

Abstract

The roles of the legislature varies in the extent they perform their duties as far as foreign policy is concerned; Thus, we see the practical variation in their roles. Some legislatures have little influence in this regard; others have larger influence. Between these two variations, other legislatures come in the middle. This comes from the nature of the political system of a state as well as the constitutional mandates granted to the legislature in performing foreign policy duties.

It is therefore the nature of the political system that sets the boundaries and roles of the legislature in the making of foreign policy. It depends on whether foreign policy is exclusively made by the executive, or it is shared with the legislature. It came to be known that the larger role of the legislature in this policy would support the status of the state within the international system.

The more interaction and confidence that the legislature shows towards the role of the executive bodies concerned with the foreign policy, the more legislations they have to be sufficient for the required role in foreign policy, and the more the executive cooperates and participates with the legislature on debating this policy, the more we have legislations enacted that serve the role of the state foreign policy. The nature of the relation between the executive and the legislature is one of the influential factors in the legislative process.

The participation of national parliaments in various political systems, especially the democratic ones, has recently witnessed great development in the field of foreign policy so that a new form of diplomacy, "Parliamentary Diplomacy", appeared. This was the product of several reasons: the increase in the number of roles played by parliaments and their members in the field of foreign policies of their states, the rising interest of peoples in various international affairs, particularly those of humanitarian nature, and the major challenges facing the world that cannot be addressed by one party of the state.

Parliamentary diplomacy is not much different from the traditional diplomacy performed by the executive through its various apparatuses in that the executive also takes part in activities to discuss many issues as well as crises, or those issues of strategic importance to the state, region or the world. Governments alone are unable to influence the national, regional and international crises and problems. The parliaments' take on political and international events and issues is no longer optional

or hypothetical. Parliaments share responsibility with other state apparatuses concerned with preserving state sovereignty and standing firm in the face of conspiracies or any external threats.

Parliamentary diplomacy is one of the new diplomatic fields whose role has been very actively evolving recently for many reasons. Among these reasons is the interplay between internal issues on the international level as they go beyond geographical boundaries. This required more cooperation between state entities and the peoples towards different economic, political and social issues. On playing parliamentary diplomacy, parliaments express the positions of their peoples. This will relieve parliaments of embarrassment and traditional limits restraining official diplomacy played by foreign ministries, and will provide wider space to express their positions that are originally in the interests of their peoples.

The role of the parliamentary institution in many countries is no longer restricted to having parliamentarians playing their traditional roles within their legislative and oversight mandates. This institution has become an important and active party in the field of foreign policy of the states. Due to their participation in debates and discussions inside parliament halls and committees on various topics, parliamentarians will acquire experience in issues laid on the external level and how they are reflected on the local level.

Therefore, legislatures, among which is the Iraqi Council of Representatives, play a role in the making of external policy decisions. However, they are governed by a number of variables like the form of the political system, the distribution of constitutional mandates between the executive and the legislature, and the capacity of their members to play this role.

Most world constitutions grant legislatures the execution of generally similar political duties. So, they usually enjoy comparably similar constitutional authorities like the declaration of war, ratification of treaties, approval of external aides of all types. However, realistically speaking, legislatures differ from each other in the extent they execute foreign policy duties and hence their roles practically vary. The first step in the process of foreign policy decision making of the states starts with the approval of the legislature of the government policy program, which includes its take on foreign policy.

The duties of the Iraqi Council of Representatives are based on the constitutional authorities granted through the roles of the Council in legislation and oversight in foreign policy. Some authorities are related to the financial aspect and some others are

procedural and with effect on those who make foreign policy within the executive branch. The legislative mandate of the Council of Representatives in foreign policy is represented in enacting legislations required for foreign policy goals of the state through the approval of international treaties and agreements, the declaration of war, and the enactment of laws that regulate the activities of foreign policy as well as the institutions concerned with foreign policy.

These roles have their influence on the making of foreign policy. They are related to the governmental program on foreign policy during the process of discussion, amendment and then approval of this program. The Council grants confidence to the minister of foreign affairs, approves the formation of the diplomatic apparatus and organizes public debates and hosting in the field of foreign policy.

The Iraqi Council of Representatives, through its specialized parliamentary apparatuses, also executes parliamentary diplomacy on the individual, bilateral and collective levels, in order to develop international relations and take part in the making of foreign policy in parallel to the executive's role in this field. This can be described as "nascent parliamentary diplomacy" as the legislature is newly formed and the democratic experience in Iraq is also new.