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**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON THEMES,
(DE)LEGITIMATION AND IDEOLOGY IN THE KURDISH
GLOBE NEWSPAPER**



MARWAH KAREEM ALI

Universiti Utara Malaysia

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Awang Had Salleh
Graduate School
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Tandatangan
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Pemeriksa Luar:
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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nor Fariza Mohd Nor

Tandatangan
(Signature)

Pemeriksa Dalam:
(Internal Examiner)

Datin Dr. Minah Harun

Tandatangan
(Signature)

Nama Penyelia/Penyelia-penyelia:
(Name of Supervisor/Supervisors)

Dr. Anne Althea Christopher

Tandatangan
(Signature)

Nama Penyelia/Penyelia-penyelia:
(Name of Supervisor/Supervisors)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Munif Zarirruddin Fikri Nordin

Tandatangan
(Signature)

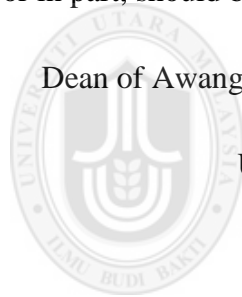
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Abstrak

Bahasa mencerminkan pengaruh kuasa sosio-politik di dalam penghasilan berita. Bahasa dipenuhi dengan nilai-nilai positif/negatif yang menyetengahkan konsep ideologi yang digambarkan oleh (nyah)legitimasi kuasa. Konsep (nyah)legitimasi adalah berdasarkan penghujahan sama ada mewajarkan atau menyanggah amalan sosio-politik yang terdapat dalam sektor media Iraq. Meskipun terdapat banyak kajian mengenai proses (nyah)legitimasi dalam wacana akhbar, namun struktur linguistik yang mendasari proses ini tetap sukar untuk difahami. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan mengenal pasti struktur linguistik yang digunakan untuk (menyah)legitimasi amalan sosio-politik dan mendedahkan ideologi tersembunyi dalam wacana akhbar. Kajian analisis wacana kritis (CDA) ini menggunakan pendekatan hubungan dialektik Fairclough (1995a). Data kajian ialah berita mengenai peristiwa pengunduran Angkatan Tentera Amerika (AMF) dari Iraq, yang diterbitkan dalam akhbar berbahasa Inggeris Iraq, iaitu *The Kurdish Globe (KG)*. Sejumlah enam berita keluaran Disember 2011 dikumpul dan disusun dalam bentuk petikan analisis. Linguistik Sistem Fungsional (SFL) juga digunakan untuk menganalisis struktur linguistik kategori (nyah)legitimasi yang dikenal pasti melalui model van Leeuwen. Kajian ini menyetengahkan tema baru berkaitan peristiwa yang dikaji. Selain itu, kajian ini mendedahkan pengaruh amalan politik dan ideologi terhadap penghasilan berita melalui bahasa, yang digunakan untuk menyahlegitimasi peristiwa yang dikaji berbanding dengan mengesahkannya. Kajian ini juga mengenal pasti peranan kata ganti nama diri dan posesif sebagai satu strategi ideologi dalam membezakan kumpulan-kumpulan sosial yang terlibat dalam peristiwa tersebut. Kajian ini memaparkan bahawa gambaran peristiwa dan keputusan politik dalam wacana akhbar ditentukan oleh konteks dan ideologi organisasi-organisasi media. Dapatan kajian ini mencerminkan bahawa wacana akhbar mempunyai signifikan dalam membentuk pandangan awam yang cenderung kepada autoriti yang berkuasa penuh. Akhir sekali, kajian ini mengkonsepsikan satu kerangka untuk memahami perbandingan berasaskan penghujahan yang dilakukan dalam satu wacana dan lingkungan konteks yang sama.

Keywords: Analisis wacana kritis, (Nyah)legitimasi, Ideologi, Iraq, Wacana akhbar

Abstract

Language reflects the influence of socio-political powers on news production. It is loaded with positive/negative values that highlight ideological concepts represented by (de)legitimation. The concept of (de)legitimation is based on argumentation that either justifies or refutes socio-political practices employed in the Iraqi media sector. Though there are plenty of studies on the (de)legitimation process in newspaper discourse, the linguistic structures underlying this process remain difficult to be understood. Therefore, the current study aims at identifying the linguistic structures used to (de)legitimize socio-political practices and reveal hidden ideologies in newspaper discourse. This study involves critical discourse analysis (CDA) using Fairclough's (1995a) dialectical relationship approach. The data comprises news stories on the event of American Military Forces' (AMFs') withdrawal from Iraq, published in the Iraqi English newspaper: *The Kurdish Globe (KG)*. A total of six news stories issued during December 2011 were collected and organized into excerpts to be analyzed. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was also employed to analyze the linguistic structures of (de)legitimation categories which were identified using van Leeuwen's model. The study found new themes related to the event under investigation. Additionally, the study revealed the influence of political and ideological practices on news production through language, which was used to delegitimize the event in question rather than legitimizing it. It also identified the role of personal and possessive pronouns as ideological strategy in differentiating between social groups involved in that event. This study showed that the depiction of political events and decisions in newspaper discourse is governed by the context and ideologies of media organizations. The findings implied that newspaper discourse has a significant part in shaping public opinion in favor of powerful authorities. Finally, the study conceptualized a framework for understanding comparison based on argumentation made in one discourse and within the same context.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, (De)legitimation, Ideology, Iraq, Newspaper discourse

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List of Abbreviations

AMFs	American Military Forces
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
KG	The Kurdish Globe
KRG	Kurdistan Region Government
1st PSg	First Person Singular Pronoun
1st PPI	First Person Plural Pronoun
2nd PSg	Second Person Singular Pronoun
2nd PPI	Second Person Plural Pronoun
3rd PSg	Third Person Singular Pronoun
3rd PPI	Third Person Plural Pronoun
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Newspapers occupy an important role in any modern society since they address its political, social, economic, and cultural issues. Newspaper is described as a means of “shaping public opinion and policy” (Haque & Sheikh, 1993, p. 1) as well as an essential source of information (Babalola, 2002; Njeze, 2013). It widens the range of public topics, events and issues their readers are familiar with (Schoenbach, 2005). Therefore, newspapers become an essential part in our life due to being a means of knowledge and information (Mehta, 2010).

The importance of newspaper lies in the language used to depict news events. Language is defined as “a set of symbols shared by a community to communicate meaning and experience” (Jandt, 2004, p. 147). Language is, as asserted by Wodak (2001), a medium of domination and social power. It has the power to manipulate, reinforce, or (de)legitimize events, practices, or policies made in any society. Generally, van Dijk (1996b) regarded power of newspaper as symbolic and persuasive. In this sense, newspaper primarily has the potential to control to some extent the minds of readers, but not directly their actions, through the effective use of language. Lakoff (1973) argued that society is reflected in the language, with the values and assumptions held by society being mirrored in the language.

Consequently, language used in newspaper discourse correlates various social, political, economic and cultural values. This shows that the essence of the news has changed. Discourse of the news has moved beyond the surface level of the language structure. As for Mehta (2010), newspapers provide in-depth analysis for an issue

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Appendix A

News Stories Selected as Sample of Analysis

1. Biden assures Iraqi leaders of U.S. commitment (Article) (December 03, 2011)

U.S. vice president meets with Kurdistan Region President

1. U.S. Vice President Joe Biden assured Iraqi leaders the withdrawal of U.S. forces does not mean the end of his government's support for Iraq but that both sides will remain tied based on their strategic agreement.
2. "It is true the U.S. forces will pull out of Iraq, but the United States' commitment towards Iraq and Kurdistan Region will remain present," Biden said.
3. On the last day of his visit to Iraq to mark the end of the Iraq War, Biden arrived in Erbil on Dec. 1 to meet with Kurdistan Region President Massoud Barzani and KRG Prime Minister Barham Salih. President Barzani said the Kurdistan people greatly appreciate the sacrifices made by U.S. forces to help topple the "dictator regime" and in "establishing a federal democratic system" in Iraq. Furthermore, both sides reaffirmed they will develop political and diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Iraq and Kurdistan Region.
4. Before traveling to Erbil, Biden officially celebrated the end of the Iraq War and said the two countries are now in a new phase of their ties. He highlighted that the remaining 13,000 U.S. soldiers will pull out by the end of the year. "Our troops... are leaving Iraq and we are embarking on a new path together, a new phase in this relationship... between two sovereign nations".
5. He [Biden] said the committee [the U.S.-Iraq Higher Coordinating Committee] would be the centerpiece of U.S. and Iraqi efforts to build their relationship, notably in security issues such as training, intelligence and counter-terrorism.
6. "We kept our promise to withdraw from Iraq's cities in 2009. We kept our promise to end our combat mission in the summer of 2010," said the U.S. vice president. "And now, we are keeping our promise we made back in 2008 to remove our troops from Iraq by the end of this year, and they will be removed".
7. "Drawing down our forces is not only in the best interest of Iraq, but it's in the best interest of the United States of America as well, and the best interest of the relationship." [said the U.S. vice president].

2. Dawn or dusk: A new chapter in Iraq (Editorial) by Azad Amin (December 17, 2011)

1. The flag of American military forces in Iraq was lowered in Baghdad during an official ceremony, bringing nearly nine years of U.S. military operations in Iraq to a formal end. At its peak, U.S. troops numbered 170,000; now, only 4,000 remain for another two weeks. With the U.S. troop withdrawal, a new chapter begins in Iraq.
2. Despite the celebratory tons of U.S. and Iraqi officials, the future of Iraq without U.S. troops is very uncertain and prone to sectarian and ethnic conflict with regional interference in Iraqi political affairs.
3. U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta told troops the mission was worth the cost in blood and dollars: "After a lot of blood spilled by Iraqis and

Americans, the mission of an Iraq that could govern and secure itself has become real."

4. In a speech in North Carolina to troops just returning from Iraq, U.S. President Barack Obama said that they had helped to build "a sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq, with a representative government that was elected by its people."
5. Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Hussain al-Shahristani said Iraqis were glad that U.S. troops were leaving. "I think we are all happy that the American soldiers are returning home safely to their families, and we are also confident that the Iraqi people and their armed forces and police are in a position now to take care of their own security."
6. The deep-riding conflicts of interest amongst the various components of Iraq have yet to be settled. The major fault lines between Sunnis and Shiites on power issues and between the Kurds and Arabs on territorial as well as sovereignty issues have not been resolved, and the Iraqi Constitution still remains no more than a nicely written piece of paper. Interferences in Iraqi affairs by regional powers are adding extra fuel to the existing internal strife that can blow up at any time. Iraq is still an arena of powers' game table for regional hegemony and regional interests.
7. The only thing that is certain in Iraq is that the future of Iraq is very uncertain.
8. The Arab Spring, which turned fundamental blocks of the Middle East upside down, is coupled with unfolding regional developments on Iraq's borders particularly that of Syria and growing tension between Iran and the U.S. and Israel also have serious potential to upset the already-fragile political system in Iraq.

3. U.S. ends its military presence in Iraq (Article) By Qassim Khidhir (December 17, 2011)

1. Kurds remain publicly silent over the U.S. withdrawal, but they are not happy about it.
2. The U.S. invasion was the best thing ever happened to Iraqi Kurds. Their bloodiest enemy, Saddam Hussein, who murdered Kurds en masse via genocide, was removed from power. Their region was recognized as a federal region in the new Iraq Constitution, and it now has its own Parliament, government and president. The region has developed rapidly since 2003, and vast, giant construction projects are now everywhere. The differences between Kurdistan before 2003 and after 2003 are enormous.
3. "When Saddam Hussein was in power we did not have any hope. We were landlocked from the outside and inside of Iraq," said Farouq Muhammad, 34, an engineer in Erbil, the capital city of Iraqi Kurdistan Region.
4. Muhammad said the invasion of Iraq was really liberation for Kurdish people. But he is worried about the U.S. withdrawal and he fears clashes between Kurds and Arabs over disputed areas.
5. The issue of disputed areas has not been resolved between Baghdad and Erbil. Kurds believe these areas historically belong to Kurdistan and must be under the control of the Kurdish government. Due to sensitivity, a joint force of Kurds, Arabs and Americans was providing security to the areas. The joint force was established because Kurds and Arab forces do not trust each other. There are a small number of U.S. troops that still remain in the disputed areas.

6. Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari said the U.S. is only ending its military presence in Iraq, but will remain very active and strong politically in the country.
7. U.S. has the largest embassy in the world in Baghdad. It announced that the current number of its employees is about 15,000, indicating that this number is similar to the number of employees at U.S. embassies in several countries. Beside the embassy, the U.S. has consulates in Basra, Kirkuk and Erbil.
8. Iraq is facing a lot of challenges. Iraq of 2011 may be safer and calmer than that of 2004-2007, but whether this calm equally calms the citizens' nerves remains to be seen.
9. According to varying estimates in the West, the number of civilian casualties in Iraq this year is similar to its counterpart in Afghanistan.
10. While the Iraqi armed forces number 700,000 troops, their missions have been doubled with the American withdrawal and their abilities are still limited.
11. As long as 170,000 U.S. soldiers operated in the country, the Iraqi government was exempt from having to worry about its borders. But now, many fear that without air defense the long borderlines with Iran, Turkey, and Syria could turn Iraq into easy prey for anyone aiming at causing violent skirmishes along those borders.
12. Iraq has ordered billions of dollars' worth of military equipment, including F-16 warplanes, but it will take years for those supplies to arrive, with Iraqis estimating that it would take a full ten years before they're fully assimilated into the military.
13. "They'll face challenges from terrorism; they'll face challenges from those that would want to divide their country. They'll face challenges from just the test of democracy, a new democracy and trying to make it work. But the fact is, we have given them the opportunity to be able to succeed," said U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, during an unannounced visit to Baghdad on December 15th.
14. Kurdistan Prime Minister Barham Salih said some groups inside Iraq, including the Kurds, requested that the U.S. extend their presence inside Iraq beyond 2011.
15. But the Kurds are required to abide by the agreement between the Baghdad government and the U.S., which set withdrawal at the end of 2011. "Iraq is much better without Saddam Hussein. Toppling Iraq has given Iraqis a chance to build a democratic country," added Salih.

4. U.S. withdrawal: End or beginning of Iraq? (Editorial) by Bashdar Pusho Ismaeel (December 24, 2011)

1. As the last convoy of U.S. troops trickled over the deserts southern Iraqi border, the move was met with contrasting emotions, much like the overall U.S. experience a little shy of nine years.
2. For many in Iraq, the image of seeing their "occupiers" leave became a long-time nationalist dream.
3. Fast forward nine years: 4,500 lost lives and expenditure fast approaching a trillion dollars that has crippled U.S. foreign policy image and dented the U.S. economy, the U.S. was arguably as keen to leave as it was to enter.
4. Many placed direct blame on much of the unfolding crisis over the years in Iraq on America, but as the future will prove the U.S. is not responsible for

every Iraqi misfortune and that perhaps America did well to stave off many obstacles.

5. The downfall of Saddam Hussein and subsequent invasion of Iraq only opened a hornet's nest; the nest was placated many decades before with the artificial creation of Iraq. The lid was simply held firm by the iron grip of Saddam; once opened, the Americans struggled relentlessly to keep grip whilst under immense international spotlight.
6. It is time for the Iraqi political actors to take accountability and responsibility for the current situation in Iraq.
7. Iraq has had a sovereign government for many years, has now held two national elections, implemented a national constitution and has a large security force at its disposal that has been in practical control of the streets long before the U.S. withdrawal.
8. History will prove that America never really got the credit it deserved. It made huge sacrifices whilst Iraqi politicians have constantly failed to deliver. It pulled Iraq from the brink of all-out sectarian war in 2007 with the promise of thousands of more troops as part of the surge strategy, but the Iraqi leaders again failed to keep their promises and their end of the bargain.
9. It is by no means to say that the U.S. adventure in Iraq should be marked as a shining glory. The two Washington administrations, particularly that of George W. Bush, will be the first to admit that Iraq was an Achilles heel and in the case of Bush the hammer blow to the credibility of the his tenure. In hindsight, the U.S. is more than likely to have done things differently and will have a bitter taste in its mouth as some events backfired.
10. However, as the old saying goes, you can take a horse to water but you cannot make it drink. Iraq has had many historical milestones and achievements but has successfully failed to capitalize on any positive motions created. The bottom line is that deep sectarianism, a clear ethnic divide and above all profound historical mistrust and animosity have severely handicapped any chance of national reconciliation and genuine progression in Iraq.
11. As soon as the U.S. forces formally withdrew, fierce debate ensued about the legacy that they left behind. One thing for sure is that the positive picture of the current climate in Iraq that the U.S. was hoping to promote did not take long to shatter.
12. A day later, Iraq become embroiled in a new sectarian and political crisis as an arrest warrant was issued for Iraq's Sunni Vice President, Tariq al-Hashemmi, and a number of other Sunni figures, on terror-related charges. This is in addition to controversy around Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlak, whose criticism of Maliki's dictatorial tendencies left him clinging on to his position as Maliki sought a vote of no confidence against him.
13. People have warned about the fragility of the current coalition, but the coalition has been anything but stable and harmonious since its much-delayed inception. Over a year later and key ministries still remain in so-called temporary hands. Iyyad Allawi, the head of al-Iraqiya, has had an ongoing political rift and escalating war of words with Maliki, accusing him of monopolization of power and renegeing on the Erbil agreement. As the current crisis has escalated, an already bewildered al-Iraqiya decided to boycott Parliament.

14. Renewed sectarian bloodshed coupled with a collapse of the current government may place Iraq in a point of no return and without a bailout from the U.S. this time around.
15. It is easy to overlook that Sunni Sahwa councils were a significant factor in the decline of violence, and they still remain a localized Sunni tool rather than a national possession. Without a balanced security apparatus, Iraq will have three different armies guarding each of the major factions of Iraq. The Sunni-Shiite power struggle is also exhibited in the increasing ploy of largely Sunni provinces to manipulate constitutional clauses and seek regional autonomy to place Maliki in a difficult bargaining corner and to safeguard their powerbases. While much of Iraq has been stuck in a rut, Kurdistan has enjoyed unprecedented progression much to the regular dismay than applaud from Baghdad.
16. More than any other group, the Kurds were most disappointed by the U.S. exit that left them feeling anxious at hostile parties around them.
17. Renewed sectarianism and friction in Baghdad will see the Kurds embroiled in a fresh nightmare that will only blight the attraction and involvement of the region. Furthermore, the Kurds have been so busy helping construct successive governments in Baghdad and then helping to paper over the cracks that they have seemingly overlooked that Baghdad has seldom kept their end of the bargain and has gotten away without any real political repercussions.
18. Kurdistan has waited for almost a decade for the return of Kirkuk and disputed territories, and has waited many years for key laws such as a national hydrocarbon law to be adopted. In reality, unless Kurdistan takes matters into its own hands and pushes Baghdad in no uncertain terms, it will wait yet another decade for the return of its lands. As kingmakers, Kurds have taken a tough-line position in negotiations over successive government formations, while Baghdad has dragged their heels in the commitments they have agreed to as part of the initial wooing of Kurdish blocs.
19. Just as the jostling of power between Sunni and Shiites will come to the boil at some point, especially if the proviso of Parliament and politics is seen as an insufficient forum, then the increasing bitter relationship between Erbil and Baghdad will take similar suit if it indefinitely becomes stuck in a detrimental cycle.
20. While much of how the proceedings play out is in the hands of the Iraqi leaders, the difficulties already inherent are only exasperated by the influence of neighboring countries. As the U.S. formally withdraws, the battle for influence in Iraq will only heighten.
21. The Shiite-led government of al-Maliki openly sways toward Tehran and has defended the Allawite and fellow Shiite Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad, while most of the Arab world has turned increasingly against him. All the while, Sunni neighbors such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia look anxiously at the alliances formed by Baghdad. As the Middle East has evolved greatly as a result of the Arab Spring, Iraq will need to greatly alter relations with its neighbors. At the same time, Kurdistan, which is already under great constraints due to the weary eye of its neighbors, strives for good relations with all sides and must not rely on the sentiments of Baghdad in achieving its nationalist ambitions.

5. Iraq's Zebari warns of foreign meddling amid crisis (Article) (Hoshiyar Zebari speaks to Reuters) (December 24, 2011)

1. Iraq's foreign minister said on Wednesday Iraq would invite more regional meddling in the country's affairs if its leaders failed to solve quickly a political crisis between the Shi'ite-led government and Sunni rivals. "This aggravation is not in anybody's interests," Hoshiyar Zebari, a Kurd, told Reuters in an interview. "As long as your internal front is fragmented and not united ... others who want to interfere will be encouraged. That's why it is very important to deal with this crisis as soon as possible," he said.
2. Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's Shi'ite-led government has sought the arrest of Sunni Vice President Tareq al-Hasheemi, accusing him of running a death squad, and demanded that parliament fire another rival, his Sunni deputy Saleh al-Mutlaq, after he compared Maliki to Saddam Hussein.
3. The row, which erupted days after the last U.S. troops withdrew, could unravel Iraq's fragile power-sharing deal among Shi'ite, Sunni and Kurdish blocs.
4. "This crisis came at the wrong time for Iraq. It came with the withdrawal of the last American troops," Zebari said. "The biggest challenge for Iraq after the U.S. forces' withdrawal is a political one, after that it is security."
5. Neighboring countries must not be allowed to think they can fill the vacuum after the U.S. withdrawal to interfere in Iraq's affairs, he said. "We will not be a pawn in others' games."

6. Iraq on the edge of possible sectarian violence (Article) by Rawaz Koyee (December 24, 2011)

Kurds monitor Baghdad tensions closely

1. The fragile Iraqi power-sharing government is under threat, as Sunni-Shiite sectarian squabbles start to erupt once again.
2. Only a day after the U.S. troops' departure from Iraq, almost nine years after the fall of Saddam Hussein, Shiites and Sunnis come face to face again, reviving fears of renewed sectarian violence.
3. When the last U.S. convoy crossed into Kuwait, U.S. President Barack Obama said it was leaving a stable, self-reliant and democratic Iraq behind. Only a few days later, the country slipped back into a sectarian quarrel after the Shiite-dominated government issued an arrest warrant for prominent Sunni leader and Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi.
4. The arrest warrant was issued for Hashemi on Dec. 19, charging him with running a hit squad involved in the assassinations of government and security officials. During a press conference in Erbil on Dec. 20, Hashemi described the charges that he was behind a plot to kill government officials as "fabricated and accused Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki of bringing the charges against him for political reasons. "Maliki is behind the whole issue, and all the efforts that were made to reach national reconciliation are now gone," Hashemi told reporters.
5. Before the warrant was issued, Hashemi visited Kurdistan to discuss the Iraqi post-U.S. issues with Kurdistan Region leaders, where he has managed to avoid arrest. The Iraqi prime minister has called on the Kurdish authorities to hand over Hashemi to the Iraqi authorities to face trial, but the Kurdistan Region refuses to turn him in. In a statement to Asharq Alawsat newspaper, head of Kurdistan Region presidency, Fuad Hussein, said Hashemi was still considered a suspect rather than a convicted criminal, and the issue of

handing him over to Baghdad authorities was not for him to address. “Hashemi visited the Kurdistan Region as Iraqi vice president to meet [Kurdistan’s President] Massoud Barzani. He is our guest and he is permitted to stay here as long as he intends to,” he added.

6. The Sunni legislators suspended their attendance at parliamentary sessions and the Shiite’s power-sharing government. In reaction, Maliki threatened to take away nine cabinet seats held by Sunni bloc ministers and replace them with ministers from his own coalition, which further escalated the crisis. Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said leaders need to bring a quick resolution to the disputes, warning that the crisis might encourage the regional powers to intervene in Iraq’s internal affairs. “As long as your internal front is fragmented and not united, others who want to intervene will be encouraged, that is why it’s very important to deal with this crisis as soon as possible,” Zebbari said in an interview with Reuters.
7. For the Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan Region, the potential squabble between Shiites and Sunnis after the U.S. combat forces pulled out from Iraq was anticipated. The Kurdish leaders have warned of possible sectarian conflict in the absence of U.S. troops in the country.
8. Kurdistan Member of Parliament Abdul-Salam Barwary told The Kurdish Globe that escalation of the disputes between Shiites and Sunnis following U.S. troop withdrawal from the country was predicted. “We saw that coming. In the past two days, incidents were anticipated indeed, that is what is expected from the Iraqi leaders’ comprehension of politics.”
9. As a part of Iraq and a partner in the entire Iraqi political process with the other Arab blocs, Kurdish leaders are keeping a close eye on the Shiite-Sunni tensions. “We monitor the situations very closely because we believe any positive or negative development in Baghdad will have implications for the Kurdistan Region as well,” Hussein told the media. After the fall of Hussein in 2003, at the time when Iraq was witnessing violent conflict between Shiites and Sunnis, Kurdish leaders played a mediating role between both sides, and played a key role in keeping Iraq united. Many Kurds were not pleased with this, preferring Kurdish leaders concentrate on Kurdish national rights rather than worrying about Iraq’s unity.
10. “We Kurds kept Iraqi unity in 2003 when the country was devastated. What have we gained in return? Nothing. When the Arab leaders regained their strength, they turned their backs on our demands,” Harmman Ashty a student from Salahaddin University told the Globe. Ashty suggests the Kurdish policy-makers stay out of Shiites-Sunni conflict and try to come up with a road map to figure out how to resolve its disputed issues with Baghdad.
11. The Iraqi Constitution’s Article 140, oil revenue, Peshmarga forces, and the budget and hydrocarbon laws are they key pending issues between Kurdistan Regional Government and Iraqi federal authorities and have remained unsolved for the past five years. Maliki did not show much faith in the Kurdish demands, after the Kurds lent their support to him to head the current Iraqi government. This raises the question of whether the Kurds should exploit the Sunni-Shiites conflict to push their quest forward or review its previous stances and choose another side.
12. “The Kurds should act neutrally, by not putting all their eggs in the basket of one specific political bloc. The Kurdish leaders should exploit this chance in a way that is in the favor of their goals,” Firsat Sofy, a Kurdish political

analyst, told the Globe. When it comes to mediating Shiite-Sunni tensions or not, public opinion seems to urge political leaders not to jump in. Politicians and analysts take another view. Kurdish PM Barwary believes the Kurds should make their efforts toward stabilizing the political process in Iraq, as it is in the favor of the Kurdistan Region. He says this would preserve the Region's prosperity. "Those who would think the Shiite-Sunni conflict could serve the Kurds' interests have a short view, because as long as Kurdistan Region is a part of Iraq, stability favors the Kurds as well," he said.

