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**AFTER MATH OF THE GULFWAR: ROLE OF THE US, UN
AND THE ARAB STATES**

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Abstract

The disaster caused by the Iraq-Kuwait conflict is attributed to incapacity of the UN organization. In contrast to this some insist that the Gulf War was the UN's finest hour. The international community after 40 years of cold war finally united and drew alien in the sands of Arabia and declared aggression never again .The USA declared war not the Secretary General ,not the UN, not even Kuwait. An international organization dedicated "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war " became the engine for war. It was in the popular mind "UN war", even if it was fought without the UN flag or UN blue helmets.

The Gulf Crisis was the first test case for the United Nations' effectiveness in the post cold war period. Divergent opinions have been expressed ranging from the most important and effective peace-keeper to an overall condemnation of being impotent and irrelevant. Keeping aside these extreme view points, one thing is very clear that the UN initially failed to help the parties to find out a peaceful solution of their differences and later to achieve Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait without the use of military force.'

Keywords: GCC, middle East, Kurds, Shiites, Emir of Kuwait, PLO

1. Introduction

Regarding the United States role in the Gulf crisis ,the study observes that the US went to the Gulf for the following reasons: Saddam Hussein had developed unlimited ambitions to dominate one of the most important strategic areas in the world ."If we do not stop him now, we would have to stop him later" was the American calculation. The study also revealed that from an Iraqi perspective the west to went to war not because of any fundamental concern over Kuwait but because it could not countenance the emergence of a militarily strong and politically influential Iraq under Saddam Hussein. Iraq was breaking the shackles of military, political and technological dependence .This threatened the west's domination of

the region , security of Israel as well as posing a danger to the oil interests of the developed world. Regarding the UN role in the prevention of crisis ,the study makes the following points:

1-UN Security Council must reform its functioning . In a crisis situation, it must hold more general public meetings.

2-UN Secretary General appeared too timid and repeatedly yielded to strong pressures from Washington.

3-The Security Council in voting for economic sanctions did not include any machinery to monitor the impact and to determine accountability.

4-The UN closed eyes and ears to the Iraqi plea and its desire to withdraw at some stage. It endorsed the US proposal to replay coalition forces in the Gulf and resort to armed action against Iraq. In fact the war in the Gulf was more a result of the US-UK and allied states' conspiracy to trap Iraq than a consequences of Iraq's military action a againstKuwait.

Regarding the Arab world's role in the Gulf Crisis AND aftermath ,the study revealed that the Crisis has triggered cataclysmic changes in the Arab World .Shifts in alliance patterns accelerated and the inter-Arab organizations suffered a criminalsdiscord. The study further revealed that depending upon their geographical and ideological outlooks, Arabs placed the Crisis in diametrically opposing frame works which influenced their analyses of the causes of the crisis and adoption of an appropriate resolution.

AFTERMATH OF THE GULFWAR: ROLE OF THE US, UN AND THE ARAB STATES

In this chapter an attempt has been made to assess the role of United States, United Nations, Gulf and the Arab world's role in the Iraq – Kuwait conflict. The chapter has been divided into three sections. The first section deals with the role of United states, the second section deals with the role of United Nations and the third section concerns itself with the Arab world's response to the Gulf Crisis and the aftermath.

According to Henry Kissinger, the United states had three options for dealing with the Gulf Crisis. It could passively subscribe to the United Nations resolutions. It could support a joint action of the industrial democracies, each of which is more dependent on oil from the Middle East than the United States itself. It could lead the protest against Saddam Hussein and muster international support for an action in which the Americans would bear the brunt ⁽¹⁾ the United States have opted for the last with all the cones –quinces that imply. In fact, the Americans have provided 95 percent of the armed forces against Iraq. Only Great Britain and France have substantially contributed to the Inter –national Force.

The United States went to the Gulf for two major reasons. Firstly, saddam Hussein had Unlimited ambitions to dominate one of the most important strategic areas in the world, because he had oil, he had the mean to acquire the weapons he needed for aggression against his neighbors, including at some futer time a nuclear arsenal. If he had succeeded in Kuwait, he would have attacked others and used whatever weapons he had, including the chemical and the nuclear, to achieve his goals. If we do not stop him now, we would have to stop him later when the cost in the lives of young Americans would have been infinitely greater. War is bad but a bad peace is worse because it can lead to a bigger war. Secondly, there is an even more important long term reason. If saddam Hussein had gained from his aggression

against Ku-wait, there are other potential aggressors in the world who would have been tempted to wage war against their neighbors. If we fail to roll back this kind of aggression, no potential aggressor in the future will be deterred by warnings from the United State or by Un resolutions. Getting him out of Kuwait and eliminating his capacity to wage aggressive war in future gives the US the credibility deter aggressions elsewhere without sending in American armed forces because potential aggressors will know that when the United states warns against aggressions we have the means and the will to back up our warnings⁽²⁾.

The former president of the United states Richard Nixon has so indicated that "it is not just a war bout oil. It is not a war about hostages. It is not a war about democracy. It is a war about peace – not just peace in our time but peace for our children and grand children for generations to come"⁽³⁾. However, two perceptible observers on Gulf Crisis, Pierre Salinger and Eric Laurent say in their book "secret Dossier: the Hidden Agenda Behind the Gulf War" how war could have been avoided, they mentioned that the war on Iraq is perhaps the best example of war that did not have happen. Although the Bush administration Kept protesting that it was going "the extra mile for peace", the evidence clearly suggests otherwise. It was in fact going the extra mile for war⁽⁴⁾.

The United states and Iraqi relationship is quite intriguing within two years, from 1988 to 1990. Iraq went from being a virtual US ally to becoming the first Arab state to fight a war with the United states. The development of this rocky relationship is on of the most interesting chapters in the history of US policy towards the Middle East⁽⁵⁾. The US – Iraq relations were extremely hostile in early 1980's. The Iran – Iraq war ushered a new era in the relations between Iraq and the U.S. In September 1984 diplomatic relations were restored. Two essential factors have dominated US - Iraq relations. First, the essence of Gulf politics was a strategic triangle between the two stronger powers – Iran and Iraq – and the weaker Gulf Arab Monarchies. This last group sought US help to deter their mightier, aggressive neighbors. Toward this end, in the 1970's the United States supported Iran against Iraq and in the 1980's it backed Iraq against Iran. In the 1990's with both Iran and Iraq hostile, the US had to intervene directly to save Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. In the long run, Iraq's goal was to dominate these states and the Gulf and eliminate the external influence while the US objective was to support regional 'stability' maintain status quo by defending the monarchs. Second, fundamental differences between the two states systems made a clash inevitable.

The confrontation with Iraq began immediately after the Iran-Iraq war came to an end in August 1988. In fact the US started its campaign to discipline Iraq much before its war with Iran ended. The reason for this was the military performance of Iraq and its lack of self restrain while using the various deadly weapons projected in the Iraq-Iran war. Iraq emerged as a strong military power out of this war. It was also making noticeable efforts at modernization including the creation of an impressive infra-structure and an industrial and technological base which continued to progress even as the war with Iran raged. It became fashionable, in fact, to describe Iraq as the potential Japan of the Middle East. In short, Iraq was emerging a significant regional power. The fact that it was the only Arab country whose resources were substantial and diverse enough to give it that sort of potential that made its progress disturbing to the beneficiaries of the status quo in the Gulf and the Middle East in general.6 Israel was such a beneficiary and it had much at stake in the new reality being created by Iraq's rise as a regional super-power in the region. I

fact, it was Israel which first focused the US attention to the Iraqi military build up and popularized the notion that Iraqi leader was a reincarnated Hitler.⁷ Not only militarily but also economically Iraq's weight had become too great to be borne. The President of the United States, George Bush and his senior advisors made it clear on more than one occasion during the course of the pre-war crisis that Iraq's occupation of Kuwait would give it a fifth of the world's production of oil and consequently enhance its influence in the OPEC, and therefore over the economies of the Industrial West. The potential implications for the region both in terms of Arab-Israeli military relations and the Arab western economic relations were obvious. In effect, Iraq was challenging the west on the two matters of greatest importance to its Middle East strategy its commitment to ensure Jewish military superiority over any combination of Arab states and its unhindered access to plentiful and relatively cheap sources of energy. Iraq was increasingly perceived as a threat, or a potential threat, to both. With this background, the US was even waiting for an opportunity to discipline Iraq. The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq provided that opportunity and facilitated the US intervention in the Gulf.

The United States determination to bring about a military confrontation with Iraq continued even after the invasion. When Iraq announced on the second day of the invasion against Kuwait on August 4, its intention to withdraw, President Bush and his advisors feared that the announcement would rob them of an opportunity to get an Arab invitation to intervene. In a meeting at Camp David, the President was concerned about the Saudis backing out the last minute and accepting a puppet regime in Kuwait. He and his advisors felt that the Iraqi announcement would be the excuse the Arabs want to start equivocating and it was agreed that he should pitch the Saudis anyway. National Security advisor Scowcroft called Riyadh and told the Saudis that not asking for American help would be tantamount to inviting the Iraqis to invade Saudi Arabia. Not inviting the US forces, he said, would convince Saddam Hussein that the Americans and the Saudis are not standing together which would amount to encouragement to invade. The Secretary of State Cheney persuaded the Saudis that the purpose of American military deployment would be strictly defensive.⁸ A US mission led by Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gates brought Saudi leaders' satellite photos showing that Iraq was reinforcing its army for a possible attack on Saudi Arabia. In a total reversal of all previous Saudi policy, King Fahd invited US troops in to protect his kingdom.⁹

The President of the US George Bush immediately responded to King Fahd's invitation by ordering a massive US military airlift to Saudi Arabia. A US-led multinational force and an international coalition were formed to isolate Iraq economically and politically and to make it withdraw from Kuwait without violence if possible, with force if necessary. Bush called Saudi Arabia's defense as vital to US interest and highlighted the objectives of US policy in the Gulf

- a) Protection of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf;
- b) Protection of the US citizens;
- c) Attain complete, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops; and
- d) Restoration of Kuwait's government and its sovereignty.

On 30th August, Bush commented that he would not be disappointed if the Iraqi people overthrew Saddam but that this was not a US objective.

The initial objectives behind the US war on Iraq were as follows: First, the US wanted to censor a rising Gulf power which, though not unfriendly, was not a client, either. Iraq considered itself the custodian of pan-Arab nationalism a

successor to Nasser's Egypt. and saw itself as the trustee of the Arab national interest. Its resources equipped it to play the role more than any other Arab state, and its efforts to become an Arab super power capable of creating problems for those external and internal vested interests that desired to inflict economic subservience on Arabs. The US and its allies in West Asia could not swallow that. Second, the US saw in the confrontation with Iraq an opportunity to establish a military presence in the Gulf region to enhance its bargaining power vis-a-vis the European and Japanese economic powers as its economic weaknesses threatened to undermine strategic primacy. The emergence of the United States as an undisputed superpower. after the dissolution of the Eastern block, was threatened by relative economic weakness as compared to the EC and Japan. An enhanced influence in the OPEC countries was thought as a balancing device. The US desired to gain substantial economic and political client by establishing a firm grip on the oil producing countries of the Gulf. Third, the United States saw the Gulf crisis as an opportunity to stress in a dramatic way the decline of Soviet power. It was the first manifestation of the Soviet impotence to influence events in an area where its influence had traditionally served as a deterrent to Washington's hegemonic designs. I rather used this opportunity to make the point that in a clash with the west, no one should expect protection from the Soviet Union. Fourth, the military confrontation with Iraq served as the first real test since Vietnam, of the ability and willingness of the United States to use military means in the conduct of its foreign policy. Previous skirmishes in Grenada and Panama, could not be conclusive and the US needed a more substantial ground to make the point. Finally, the war with Iraq served notice that the Third World's importance in the power politics in new order and the United States would not accept replacement of the bipolar system with a multi polar system through the emergence of regional power centers.

United Nations and the Gulf Crisis

The Gulf Crisis was the first test case for the United Nations' effectiveness in the post cold war period. Divergent opinions have been expressed ranging from the most important and effective peace-keeper to an overall condemnation of being impotent and irrelevant. Keeping aside these extreme view points, one thing is very clear that the UN initially failed to help the parties to find out a peaceful solution of their differences and later to achieve Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait without the use of military force.'¹

On August 2, 1990 — the very day of the Iraqi invasion - the Security Council of the United Nations adopted the Resolution 660 demanding that Iraq should withdraw immediately and unconditionally all its forces from Kuwait. It also called on Iraq and Kuwait to begin immediately "intensive negotiations" for the resolution of their differences. Resolution 660 was passed by the Security Council acting under Articles 39 and 40 of the UN Charter.³² On August 6, 1990, the Security Council adopted resolution 661, acting under Chapter VII Articles 41 of the Charter. It decided to take measures for imposing economic sanctions against Iraq.

However, the trade embargo was soon turned into a maritime and air embargo by the United States. Just after ten days, the US President ordered a naval blockade of Iraq as part of the economic embargo which was described by the UN Secretary General Javier Perez De Chellar as "a breach of the UN Charter". Under Article 41 of the UN Charter, any blockade h to have the UN Security Council's approval. The American warships however had been ordered to stop and search all

ships carrying cargo to and from Iraq and Kuwait in the Gulf, the northern part of the Red Sea and the Gulf of C)rcn.13 Though Article 42 of the UN Charter permits the Security Council to take actions involving the use of force, including blockade, yet in this case there had been no such Security Council resolution till then. However, to provide legitimacy to its unilateral blockade, the US got passed a resolution later on, on 25 August 1990 in the Security Council that allowed the use of necessary naval force in the Gulf region to ensure compliance with the mandatory economic sanctions imposed on Iraq. Between August 2 and October 29, 1990, the Security Council passed ten resolutions condemning the invasion and the occupation, demanding the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, requiring Iraq to allow the safe and immediate departure from Iraq and Kuwait of nationals from third countries. Condemning Iraq's violations of international norms regarding diplomatic immunity, and requiring Iraq to protect diplomatic and consular personnel and property.14 These resolutions were aimed to step up the pressure against Iraq, hut without much positive result.'5 It also appears that sanctions were imposed too soon and before adequate time had been given to President Saddam Hussein to appreciate the wisdom of withdrawing and then negotiating the settlement of his disputes with Kuwait in conformity with legal norms.

Iraq had been very critical of the Security Council Resolutions. Criticizing the various resolutions of the Security Council, President Saddam stated that Iraq had been tried in absentia and its Foreign Minister had been denied the facilities he needed to be able to present his case. Further he stated that on earlier occasions when the Council has called for the withdrawal of troops this has been accompanied by a call for negotiations between the parties, withdrawal had not been set as a precondition for such negotiations. Moreover, he observed that Israel had never been subjected to sanctions or outside military interventions as a means of ensuring compliance with the Security Council Resolutions. This was indicative of double standards, he ratiored. He also said that actually if all the countries are to abide by certain rules of behavior, those rules must he enforced even-handedly and without manipulation of the UN for special interests.

On 29 November 1990, the Security Council passed the most controversial Resolution of 678. This resolution states:

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of United Nations (Security Council) demands that, One, Iraq comply fully with resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and decides, while maintaining all its decisions, to allow Iraq one final opportunity as a pause of good will, to do SO; Two, authorizes Member states cooperating with the government of Kuwait, unless Iraq on or before 15 January 1991 fully implements, as set forth in paragraph I above, the forgoing resolutions, to use all necessary means to uphold and implement Security Council Resolution 660 (1990)and all subsequent resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area. Three, requests all states to provide appropriate support for the actions undertaken in pursuance of paragraph 2 of this resolution. 17

The use of all necessary means in Resolution 678 has been interpreted by the US and its allies as an authorization to use armed force against Iraq in order to compel it to withdraw from Kuwait and liberate all the hostages. The Security Council could have used the term armed forces if it so intended. The absence of these words in the context of the Charter of the UN and earlier resolutions of the

Security Council means that it has in fact sanctioned use of all measures other than the armed force. Moreover, the sanctions should have been given more

time to achieve the direct result. Paul Nitze, former Deputy Secretary of State said at a Senate hearing, "I would prefer to exercise more patience and give the embargo more time. We could sustain his recalcitrance. Economic sanctions in other cases have been given a much longer chance to yield results. IR Above all, it can be remarked that the ultimatum of six weeks given to Iraq had the effect of inhibiting the ongoing diplomatic negotiations. The UN Secretary Generals conversation with Saddam Hussein on 13 January 1991 gives enough indications that the latter was willing to consider a "Package deal" if more time was given and diplomatic talks allowed to continue to seek a solution through means other than war.

Since Iraq did not comply with the deadline for withdrawal, on 17 January 1991, the coalition of thirty two states led by the United States launched the "Operation Desert Storm". The United States and its allies began the most extensive bombing campaign since the Second World War. The war itself was relatively short, commencing on the 17th and continuing through to 27 February when a cease fire was proclaimed. The ground assault which began on 24 February was over in 100 hours, by which time the allied forces had penetrated several kilometers inside Iraq's southern border. The war formally ended on 3 March 1991. Through out the period of war, the Security Council did not meet to discuss the situation except in a few close door meetings. The first public meeting was convened on 2 March 1991 to consider the US drafted resolution. This resolution No.686 setting the terms of cease fire was passed by eleven votes to one with three abstention in the Security Council. Cuba voted against the resolution while China, Yemen and India chose to abstain²⁰ The Resolution reaffirmed the previous Security Councils resolutions and required Iraq to take immediate steps to implement them. The resolution demanded that²¹

- a) Iraq rescind its annexation of Kuwait;
- b) Return all POWs and Kuwaiti detainees.;
- c) Accept in principle its liability under international law for war damages in Kuwait and elsewhere, for the return of all seized property and for help in rebuilding of Kuwait;
- d) Cease further military actions including missile attacks;
- e) Provide all information and assistance in identifying Iraqi mines, booby traps and other explosives as any chemical and biological weapons in Kuwait or where allied forces are located, pursuant to Resolution 678.

More detailed and comprehensive terms for the cease fire came one month later, on 3 April when the Security Council adopted Resolution 687 which stipulated that Iraq would unconditionally accept international supervision of the destruction, removal or rendering harmless of all its, chemical and biological weapons and its ballistic missiles with a range of 150 km or more. It further stated that the United Nations would establish and administer a fund, to which ' Iraq would contribute, to compensate foreign governments, nationals, and corporations for losses, damages and injuries suffered in the course of Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait.²² The cease fire Resolution 687 was drafted very carefully. This nine part resolution set out specific conditions by which international peace and security would be restored in the region. It was sponsored by Belgium, France, Rumania, the UK, the US and Zaire. The vote was 12 to 1 (Cuba voted against) with 2 abstentions (Ecuador and Yemen). Some of the important aspects of the Resolution are give below²

Part A asked Iraq and Kuwait to respect the inviolability of the 1963 International boundary and called upon the Secretary General to help demarcate that boundary.

Part B requested a UN observer unit to monitor a demilitarized zone established under the resolution.

Part C asked Iraq to unconditionally accept the destruction, removal or rendering harmless of all its chemical, biological weapons and ballistic missiles of more than 150 km. range. Iraq was also required to submit locations, number and types of such weapons. There would be a UN team to inspect the sites of all chemical, biological and missile capacities. It would also supervise their destruction. The IAEA would inspect Iraq's nuclear capabilities and would submit a plan for their destructions or removal.

Part D asked the Secretary General to report the return of all Kuwait properties by Iraq.

Part E reaffirming Iraq's liability under international law for any direct loss, damage or injury to foreign governments, nationals and corporations, as a result of its occupation of Kuwait. Mechanism to be adopted for this was specified.

Part F stated that all prohibitions against sale or supply of food and other necessities for civilians were to be lifted and that other bans would be lifted methodically.

Part G called upon Iraq to extend all necessary cooperation to the International Committee of the Red Cross to facilitate the repatriation of all Kuwaiti and third country nationals.

Part H called upon Iraq to inform the Security Council that it would not commit/support any act of international terrorism.

Part I declared that a formal cease fire between Iraq, Kuwait and coalition countries would come into effect when Iraq accepted Resolution 687.

The disaster caused by the Iraq-Kuwait conflict is attributed to incapacity of the United Nations organization. In contrast to this some insist that the Gulf war was the UN's finest hour. The International Community after 40 years of cold war finally united and drew a line in the sands of Arabia and declared : Aggression never again! The USA declared war, not the Secretary General, not the UN, not even Kuwait. An international organization dedicated "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" became the engine for war. It was in the popular mind "a UN war", even if it was fought without the UN flag or UN blue helmets. Homer Jack identified the following eight points as the reasons for diminished status of the UN in the Iraq—Kuwait conflict²⁴

First, the regular session of the 1990 General Assembly should have been reconvened by its President or a special session called through a vote of a majority of its members in January or even in February 1991. Some of its 159 members should have insisted on meetings to debate the Gulf Crisis and war, even if under Article 12, it could not have taken any action while the Security Council was seized with the issue. The involvement of the UN in war is a matter which should not have been confined to the debates and decisions of the 15 members of the Security Council.

Second, UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar appeared too timid and repeatedly yielded to strong pressures from Washington. His politically non-aligned stance evaporated. He may have performed well in helping release of the American hostages in Lebanon and in bringing peace to El Salvador, Cambodia and other parts of the world. Yet the Secretary General must be the protector of the tradition and reputation of the organization and fiercely oppose its manipulation by any state or group of states. The Secretary General was strongly armed by the support of the USA not an appropriate posture for any Secretary General, who

should refuse to be beholder to any nation or group of nations.

Third, the Security Council must reform its way. In a crisis situation, it must hold more frequent public meetings. It was a scandal how the US/coalition prevented, the security Council from holding a public meeting for almost two months - i.e. all through the Gulf war

Fourth, the Security Council in voting for economic sanctions did not include any machinery to determine accountability. It rightly voted sanctions but provided no means or test to determine whether they were working.

Fifth, the majority of members states made no sustained effort to prevent aggression without war. The Security Council did not attempt to use the untried collective security process in Chapters 43-50 of the Charter. This includes Member States making available to the Security Council armed forces and air force contingents Member States doing so, which are not members of the Security Council, could have participated in the decisions of the Security Council concerning their use. The Military staff committee could have assisted the Security Council on all military questions. Such military actions could have been taken by all member states or by some of them.

Sixth, the exodus of the Kurds and the Shiites was unexpected and tragic. And then another unexpected action occurred. The UN sanctioned what has come to be called humanitarian intervention. The Security Council in Resolution 688 allowed some member states - the USA and other nations - to enter Iraq without Iraq's permission to feed and house the refugees in their own country. Hundreds of Kurds and Shiite died and the tragedy is still unfolding and without any firm precedent for future situations involving the relocation and rescue of populations within an oppressive regime.

Seventh, the International Court of Justice – an organ of UN - was completely forgotten during the long period between August 1990 and January 1991.

However, doubts have been raised about whether the Security Council strayed from the provisions of the Charter in three respects : in permitting member states to take enforcement actions over which neither the Council nor its Military Staff Cottee had any control an resorting to force before waiting to see whether the economic sanctions would prove effective, and in giving precedence to 'humanitarian intervention over respect for sovereignty. Security Council abdication of its prerogatives in authorizing states with naval forces in the vicinity of the Gulf to enforce the sanctions, and subsequently in allowing member states to use all necessary means to repel Iraqi forces from Kuwait are of particular concern. As Brian Urquhart pointed out that neither Resolution 677- nor Resolution 678 placed enforcement actions under the control of the Security Council or its Military Staff Committee although the need for such control was clearly implied in article 46 and 47 of the Charter.²⁵ The ability of the United Nations to implement military sanctions under article 42 was severely undermined by two factors ones the Military Staff Committee played virtually no role during the Gulf Crisis. The Committee which is composed of the chiefs of staff of the permanent members of the Security Council or their representatives was established under the article 47 to advise the Security Council on matters pertaining to its military requirements and to command forces placed under United Nations Command. Secondly, the marginalization of the Military Staff Committee in the Gulf Crisis reflected the preferences of the permanent members which was however consistent with the past practices. Thirdly,

the US—led coalitions intervention in Iraq under the UN mandate was a peculiar and unprecedented situation in which in order to restore Kuwait's sovereignty was violated with the tacit consent of the United Nations. The entire episode presale the United Nations in a highly dubious image arid role. However, it also meant that the United Nations lacked effective military leadership to assume command in a situation of crisis.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was a clear violation of the state's sovereignty. As such it placed the conflict firmly within the United Nations mandate to handle conflicts between states. The plight of Kurdish refugees following the war, however, engendered a clash in which priority was given to humanitarian intervention rather than to respect for the Iraqi sovereignty. As David Schaffer puts it "For the first time, the Security Council directed a member state to stand aside and let international humanitarian agencies operate on its territory to assist citizens victimized by that government's repression. It stripped the Iraqi government of any right under international law, to refuse admission to the humanitarian agencies. In fact, it obliged the government to make available all necessary facilities for their operations".²⁷ The Resolution broke new ground in linking humanitarianism with international peace and security and in giving the former priority over respects for state sovereignty.

GCC AND ARAB WORLD

The Gulf Cooperation Committee's reaction to the invasion of Iraq against Kuwait came on 3 and 4 August 1990. The GCC Foreign Ministers were attending in Cairo an Arab League and ICO conference. In their meeting the GCC Ministerial Council condemned the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. They called for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kuwait. They called upon the Arab League and the UNO to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait. The GCC ministerial council held its meeting at Jeddah on 7 August and recorded its support for Kuwait and backing for its legitimacy. The Council studied the best ways of handling the situation and of presenting its recommendations to the Supreme Council. The GCC states moved the first draft Resolution to the UN Security Council — Resolution 660 which called upon Iraq to withdraw immediately and unconditionally and restore the legitimacy and sovereignty of the Kuwaiti government and state.

The GCC states played a major role in getting a Resolution condemning the Iraq for its aggression on Kuwait passed at the Arab Summit meeting. The GCC Information Ministers in their first extraordinary meeting on August 15 at Jeddah expressed their utmost regret, condemnation and denunciation of the Iraqi aggression. They were astonished at Saddam's peak initiative towards Iran and asked why did he sacrifice so many innocent lives and allowed destruction of property and environmental waste if he could make up with Iran. The ministers also decided to stop information cooperation with Iraq. Another meeting of the GCC foreign ministers was held in Jeddah on September 5, 1990. The Oman Minister of State for Foreign Affairs who is also the Chairman, stressed the importance of the meeting which is being held at a time when the region is passing through the most difficult and critical circumstances. These circumstances presumably were Iraq's decision on August 28 to formally merge Kuwait into Iraq's administrative structure making it the 19th governorate and Saddam's call for a holy war against the US forces and call for the overthrow of Fahd and other Gulf rulers. The Minister said

that Iraqi invasion is a serious having implications not only for the inter-Arab relations but for the region as a whole. He thanked the western countries for sending the troops to the GCC states. He said “it was due to the speedy way in which these forces were sent that the possibility of a wide scale war breaking out was stopped and the security deterrent in the region was bolstered”. The communiqué issued at the end of the meeting contained that Iraq should respect civilians in Kuwait and not to tamper with the demographic structure. It also expressed gratitude to Syria, Iran and Turkey for cooperating in implementing the UN resolutions against Iraq. They also called upon Iraq not to hamper the legitimate right of the foreign nationals to leave Iraq or Kuwait.²⁸

On 24 February 1990, at the Arab Cooperation Council meeting at Amman, Saddam Hussein read out a long, angry analysis of the world events. It included the impact on the Arabs of the end of the cold war and the decline of the USSR, with consequent rise in the US influence. “The world situation”, Saddam warned, “might lead Israel to undertake new ‘stupidities’ ; encourages as it was by continued US arms shipments, and by the support of both Washington and Moscow for Jewish emigration to Israel, to the detriment of the Palestinian Arabs”. Saddam said that the US should remove its war fleet from the Gulf. Saddam called on the Arab to establish a well defined plan of action to constitute a regional power base capable of imposing relations on equal basis with the world’s bigger powers. Saddam inflicted insults on ‘cowardly and timid’ Arab leaders who recognized the US as a superpower, a clear reference to Egypt’s President Hosni Mubarak and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia.²⁹ On 16th July Tariq Aziz submitted a memorandum to Arab League listing various issues to be settled between Iraq and Kuwait. King Hussein and the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Yasser Arafat constantly shuttled between Baghdad and Kuwait during this period. The Kuwait government decided on 29 July to continue seeking an Arab solution to the Crisis. The Saudi government obtained the agreement of Kuwait and Iraq to meet in Jeddah on 31 July. The Emir of Kuwait refused to attend the meeting and sent Crown Prince and the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Saddam Hussein took it as an insult and cancelled his own trip. He sent instead the Vice-Chairman of the RCC and Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq. The meeting failed to reach any conclusion and Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August.³⁰ As a matter of fact, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait surprised many in the Arab world. Despite the extreme level of tension between the two governments and despite Iraq’s mobilization of forces on the Iraq-Kuwait border, the Arab. leaders thought that their differences could be resolved through negotiations and the crisis could be defused. Arafat and Mubarak were assured by Saddam Hussein that he would negotiate with Kuwait and these leaders felt that the Iraq’s threat was mere pressure tactics and did not mean war.

Mubarak and Assad immediately sought to help the GCC counter the invasion. The Arab League Foreign Ministers were already assembled in Cairo as part of a meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). On the 3rd August the ministers denounced Iraq’s invasion and called for its immediate and unconditional withdrawal and asserted their commitment to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the member states of the Arab League. The Foreign Ministers of Arab League opposed the foreign intervention in the crisis. They also rejected the Kuwaiti demand that they form a joint Arab force to counter Iraq’s army.³¹

The Iraq invasion of Kuwait led to a deterioration in inter—Arab relations,

creating a number of rifts among them. The Arab League's activities are hamstrung for only 12 of its members attended the meetings called to discuss the Gulf crisis. Certain Arab circles, and first among them, the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, supported Saddam Hussein, even though the Palestinian Liberation movement had so far only suffered from the crisis. It should be mentioned that Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Mauritania, Jibouti had sided with Iraq. Some Arab centers such as Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Morocco had formed a kind of front against Iraq, thus manifesting their aversion to the use of force in the settlement of problems among Arabs. Egypt, Syria and Morocco had dispatched their troops to Kuwaiti and the Saudi border areas, but the major concern of these countries was to have a solution to the crisis to be sought exclusively within the Arab community. By adhering firmly to their principles and with their moderate stand this group was gradually bringing its influence to bear upon those Arab states that were in sympathy with Iraq and that had supported Saddam Hussein since the very outset of the crisis. Their efforts had not been in vain as all Arab governments later upheld the economic embargo and the Security Council Resolutions. They also urged the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait which would give Saddam the chance of moving out of Kuwait without losing force.³² Even though Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak played an important role in the adoption of the Arab League resolution condemning Iraq, he was reluctant to internationalize the issue. In spite of their close relations with Washington, Mubarak as well as King Hassan of Morocco were reluctant to endorse the American request for Arab forces in defense of Saudi Arabia. The US badly needed Arab support or else the campaign against Iraq would become an Arab vs. non-Arab issue. When Mubarak called for an extraordinary Arab Summit meeting in Cairo, Saddam responded with the annexation of Kuwait. And on August 10, by a majority vote, the league adopted a Resolution calling for a Pan-Arab force in defense of Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf states.³³

The position of Arab forces was further complicated when Saddam Hussein linked the issue of Iraq's presence in Kuwait to the Israeli occupation of Arab lands, Syrian control over Lebanon and Iraq's territorial disputes with Iran. His initiative on 12 August proposed 'that all issues of occupation be resolved in accordance with the same .. principles . . . set by the UN Security Council'. Withdrawal from the oldest occupation should take first and arrangements for the situation in Kuwait must take into consideration the historical rights of Iraq in its territory and the Kuwaiti people's choice. The UN should impose sanctions and an embargo against any party that fails to comply with the request to withdraw. The Arab reactions to the Gulf Crisis must be analyzed in relation to three issues: Arab governments and public position on the Iraqi invasion; reactions to the rapid movement of US forces into the region; and responses to the emphasis on the Palestine problem as the fundamental occupation that needed to be resolved.

EGYPT

The Egyptian government denounced sharply the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Mubarak had just reassured the Amir of Kuwait that Saddam would not attack, so he was furious at the apparent double cross. He urged Arab countries to respond swiftly to the OCC requests for military assistance or otherwise "We will be as good as dead bodies. We will be humiliated and dictated to. Iraq's military power will impose its will on us in spite of ourselves". Egyptian officials maintained that the basic principles of their policy were the renunciation of force to resolve Arab differences, non-intervention in the domestic politics of Arab countries, and the need to settle

Arab differences within an Arab framework. Egypt, therefore, rejected Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait and called for a peaceful solution under the auspices of the Arab League.

However, Mubarak viewed the situation as sufficiently grave to warrant international involvement. Because Saddam had lied to the Kuwaiti ruler, he argued, no one could trust Saddam when he claimed he would not strike Saudi Arabia "Should King Fahd wait until a catastrophe takes place there too? He even added that the Gulf states were afraid because no Arab military umbrella existed, and they therefore, concluded that "I will cooperate with the devil for the sake of my country. They are right. Do you blame those who request the US aid? Mubarak maintained that he would prefer to have Arab or UN forces in the Gulf and that he hoped the crisis would convince Arab states of the importance of forming an Arab defense force. He argued that the Egyptian troops in the Gulf were under Saudi command and that they served a purely defense purpose. Before taking this decision, the Egyptian government dithered a bit for the following reason. It amounted to casting the lot with the US which was a bet noire to the Arab masses and it was apprehended that collusion could undermine the regime. Special security precautions taken in Cairo indicated that Mubarak's land on the crisis was under stress on his own home ground. The government tried to mollify popular passions by projecting the induction of Egyptian troops as a UN ordered operation and underlining the international consensus on opposing the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.³⁴ Another factor which helped the Egyptian government was that the people of Egypt were very angry with Iraq regarding the Iraqi government's threatening to the Egyptian workers. In recent years, resentment had mounted at the severe restrictions on repatriating savings and the mistreatment and even killing of Egyptian workers by demobilized Iraqi soldiers. The Egyptians who poured home from Kuwait and Iraq complained about Iraqi soldiers who stripped money, gold and consumer goods from them. However, the Egyptian government was able to tide over difficult situation unscathed.

Egypt got a bonus for its policy from another quarter. On 4 September the White House announced that President Bush had decided to ask the Congress to write off Egypt's 7 billion military debt because of the role it had played in standing up to the Iraqi aggression. The spokesman said 'forgiving the debt recognizes the strategic importance of Egypt in multinational effort to enforce UN trade embargo against Iraq. It is a symbol of an appreciation for the role played by the Egyptian President. 3.

SIR IA

Nafiz al-Assad of Syria immediately denounced the Iraq's invasion and called for an unconditional withdrawal of troops from Kuwait. He viewed the crisis as a fundamental threat to the Arab regional system because it violated the basic codes of inter-Arab relations and exposed the area to the danger of foreign intervention. Assad argued that Saddam had dragged the Arabs into a side of conflict, just as he had done in his war with Iran and that he should have focused on Israel instead.

Assad justified his actions in sending the Syrian forces to Saudi Arabia on the following four counts

1. Assad had promised King Fahd at the Arab Summit in Cairo that he would help him defend his territory;

2. Syrian forces would protect the holy places;
3. As a Pan—Arab act, their presence would help prevent further fragmentation of the Arab nation.
4. Arab forces would gradually replace the foreign forces already in the Gulf.

The latter justification was particularly important politically since many observers were startled at the image of Syrian forces fighting alongside US and British troops. Assad firmly blamed Iraq for this crisis. At the Arab Summit he stated that “the foreigners who came to the region were not responsible for the event; the event brought them to the region. If we want these foreigners to be out as soon as possible, we have to find a solution to this event . . . So we might not leave a pretext — as unwanted guests.³⁷

FT also mentioned that the Gulf rulers had panicked because they lacked military means to protect themselves and were compelled to invite foreign forces to help. However, Syrian authorities insisted that Syrian troops would operate corporately from foreign forces in Saudi Arabia. The Syrians became increasingly critical of the US military build up and opposed a US-Iraqi military confrontation and hoped that economic and diplomatic pressures would make Saddam Hussein seek a political solution. The Syrian government also felt that once Iraq withdrew, Syria would join an Arab peace keeping force in Kuwait that would also provide a buffer between Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

The reasons for Syria taking such kind of stand were guided by many factors that ensured potential benefits for the country. On an economic level, the alliance with the GCC guaranteed a major flow of funds and investments for Syria’s struggling economy and promised a resumption of assistance from the European community. By opposing Iraq, the US would certainly remove Syria from the black list of a state supporting terrorist groups, thus paving a way for access to the US commercial credits and advanced technology. On a political level, Assad deepened his estrangement from Saddam. He hosted meetings of Iraqi opposition groups - Arab nationalist, communist and Kurdish — who jabbed at Saddam by articulating a programmed to build a federal democratic state in Iraq. Thus Assad must have viewed the crisis as the optimal moment to remove Saddam Hussein from power.³⁸ Adds also sought to place Syria in a strategically central position in the Middle East to enhance its ability to influence events and resolve central issues. Damascus hoped to use its alliance with Riyadh and Cairo to press for a comprehensive agreement with Israel that would restore Syrian sovereignty to the Golan Heights and resolve the Palestine question in a manner acceptable to Syria.

However, the Syrian people to some extent were opposed dispatch of their troops to Saudi Arabia. The Syrians did not approve of Iraqi actions in Kuwait but they also believed that “the arrogant Kuwaiti asked for it”.³⁹ In fact, the popular belief was that the Syrians, in case of hostilities, would fire at the Americans and not at the Iraqis. To conclude, Assad took anti-Iraqi stance because of the feud between Syrian and Iraqi Baathists; and scramble for leadership of the Arab world. In the final analysis, the US President Bush’s personal persuasion made President Assad of Syria to take anti—Iraqi stance in the Gulf crisis.

The Palestinian response to the Gulf crisis was highly emotional. The Palestinians had expectations that Saddam Hussein’s tough approach was the correct way to confront Israeli and the US ‘arrogance’. Palestinians poured into the streets of the occupied territories and Jordan to support Saddam Hussein’s actions. They saw the Kuwaiti oil price manipulation. Israeli threats to bomb Baghdad’s chemical

weapons plants, and the US naval maneuvers in the Gulf as aspects of a concerted effort to destroy the one Arab leader who could challenge Israel and alter the strategic balance in the region. Saddam's attack on Kuwait was thus perceived as defensive, rather than aggressive.

When US troops landed in Saudi Arabia, the anti- American element to Palestinian protests became pronounced. Arab governments that fought alongside western forces were derided as Washington's lackeys. Many believed that the United States sought a permanent presence astride the oil fields and strategic waterways and would strangle any signs of independent Arab action. The link between Saddam's stance and Palestinian cause was confirmed in their minds by Saddam's 12 August initiative and the Washington's immediate rejection of the idea of relating one regional occupation with another. That also confirmed Palestinians belief that the United States held contradictory standards in regard to Israeli and Iraqi behavior.

Yasser Arafat supported Saddam's effort to challenge the US power. Although PLO abstained from the vote at the Arab foreign ministers meeting on August 3, 1990, it voted against the Summit Resolution on 10 August. Although PLO leaders were disturbed by the fissures widening in the Arab world, they seized upon the opportunity presented by Saddam Hussein's initiative on 12 August. In his message on the thousandth day of the intifada, Arafat stressed that the PLO's approach involved keeping foreign forces out of the region, tackling the Kuwaiti issue within an Arab framework and highlighting the Palestinian cause as "the crux and core" of the regional conflict. The PLO also proposed peace proposals in conjunction with Jordan, Libya and Yemen that called for modifications in Kuwaiti status in order to accommodate Iraq.⁴ Thus the PLO's attempt to resolve the crisis displayed a underlying sympathy for Iraq. Some Palestinian groups especially Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Islamic Resistance Movement, and Abu al Abba's Popular Liberation Front expressed strong solidarity with Iraq and urged violent action to oust the US troops from the Gulf. However, some other groups noted the danger of seeming to support the forcible seizure of territory. Professor Hanan Michail Ashrawi voiced the concern that "We do not condemn occupation in one area and condone it in another. We do not condone the acquisition of land by force. We do not have . . . double standards".⁴

As the crisis escalated, Palestinians also expressed concern for the fate of communities in Kuwait and the Gulf which provided vital financial and moral support to the antiradar. The head of the Palestine National Fund attempted to limit the damage by asserting that 'the support by the PLO for Iraq's Pan Arab and National Position does not mean Supporting Iraq in occupying and annexing Kuwait by force . . . this is an illegal measure'. Several GCC governments did cut the financial support to Palestinian employees. Paradoxically, many West Bank institutions had to appeal to Europe and the United States for substitute funds and the PLO considered turning to the UN for compensation under Article 50 of the Charter.

As Saddam Hussein became increasingly isolated inter nationally, Palestinians got worried that their cause also could be damaged. Washington agreed to underwrite housing loans for Soviet immigrants to Israel and to provide more advanced weaponry to Israel to help compensate for the large American arms sale to Saudi Arabia. The Soviet Union and Europe were cool to Arafat's efforts to mediate between Iraq and Kuwait and rejected his assertions that Washington was

playing a neo—colonialist role in the Gulf. Nonetheless, by September some Palestinians argued that they could win irrespective of the outcome in the Gulf. Sari Nuseibeh, a leading intellectual in Jerusalem suggested that a US military confrontation with Iraq would cause severe anti American fallout in the Arab world and thereby restore support for the Palestinians.

In the final analysis, the Palestinians suffered a lot for supporting the Iraq in the preset Gulf Crisis. Anti-Palestinian feelings hardened in most of the Gulf countries for the PLO actions. In fact PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's personal Jet was refused permission to land in Abu Dhabi although it was running short of fuel. Dubai government gave the landing permission on the condition that Arafat should remain inside the aircraft until the plane took off. The Palestinians holding key positions in government, and oil companies were being retrenched and expelled from other Gulf countries.

Thus depending upon the geographical and ideological outlooks, Arabs placed the crisis in diametrically opposing frame works which influenced their analysis of the causes of the crisis and of the appropriate Resolution. This polarization was strikingly evident in the perspectives taken by Egypt, Syria, Jordan and the Palestinians. The Egyptian government saw Iraq's invasion as a bid to overturn the regional balance of power, impose its will on militarily vulnerable neighbors and control regional economic resources. Egypt therefore sought to contain Iraqi power so that it could not destabilize the region. The Syrian government could not aspire to regional dominance but wanted to consolidate its position in the eastern Mediterranean. Wary of its powerful neighbors, Iraq and Israel, Damascus shared Cairo's concern that Baghdad could fundamentally alter the regional political balance. On the other hand, the Jordanian government in contrast led a small and vulnerable country with an angry and highly politicized population. Jordanians and Palestinians viewed Saddam as an Arab leader who asserted Arab national rights, called attention to the injustices done to the Palestinians, sought a strategic balance with Israel and challenged the inequities in the current state system in the Arab world. Jordanians and Palestinians believed that Iraq should be persuaded to relinquish Kuwait and that its wider political and economic objectives required urgent attention. They argued that the Palestinian problem and the regional gap between rich and poor, if left unattended, would blow up again in highly damaging ways. Both the Jordanian and Palestinian people deplored Washington's double standards and both of these were severely affected by the Gulf Crisis. However, in a long run, both could turn the flow of events in their favor and draw peace-settlements with Israel and financial assistance and friendly commitments from the United States as well.

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