CONCLUSION

Security is bound to be high on the agenda of Persian Gulf countries throughout the 1990s as it is the central problem of Persian Gulf States. In the Persian Gulf security of Regime (ruling elite) and not the security of the state appears to be more important.

In the post second world war period, Persian Gulf region played a crucial role in the overall global strategy of the major Global powers. In 1951 President Eisenhower of USA described Persian Gulf as most strategically important in the world. Persian Gulf region assumed tremendous strategic significance in the wake of cold war rivalries between Washington and Moscow.

Control of the Persian Gulf will still be a key factor in global balance of power. No other region of the world has been as much strategically significant to the major Global powers as the Persian Gulf. Persian Gulf has assumed important strategic and economic dimensions in recent years. The Gulf littoral states have truly become the world's centre of economic activity because of their immense oil resources.

60 per cent of the total world, reserve oil is found in the Persian Gulf. Even the major powers, who produce oil, are interested in the control of oil measures of this
region to maintain their supremacy and preserve their own limited resources for the future.

In the Persian Gulf region, Iran and Iraq responded positively to US overtures in early 1950s. Iranian response was primarily motivated by Shah of Iran's personal ambition to cultivate US as an ally because Washington had helped him in restoration of throne. Besides, the Shah of Iran wanted to strengthen his own position within the country as well as to make Iran a strong power in the region. Such a mission could be accomplished by acquiring sophisticated weapons from the US. Thus mutuality of interests brought Washington and Tehran closer to each other which got reinforced in succeeding years.

The fall of the Shah of Iran and advent of the Islamic revolution in Iran in early 1979, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, proved a turning point in the US global strategic posture in general, and its policy towards the Persian Gulf in particular.

As regard Persian Gulf region, US policy was strictly governed by national interests and to keep the region out of Soviet sphere of influence. Unqualified support to Israel and help build it up as a powerful regional military power served as a pressure tactics to impress upon other Arab and Gulf regimes, the need for relying on Washington. When oil producing countries of the
Persian Gulf successfully used oil as a political weapon US used "sale of American arsenal" as a leverage for recycling of Petro-dollars back to American Coffers.

On the other hand, Russian strategic interest in the Persian Gulf was probably greater than that of the USA and the West. Soviet-Iraq treaty extended Russia's influence at the head of the Persian Gulf. Iranian revolution and overthrow of Shah coincided with Soviet invasion in Afghanistan.

Persian Gulf was most vital to the Soviets as the land and waters of the region were the hostile military platform for aerial and naval attack against her. Persian Gulf affected political, cultural and social trends across the border which made a great impact on the domestic and external security of the USSR. After the demise of Soviet Union, Islamic resurgence reemerged in the region.

The Soviet Union picked up the most sensitive political issue, namely the Arab-Israeli conflict to establish a foothold in the region. It became easy for the Soviet Union to gate crash into the Arab World because of the US support for Israel. Gulf region became a weapon seller's market as following the oil price - hike in 1973, USSR, UK, France and West Germany competed with the US in the sale of weapons.
After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war, Soviet influence in the Persian Gulf vanished. Persian Gulf region is considered to be vital to American interests.

The US has emerged as a key arbitrator in the future of Persian Gulf politics and a single most powerful influence, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In the post Kuwait phase US has further strengthened its position in the region.

Very often GCC countries have been able to send positive signals to the countries regarded as common threats: Iran and Iraq. The main objective of the policy of the smaller state is to placate the hostile power and offset the Saudi paternalism. This indicates that they do not consider the existing mechanism of regional cooperation a foot proof safely-valve against national security threats. Infact, they have evolved their policy towards security in the backdrop of their relation with Iran and Iraq.

The call to induct Iran or Iraq into the GCC has also come from the smaller number state of the region. Qatar advocated for the induction of Iran into the post Persian Gulf war security setup. Qatar was also the first country to have decided to normalize relations with Iraq after the latters withdrawal from the region. The Latter issue invited severe criticism from Saudi and Kuwaiti
governments. Border Skirmishes with Saudi Arabia in 1992, prompted Qatar to threaten to withdrawal from the GCC. The desenchantment with Saudi Arabia before the border skirmishes started would have also directly or indirectly determined Qatar governments decision or endecision to bid farewell to the GCC.

However, conflict amongst countries themselves and those with countries outside has led the GCC countries to move towards cooperation. 'Common threat perception' has been the most important factor in convenincing the Arab States of the Persian Gulf to freeze the disputes among themselves if not to settle it once and for all. Without going into the details whether the GCC was the direct corollary of the Iran-Iraq war or no one can not deny the fact the war helped the GCC grow. It turned the GCC into a security grouping even if not a formidable one to give it more teeth by both strengthening the common defence network and seeking to involve Egypt and Syria (also, Iran by some countries) in to it.

The superpowers have become more interested in the Gulf after the withdrawal of British forces from the region. The conflicting and diverse interests of the super powers encouraged political instability in the persian Gulf region and created volatile security environment. The Iranian revolution, Soviet intervention in Afghanistan,
out break of Iran-Iraq war and the Gulf crisis of 1991 these events of international importance took place in and around the Persian Gulf. These events of course changed the balance of power in the Persian Gulf region. The security environment of the region has completely transformed and became susceptible. They viewed these developments as a threat to their regimes as well as security of the region.

In the post Gulf crisis 1991 the US will find it impossible to maintain a large military presence in the area due to domestic pressure. Some kind of collective security arrangement would be necessary for the region. The crisis in the Gulf, inter alia, was testimony of the US failure to ensure a viable security system for the region that has remained vital to its position as guardian of Western interests. The Gulf war has left the US with the problem of protecting its security interest in the Persian Gulf. These interests include the continued supply of oil at reasonable prices.

The United States has suggested that several steps be taken to promote stability in the region.

(1) The GCC states should improve their overall defensive capabilities and accelerate the integration of their planes and programmes for the defense of their territory.
(2) The US stand should strengthen its military ties with the GCC states and maintain a limited military presence on the Peninsula.

(3) The US should work with the GCC in developing a greater role for regional and extra regional actors, principally Egypt, Britain and France.

The Gulf war 1991 reverserved some of the results of Iran-Iraq War. But rehabilitating Iran and weakening Iraq, it ushered in a period in which Iran assumed a greater weight in the Persian Gulf Security. There are several possible ways in which security in the Gulf region could be organised. Hegemony is one possibility. A second would be a functioning balance of power system and the third possibility is collective security.

The cold war is over and there are reasonable prospects of international peace among the developed countries of the world. The post-cold war situation in the globe as a whole and the conflicts in the developing world call for serious thinking. Gulf crisis of 1991 was the first crisis in the post-cold war regime. Even after Kuwait's sovereignty is restored and immediate threats of Security of Gulf nations are removed, the post-crisis situation in the Gulf area will still leave the states of the area with a sense of insecurity. The Gulf Cooperation
Council itself flawed in conception has proved its ineffectiveness. The policies earlier pursued by certain extra-regional powers of attempting to bolster the security of the region by selective supply of arms have proved to be counter productive (both in 1979 in the case of Iran and now in the case of Iraq).

The security perceptions of the rulers of the GCC States reflect not simply their views on the nature of most pressing threats, but also their recent experience, as well as their capabilities. The rulers of the Gulf States looked to the methods that appear to have served them well in the recent, as in the more distant, past. First, the series of bilateral agreements is one of the more noteworthy aspects of GCC co-operation below head of State level. Second, a number of the GCC states either concluded, or began negotiations aimed at concluding, a series of security agreements with those Western powers that had been so instrumental in defeating Iraq and liberating Kuwait.

In the Persian Gulf, following the two wars and two interventions by external states, there is still no consensus on the nature of the security threats, whether external or internal. In the past two decades, both Iran and Iraq have been threatening. Other states, including Oman, Kuwait and Yemen and have felt the need to keep their distance from Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia considers both Iran
and Iraq to be rivals. It feels much the same way about Egypt and Syria, with whom it is unwilling to contemplate serious security co-operation.

If Iran wants an indigenous, collective approach to Persian Gulf security, it will have to recognize that the thrust of its policies in the wider region are bound to be judged as an indicator of overall intentions.

It is thus obvious that, as far as the Gulf countries are themselves concerned, there is hardly any consensus about the threat perceptions or security arrangements. The ongoing and potential rivalries are too much of the stumbling blocks in the way of any regional approach to national security.