CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the post-cold war era and the changed global situation, the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait proved to be a great blunder with serious implications for the country and the region as a whole. Iraq had to face not only world-wide condemnation and bear humiliation of being ousted from Kuwait but its military and economic processes have been destroyed. Moreover, its status as a free and sovereign state has been undermined by a number of UN resolutions imposing sanctions and several other restrictions. It remains no longer free to decide its internal and external affairs.

There were certainly some territorial issues between Iraq and Kuwait and differences over the fixation of
oil price. On the border problem, Kuwait wanted technical experts to identify the area of dispute and to take final political decision. But Iraq perceived this as a Kuwaiti delaying tactic and wanted to thrust a solution on Kuwait. Kuwait refused Iraq’s method of using pressure and intimidation. As regarding oil, there was a clear indication that in the face of mounting Iraqi pressure Kuwait and UAE agreed to abide by OPEC ceilings on their production quotes. The OPEC in its meeting at Geneva on 27 July 1990 also agreed to raise oil price to $21 a barrel. But Iraqi impatience led to their misadventure in Kuwait.

The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and the subsequent annexation constitute a clear violation of International law and norms. In the altered global environment, Iraq could not enlist support even from her traditional and the erstwhile state of Russia, which was herself on the verge of a collapse. This provided an opportunity to America to destroy Iraq’s increasing military and economic power. America found almost the entire world united with it in condemning the Iraqi actions and in restoring the independence of Kuwait. All the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council agreed to take action against Iraq. Unfortunately, Saddam failed to understand the dynamics and implications of the changed international power equation. He also ignored
the financial position of his regional adversaries - namely Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia was reported to have offered to bear the total cost of the war. Its economy was in good health due to the increased income from the enhanced oil production and inflated oil prices during the Kuwait crisis. Kuwait too had investments in different countries of the world estimated between $100 and 200 billion, from which it was assured of getting help. Consequently, America, despite her own financial constraints, preferred to achieve the objectives only by going to war and has not given enough time for the pacific settlement of the dispute. Even economic sanctions imposed under UN Resolution No.661 were not given enough time to produce desirable results before military action was actually undertaken. Sanctions were carried out for merely a five-month period, which is in sharp contrast to the other similar cases. It can be remarked with all fairness that all reasonable efforts to reach a peaceful resolution were not exhausted. In order to justify the massive military action against Iraq, its military potential was exaggerated.

Iraq's rejection of the eleventh hour French Peace proposal and its cold attitude towards the UN Secretary General's proposals strengthened America's resolve to use force. The forces of the 28 countries under America's
command launched the 'Operation Desert Storm'. Iraqi Military strength and other infrastructure was completely destroyed by the American-led coalition within a few days. Iraq, therefore, lost all potential of providing any effective resistance. Later, only after a day of ground battle Iraqi troops surrendered and withdrew from Kuwait soon after, Iraq informed the United Nations that it accepted all 12 UN resolutions unconditionally. American and its allies declared their victory and dictated their terms and conditions of peace to the defeated Iraq. Several constraints have been imposed on Iraq's freedom and sovereignty besides continuing with the UN Sanctions. Iraq is not allowed to sell its oil even to meet the basic minimum needs of its population. Such restrictions and constant perusal by America is only to weaken Iraq and destroy its entire military and economic infrastructure. By all possible means it eroded the goodwill of Arab and Muslim nations who had earlier extended their co-operation to America against Iraq. Pushing Iraq beyond a point would not help the promotion of long term interest of America.

In the most obvious sense the Gulf War and the spectacular military victory of the UN coalition forces was a demonstration of American overwhelming power and leadership. At a less obvious level - and again this point has been made
clear elsewhere - it was a manifestation of limitations of American power. One of the imperatives for confronting Saddam Hussain's act of aggression was the necessity for fashioning a future international environment, in which such acts are deterred. There would be not only a reluctance on the part of large sections of American opinion to assume the role of world policeman, and the 'loneliness' and antagonism that such a role would entail. But the role would put such a strain on American resources and its already ailing economy, such that America would not be strong enough to bear it.

So the Gulf war contributed to the already emerging tension in American attitudes between a post-cold war triumphalism and a reversion to a traditional isolationism. Though victory in the Gulf could on the face of it be an added victory in the cold war to confirm America's supremacy in the world and her leadership of the western alliance. This is tempered to a considerable extent by the failure both of an internally coherent European Policy in the crisis, and one which provided a consistent support for American action. The Britain stood out alone among the European powers in her direct and unhesitating firmness to confront Iraq and reverse its invasion of Kuwait.
Among the major continental European powers France and Germany, there was what might be called a 'reversion to type'. France pursued her well-practiced diplomacy of keeping all options wide open by following an independent diplomatic and military line directed to distancing herself certainly from the 'Anglo-Saxon' alliance but also from the European Community. This was reflected throughout the crisis-phase and particularly in her attempted independent last-minute diplomacy in Baghdad and United Nations without consultation of any of her allies on either side of the Atlantic. Even her military involvement in the war was literally peripheral in her flamboyant participation in the great flanking movement through the western desert of Iraq to An Nasiryah on the river Euphrates.

The Germans found themselves preoccupied with reunification at the time of the Gulf conflict and perhaps had some difficulty in focussing on events remote from the revolution in their domestic affairs. Thus the emphasis given to the constitutional prohibitions on the use of German troops beyond their own borders showed not only a reluctance to be diverted from their domestic concern but also perhaps a reluctance to contemplate the implications of once again becoming an ordinary state, which would include the preparedness to use force if and when the need arises.
There is a tendency for continental Europeans (with the exception of Britain and France) to assume that the principle of non-violence, that has become the chief feature of the Euro-Atlantic system of inter-state relations since the II World War, can be and should be equally applicable to the non-European world. Although the European community assumed a diplomatic and economic role in the Gulf conflict - it imposed sanctions before the United Nations did and attempted a common response to the hostage issue and on the diplomatic premises issue its role was not prominent and its equivocation (to say the least) over the use of military force again raises questions about the seriousness of the European commitment, to an Atlantic link and the credibility of the notion of a common European Security structure. The EC stance on the Gulf conflict prompted two opposing responses on the issue of European Security. One suggested that it demonstrated the need for a European Security umbrella, that defence is vital for Europe's political self-definition ... We must reinforce the EC by giving it this role, for it will not be strong without a clear Security dimension. The opposing response suggests that far from 'proving' the need for a common defence policy, it points up the essential inplausibility of European Political Union (EPU). The argument is clear - you can not have EPU without
a common security policy. Thus, if a common security policy is not possible then neither is EPU.

What the pro-European Security Policy case is really saying is that a common security policy must be used as an instrument to force EPU. Those who oppose suggest that this is putting the cart before the horse if there is no political unity there could neither the security nor unity. The Gulf conflict has played a part in clarifying these issues and in conjunction with the disintegration of Eastern Europe will have a setback in the cause of Western European Political Union.

Despite the military victory of America and the allies, the war provided no solution to the troubles and the political questions that bedevilled the region since long. Though the triumph of America and its allies in the field was easier they rather forced Saddam to swallow bitter terms for a ceasefire, yet they failed to establish peace or devise a plan for conflict-resolution. They even failed to remove Saddam, who was indulging in a policy of adventures and escalating tension and insecurity in the region. Despite the fact that American and British politicians overtly argue that removing Saddam had never been their aim and what happened to him was really a matter for the Iraqi people themselves, yet
ousted him from power was undoubtedly one of the aims of allies. But the coalition was not in a position to unseat the Iraqi President as the Arab world would react to it unfavourably. Moreover, Saddam would be seen as a martyr. Saddam claims a political victory for himself as he had defied the greatest power in the world with his military and political apparatus still functioning and with himself still in control of it. Even the western analysts accept that Saddam did not appear to be losing his grip on power in Baghdad despite his reckless behaviour.

Many moral and legal questions besides the short-sighted policies of Saddam, contributed to justify the America-led military operation. The Gulf crisis, indeed, provided America an opportunity to establish its preponderant and unchallenged global position paving the way for an extension of Pax Americana. But in the Post-Gulf War period, America might not be in a position to mobilise and get so much of support of the world community for its direct intervention as was the case against Iraq. The victory in the war against Iraq has, undoubtedly, increased the international influence of America. But without a stable economy, America cannot maintain its international involvement in the long-term. The commitment of the Democratic Government of President Clinton regarding cuts in American defence spending would also reduce
her capability to deploy forces in far-flung areas without the military and financial support of other countries, which cannot be taken for granted in the emerging multi-polar world. Therefore, it is imperative for America to adopt rational, more accommodative and democratic policies towards the countries in the region in accordance with the legitimate aspirations of the local people. It should avoid to support the undemocratic, unrepresentative and autocratic regimes and put a limit to arms export in the countries in this region.

As a supreme world power in the era of Post-Gulf War, America owes a greater responsibility to promote peace and security. For this not only the world, organisation like the United Nation is to be strengthened and given a greater opportunity but also the role of regional organisations is to be encouraged and supported for resolving the local disputes. America can help in finding amicable solutions to the major regional conflicts and discourage the use of force. Avoiding double standards and removing all possible contradictions in its policies is a necessity and a pre-requisite to a positive and effective role. For the security and stability of the region, a system of checks and balances should be allowed to operate. Regional balance of forces can certainly contribute to peace. Therefore, survival of Iraq as a regional power is conducive to the regional stability and cannot be regarded as
a threat. Most of the Arab and Muslim nations and countries in the Third World are not happy with the continuing of sanctions against Iraq as the common masses are put to lead a life of miseries and deprivation. Moreover, these have never been applied to against Israel to implement the U.N. Resolutions on Palestine which is constant irritant between America and the Arab nations. So America should evolve a plan of securing peace and stability in the region. This would help America to justify and legitimise her status of supreme world power and absolve her from the image of a global policeman.