

THE INITIAL BEGINNINGS OF THE IRAQI NATIONAL NUCLEAR PROGRAM: FROM THE FOUNDATION UP TO THE GULF WAR 1990

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Abstract

During the foundation of the new Iraqi state in 1921, Iraq did not have a national nuclear program, and since the political changes took place in the world specially after the WWII which resulted a creation of two superpowers in the world: United States and the Soviet Union, Iraq has began thinking seriously about possessing a nuclear power. Despite the fact that the first beginnings of the Iraqi National Nuclear Program (INNP) was simple and only for peaceful purposes, but later this fact has been changed, and the Iraqi nuclear program started develops and progresses quickly especially after coming of Saddam Hussein to power in 1979 and the outbreak of the Iraq - Iran war in 1980.

In the beginning Iraq has relayed on the experiences of the foreign companies in this field: (French and Italian), and after sending abroad some of the Iraqi technical staff and Iraqi scientist and growing the interest of the Iraqi government to create a national Iraqi scientists and technicians staff which later have been reached to 8,000 people at that time, the equation has been changed.

The International community in general and the U.S. in particular started doubt and fear about the goals and the intentions of the national nuclear program of Iraq and the extent of its impact on the future on the Middle East region, the beginning was to put an end to this program through destroying the Osirak French reactor "Tamooz" in 1981 by Israeli aircrafts. As well as a campaign of assassinations which affected the Iraqi and the Arab scientists of the Iraqi nuclear program, and the end was with the fully destruction of the Iraqi nuclear program by the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) which was established by the United Nations according to the decision No. 687 in April 1991 used to oversee Iraq's compliance with the destruction of Iraqi chemical, biological, and missile weapons facilities and cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency's efforts to eliminate nuclear weapon facilities all in the aftermath of the Gulf war 1991.

This commission ceased to destroy the Iraqi Missile system completely. USA and its Allies claimed that Iraq still possesses weapons of mass destruction, and that makes Iraq a great threat to the security in the Middle East, which was proved to be false in the recent war on Iraq in 2003.

By its resolution 687 of 3 April 1991, the United Nations Security Council established the terms and conditions for the formal cease-fire between Iraq and the coalition of Member States co-operating with Kuwait. Section (C) of this resolution called for the elimination under international supervision of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 km, together with related items and production facilities. It also called for measures to ensure that the acquisition and production of prohibited items were not resumed. UNSCOM was set up to implement the non-nuclear provisions of the resolution and to assist the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the nuclear areas. The precise terms were laid out in paragraphs 7 to 13 of the resolution.

This paper will demonstrate several points: highlighting on the historical background of the Iraqi National Nuclear Program since the establishment during fifties until the outbreak of the Gulf war in 1991, What was the motivations for establishing an Iraqi nuclear program? Does Iraq needed to create a nuclear program? Why the Iraqi nuclear program during Saddam's regime has been shifted from peaceful purposes to military purposes?

Keywords: Iraqi National Nuclear Program, Iraqi Atomic Energy Organization, UN sanctions on Iraq, UNSCOM, UNMOVIC, Weapons of mass destruction, UN security council resolutions on Iraq, International inspection committees