkey will continue to implement its policies refusing to conclude an agreement on the sharing of water. We find it sometimes cooperating and at other times it tends to conflict, where it appears at some point in conflicting issues, especially in light of the continuation of the Turkish water policy in dealing with the issue of water, and all of this permeates a number of indicators with the intent of Cooperation such as providing some information on its water projects or an attempt to increase water releases from the two rivers when it is certain of the urgent need for both Iraq and Syria, that is, it reduces the intensity that leads to confrontation emphasizing at the same time the necessity of sustaining economic relations and perpetuating the flow of oil through their lands, and we see that this possibility is the most likely In light of the existing conditions in Iraq, the latter needs time to regain its political weight at the regional and international levels. Finally, although each of these dimensions (scenarios) is a stand-alone case, in theory, they are all linked and complement each other to a large extent in practice. Abroad, it is also a product of the direct assault on the sources of those waters, which means that the relationship between these determinants is characterized by a complex interactive nature, and in turn constitutes a state of conflict of interests, which negatively affects the shape of future water relations ((Refaat, Abbas Saadoun, 2017)

Conclusion:
The issue of water is one of the most dangerous issues if it continues without a solution, and its danger lies in exploiting the geographical neighborhood in the upper rivers (Turkey) for this issue, as it seeks to exploit its geographical position as a source country and establishes many water projects, which is considered one of the major influences on the water imports of the estuary country. (Iraq).

That is, the water problem based on the process of sharing water shares, whether in the Tigris River between Iraq and Turkey and in the waters of the Euphrates River between the three parties, Iraq - Syria - Turkey, can be solved on the basis of sharing in a fair and reasonable manner and in an integrated coordination of the projects on the two rivers and arranging priorities, as the shared waters are shared according to reasonable ratios agreed upon by the concerned parties in a way that does not lead to harming the interests of any of these parties. The imbalance in the balance of power between the riparian countries may lead to a state of conflict ranging from feared wars to silent conflicts that do not reach the limit of wars thanks to some cooperation between the riparian countries. Actual cooperation mechanisms, regardless of the balance of power, due to the importance of this endeavor in determining the prospects for cooperation in the future through a series of joint activities dictated by political, economic and security factors. Together, these factors determine how the interests of the riparian countries affect the scope of their cooperation, through a continuum of cooperation options whose application shows the development of levels of cooperation, and these options go beyond unilateral (national) measures to include joint action in the field of water resources management and investment.

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