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Assessing the Implication of Turkey's Dam Buildings on Iraq's National Security

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Abstract

From a geopolitical and geostrategic point of view, Iraq is located in a bottleneck and faces unique geographic restrictions in accessing open waters and international rivers.

Tigris and Euphrates are the main source of water needs of this country, which originate from Turkey. The Tigris and Euphrates watershed is one of the most important watersheds in the Middle East.

The dispute over the manner and amount of exploitation of the three coastal countries (Turkey, Iraq and Syria) which resulted from the disintegration of the Ottoman government, has a long history.

Turkey has built 14 large dams on the Euphrates tributaries and 8 large dams on the Tigris tributaries by implementing the Gap project. Following Turkey's exploita-

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tion of the Atatürk Dam (Turkey's largest dam) in 1992, the issue of "environmental security" has been one of the most important concerns of affected countries, especially Iraq.

Following the exploitation of this big dam and 13 other dams, as well as the construction of three dams by Syria, the Euphrates flow to Iraq has decreased by about 90% in recent years.

Ilisu Dam (Turkey's second largest dam) is built on the Tigris River, and if the capacity of this dam is fully utilized, the natural flow of the Tigris to Iraq will decrease by 56%.

With the completion of the Gap project, Turkey will be able to control more than the average annual flow of natural flows in the Tigris and Euphrates in this country. Turkey's dam constructions have led to widespread problems in various dimensions in the region and affected countries, especially Iraq, due to its location in the lower reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates watershed and the environment.

The purpose of the research is to explain the effects of Turkey's dam construction on Iraq's national security. This research is important because after Iraq and Syria, Iran is the third country affected by Turkey's dam construction because internal and external factors affecting Iraq's national security for reasons such as long border, cultural, historical, religious commonalities, economic exchanges and significant commercial and political and security interests have similar and extensive effects on Iran's national security.

Iran has vital interests in Iraq, and no country is as influential as Iraq in terms of securing Iran's interests and national security, therefore, a threat to Iraq's vital interests is a threat to Iran's vital interests.

The research has tried to answer the main question that Turkey's dam constructions on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers have had on Iraq's national security and the hypothesis of the research is based on this axis that Turkey has controlled the sources of power production through extensive dams on the branches of the international rivers Tigris and Euphrates and developed policies with the aim of strengthening and perpetuating the "geopolitical position" in the course of interaction and conflict with beneficiary countries of Tigris and Euphrates, especially Iraq, should use economic, political and security issues as a means of pressure in negotiations and the manner and extent of exploitation

of the mentioned rivers. Turkey's dam building policy on Tigris and Euphrates is considered as an independent variable and Iraq's national security is considered as a dependent variable.

This research is of a qualitative type, which analyzed the data and explained the topic with a descriptive-analytical method and applied approach. Information gathering has been collected using library resources and scanning documents, books, articles, media and electronic resources.

The lack, change and destruction of environmental elements are among the most important factors that threaten the life and survival of human societies and governments. Mastery over water resources is mastery of an element that has a vital and strategic role.

Water has a significant role and importance in the environment, sustainable economic development, cultural-social development, political-security stability and the power of governments in the national, regional and international arenas. Therefore, the competition of the governments to acquire, exploit and dominate the common water resources due to the vital role and strategic importance of water has created the ground for conflict and conflict between the stakeholders. Since the 1960s and following Turkey's extensive dam constructions on the Tigris and Euphrates, water leverage has been used as a tool to exert pressure against Iraq.

The problems caused by the water shortage crisis in combination with factors such as the decrease in precipitation due to climate change, the destruction of vegetation and forests, soil erosion due to the decrease in humidity, air pollution due to the change and destruction of environmental elements, and the devastating consequences of three wars in the last four decades, Iraqis' indiscriminate exploitation of rivers, lakes and wetlands in the agricultural, industrial and urban sectors, pollution of water resources and exhaustion of the water storage and transmission network, the process of destruction of natural ecosystems and the destruction of environmental elements of this country, accelerating and has intensified and the health, livelihood and security of the residents of the affected area have been jeopardized to a significant extent. The location of this country in the lower reaches of Tigris and Euphrates is a geopolitical bottleneck and a factor for threatening this country.

Turkey, Syria and Iran have superior geopolitical advantages over this country due to being located upstream of the rivers entering Iraq. Environmental el-

ements have a transboundary nature, therefore, managing and controlling challenges requires bilateral, regional and international cooperation. Environmental security is related to water security, food security, job security, sustainable economic development and in the macro dimension with the interests and national security of countries and the power of governments in the national, regional and international arenas. Considering the five parts of Bozan's theory, the military, political, economic, social and environmental power of Turkey has increased against the countries affected by Tigris and Euphrates, especially Iraq. Based on Homer Dixon's theory, three factors: environmental destruction, population increase and unequal social distribution of resources due to lack and change of environmental resources and six factors: climate change due to the emission of greenhouse gases, destruction of Ozone layer, destruction and reduction of agricultural lands, destruction of forests, reduction and pollution of fresh water sources and reduction of fishing due to destruction of fisheries following widespread climate change, the possibility of conflicts turning into violent conflicts between Turkey and the countries affected by Tigris and Euphrates with this country, between each other, especially Iraq and Turkey, has been strengthened in case of lack of understanding, agreement and constructive interaction. According to Mackinder's theory, the use of power generation resources using natural (energy resources), human and environmental factors (dam construction) has achieved the goal of Turkish hegemony to a significant extent. Based on Ratzel's theory, Turkey has strengthened its national and regional power and vital space against the countries affected by the Tigris and Euphrates, especially in the face of Iraq. Blocking the natural flow of the international channels of the Tigris and Euphrates is an existential threat, and the demand for Iraq's natural and historical water rights in order to preserve survival, manage and reduce the harmful consequences of this threat is that the emergency measures of the policy makers of this country, regional countries, regional and international organizations and Institutions defending human rights and environmental rights and the United Nations are effective.

Key words: Environmental security, Iraq's national security, water scarcity crisis, Tigris- Euphrates basin, Turkey's dam constructions