

## The Role of the Governmental Public Relations in Marketing the Great Port of Al – Faw

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### Abstract

The Great Port of Faw is an Iraqi port on Al-Faw Peninsula to the south of Basra Governorate. The cost of the project is about (8. 2) Billion American Dollars with a total area of (54) square kilometers. The capacity of the port that was planned to be constructed nearly (99) million tons annually, to be one of the largest ports overlooking the Arabian Gulf and the tenth in the world. The depth of the port is likely to be (19) meters to accommodate the largest commercial ships. The foundation stone for this project was laid on 5 April 2010. In terms of the geographical location, the port is located in Raas Al-Besha region at the end of the continental cliff of Iraq. It is considered a quality leap in its geopolitical importance to link Iraq with the world by restoring the importance of the location that links between the East and the West. Its construction will change the global maritime transport map. This project upon completion is likely to become one of the largest ports in the Arabian Gulf. It is regarded as a strategic project links the East with Europe through Iraq, Turkey and Syria with the so-called dry channel.

### Keywords

Governmental Public Relation, Marketing, Al – Faw, Port, Role.

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## **Introduction :**

The Great Port of Faw is an Iraqi port on Al-Faw Peninsula to the south of Basra Governorate. The cost of the project is about ( 8.2 ) Billion American Dollars with a total area of ( 54 ) square kilometers. The capacity of the port that was planned to be constructed nearly ( 99 ) million tons annually , to be one of the largest ports overlooking the Arabian Gulf and the tenth in the world. The depth of the port is likely to be ( 19 ) meters to accommodate the largest commercial ships. The foundation stone for this project was laid on 5 April 2010

In terms of the geographical location , the port is located in Raas Al-Besha region at the end of the continental cliff of Iraq . It is considered a quality leap in its geopolitical importance to link Iraq with the world by restoring the importance of the location that links between the East and the West . Its construction will change the global maritime transport map . This project upon completion is likely to become one of the largest ports in the Arabian Gulf. It is regarded as a strategic project links the East with Europe through Iraq , Turkey and Syria with the so-called dry channel

The construction of the port , the connection to the dry canal and the projects are attached to Al-Faw economic zone are considered as great economic importance . Which their effects are reflected in the development of the wheel of economic and social development . Which contributes to achieving the goals of sustainable development in Iraq in the medium and long term through construction of infrastructure for roads, bridges, railways and airports , development of existing ports as well as the establishment of Al-Faw the large port in order to link with international trade routes, especially the Belt project and Silk Road . Which makes Iraq an important economic corridor , way in the region with taking advantage of the strategic location of Iraq in the middle between the three continents . And the most important link in the region to connect the Eastern Asia with the European and African West , for the purpose of getting rid of many problems that constitute an obstacle towards the various activities of the existing Iraqi ports in the light of the recent developments are witnessed by the ports Where the ports of Iraq no longer keep pace with those developments.

Since its early days , the construction of the port has faced a large number of rumors and gossip . Where a large media war was waged against it , including at the local and foreign levels , such as electronic armies propagating gossip against it with an evidence or without evidence ( 1 )

Where this study deals with the role of government public relations in marketing Al – Faw large port of in a scientific , sound and proper manners

First :

The Americana encyclopedia department defines the public relations as “The art that is based on the analysis and interpretation of a specific topic . Whether this topic revolves around an idea, a person or a group with the intention of preparing ways for the masses to recognize the benefit contained in this topic and that person actually benefits from performing that” ( 2 )

Considering that public relations is “A continuous and planned communication function is carried out by private , public institutions and organizations to gain public understanding and support by measuring the direction of public opinion to ensure that it is compatible as much as possible with its policies and activities, as well as to achieve more creative cooperation and effective performance of common interests through using planned mass media.” ( 3 )

And for significance of the public relations activity . It is requires of availability of a basic set of methods that ensure the success of this activity and achievement its objectives. The previous definitions have referred to some of those methods, including planning, evaluation, coordination and others. It aims to create or establish good relations or maintain these relationships, as well as to avoid misunderstanding between an organization and the masses that deal with it. It uses various means and methods of communication in order to improve the image of the organization among the masses . It also conveys the view of the different masses to the senior management of the organization. ( 4 )

Therefore, we believe that it is necessary for the governmental public relations departments in the various ministries of the state to cooperate in marketing the port in the best scientific way through a proposed example for it within this study

Second : Significance of Al – Faw Port economically :

The port's strategic importance is due to moving the wheel of maritime navigation . It will be the first industrial city in Al- Faw region in the Middle East. The project is expected to have large financial returns for Iraq through the transportation and delivery of goods and oil faster than ever

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before. It will also have a maximum carrying capacity of ( 99 ) million tons annually , moreover to revitalizing the transport sector in Iraq . It aims to diversify import and export routes. Economists expect that the port will bring Iraq benefits estimated at more than ( 50 ) billion dinars per month when the project is completed and operating at its maximum capacity

It is planned to establish a railway to link the Gulf region through Iraqi lands to northern Europe through Turkey . And this is what gives it global importance at the level of world trade

Grain storages, towers, wind tunnels, 2 conveyor belts, 22 standard cranes of different capacities, airstrips, international roads, water treatment plants and fuel stations will be built.

The project is also will be considered as a link between the Arab Gulf countries . Which are a major consumer of foreign goods, . Where it is a link with Turkey which is a major consumer of oil and at the same time the main source of goods. Therefore, it is expected that Al-Faw region will become a link that connects many parties with each other.

Among the internal obstacles are the weakness of financial financing and Iraq's economic inability to provide the necessary liquidity to secure its contracts with the executing companies, as well as neutralizing the forces of corruption and extortion that may be practiced on the executing authorities, in addition to the partisan and political struggle over the management of some of its institutions.(5)

And in the concern of regarding foreign challenges " They occur when the interests of some regional countries are damaged and the maps of sea lanes change , and this affects channels and passages that have been living on their imports for a long time . So some parties may seek direct and indirect intervention to delay the implementation of the project if they cannot stop it." There are many problems and threats to the project , most notably of them as following :

A ) Port of Mubarak Al-Kabeer - Kuwait: According to the statements are made by Iraqi officials . The port of Al- Faw will enable Iraq to be the first in the region in the field of ports . Where without the port of Al – Faw . Iraq will not be able to be located in the right place in the region in the future. ( 6 )

The first and greatest danger comes from the port of Mubarak Al-Kabeer in Kuwait . Which Kuwait began to build it in 2010 at a cost of ( 1.1 ) billion American Dollars off the Iraqi coast on Bobian island . It is supposed to be completed in 2016

The project which Kuwait chose to implement . It is located a few kilometers away from the great Al-Faw project . It is considered the most critical navigational area in the world . As it imposes a geo-political reality on Iraq in that it closes the only sea lung of Iraq that does not have a sea outlet . Where it deprives Iraq of its maritime connections with other countries , in addition to that the project intends to extend railway lines towards Um Qasr the Iraqi port . Which will lead to repercussions on Iraq's land trade. ( 7 )

To be more information that the feasibility study of the project stated that Mubarak Port will depend on the Kuwaiti-Iraqi trade greatly . Whereas it will depend on the Iraqi commercial movement greatly, as a matter of relying on consumption that the highest percentage of which is concentrated in Iraq by 68% . It is expected that 80% of the Iraqi market will move through Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port on Bobian island because the Iraqi ports do not carry a large capacity of containers as Mubarak Port will carry ( 8 )

The project according to the many reports that are published by economic institutions regarding it. They acknowledged the physical damage that will be inflicted directly on the Iraqi economy . Where the Iraqi ports which are located north of ( Creek ) Khour Abdullah will be gradually paralyzed after the implementation of the project. The port extensions will also cause a reduction in the area of the continental cliff of Iraq . The construction of concrete berms in Creek Abdullah will cause severe damage to the fish wealth in Iraqi territorial waters. ( 9 )

As one report indicates that the project is supported by the United States and contributes to containing Iran's growing influence on Kuwait and quelling Kuwait's fears of what it considers the neighbor's constant threat to its independence.

In addition to a plan to turn Kuwait into a regional hub . Where Kuwait in which aspires to become a key free trade zone to link Asia with Europe by building a city with value approximately ( 90 ) Billions American Dollars , build railways and metro network serving the port .

B ) The Suez Canal

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The great Al - Faw project was designed to accommodate ( 99 ) million tons of freight annually and to connect the Arabian Gulf to Europe by means of an iron network . Where this in turn is considered a major threat to the Suez Canal and its role in the region that is represented in sea freight between Asia and Europe to the American continent, especially in the light of what the Egyptian government has done and is doing in terms of developing the Suez Canal by digging the new branch of the Suez and developing the sea berths with the aim of expanding the canal's revenues.

C ) Iran

Iran has shown interest in the great port of Al-Faw . Where this justifies the green light that is given to the Iraqi government to establish the port in response to Mubarak Al-Kabeer port and the fact that the port is located in an area close to the Iranian border and to allow it to develop trade opportunities for Iran. Where Iran has expressed at many times about its interest in linking the Iranian railways to the dry channel that will link the Iraqi railways to Europe passing through Turkey . Which is one of the stages of building the great project.

D ) Mountain of Ali – Dubai

The great Al - Faw project in Iraq threatens the position of ports of Mountain of Ali in Dubai . Which is regarded as the largest port in the Arab region for what it provides access to local, regional and global markets. It is worthy to be mentioned that the multi-modal port of sea, land and air transport plays a pivotal role in the economy of the Emirate of Dubai in particular and the economy of the United Arab Emirates in general . Where it is considered also pivotal to more than ( 90 ) weekly shipping services that link more than 140 ports around the world

The Emirates formed a great weight on Egypt during the different periods of governments from the days of Mubarak to Morsi and then Al - Sisi in order not to prejudice the development of the Suez Canal because of the negative effects that it bears on the Jebel Ali site and the economy of Dubai. Therefore, it is not excluded that the Emirates also contributed to pressure on the Iraqi government since the project was announced in the past years to eliminate the idea or to delay it as the weakest faith.

Third : Role of the public relations to enhance of breakthrough construction of Al – Faw Great port

Public relations seeks to achieve mutual understanding between the organizations and the individuals who are working within them and between them and the masses that deal with them . Where it aims to establish a good reputation for the organization among the masses that it deals with on the one hand, and on the other hand to maintain good relations and continue dealing with those masses . Where the goal of any organization, whether large, medium or small, and whether governmental or private, is to seek communication, understanding and cooperation with its masses. The continued success of the organization's work depends on its image in the minds of the public . As the formation of this image of it is linked to the services or products it provides.(10 ) Therefore, the main objectives of qualitative public relations in any organization are as following : ( 11 )

- 1) Formation a good reputation for the port in local and foreign means .
- 2 ) Creating a state of contentment locally and maintaining it among the masses
- 3 ) Forming a positive mental image of the port administration and the Ministry of Transport among the public
- 4 ) Formation of a state of reconciliation of interest between the port administration and its masses of workers and clients. Public relations also seeks in times of crisis, especially what is facing the port of Al - Faw. If it is well prepared , it contributes to achieving a number of goals, including as below : (12)

A ) Control over the crisis or emergency situation quickly , more effectively through rapid response to critical situations that appear on a large scale. And coordination between the various state institutions with regard to public relations activities in order to ensure a clear positive image of the port. It is necessary for each state institution to understand its role in public relations programs that support the stages of port completion.

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B ) Reducing the ambiguity surrounding some positions of the port administration , announcing the transparency of its projects, their financial costs, the type of companies to work for and the classification of those companies. ( 13 )

C ) Gaining public approval , support through hosting the port administration for public opinion leaders from journalists, community leaders, embassies, artistic, literary and scientific figures in universities

D ) Gaining new supporters in response to a good and planned treatment of the crisis or emergency situation.

E ) Protecting the positive image of the port's work progress and the fulfilled achievements. And cooperation with the cadres working in the field of public relations and media in order to secure the necessary skills to employ and use all means of communication and audio, visual and digital media to market the stages of completion of work in the port. Upgrading the media discourse, avoiding composition, rhetoric, ambiguous general phrases, relying on facts, figures, analysis and follow-up, preparing well for it so that you create a clear and positive picture of the stages of achievement. ( 14 )

F ) Confronting rumors that are launched against the port, both internal and foreign in responding to them on a timely basis with the help of a number of media professors , supportive agencies from the security services , establishing a crisis cell to confront and analyze rumors. ( 15 )

G ) Establishing cultural activities such as exhibitions , conferences , organizing visits to well-known economic and international personalities that would contribute to building a good picture of the stages of work.

H ) Through the government public relations function will make : ( 16 )

1 ) Through providing continuous , organized information about the policies, plans and achievements are made by the Ministry of Transport and the port administration with full transparency to the public, and informing them of the legislation and procedures that achieve success.

2 ) Providing advice to ministers , senior officials in the Ministry of Transport regarding current and expected reactions to existing or prospective policies facing the port's work phases. ( 17 )

I ) Communicating the institution's message to the masses of the people , providing all services and instructions by using all media means to clarify the percentage of achievement.

- The public relations departments know the trends of the internal and external audience of the institution in multiple and immediate ways, such as e-mail services, websites or through new media sites. ( 18 )

-Delivering the correct information to the public in its various collections and as quickly as possible. ( 19 )

- Contribute to the promotion , marketing of the company's products , services and enhance its reputation . ( 20 )

-Identifying the trends , reactions surrounding the institution . Which helps to anticipate and confront crises. ( 21 )

-Establishing effective relations with the media . As it gives the institution great possibilities for immediate communication. ( 22 )

-Providing data, information and statistics for the processing of any media material or institutional activity. ( 23 )

-The Internet is considered as an effective means in public relations research to learn about public opinion , its impressions of the institution as well as its effective use in immediate evaluation. ( 24 )

The website is regarded as the main interface for the institution . As it is a website owned by an institution . It includes a set of static pages . It contains general information about that institution, its activities, the services it provides, the products it offers and promotes, it also includes data pertaining to the institution, addresses, links and ways to contact it . These sites are fixed throughout the day on the World Wide Web . It is considered the best media for the institution . Where it is available to all visitors to the network to answer their questions and meet their requests ( 24 )

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