CHAPTER I

IRAQI INVASION OF KUWAIT: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES
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Introduction

When the Second World War was over, the British domination in the Gulf was over and the US emerged as the new world power. The overall US strategy was the same as England's and France's: keep the political families' sheikdoms, emirates and kingdoms just strong enough to fight with each other, but not strong enough to destabilize the region or any one of them become a unifying force for all Arabs. That way the US could keep overall control of the oil in the area. A problem arose when, for example, Iran nationalized its oil companies in 1951. The US, response was to overthrow the elected government of Muhammad Mossadeq, and to replace it with a dictatorship by the Shah. The Western powers finally succeeded in breaking up the Arab World into several impotent client regimes. Iraq was just one of the fictional nation states; pro-west leaders were forcefully installed to execute Western instructions. They had manipulated the political environment and ensure the establishment of impotent client regimes whose social and economic administration was obedient to Western interests. This inevitably resulted in the hardship and repression of the Arab people under their newly formed illegitimate governments. Due to this programme, which involved a series of political, economic and cultural manipulations, these regimes became dependent on the West for their survival in all significant respects. The West Asia was a vital prize for any power interested in world domination, the control of the world’s oil reserves also means control of the world economy.
The United States aimed to dominate and control West Asia affairs to ensure its monopoly over regional resources, namely, oil. Iraq officially has the third-largest proven oil reserves in the World. Although recent seismic data suggests that it may in fact have the largest oil reserves, as high as 350 billion barrels.

The Western powers were horrified by the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran regardless of its domestic popularity. It implicated their expulsion from Iranian territory and the subsequent insecurity of elite interests in that region, including America's strategic designation of Iran as a 'guardian of the Gulf' subordinate to U.S. orders. The Islamic nature of the revolution gave the West further reason to fear. The Western powers expected that the events in Iran might pose a model for other Muslim nations in the region whose people suffered similarly under Western backed dictatorships. In this respect, the Iranian revolution bore the potential to severely damage US hegemony in the West Asia. The solution was to attempt to crush the revolution of Iran before it bore fruit. Iraq represented many possibilities in this regard. The US removed Iraq was from the terrorist list, so that the US plan could begin actualization.

Saddam Hussein started with encouragement from the Americans, who wanted him to destroy their great foe, Ayatollah Khomeini. Before the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war, America had made moves toward extending the hand of friendly relations to the Iraqi regime under the rule of Saddam Hussein. On 22 September 1980, Saddam Hussein initiated his offensive against Iran with US consent. On 26 February 1982, the America

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and Iraq’s special relationship was officially sealed. The real reason was to help them succeed in the war against Iran. The Iran-Iraq war was seen as a new opportunity to recoup US losses from the Iranian revolution. Starting in 1982 the U.S. encouraged and provided arms and satellite information to the Iraqi government in its fight against Iran. The Reagan and Bush administration’s principal goal was to weaken and contain Iran in order to limit its regional influence. The Iran-Iraq war did indeed weaken Iran, as much of the human and material resources of the revolution were wanted. However, Washington became concerned over Iranian success on the battlefield and secretly began providing CIA satellite information to Baghdad.

In December 1983, in spite of reports on Iraq’s use of nerve gas to stem the Iranian advances, the Reagan administration signed a confidential directive to do ‘whatever was necessary and legal’ to prevent the country from losing the war. The White House and the State Department continued to put pressure on the Department of Agriculture and the Treasury to extend credits to Iraq because Saddam was still considered a potential ally. During Iran-Iraq War, the United States turned a blind eye when Iraq used American intelligence for operations against Iran that made limitless use of chemical weapons and ballistic missiles. US chemical companies meanwhile sold pesticides that could be used for chemical warfare, while others supplied—under department of commerce licenses—biological agents including anthrax. There were no reasons to check the Iraqi aggression against Iran because of dual contentment. In 1988, Iraq’s use of gases had also repeatedly been documented by UN specialists. The United Kingdom was also heavily involved, throughout the devastating eight year war.
During the Carter’s election campaign, Iran seized of the US embassy in Tehran. William Casey, the head of Reagan’s campaign and later CIA director, then entered into secret negotiations with the Iranians to delay release of the hostages in the embassy until after Reagan had been elected. He promised that the US would resume weapons supplies thereafter. The US had become a major customer for Iraqi oil, importing by 1987 30 million barrels. This was still minimal in comparison to later imports. In 1988 the year of the most visible domestic atrocities initiated by Saddam’s forces US imports of Iraqi oil had increased rapidly to 126 million barrels. This figure should be compared to the 1981 figures when the US had not imported even a single barrel of Iraqi oil. The disparity constituted a momentous increase of over 400 per cent, with US purchases bringing in $1.6 billion. Iraq became the twelfth largest market for American agricultural exports in the 1980s; for some crops the country became the number one export market. One of the groups which were particularly active in ensuring that the US did not impose sanctions on Iraq was the US Iraq Business Forum, established in 1985. Iraq neither attacked nor threatened the United States. The Bush administration, on behalf of the giant oil corporations and banks, sought to strengthen its domination of this strategic region. It did this in league with the former colonial powers of the region, namely Britain and France, and in opposition to the Iraqi people’s claim on their own land and especially their natural resources.

The US now needed a strong Iraq to oppose the newly dangerous Iranians, and so supported Saddam Hussein in his eight-year (1980-88) war against Iran. The US therefore ignored Iraq’s brutalities. The UN found evidence that Saddam had used chemical weapons four times during the Iran-Iraq war. The other three were in April 1985,
February-March 1986 and April-May 1987. Saddam was also busy violently oppressing his own people, cracking down particularly on the Kurds of northern Iraq. In February 1988; Saddam developed an even more massive campaign against the Kurds. His troops employed the traditional methods of destruction. By 16 March 1988, the Iraqi air force was bombing Halabja with mustard gas and nerve toxins. “Entire families were wiped out and the streets were occupied with the corpses of men, women and children. Such atrocities did not satisfy for the United States and its Western allies to cease military assistance to the regime.

Even the Halabja atrocities only led to the token tightening of a few export controls related to chemical weapons manufacture and the production of what amounted to an effectively meaningless condemnatory resolution in the UN Security Council. The US sold more than twenty billion US dollars worth of arms and ammunitions to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf states during this period and allowed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to transfer large quantities of US arms to Iraq during the war. In 1984, because of Iranian battlefield victories and the growing US Iraqi ties, Washington launched “Operation Staunch”. This move was like a double-edged sword as it pressurized US allies to stop arms sales to Iran in an effort to dry up Iran’s source of arms while it continued supplying weapons undercutting arms sales to Iran, making the secret weapons transfers to Iran that much more valuable. In the meantime, Iraq made an apparent peace with Iran.

In 1987 Iran’s leaders prepared for what they hoped would be a last round of offensives to end the war and topple the Iraqi government. As the situation became steadily graver, international concern mounted. In July the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 598, calling for both sides to stop fighting, withdraw to the prewar border, and
submits to an international body to determine responsibility for the war. Iraq seized on the resolution, but Iran refused to end hostilities with victory so near. Iran continued its attacks but did not achieve the victory for which it had hoped.

By 1988 Iraq, sufficiently rearmed and regrouped, drove the Iranians out of Al- Faw and several other border areas. Iran was in no position to launch a counterattack, and the international situation seemed increasingly favorable to Iraq. The two countries had held their first face-to-face meeting since the 1988 cease-fire in their eight-year war, and in mid-August, Saddam Hussein offered in a letter to Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to meet virtually all Iran's terms for making peace. Many Iranian leaders concluded that the war could not be won and worked to persuade Khomeini to accept Resolution 598. Although the resolution failed to provide key Iranian aims such as an end to Hussein’s government, payment of reparations, or clear identification of Iraq as the initiator of the war Khomeini endorsed the ceasefire in July. On August 20, 1988, both sides ceased fighting in accordance with the terms of Resolution 598.

**Kuwait invasion**

The Iraqi- Kuwaiti border had been the focus of tension in the past. Kuwait was nominally part of the Ottoman Empire from the 18th century until 1899. Kuwait was a close ally of Iraq during the Iran, Iraq war. However, after the war ended, the friendly relations between the two neighboring Arab countries turned sour due to several economic, territorial and diplomatic reasons which finally resulted in an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Relation between the two countries improved during the Iran- Iraq war (1980-1988), when Kuwait assisted Iraq with loans and diplomatic backing. Kuwait had heavily funded the 8 year long Iraqi
war against Iran. After the war, Iraq was not in a financial position to repay the $14 billion which had borrowed from Kuwait during Iran-Iraq war. Iraq argued that the war had prevented the rise of Iranian influence in the Arab World. However, Kuwait’s unwillingness to pardon the debt created trouble in the relationship between the two Arab countries. During 1989, several official meetings were held between the Kuwaiti and Iraqi leaders but they were unable to break the deadlock between the two countries.

After the failure of the talks, Iraq tried repaying its debts by raising the prices of oil through OPEC’s oil production cuts. However, Kuwait, a member of the OPEC, prevented a global increase in petroleum prices by increasing its own petroleum production. Iraq also accused Kuwait of producing more oil than allowed under quotas set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), therefore, depressing the price of oil. Iraq’s complaints against Kuwait grew increasingly harsh. When Iraqi forces began to mobilize near the Kuwaiti border in the summer of 1990, several Arab states tried to mediate the dispute. Kuwait, seeking to avoid looking like a puppet of outside powers, did not call on the United States or other non Arab powers for support. The U.S. and the Western governments generally expected that Iraq would seize some border area to frighten Kuwait. So they avoided any action against Iraq. Arab mediators convinced Iraq and Kuwait to negotiate their differences in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on August 1, 1990, but that session resulted only in charges and countercharges.

The US also did not take a clear cut stand on the Iraq Kuwait dispute. Ambassador Glaspie stated that, we have no opinion on Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait … We hope you can solve this problems using suitable methods via Kibli [the head of the Arab League] or via president Mubarak. All that we hope is that these issues
are solved quickly. ... I received an instruction to ask you, in the spirit of friendship not in spirit of confrontation regarding your intention. Glaspie’s were not the only signals in that direction. Five months earlier, when General Schwarzkopf outlined the danger Iraq posed to its neighbors in the US Senate, Assistant Secretary of State J. Kelly told Saddam in Baghdad that the US consider him a force of moderation'. US senate delegation in March confirmed that line.³

Iraq is one of the few countries in the Arab world to have emerged within the span of less than a decade as a major militarized state. During the period of the war with Iran, it became a significant arms producer, surpassed in the Arab world only by Egypt. And Egypt, assisted by its traditional position of leadership in the Arab world had nevertheless developed its military industry only gradually, over a period of decades. Yezid Sayigh observes that: Iraqi military industrialization is especially striking because it is the first instance of an Arab country building up its indigenous productive capability between 1984 and 1990, which indicates a high rate of financial and human investment and suggests the existence of a scientific and technical base sufficient to allow such rapid expansion.⁴ From1980 to 1988, manpower increased in the army from 222,000 to an estimated 1 million: this represents a staggering increase of 350 per cent.⁵ This massive increase in

manpower required a correspondingly high increase in acquisition. Iraq’s arsenal became so extensive that, before the Gulf war, some experts were ranking Iraq as one of the top military state in the world. During the war with Iran the number of Iraqi tanks, for example, actually increased from 1900 in 1980 to 6300 in 1987/88, while those of Iraqi combat aircraft increased from 339 to more than 500. Iraq’s overall expenditure on arms increased from $1180 million in 1973 to a peak in 1982 of approximately $25 billion. By the end of the war, that had increased only to a mare $16.5 billion. All in all, these expenditures turned oil rich Iraq from one of the most prosperous countries in the region into the third largest debtor nation in the world, with estimated debts of $80 billion.

According to the Japanese Institute for Middle Eastern Economies, total Iraqi war losses from 1980 to 1985 amounted to $226 billion.⁶ According to al-Bazzaz, the war with Kuwait was inevitable. Iraq continued to let Kuwait flood the oil market, he maintains, Iraqi oil revenues would have not covered half its internal economic needs, let alone be to service its debt. The author argues further that, after eight years of attrition, Iraq can’t build on its previous economy with a high standard of living. It became necessary therefore, to find a permanent solution to the economic predicament, with its problems of debt, a solution which can only be geo-political which would provide new sources for the Iraqi economy. The economies of both Iran and Iraq were severely damaged during the war. Moreover, their economic problems were exacerbated by a steady decline in petroleum revenue that began in 1980 and resulted in a 75 percent decline in petroleum revenue by 1986. Following the 1979 energy crisis, there was a reduction in demand at the

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same time as there was a surge in production. The damage to Iraq’s infrastructure during the war amounted to at least $120 billion more than the total value of the country’s oil exports since 1973. The total economic cost of the war has been estimated at $644 billion on the Iranian and side $453 billion on the Iraqi side. The GDP per capita in Iraq declined from $6,052 in 1977 to $2,944 in 1988.

In addition, at the conclusion of the war, Iraq had accumulated a foreign debt officially estimated at $42 billion, excluding interest. In the political sphere, regional and international pressures towards liberalization were also evident. The tremendous economic and human losses brought about by the war with Iran from 1980-88 made it extremely difficult for the Iraqi government to retain the always precarious allegiance of its various ethnic minorities. Saddam Hussein was well aware of the fact that the ending of the war with Iran, the crushing of the Kurdish rebellion and the continued effective suppression of Shi’a Islamist organizations did not remove political challenges to his own position.

Two particular legacies of the war needed to be dealt with immediately if they were not to undermine his own position as supreme leader. The first was the apparent corporate solidarity of the Iraqi officer corps. The second was the economic predicament of the country. Both of these developments presented a challenge of a particularly acute kind to the form of neo-patrimonialism that sustained Saddam Hussein’s power in Iraq. The

economic liberalization process which had begun during the war was extended & reinforced, at least on the statue book. There were many work enforced by the government for economic recovery. But these activities were benefited few individuals and family concerns. However, they led to massive inflation which became so serious that regulation had to be re-imposed in a number of areas. All of this activity, although beneficial for those in a position to profit, could not make any serious dent in the overall economic predicament of the country.

Given the debt repayment burden amounting to over 50 percent of Iraq’s oil income in 1990, the massive costs of reconstruction, the continuing weakness in the price of oil and a military and a civil especially food import bill which far exceeded Iraq’s projected oil revenues, a more drastic solution was needed. It was in these circumstances that Iraq tired to increase its oil revenues by seeking to persuade OPEC to raise the price of oil through new restrictive quotas. In particular, Saddam Hussein looked to Iraq’s Gulf countries; Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, to help escape it form its financial plight in a number of ways. They were supposed to cooperate in maintaining a high price for oil, through restraint of their own production pressure on others. Furthermore, they were asked repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, by Iraq to declare that the $40 billion financial aid they had given to Iraq during the war with Iran should be considered a grant and not a loan. In addition, it was suggested that they should contribute very substantially to Iraq’s economic reconstruction. At the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) summit in Baghdad on 11 February 1990, Saddam Hussein for the first time revealed that he was in terrible financial crisis. He told a closed session of the summit: “We cannot tolerate this type of economic warfare which is
being waged against Iraq".\textsuperscript{10} He wanted around $ 27 billion from Kuwait and the Al Sabah regime flatly refused to bail him out. In May 1990, at the Arab Summit in Baghdad, in the closed sessions, Saddam Hussein accused that some of the Gulf countries had begun early in 1990 to produce oil beyond their OPEC quotas to such an extent that the prices in certain instances had plummeted to $ 7 per barrel. He claimed that every one dollar drop in the price per barrel meant a loss of $ 1 billion per annum for Iraq. Saddam Hussein explicitly stated that in Iraq’s present economic state this over production was an “act of war”. Saddam Hussein stated: “Wars can be started by armies and great damages done through bombing, through killing or attempted coup. But the other times a war can be launched by economic means. To those countries, which do not really intend to wage war against Iraq, I have to say this is itself a kind of war against Iraq”\textsuperscript{11}

He added, “I must frankly tell you that we have a stage where we can no longer take any more pressure”. This was a clear warning to the oil-rich states to pay Iraq. Iraq was asking them to bail it out from its dire financial straits and threatening them in case of refusal. The Iraqi position in the summit suggested that Kuwait was already identified as an enemy. Saddam Hussein sought to leave some room for maneuvering by Kuwait and said that the future summit would lead to an agreement.\textsuperscript{12} In a thirty seven-page memorandum, dated 15 July 1990 and addressed to the secretary General of the Arab League, which included figures and facts about the Iraqi claim, Tariq Aziz explicitly named Kuwait and


\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 63
the UAE as the two “culprits in over production”.13

The Kuwaitis were shocked by Tariq Aziz’s memorandum. It also made a counter-accusation that Iraqis were “stealing” from Kuwaiti oil well. Kuwait refused to be “cowed down by Iraq’s bullying tactics” which was obviously an attempt at writing off debts. On 17 July 1990 which marked the anniversary of the Ba’athist seizure of power in 1968, Saddam Hussein once again repeated his accusation against Kuwait and the UAE. It was on that day, Saddam Hussein, in a televised speech first threatened the use of force to halt over production. He stated: “They are trying to undermine Iraq after its military triumph...instead of rewarding Iraq, which sacrificed the blossoms of its youth in the war to protect their houses of wealth, they are severely harming it...” he also threatened, “...raising our voices against the evil is not the final resort if the evil continues... If words do not give us sufficient protection then we will have no option but to take effective action to put things right and ensure that our rights are restored...cutting a few throats is better than cutting the means of living...”14

10 July 1990, Gulf oil ministers met in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to study the Iraqi complaints. Both Kuwait and the UAE officially agreed to adhere to the OPEC quota, but both did not cut the production. Kuwait hoped to earn higher revenues for itself by expanding its market share than by raising prices. Therefore, Kuwait was quietly producing four hundred thousand barrels more per day than its quota of one and half million barrels.15 Iraq hinted

14. Iraq T.V. 8 P.M. (IST), 17 July 1940
that Kuwait’s trouble might be over if it was to reach an agreement on oil quotas and pay to Iraq the amount demanded. The telecast was seen and heard in the most of the Gulf and the Arab Countries. Kuwait’s ruler was shaken by the vehemence of Saddam Hussein’s attacks and open military threat. Kuwait’s Foreign Minister, Sheikh Sabah al–Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, rushed to Riyadh on 18 July 1990 to try to persuade King Fahd of Saudi Arabia to intervene. The Kuwait’s Minister of Justice, said, “The Iraqi memorandum is just the beginning, God knows how far they will go”. In response to the Iraqi letter to the Arab League, Kuwait on 19 July 1990 sent a formal letter to the Arab League Secretary General expressing “astonishment and surprise” at Iraqi accusations. Moreover, Kuwait also sent a letter to the UN Secretary General on 19 July 1990 drawing his attention to the “unmistakable threatening” in the Iraqi note against Kuwait and said “it is regrettable”. Kuwait rejected the Iraqi demand in a letter to the secretary General of the Arab League: “the sons of Kuwait, in good times as in bad, are men of principle and integrity. They will not yield to threats or extortion under any circumstances”. 16

On 24 July 1990, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt visited Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq, listening to each leader's viewpoint and stressing the need for a negotiated settlement. On his return to Cairo, he announced that a special meeting would be held between Iraqi and Kuwaitis delegates in Jeddah at the end of July. President Hosni Mubarak said that, Iraqi President had assured me that he would not take action against Kuwait unless all the diplomatic options had been exhausted. At the same time, Iraqi forces were being moved into the border of Kuwait.

It was aimed at putting more pressure on fellow Arab countries at the forthcoming Jeddah meeting. Eventually, the meeting took place in Jeddah on 31 July 1990. It changed everything, but not in the way Saddam Hussein had earlier assumed. The Iraqi team was constituted of Izzat Ibrahim, Vice-Chairman of the Revolution Command Council, Sa’adoun Hammadi, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Ali Hassan al-Majid, Saddam’s Cousin and the Local Government Minister. The Kuwaiti delegation was led by the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sa’ad al-Abdullah al-Salam al-Sabah, who was also the Prime Minister. John Simpson described the Jeddah meeting in the following words: It was clear to the Iraqis from the start that Saddam’s assumption that the Kuwaitis were looking for a solution of this crisis was wrong. They themselves seem to have had instructions to be as “flexible as possible” but they found the Crown Prince “arrogant and unyielding”. Kuwait, he said, had the backing of the US, Britain, and Saudi Arabia and had no need to be blackmailed into paying Iraq. His real opponent was Ali Hassan al-Majid, himself an aggressive man. During the two hour meeting the Iraqis presented a “series of Demands to Kuwait including a requirement that all debts by Iraq should be written off by Kuwait” and that Kuwait should cede to Iraq certain areas of Kuwaiti territory. In all, the Iraqis were reported to have demanded 10 billion US dollars in aid: debt write-offs of a further 10 billion dollars; relinquishing of Kuwait’s section of the Rumailah oil field which straggled the border between the two countries; 2.4 billion US dollars in payment for oil which Kuwait had legitimately extracted from its section of this field; and finally a long term lease of islands of Warbah and Bubiyan”.

17. Ibid., p. 107

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Reaction of Arab Countries

The invasion of Kuwait with 300 tanks and 100,000, troops moved rapidly into the Kuwait. By mid afternoon most of the city was under Iraqi control. The 16,000 strong Kuwaiti forces did not even offer token resistance. The Arab world strongly condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and demanded immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Syrian President Hafez al-Assad immediately sought to help the GCC Countries to counter the invasion. The Arab League foreign ministers were already close up in Cairo as part of a meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Therefore, both the GCC and the Arab League held emergency session to debate Iraq’s attack. On 3 August 1990, the ministers denounced Iraq’s invasion, called for its immediate and unconditional withdrawal and asserted their commitment to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states of the Arab League. The foreign ministers opposed foreign intervention in the crisis, but they also rejected Kuwait’s demand that they form a joint Arab force to counter the Iraqi forces. The vote of condemnation at the foreign ministers meeting was significant: 14 voted yes and 5 abstained which was Jordan, Mauritania, the PLO, Sudan, and Yemen; Iraq was ineligible to vote and the Libyans withdrew on the government’s instructions.

The United Nations Security Council and the Arab League immediately condemned the Iraqi invasion. After four days, the Security Council imposed an economic embargo on Iraq that prohibited nearly all trade with Iraq. Iraq responded to the sanctions by annexing Kuwait on August 8, prompting the exiled Sabah family to call for a stronger international response. In October, Kuwait’s rulers met with their democratic opponents in Jeddah, with the hope of uniting during the occupation. The Sabah family promised the democrats that
if returned to Kuwait, they would restore constitutional rule and parliament. In return, the democrats pledged to support the government in exile. The unified leadership proved useful in winning international support. The US succeeded in getting a series of anti-Iraqi resolutions adopted in the UN Security Council. It also sent troops to protect Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States against possible Iraqi aggression. The Iraqis tried to deter and split the growing international coalition through several means, but did not succeed in its target. They hinted that, they would use chemical weapons and missile attacks on cities, as they had against Iran during the Iran-Iraq War. Iraq also detained citizens of coalition countries who had been in Kuwait at the time of the invasion and said they would be held in militarily sensitive areas in effect using them as human shields to deter coalition attacks. Iraq eventually released the last of the foreigners in December 1990 under pressure from several Arab nations. After the Iraqi takeover of Kuwait and continued for several months, a large international force gathered in Saudi Arabia. The United States sent more than 400,000 troops, and more than 200,000 additional troops came from 32 countries. Still other countries made other contributions: Turkey allowed air bases on its territory to be used by coalition planes, and Japan and Germany gave financial support.

In the early morning of January 17, Operation Desert Shield became Operation Desert Storm. There were 1700 planes many of them flying from the airbase near Adana, Turkey. Saddam Hussein threatened to strike at Israel with a new missile. On the peace front, the Soviet Union announced that Iraq would be willing to negotiate an end to the crisis if assured those Rumaila oil fields in Kuwait and two offshore islands. Bush rejected any reward for Hussein's aggression and called for Iraq unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. Oil reached over 40 dollars a barrel. When Saddam Hussein linked the Arab-Israel
conflict, President Bush rejected a directing link between the Gulf crisis and any other dispute. The Iraqis argued that the UN had not forced Israel to leave Arab territories it occupied during and after the Six-Day War of 1967. It should not force Iraq to leave Kuwait. The Iraqis further implied they might leave Kuwait if Israel withdrew from the Occupied Territories. Several Arab countries responded positively to Iraq’s statements. However, most of the Arab countries did not support the coalition forces such as Jordan and Yemen, which were not part of the coalition. Only in Morocco and Syria did government support for coalition involvement weaken as a result of Iraq’s initiative. This suggestion was roundly rejected by Western governments when it was first made in the middle of August.

Since Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, the PLO has been accused repeatedly of siding with Saddam Hussein. However, Palestinians argue that their position has been misunderstood, pointing out that PLO leaders have been condemning Iraq in private while working hard behind the scenes to secure a peaceful resolution of the crisis.18 The PLO supported Saddam Hussein proposal for linkage between the Gulf crisis and other problems in the Middle East. The PLO President Yasir Arafat said that the plan would see the withdrawal of occupation forces from Kuwait, Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strips) and the Golan Heights (Syria) which was occupied by Israel in 1967 War. Arab and UN forces would replace foreign armies. Kuwait has been very important sources of funding for the PLO, and there were immediate fears about the fate of Palestinians there because Yasir Arafat was supporting Saddam Hussein. About 350,000 Palestinians lived and worked in Kuwait and as many as 100,000 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza relied on their

18. MEI- 31 August 1990. P. 30
remittances. PLO decision makers also had in mind the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians elsewhere in the Gulf and Saudi Arabia, and the crucial financial and political support which comes from those countries.\(^{19}\) The Iraqi leader said that invasion had opened the door to the solution of the Palestinian problem.

**International Reaction**

On November 29, with coalition forces massing in Saudi Arabia and Iraq showing no signs of retreat, the UN Security Council passed a resolution to allow member states to “use all necessary means” to force Iraq from Kuwait if Iraq remained in the country after January 15, 1991. The Iraqis rejected the ultimatum. Soon after the vote, the United States agreed to a direct meeting between Secretary of State James Baker and Iraq’s foreign minister. The two sides met on January 9, neither offered to compromise. The United States said that the meeting was failure and the conflict could not be resolved through negotiation. When the UN deadline of January 15 passed without an Iraqi withdrawal, a vast majority of coalition members joined in the decision to attack Iraq. A few members, such as Morocco, elected not to take part in the military strikes.

In the early morning of January 17, 1991, coalition forces began a massive air attack on Iraqi targets. Other countries contributed ships, air forces, and medical units, including Canada, Italy, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Czechoslovakia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Poland, and South Korea. Still other countries made other contributions: Turkey allowed air bases on its territory to be used by coalition planes, and Japan and Germany gave financial support. The initial goal of the

\(^{19}\) Ibid. p. 30
force was to prevent further Iraqi action. But the most countries were to be used to drive Iraq from Kuwait. A large minority of the U.S. population opposed military action. The air attack had three goals: first attack Iraqi air defenses, to disrupt command and control, and to weaken ground forces in and around Kuwait. The coalition made swift progress against Iraq’s air defenses, giving the coalition almost uncontested control of the skies over Iraq and Kuwait. The second task, disrupting command and control, was larger and more difficult. It required attacks on the Iraqi electrical system, communications centers, roads and bridges, and other military and government targets. These targets were often located in civilian areas. Although the coalition air force bombarded civilian areas and caused thousands and thousands innocent peoples and child died and completely disrupted Iraqi civilian life. Who suffered? The Iraqi people are suffered. They are facing lots of problem for their surviving, neither Iraqi government nor the American and the Western countries. The third task was weakening Iraq’s ground forces.

The coalition used sophisticated weaponry to strike Iraqi defensive positions in both Iraq and Kuwait, to destroy their equipment. In retaliation Iraq fired Scud missiles at both Saudi Arabia and Israel, which especially disrupted Israeli civilian life. Iraq could not get positive result after that. Saddam strategy failed to split the coalition. The Israeli government did not retaliate. Iraq also issued thinly veiled threats that it would use chemical and biological weapons. The United States hinted in return that such an attack might provoke a massive response. Iraqi ground forces also initiated a limited amount of ground fighting, occupying the Saudi border town on January 30 before being driven back.

After one month air war, the Iraqis began negotiating with the Soviet Union over a plan to withdraw from Kuwait. The war made diplomacy difficult for Iraq: diplomats had to travel
to Iran and then fly to Moscow to give messages to the Soviet Union to put his demand in UN back and forth. Sensing victory, the coalition rejected his demand and said Iraq pullout their forces from Kuwait unconditional. On February 28, with the collapse of Iraqi resistance and the recapture of Kuwait after the fulfilling goals the coalition declared a ceasefire. The land war had lasted precisely 100 hours. On March 2 the UN Security Council issued a resolution laying down the conditions for the cease-fire, which were accepted by Iraq in a meeting of military commanders on March 3. After the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the United States president George Bush announced on August 8, 1990, that he was sending military forces to defend Saudi Arabia following Iraq’s invasion of neighboring Kuwait on August 2. Washington called for the “complete withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait”.

UN Sanction on Iraq

The direct human cost of the war and its aftermath has been estimated at 158,000, with 86,194 men, 39,612 women and 32,195 children dying. Soldiers accounted for just 40,000 of these deaths. The bombing campaign also decimated Iraq’s water treatment and sanitation facilities, fertilizer and power plants etc., soon after the end of the war, a series of rebellions broke out. Those in the south of the country were spontaneous, while those in the north seem to have been planed and organized by Kurdish nationalist parties. All were swiftly crushed by the Hussein regime. Immediately after the war, per capita income in Iraq fell to just $627, and it had decreased to $450 by 1995. Numerous surveys and reports conducted by the government of Iraq and UN agencies during the 1990s revealed a

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deepening of the complex humanitarian crisis that had been precipitated by the war and exacerbated by the sanctions.\textsuperscript{21}

The end of the fighting left some key issues unresolved, including UN sanctions against Iraq, which did not end with the war. On April 2, 1991, the Security Council laid out strict demands for ending the sanctions because Iraq accepted liability for damages, destroys its chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missiles, forego any nuclear weapons programs. Iraq also accepted international inspections to ensure these conditions were met. If Iraq complied with these and other resolutions, the UN would discuss removing the sanctions. Iraq resisted, claiming that its withdrawal from Kuwait was sufficient compliance. The UN attempted to ease some of the hardship suffered by the Iraqi population by offering the Iraqi government the opportunity to sell $1.6 billion worth of oil in 1992 to pay for the import of food and medicine. This was rejected by Saddam Hussein since the UN also insisted on controlling the funds and retaining some thirty percent to pay towards war reparations. Only in 1996 did the Iraqi government finally agree to the terms of UN Security Council Resolution 986, allowing Iraq to sell 2 billion worth of oil every six months for the porches of supplies for its population. Further this was raised to $5.52 billion worth of oil every six months in UNSC Resolution 1153 of 1998 and in October 1999 to $8.3 billion for the period of May- November.

According to the provisions in the UN Security Council Resolution 687, the UN established a Special Committee aimed at destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction,

which together with the IAEA has conducted 8-year-long inspection and destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction since 1991. During inspection, the two sides had constant disagreements and conflicts, which brought about arms inspection crisis for many times and ultimately led to the "Desert Fox" military operation against Iraq launched by the US and the UK in December, 1998. After prolonged consultation lasting nearly one year, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1284 on December 17, 1999, deciding to establish the United Nations Monitoring Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) to replace the Special Commission. It is confined that if Iraq gives cooperation within 120 days, the Security Council intends to suspend the restrictions on Iraqi import and export for periods of 120 days each, remove the ceiling put on Iraq's oil export, and simplify the procedures for contract approval. However, it is not stipulated explicitly as to how to start the procedure to suspend sanctions against Iraq. On January 26, 2000, Mr. Former director general of IAEA was appointed chairman of UNMOVIC. At present, the personnel composition and system of operation of UNMOVIC is under deliberation.

In 1997, Iraq expelled all US members of the inspection team, alleging that the United States was using the inspections as a spy, which the U.S. was accepted. The team returned for an even more turbulent time period between 1997 and 1999. Saddam Hussein also alleged that the CIA was using the weapons inspection teams as a cover for confidential operations inside Iraq. In 1999, the team was replaced by a new team which began inspections in 2002. In April, 1991, the US, the UK and France defined the three provinces in northern Iraq as a “security zone” and demanded the withdrawal of Iraqi troops and administration institutions under the excuse of preventing Iraq from suppressing domestic
minority nationalities. In fact there are no such provisions in the Security Council Resolutions. The “no-fly zone” in southern Iraq was also set up by the US under the trick of protecting the Iraqi Shiite Muslims in August, 1992. In early September, 1996, the US launched retaliatory strikes against Iraq as Iraqi troops entered the “security zone” in northern Kurdish area to crack down the Kurdish pro-Iranian anti-government armed forces. The US also announced that the “no-fly zone” be expanded from North and South Iraq where the Shi’a and Kurds are living there. However, the greatest amounts of bombs were dropped during two prolonged bombing campaigns: Desert Strike, which lasted a few weeks in September 1996, and Desert Fox, in December 1998, the aim was to oust Saddam Hussein from his power in Iraq.

The sanctions on Iraq and the American military presence in Saudi Arabia contributed to the United States’ increasingly negative image within the Arab world. Therefore, the nine years of sanctions had no appreciable affect on the power of Saddam Hussein’s leadership over Iraq. The UN sanctions were contributing to the widespread and terrible suffering of the Iraqi people. The Iraqis achieved none of their initial goals. Rather than enhancing their economic, military, and political position, they were economically devastated, militarily defeated, and politically isolated. Yet because the government and many of the military forces remained intact, the Iraqis could claim mere survival as a victory. The surviving military forces were used a short time later to suppress two postwar rebellions: one involving Shi’a Muslims in southern Iraq and one involving Kurds in the north.
The oil-for-food programme

In response to the growing humanitarian crisis, the UNSC passed resolutions 706 in 1991 and 986 (the oil for food program) in April 1995. The latter was implemented following a memorandum of understanding with the Iraqi government in 1996. Notwithstanding the sanction resolutions, Iraq was permitted to export oil up to a value of $1 billion in a period of ninety days, in exchange for “medicine, health supplies, foodstuffs, and materials and supplies for essential civilian needs”. The program was administered by the UN Office of the Iraq Program, which ensured that the Iraqi government would fully comply with the provision of the resolutions.

Prior to the start of the oil-for-food program, the government had been distributing 1,300 calories per day to the population by way of food rations and foodstuff subsidies. The prevalence of malnutrition in Iraqi children under five almost doubled between 1991 and 1996: from 12 to 13 percent. Acute malnutrition in the center and southern region rose from 3 to 11 percent for the same age bracket. Indeed, the World food program (WFP) indicated that by July 1995, average shop prices of essential commodities stood at 850 times that July 1990 level. The Oil-for-Food program successfully staved off mass starvation, but the level of malnutrition within Iraq remained high and directly contributed to the high morbidity and mortality rates. In 1999, a UNICEF report estimated that

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sanctions had caused the deaths of half a million Iraqi children. In March 2000, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan acknowledged in his report that the prices of essential food items were beyond the reach of most Iraqis. The 2003 Report on the State of the World’s Children, issued by UNICEF, and agreed, stating that “Iraq’s regression over the past decade is by far the most severe of the 193 countries surveyed”. The impact of the sanctions regime on Iraq was overwhelming and multifarious. While it pauperized the Iraqi people, it strengthened the grip of the Hussein regime over a population that had become fully dependent on the state’s food-distribution system.

In operation between 1996 and 2003, the oil-for-food programme generated $69 billion dollars from Iraqi oil sales, of which $38 billion were allocated to humanitarian purchases for Iraq. Following the imposition of comprehensive economic sanctions on Iraq, the regime of Saddam Hussein had refused a humanitarian programme on the grounds of sovereignty, preferring in effect to have control over a smaller illegal import/export sector. In 1995 the Iraqi regime agreed with the UN Secretariat to a revised programme providing it discretionary control over oil pricing and the selection of purchasers of oil exports and humanitarian (and oil industry spare parts) imports. In other words, some members of the Security Council would have allowed corruption for the sake of pursuing a sanctions-based security agenda while others financially benefitted from the regime of Saddam

28. Ibid., p. 127
Hussein. Beyond the case of the oil-for-food programme, Security Council members also
defacto tolerated Iraqi illicit revenues from oil smuggling (outside the programme) estimated at between $5.7 and $13.6 billion between 1997 and 2002. Again political 'realism' played out in this attitude, with the USA in particular seeking to avoid a confrontation over smuggled oil with 'friendly regimes' such as Jordan and Turkey.

The UN Secretariat itself did not tackle the problem of illicit revenues, considering it a political issue to be addressed by the Security Council. Allegations of bureaucratic corruption by the head of the programme, Benon Vahe Sevan, also appear to be true, while the exact role and possible gains of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's son Kojo-who was affiliated to a Swiss firm at the time it received the programme's inspection services contract has not yet been clarified. The official investigation into the programme led by Paul A Volcker has recognised the political interference of Security Council members in the running of the programme, but it has also strongly criticised the failure of the UN Secretariat to challenge this interference and to observe its 'own rules of fairness and accountability'. Oil has been a major driving force behind foreign interests, balance of power, and territorial conflicts in the Persian Gulf. As a result of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, debates on oil and the US security agenda in the Gulf region have significantly shifted. On one side of the debate those opposing US military intervention argue that the 'war on terror' has provided yet another convenient cover for a renewed

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30. Ibid., p. 4
'imperialist oil grab' in the region. Others have justified intervention in terms of the dismal record of human rights abuses under Saddam Hussein, continued regional instability, and the threat of state-sponsored and oil-funded political violence. Among these, the US administration has portrayed its foreign policy on Iraq and the Persian Gulf as going beyond ensuring free access to oil for the world market to ensuring that oil is supporting 'freedom' in Iraq and the region. Accordingly, the US has justified its control of the Iraqi oil sector in light of the welfare and political stability requirements of the country. Despite opposition to the Iraq war, UN Security Council members largely back this vision, provided that the right of the Iraqi people to ‘control their own natural resources’ be recognised, and that the management of oil revenues by occupying forces ‘benefit the Iraqi people’ and be adequately audited. Saddam Hussein’s first son, Uday, accumulated at one point close to 30 official positions and supervised both ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ economic activities, most notably oil smuggling during the sanctions regime. The control of part of the ‘informal’ market and the official control of the rationing programme enabled the government of Saddam Hussein to strengthen its ‘dictatorship of force’ with a ‘dictatorship over needs' targeting the mainstream population.

**Internal revolt (Kurds& Shi’as)**

Kurds in Iraq have been in an almost constant state of revolt since Britain created Iraq after World War I. At times they also have been bitterly divided among themselves. Kurds

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31. [www.socialistworker.co.uk](http://www.socialistworker.co.uk)
32. [www.iraqpress.org](http://www.iraqpress.org), accessed 24 August 2004
33. Tripp, A History of Iraq; and F Rigaud, 'Irak: Le temps suspendu de l’embargo', Critique Internationale, April 2001, p. 15
are the majority in As Sulaymaniya, Irbil, and Dahuk province. Although the government hotly denies it, the Kurds are almost certainly also a majority in the region around Kirkuk, Iraq's richest oil producing area. Kurds are settled as far south as Khanaqin. The two main Kurdish parties the KDP and the PUK were founded in the early 1960s, while two of the main Shiite parties the Da’wa and SCIRI were formed in the early 1980s, and the third, the Sadr movement, in 1990. Whereas Masoud Barzani of the KDP was keen to sign an autonomy agreement with Saddam Hussein, his main rival, Jalal Talabani, leader of PUK, announced in December 1991 that “they were openly cooperating with the Iraqi opposition to overthrow the present government in Iraq”. The allies continued to maintain air cover for the ‘safe haven’ area established during relief efforts in April 1991, north of the 36th parallel in Iraq. In numerical terms, the Shi’a number approximately 60% of the Iraqi population. The Shi’a population would act as a cohesive voting block in any democratic election. Saddam pursued a ruthless policy of persecution, oppressing the Shi’a Arabs throughout his period in power and particularly after 1988. Further complicating the issue of Shi’a position in Iraq is the fact that they consider themselves to be Iraqi nationalist. The Shi’a tribes were heavily involved in the 1920 revolt against the British. For the first time since 1980, Shi’a had a leader who had a mass following and the ability to politicize the hawza and spiritualize the masses. Recognizing the threat, Saddam acted swiftly; Ayatollah Sadiq al-Sadr was assassinated in Najaf in 1991, along with his two eldest sons, leaving his youngest son, Muqtada, as heir to political legacy of al-Sadr al-Thani. The Kurds and Shi’a opposition to Saddam Hussein was supported by the misjudged invasion

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of Kuwait in 1990. Therefore, the popular uprising took place in the south against Saddam

Iraq opposition leaders became more confident due to Saddam Hussein defeat, and repeatedly called for a democratic system in the country with autonomy for the Kurdish population. There were 300 opposition leaders of different political parties, who met in March 1991 at Beirut. They took part in the largest gathering of the Iraqi opposition to the rule of the Bath party over the past 23 years. Those attended included the Kurdish front, a coalition of eight Kurdish militia groups, the Pro-Iranian Da’wa party, the Iraqi communist party the Islamic Amal Organisation, the Pro-Syrian branch of the Bath party and the council for democratic Iraq, which was recently formed in London and has close links with Saudi Arabia. Britain, USA, Syria and Saudi Arabia openly supported the Iraqi opposition groups who concluded that Saddam Hussein might survive the uprising. The Iranian backed anti government Shi’a Muslim group, called the Supreme Assembly for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, (SAIRI) was headed by Ayatollah Bakr Hakim. He played a crucial role in the Shi’a uprising in the two southern provinces. Hundreds were killed in large scale clashes between demonstrators and government troop in four townships near Baghdad. These four towns, Al- Thawra, shoal, Al-kadhemiya and Mashtal, witnessed scenes of massive demonstration against the government. Basra, Zubair and Ummalkhasib also witness Shi’a uprisings and the end of the March 1991, Saddam’s force had crushed

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the uprising by Shi’a fundamentalist. On March 16 1991, in his first nationally televised address since end of the Gulf war, Saddam Hussein promised wide scale political reforms, including a new parliament, constitution and cabinet. But he did not give anytime table for holding elections. The large scale destruction caused by the Iraqi Army’s action against Shi’a only aggravated the damage resulting from allied bombing and earlier from Iranian attacks. Many of the Arab worlds wanted to oust Saddam Hussein from the power. The goal was to divide the Iraqi military by building a network of opposition forces that could challenge Saddam Hussein’s control of the countryside and ultimately change his stronghold in Baghdad. There were Saudi plans to use the Kurds from the north through Turkey to overthrow Saddam Hussein, by providing weapons to Kurdish guerrillas. Syrian intelligence also cooperated with Saudi Arabia in the anti- Saddam Hussein, planning.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{36} The Times of India, February 8, 1992; March 13, 1992