

The economic importance of the construction of the great port of FAW and the link to the Silk Road

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Abstract

Iraq has a single sea port overlooking the Arabian Gulf, and despite the poverty of the Iraqi coast on the Gulf, as it does not exceed 60 km, which is the least area among the countries bordering the Arabian Gulf, this small area represents the maritime port of Iraq on the high seas. And if used correctly, it would have great returns on the economy, as Iraq has an important strategic position in shortening the distances between East and West. And if Iraq wants to catch up with global developments, especially in the field of maritime transport and the establishment of modern and advanced ports, it must expedite the establishment of the great port of Faw and link to the dry canal, as Iraq's possession of important commercial ports, but these ports do not meet Iraq's growing needs, as they are internal ports with limited depths. It does not directly overlook the Arabian Gulf, in addition to Iraq's link to the Belt and Road Initiative and its willingness to exercise its vital role in linking the Asian East and the European West, from the ports of the Arabian Gulf to the ports of the Mediterranean. This requires accelerating the completion of the Faw port project due to its importance in transporting trade and considering it the gateway that drives economic development and the great economic benefits that will come to it through the establishment of the dry canal and contribute to shortening the time and cost of transporting global trade.

Keywords

Faw Grand Port, Belt and Road Initiative.

To cite this article: Al-Zahidee A, R and Al-Edam, H, S. (2021) the economic importance of the construction of the great port of FAW and the link to the Silk Road. *Review of International Geographical Education (RIGEO)*, 11(5), 3134-3144. doi: 10.48047/rigeo.11.05.204

Submitted: 10-10-2020 • **Revised:** 12-12-2020 • **Accepted:** 16-02-2021

Introduction

The world has witnessed rapid and successive developments in the field of establishing and developing ports and maritime transport, due to the realization of the importance of this sector among other economic sectors, if we know that approximately 90% of the volume of international trade is transported by sea. As well as being the border crossing points for countries. Despite the problems that Iraqi ports suffer from due to the neglect of successive Iraqi governments, as well as wars or economic blockades and economic and political crises, and sometimes because of geological factors represented by the Shatt al-Arab sediments that reduce the depths of the entrances to Iraqi ports and the limited area of the maritime borders overlooking the Arabian Gulf, which is estimated at 60 km, as it is one of the poorest coastal areas overlooking the Arabian Gulf compared to the rest of the Arab Gulf countries, but the Iraqi ports have great economic importance, being the only outlet to the high seas, and if they are exploited well and modernly, through the development of the existing Iraqi ports and the introduction of modern technology in the management and organization of ports in a way that leads to attracting merchant ships, and the establishment of the great port of Faw and its dry canal and linking it to the ports overlooking the Mediterranean in Syria and Turkey, so that Iraq would be a link between the Asian East and the European and African West, taking advantage of the distinguished geographical strategic location of Iraq, the Mediterranean between the three continents (Asia Europe and Africa), as well as the link to the Belt and Road Initiative, and turning it into a center for and the development of the Al-Faw region and other associated areas, which represent attractive investment opportunities for profitable local and foreign investments. Which casts direct and indirect economic shadows on the Iraqi economy by reducing unemployment and diversifying sources of income from the port's revenues, as well as stabilizing the security situation.

First: The importance of research: The importance of research stems from the importance of establishing and developing the Great Port of Faw in moving the wheel of economic development in Iraq by linking to the Belt and Road Initiative.

Second: The research problem: What is the role of establishing the Grand Port of Faw and its connection with the New Silk Road initiative in promoting economic and social development?

Third: The research hypothesis: The research hypothesis stems from the fact that the establishment of the great port of Faw and the link with the Silk Road initiative has an important role in achieving economic and social development, directly or indirectly, on the reality of the Iraqi economy.

Fourth: Research Objectives: The research aims to demonstrate the role of the great port of Faw in achieving economic and social growth in Iraq through the link with the Silk Road.

The first topic is some basic concepts

First: The concept of the port The ports are the window through which countries overlook the outside world, and through which the state's trade relations with other countries are built, so the port is the link between the sea and the land, that is, between the Fore land and the Hinter land (Hamid & Ahmed, 2014; Kazar, 2016).

Second: The concept of maritime transport as for the concept of maritime transport, it is an important means of transport, and international transport is one of the most important means of transport. It is the main gateway to the global markets.

Third: The concept of the Silk Road or the Belt and Road Initiative. The belt means the economic belt of the land Silk Road that is, building a branched and comprehensive network through the main Silk Road that starts from China and then connects it with Central Asia, Russia, Turkey, Europe and the White Sea. As for the road, it is meant to link The Chinese coast in Europe through the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean Sea, all the way to the African coast (Aqrawi, 2020; Shehab, 2017).

The second topic is the economic importance of establishing the great port of Faw

First: The strategic importance of the historical site of the Al-Faw port project

The area of establishing the port of Al-Faw is one of the most difficult coastal areas in the world, as it is located in an intermediate area between the two neighbors Kuwait and Iran, taking into account all the geopolitical problems represented in the problems of border demarcation with the two countries whose issue has not been resolved until now despite the intervention of the United Nations, which issued Resolution No. 833* of 1993 regarding the demarcation of the Iraqi-

Kuwaiti border and the agreement of Khor Abdullah, in addition to the problematic establishment of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Kuwaiti at a distance of only 27 km from Iraqi ports, which is contrary to the law of the sea because of its negative effects on the entrance to Iraqi ports. As for the border demarcation agreements with neighboring Iran as well, some problems are still unresolved regarding the borders in the Shatt al-Arab and the problems of the Algiers Agreement of 1975, and the encroachment towards the Shatt al-Arab as a result of geological sediments. The Iraqi coast is located in the Basra Governorate in southern Iraq, and represents the end of the continental shelf and its connection with marine waters, where the land gradually declines towards the Arabian Gulf, specifically at the southernmost part of the sedimentary plain (Al-Mahmoud, 2018; Mohamed & Abood, 2020).

The idea of establishing the great port of Al-Faw dates back to 1938 when Iraq decided to establish a port supporting the port of Basra (the current stronghold). It rejected all diplomatic efforts in this field for fear that Iraq would not return the island to the Kuwaiti side, and in 1985 the Ministry of Transport and Communications submitted a project to build (the Great Port of Basra), but the Iran-Iraq war prevented the start of its implementation (AL-Jumaili & AL-kinani, 2012).

In the 1990s, the project was disrupted due to the siege and financial deficit, and the Iraqi engineer Joseph Hanna Al-Sheikh, who is a resident of the city of Basra, presented a plan to establish a rocky island extending in the territorial waters of Iraq in the Arabian Gulf. However, the Iraqi government rejected the offer submitted by Joseph Hanna Al-Sheikh Company. Iraq seeks, with economic and social motives related to sustainable development, to establish a huge port (the Great Port of Faw), which will represent to Iraq of great importance to meet its urgent needs to expand its commercial activities, and thus the Ministry of Transport placed in April 2010 the cornerstone for the construction of the Great Port of Al-Faw project at the Al-Mamlha area in Ras Al-Bishah located on the eastern bank of Khor Abdullah in the southernmost part of Iraq in the Al-Faw district, which strengthens the regional relations of Iraq and strengthens the joint economic ties, leading to the stability of relations between the neighboring countries and opening a wide field for the employment of hands The female worker (Al-Samarrai, 2013).

Second: The purpose of establishing the port

Through a review of the most important goals that Iraq seeks to achieve through the establishment of the great port of Faw, the importance of establishing the port becomes clear, and among these goals:

- 1- Providing decent job opportunities for thousands of unemployed hands.
- 2- Getting out of the bottleneck represented by the problem of the depths of the Iraqi ports and the narrowness of the shipping lanes in Khor Abdullah and Shatt Al Arab.
- 3- The low competitiveness of the Iraqi ports compared to the developed ports of the region.
- 4- Iraq's need for a port that establishes the coastal borders from the east, Iran, and from the west, Kuwait, and the problems of border demarcation between the riparian countries of the Gulf.
- 5- Iraq's need for a giant port such as the great port of Faw to fill the deficit that hit Iraqi ports, as it cannot join the developments that the world's ports have reached, as well as the ports of the region.
- 6- Improving the coastline and stopping the erosion process and the loss of the coast.
- 7- Preparing Iraq to be a land bridge between East Asia and Europe through Turkey and Syria, as the distance between Iraqi ports and Turkish lands is not more than 1200 km, which does the railway line (Baghdad-Berlin), and thus the great port of Faw becomes one of the most important strategic ports that will change the transportation map The World Bank and that Iraq possesses the economic potentials, which makes it a global center for trade and investment (Moans, 2014).
- 8- Establishing a deep-water port that will allow it to receive giant ships that cannot reach our current ports, which are far from the coast of the Arabian Gulf.
- 9- The capacity of the current ports is not ready for Iraq to exercise its leading role in transporting goods through the dry canal.

Third: basic designs

Regarding the basic designs of the Grand Faw Port, an agreement was reached with the Italian group of companies (TECHNITAL) on 14/1/2010 to study the economic feasibility in terms of the

initial dimensions of the port and its functional components and also consider the renewal and development of the existing ports. The Italian study included eight alternative sites for the port from where the technical and economic aspects and an environmental feasibility study of the port located along the Khor Abdullah Canal in terms of (winds, waves, air currents, sediments, seismic monitoring, etc.). The study included three alternative scenarios, the first scenario represented doing nothing for the Iraqi ports, and the second scenario aimed at developing the existing Iraqi ports, specifically Umm Qasr port. Taking into account the non-interference with the oil ports in terms of the navigation movement of ships entering and leaving the port, and that it is in the Iraqi territorial waters in accordance with the technical requirements, the infrastructure of the new port is established in two phases that can be clarified in the following table (1):

Table (1)

Specifications for the first phase of the completion of the Great Port of Faw until 2028.

The first stage until 2028 to deal with 36-40 million tons of containers and 22-25 million tons of dry bulk This stage requires the following		
For containers	3900 m	long sidewalks
for containers	1200,000 m ²	yard
For bulk materials (bulk)	400,000 m ²	yard
For roads, railways, buildings and services	600,000 m ²	areas
to store wheat	150,000 m ³	silo

Rescuers; Project; New Basra Grand Port FEASIBILITY STUDY/VOL2, 2008

Table (2)

Specifications of the second phase for the completion of the Great Port of Faw until 2038

The second phase of additional infrastructure development is expected to be completed by 2028		
for containers	3,100	long berths for containers
for bulk	1,500	container berths
for container load	800,000 m ²	yard
For bulk materials (bulk)	200,000 m ²	yard
For paved roads and services	400,000 m ³	areas
store wheat	50,000 m ³	silo

Rescuers; Project; New Basra Grand Port FEASIBILITY STUDY/VOL2, 2008

Table (3)

Specifications of the third phase of the completion of the Great Port of Faw until 2038

Thus, the total requirements for the final stage to deal with 66 million tons of containers and 33 million tons of dry bulk		
for containers	7,000 m ²	long berths for containers
For bulk materials (bulk)	3,500 m	container berths
for container load	2000,000 m ²	yard

Rescuers; Project; New Basra Grand Port FEASIBILITY STUDY/VOL2, 2008

Fourth: The port's capacity

The capacity of the Grand Faw port can be clarified according to Table (5):
Table (5) Absorptive capacity

Table (5)

The capacity of the Grand Faw port

Statement	Sidewalks length / km	number of berths	annual capacity
container berths	17	50	25 million tons
piers	5	15	50 million tons
general merchandise docks	5	20	5 million tons
Ro-Ro. Pier		1	400,000 cars
Oil derivatives docks		6	230,000 barrels/day

Source: Ministry of Transport (2020)

The port was scheduled to start operating in the year 2018, according to the plan and timeline prepared by the study of the Italian companies, but due to the delay of successive Iraqi governments in completing the project, and their lack of feeling of their responsibility towards this important strategic project, knowing that that period was explosive budgets, and it was possible to allocate sufficient funds to complete the project, but that period was not utilized until the complex crisis represented by the drop in oil prices, and the period of state preoccupation with fighting ISIS in 2014. In addition to external factors related to the influence of neighboring countries and their sense of the port's regional and global importance and its competitive ability, which it is likely that it will affect it in the future. All these factors and others led to the delay in the completion of the project.

Fifth: The cost of completing the Faw Grand Port project

The estimated cost of completing the port in full amounted to approximately (4.4) billion euros (four billion four hundred million euros). The General Company for Iraqi Ports has contracted with two companies (a Greek company and a Korean company) to complete the eastern and western breakwaters, and they have been completed. And a contract was made with the Korean company Daewoo to complete the first phase of the Grand Port of Faw project, which is represented by five projects that were signed at once, represented by the construction of (the highway linking the port of Faw and Umm Qasr port), (the five container berths) and (drilling and furnishing the navigation channel). (External), (Khor Al-Zubair Canal Tunnel), (Backfilling a Storage Yard, Container Handling, and Digging the Internal Navigational Canal). The five contracts, their costs and completion period can be clarified according to Table (6):

Table (6)

Contracts for the five projects

Contract	Statement	Cost	Implementation period
the first	Construction of the berth wall - container terminal (identifying the five berths)	\$511 million	37.5 months
The second	Construction of the road linking the Grand Port of Faw and Umm Qasr	440 million dollars	45 months
the third	Construction of a tunnel under the flooded Khor Al Zubair, with a length of 2444 m, a width of 3 lanes in each direction, and a depth of 28 m	634 million dollars	48 months

the fourth	Infrastructure - Phase One, excavation and backfilling works	\$726 million	48 months
Fifth	Construction of a navigation channel. The length of the channel is 23 km, the depth is 19,8 m, the width of the channel is 200 m	314 million dollars	48 months
The sum of the five contracts		2625	

Source: Ministry of Transport (2021)

These five projects that were contracted with the Korean company Daewoo, and if they are completed after four years, as agreed upon according to the planned timetable and set by the Italian company, and as pledged by the Korean company executing the project, the production capacity will consist of five berths that can accommodate two million containers. And a maximum capacity of three million containers per year.

Sixth: Projects attached to the great port of Faw (the economic city in Faw)

It has become necessary for the port and maritime transport community to focus on the axes of sustainable development to confirm that this dimension has become a general international trend, and to find innovative ways to increase the effectiveness of port services and achieve international competition on the maritime transport map and Vision 2030, in line with the seventeen sustainable development goals, 169 goals and 240 Index of the United Nations announced in September 2015. Although there is no explicit goal related to maritime transport and ports within the declared goals, a number of indicators related to transport indirectly are addressed (Badr, 2017). Transport is a critical factor in achieving eight goals and 11 goals, directly and indirectly, in contributing to the construction of high-quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure to support economic development and achieve human well-being and focus on facilitating access to all at an affordable cost and on an equal footing (Barki & Deleze-Black, 2016; UNCTAD, 2016). This is through the development of leadership cadres in the port and maritime transport industry in order to promote sustainable development in the areas of future infrastructure, energy, social integration, security and safety, developing green ports, preserving the environment and reducing carbon emissions, which contributes to achieving the sustainable goals of ports. Investment in infrastructure and technology development is essential in ensuring the grand port of Faw to be established as a central and chosen business point in the logistics and transportation sector in Iraq, the Middle East and Europe. The Grand Faw port project covers Iraq's need for a hundred years, as the port area has changed to approximately 54 km² after it was 12 km² in the basic design, i.e. an increase of more than four times the previous area, provided that the port contains 90 berths for various goods, and includes power stations, and heavy water treatment. Water purification, many squares and buildings, and a railway station. It is a plan to establish an integrated city behind the port worthy of the coast of Iraq on the Arabian Gulf. It includes lakes and a coast on the sea. Thus, the port needs thousands of manpower, as well as other opportunities in rail transport, land transport and air transport (Transport and the Citizen, 2019). We can show the components of the Grand Faw port project as follows (Planning Division, 2019) and (Map 1):

- Faw oil refinery and petrochemical plant.
 - The western breakwater with a length of 16 km in the sea (completed)
 - Oil derivatives docks station.
 - The eastern breakwater with a length of 8 km in the sea (completed)
 - Marine infrastructure, including (marine excavation works, sea burial, stowage, and construction of container berths).
- The base, heavy water treatment, and the internal railway system, and linking it to the national railway, with a length of more than 100 km.
- Land infrastructure, including (service buildings and squares, the internal road network, service stations such as water desalination and power stations).

- Casting station.
- Khor Al Zubair Tunnel (Al Harir Tunnel*) under Khor Al Zubair with a length of 2.5 km.
- The road linking the Grand Port of Faw and Umm Qasr Port, with a length of 75 km.

The basic design of the Faw Peninsula consists of four main parts (the site of the great port of Faw and the expansion of the current city of Faw, the urban area and the industrial zone), in addition to the infrastructure for each part of it, logistics services, transportation routes, transport movement in the region and future expansions.

Al-Faw Economic City is an essential part of the components of the Great Port of Faw, which is an important economic resource, and will contribute to the expansion of trade exchange between Iraq and the countries of the world, thus strengthening international economic relations. It also contributes to the urban development of the region by transforming that region from a semi-region Abandoned into an industrial, residential, coastal and tourist city that would improve the standard of living of the population and open up prospects for the development of Iraq's economic, social and security future. It is hoped that the industrial city will include integrated industrial zones that are environmentally friendly and investment projects. Supported by all infrastructures to be ready to receive investors in the local and foreign private sector. Including an air cargo airport with enhanced multimodal transport*, a refinery for petroleum products, and a petrochemical plant, in addition to a residential city with a capacity of nearly half a million people (SDG, 2019). Through the map of the FAO region drawn up by the Italian Chancellor, which was contained in the proposal for the master plan of the FAO Peninsula prepared by the Italian group of companies TECHNITAL (AL Faw Peninsula Master Plan, 2019).

Table (7)

The number of manpower in the projects attached to the port

The project	The number of manpower
Heavy industries (steel industry, petrochemical, oil refinery)	3700-3400
Light industry (food industry, textile and clothing industry, machinery and equipment, building and construction, transportation equipment manufacturing, medicine)	18000
Services (schools, kindergartens, training institutes)	9000
Agro-industries (extensive farming, hydroponics)	1500
Transportation and logistics (cargo airport, dry port)	2000
Services (power station, waste recycling plant, water desalination)	1000
green areas	350
other	4500
the total	40050

AL Faw Peninsula Master Plan (2019)

Usually the construction of ports accompanies the development and construction of the rear areas adjacent to the port (hinterland). As for the Great Port of Al-Faw, approximately (100) km² has been acquired, and the Ministry of Transport has contracted with the Italian consulting company "Tental" to prepare the Master Plan for that area, including: (Planning Division, 2019)

- Inventory of all energy facilities and projects in one area for reasons related to pollution.
- Distribution of spaces in a way that ensures optimal use of lands by dividing them into industrial, commercial, service, residential and tourist areas... and others.
- Protection of the Iraqi coast through the establishment of a military and security base.
- Improving the environment in the Al-Faw Peninsula through the establishment of a green belt. It is known that the weather in the Al-Faw region is very bad in the summer due to the high temperature and humidity.

- Designing the road linking the Grand Port of Faw and Umm Qasr Port with the design of the tunnel under the Khor Al Zubair Canal (the Silk Tunnel), which links the Great Port of Faw to the international road, which contributes to activating and facilitating the transportation of goods coming from the countries of the world.
- Restricting all oil and gas pipelines and cables in one corridor to ensure that there is no conflict, as well as to reduce the spaces occupied by these lines.

The Italian company is preparing a general plan for potential factories and factories within the industrial zone and how to deliver services to them, such as iron and steel factories, fertilizers, cement, food and canning factories, and others. In addition to the establishment of an oil refinery, in coordination with the Ministry of Oil, with a capacity of (300) barrels per day, especially since crude oil depots are close to the site and there are docks for the export of oil derivatives that will be established for this purpose, which will enhance Iraq's export capacity, which it hopes will reach eight million barrels per day.

The economic zone in the city of Al-Faw is divided as follows:

1. The new residential area is located west of the current city of Faw and includes various residential activities and events and service facilities to accommodate approximately (350,000 thousand people) for people who will work in various port activities
2. The industrial and commercial area in the Al-Faw peninsula, located in the northwest of the port of Al-Faw, with an area of 10,000 hectares. It is closely linked with the port, commercial docks, the iron network, and the roads linking the port and the industrial zone, and part of it lies within the port's borders with regard to heavy industries such as (The oil refinery and petrochemical plant) and it also includes various heavy industries stationed near the port (such as the desalination plant, power plant, waste recycling plant, etc.), light industries, assembly industries, packaging and re-export industries, the Basra railway, Al-Faw and other environmental services ([AL Faw Peninsula Master Plan, 2019](#)).
3. Development of the extension area of the current city of Faw towards the northwest of the current city and located on the borders of the Shatt al-Arab and includes various commercial, residential and service activities and events to accommodate approximately (150,000 thousand people).
4. The environmental performance strategy to support a sustainable environmental policy for the industrial zones, as it was set within the basic plan to deal with environmental issues and the optimal use of resources, including energy, water and raw materials in order to achieve an integrated approach for social benefits, and to achieve the strategic objectives of environmental performance through:
 - a- Effective use of resources.
 - b- Reducing environmental impacts.
 - c- The provisions of managing the interactions between the environment and the surrounding communities in order to reduce the use of resources and reduce environmental pollution ([AL Faw Peninsula Master Plan, 2019](#)).

The third topic is the link to the Belt and Road Initiative

The Silk Road project or the Belt and Road Initiative was introduced by Chinese President (Xi Jinping) in 2013 during his visit to Central and Southeast Asia, as it included more than 65 countries from the three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, with a population of approximately 65% of the world's population That is, about four and a half billion citizens, in addition to that it attracts approximately 35% of global trade and more than 31% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) ([Qian & Fulton, 2017](#); [Song, Che, & Yang, 2018](#)). In a speech he delivered in Kazakhstan in September 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping called for the development of the Silk Road Economic Belt, or what is known as the Silk Road Economic Belt. This concept relates to building roads and corridors consisting of railways, agricultural and industrial activities, and energy, water and construction projects. Infrastructure of trade, as the belt extends from the Pacific Ocean to the Baltic Sea, as described by the Chinese President, taking advantage of the ancient Silk Road. These roads extend through a wide network of transport lines, the Internet, and infrastructure projects in airports, ports, railways, roads and bridges linked to economic development corridors, an initiative that can be considered the project of the economic century in the world. The world

in the twenty-first century (Ahmed, 2020). This initiative can be summed up in reviving the ancient Silk Road anew to link the continents of the ancient world (Asia, Europe, Africa), through a wide network of transportation routes, and it falls within the framework of the soft power strategy, as China employs its great capabilities in granting loans through financial surplus, so it established a bank Investing in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and entering into investment projects with the participating countries to complete the infrastructure in their countries and this is a way to increase their strength. The Belt and Road Initiative, also known as the Silk Road Economic Belt, is a development strategy adopted by the Chinese government that includes the development of infrastructure and investment for the countries organizing this initiative, and then as a means to develop cooperation and communication between regions. The cost of this project has reached one trillion dollars and attracted an additional eight trillion dollars since its launch (ESCWA, 2019). This initiative focuses on five important areas: (coordination between development policies, strengthening investments and foreign trade relations, establishing infrastructure and utilities networks, improving financial cooperation and intensifying social and cultural exchange. These main pillars are closely related to the objectives of The seventeen sustainable development The Ring and the Road initiative contributes to bridging large financial gaps to achieve the sustainable development goals (ESCWA, 2019).

Iraq's link to the Ring and Road Initiative is a forward-looking vision

The volume of trade between Iraq and China

By extrapolating the volume of trade between China and Iraq, it becomes clear to us the depth of the importance of linking to the Belt and Road Initiative (Silk Road), as China is one of the largest trading partners with Iraq due to the large volume of trade exchange compared to the rest of the world, and although the trade balance has always been It constitutes a deficit in favor of China, but China's need for energy sources represented by oil made it pay special attention to Iraq, which prompted it to conclude initiatives and agreements with the Iraqi side and emphasize the importance of Iraq, through what the Chinese Prime Minister (Xi Jinping) stated during a visit The former Prime Minister, Mr. (Adel Abdul-Mahdi) to China about the importance of Iraq, in reference to strengthening the infrastructure in Iraq to rehabilitate it to be linked to the Belt and Road Initiative (the New Silk Road). By comparing the volume of Iraqi imports to the largest exporting partner countries to Iraq, including (Turkey, China, Italy, Jordan, South Korea, Iran, the United States of America and the European Union) for the period from 2015 to 2019, in which the role of China as the largest partner with Iraq is highlighted according to Table (8):

Table (8)

The highest value of imports for trading partners
(The amount is one trillion Iraqi dinars)

Year	Country	Volume of Imports	Percentage
2015	Turkey	9.9	21.70%
	China	7.6	16.40%
	South Korea	5.4	11.70%
2016	China	19.9	36.30%
	Jordan	7.7	13.90%
	European Union	7.2	13.10%
2017	Iran	10.4	30.10%
	Italy	3.9	11.40%
	China	3.8	11.10%
2018	China	10.6	26.20%
	Iran	4.8	11.90%
	United State	4	9.80%
2019	China	5.8	27.10%
	Iran	3.1	14.30%
	South Korea	2.2	10.20%

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the reports of the Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Organization, Directorate of Trade Statistics, imports reports for the years, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019.

We note from Table (8) the diversity of countries on which Iraq relies on imports, but it is noted that China is the partner most contributing to Iraq's foreign imports, as it is among the top three countries of the largest exporting countries to Iraq. China's exports to Iraq in 2015 amounted to approximately 16.40%, ranking the second country after Turkey, which amounted to 21.7%, while in 2016 China was in the first place in the volume of its exports to Iraq, with a rate of 36%, and in 2017, China was in third place after Iran and Italy, with a rate of 3, 8%, and in 2018, China ranked first with a rate of 26.2%. With regard to the year 2019, also, China was in the first place among the countries exporting to Iraq, with a rate of 27.1%. This continuous increase in the volume of economic activity with China shows the size of the growing economic relations between the two countries. We conclude from this that Iraq can be linked to the Belt and Road Initiative (the New Silk Road), and it is likely that it will be the heart of the New Silk Road and a confluence between the sea and land road, and the important node in its trade corridors through the dry canal corridors linked to the great port of Faw, and thus Iraq is an important strategic location in the map of regional and global ports through linking with global shipping lines, specifically through the port of cadres in Pakistan or other ports such as the ports of Singapore and Japan.

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