

**ARAB - ISLAMIC RESPONSES
TO THE GULF CRISIS (1990-91)**

*DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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1992




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21st July, 1992

CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled "ARAB-ISLAMIC RESPONSES TO THE GULF CRISIS (1990-91)" submitted by DINESH KUMAR in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (M.Phil) of this University, is to the best of our knowledge his original work and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or of any other University.


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CONTENTS

Acknowledgment

Preface

Page

Chapter - I Dimensions of the Crisis 1 - 24

Chapter - II Islam and Arab Nationalism
as Issues 25 - 40

Chapter - III Arab Responses 41 - 76

Chapter - IV Islamic Responses 77- 96

Chapter - V Conclusions 97- 102

Appendix

Bibliography

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am highly indebted to my teacher and supervisor Prof A.H.H. Abidi who supervised my work with great zeal and interest.

However, a mere acknowledgement cannot express my immense indebtedness towards him. In fact it was his constant encouragement which led me to complete my work.

I am also thankful to my friends, Niranjana Dev Sharma, Sonam, T.N.Giri, Mirza Aslam Beg, Chuanana and Abdul Hamid Khan..

However my special thanks to K. Srujana, Rajbir Kaur, Anil Jaryal, Rajiv Malhotra, Sunil Raina and M.V.Srinivas whose help and assistance went a long way in realizing my goal of completing the dissertation.

I would also like to thank the staff of the libraries of J.N.U. , I.D.S.A. , Teen Moorti and I.C.W.A. who provided me with invaluable assistance during the course of my work.

Finally, I would thank my parents for their affectionate encouragement and support.

DELHI :

DATED : 21/7/92


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PREFACE

The Gulf Crisis (1990-91) marked an important event after the end of the super power rivalries. This crisis which started as an intra-Arab dispute, assumed a global significance. It affected large segments of the world community directly or indirectly. Many old alliances and loyalties were broken, whereas many new alliances and loyalties were formed.

The Gulf crisis which led to the disastrous war raises an important question - Why did Saddam Hussain decided to take on the might of military superior US led multinational forces ? This work is an effort to answer this question.

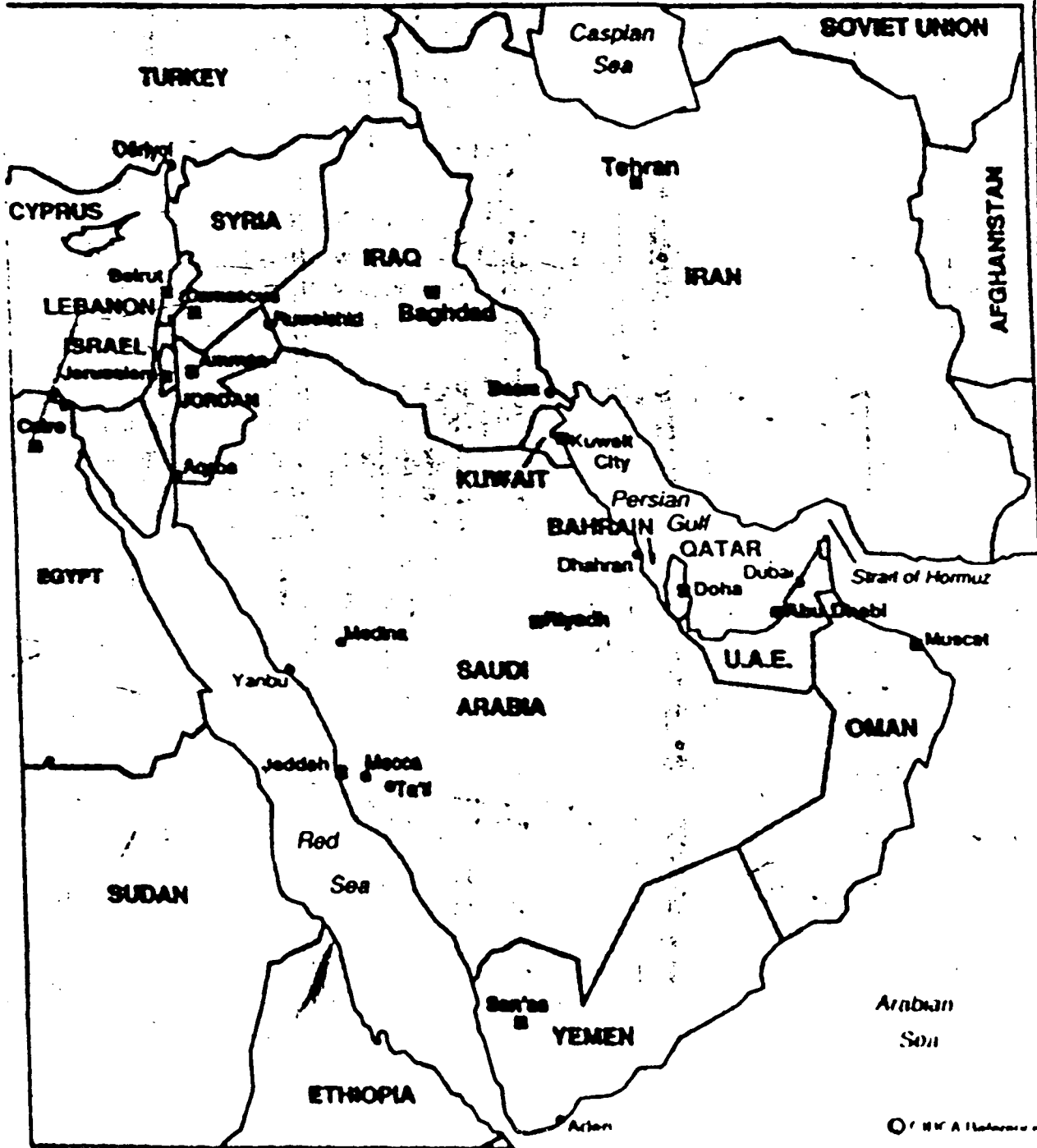
One plausible explanation is that Saddam Hussain thought that through his populist moves he would be able to arouse the sentiments of Arab Nationalism and Islam to check any outside military intervention in the region on the issue of invasion of Kuwait. The importance of these issues in the West Asian region influenced the responses of the Arab and Muslim countries to the Gulf crisis which assumed a crucial role in the Gulf crisis.

Chapter 1 of the present work deals with the various dimensions involved in the crisis. Chapter 2 explains Islam and Arab Nationalism as issues in West Asia.

Responses of Arab organisations, countries and masses are dealt in chapter 3. Islamic responses are taken in chapter 4. A summary and an evaluation of the study constitutes the concluding chapter 5.

An historical and analytical method of the study is followed. Primary sources to the possible extent have been used but this work is primarily based on the secondary sources.

GULF STATES



CHAPTER I

DIMENSIONS OF THE CRISIS

The West Asian region saw unprecedented upheavals in the Gulf crisis 1990-91. It was not just the annexation and liberation of Kuwait. It was the manifestation of various issues entangling the region, viz, Arab character and tradition, intra-Arab rivalry, division between the rich and the poor Arab countries, arbitrary creation of the states by the colonial powers, border disputes, gulf between ruling elites and masses, oil production quota and price, foreign interest and involvement in the region, piling up of arms by the states of the region, scramble for the Arab leadership, role of the United Nations in the emerging New World Order, etc.¹

When these unresolved and unsolved issues were mixed with Iraqi President, Saddam Hussain's desire to impose his dictates on the region and thereby on the world with the help of Iraq's strong military build-up and infrastructure, including biological and chemical weapons along with the advances to join a nuclear club, there culminated a grave crisis. In the present chapter following dimensions are discussed :

1. Iraq's historical territorial claims over Kuwait.

1. Abidi, A.H.H. "Arab-Islamic Responses to the Gulf crisis", Abidi, A.H.H. and Singh, K.R. (eds), The Gulf Crisis (Lancer Books, New Delhi 1991), p. 71.

2. Extra regional dimension
3. Dubious role of the United Nations.
4. Various tactical moves by Saddam Hussain.
5. Israeli dimension.

Iraq's Historical Territorial Claims over Kuwait

In retrospect, the relations between Iraq and Kuwait remained uneasy on territorial grounds. whether during monarchy or since the revolution, Iraqi leaders have time and again asserted Iraq's territorial claims over Kuwait. One compelling reason behind this claim by Iraq has been to acquire more access to the Gulf.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990 was the first time in modern history when an Arab state virtually invaded and then annexed another Arab state. This crisis cannot be called merely a border dispute between Iraq and Kuwait. In fact it was the outcome of the long standing Iraqi claims over Kuwait or part of Kuwait's territory.

In the 19th century, Kuwait had been administered as the part of the Ottoman province of Basra. However, the Turks had never occupied or gained full sovereignty over it. In 1896, Mubarak the Great, seized power in Kuwait and this event coincided with the rise of Great Britain as a significant maritime power in the Persian Gulf. To make his throne safe, Sheikh Mubarak sought protection from Britain and in 1899 an agreement was signed. This agreement could

not be ratified because of the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Britain established its protectorate over Kuwait and promised that no aggression would be allowed against Kuwait. In return, Kuwait cooperated with the British to liberate Basra from Ottoman rule. Kuwait retained this status until June 19, 1961.

The border between Iraq and Kuwait had first been defined in April 1923 between Sheikh Ahmad al Sahab of Kuwait and Major-General Sir Percy Cox, British High Commissioner in Iraq. Again, in July and August 1932, Sheikh Ahmad and then Iraqi Premier Nuri al Said re-affirmed the existing frontiers between Iraq and Kuwait on the basis of the 1923 understanding. However, this border demarcation was later regarded as invalid by Iraq on the grounds that Iraq had not been an independent state at the time of signing of border agreement (Iraq became independent on Oct. 3, 1932).

Meanwhile King Ghazi (Second King of Iraq) became the first Iraqi ruler to lay claims over Kuwait. In fact he had raised the possibility of intervening in Kuwait and incorporating it just before his death on April 5, 1938 in a mysterious car accident. Kuwait which raised the issue of border demarcation for the first time in 1951 found Iraq unenthusiastic on the issue and when the Kuwaiti rulers pursued the issue, Baghdad, for the first time expressed its desire to have Warbah island in return for demarcation of

their borders. Kuwait did not accept it. The Iraqis kept up the pressure on Kuwait when in 1954 in the context of negotiations related to the supply of water from Shatt al-Arab Iraq increased her claims on Kuwaiti territory. In 1956, Kuwait rejected a British proposal to Iraq in return.

In the following years Iraq repeated its claim over certain parts of Kuwaiti territory. In 1964 when negotiations started under the joint Kuwait-Iraq Committee to demarcate the border, Iraq for the first time challenged the legality of the previous agreements.² Iraq's plea was that at the time of these agreements Iraq was not a free country. Iraq wanted a border adjustment in its favour as a quid pro quo to accept the previous agreements. Kuwait rejected it and the committee talks ended in a stalemate in 1967.

After the Ba'ath Party captured power in Iraq (1968) it added ideological, political, geographical, economic, security and strategic dimensions to Iraq's border

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2. a) Anglo-Kuwait Agreement (1899) - a pledge by Turkey not to disturb the status quo in Kuwait and a determination of Kuwait's borders with the valleys of Basra-Under the agreement the islands of Warbah, Bubyars and Faylaka were included in Kuwait territory.
 - b) 1923 Agreement - Iraq - Iraqi recognition of the Iraq-Kuwait boundary as defined in the Anglo Ottoman convention of 1913.
 - c) confirmation of the existing border by Iraqi Nuri as said in July 21, 1932.

problem with Kuwait.³ Initially, relations appeared normal and cooperative but the trouble was brewing up over the old issue of demarcation of their common border.

A new element was added to their old problem during this period when the relations between Iraq and Iran became tense in 1968. Iraq requested Kuwait to allow it to station its troops in Kuwait to meet the challenge from Iran. Faced with persistent Kuwaiti refusal, Iraq coerced Kuwait to allow it to station its troops in Kuwait to protect the part of Umm al-Qasr in 1969.

Iraqi impatience was growing and it exploded on March 20, 1973, in an exchange of fire between the two states.⁴ Iraq also made border incursions into Kuwait and occupied part of Al-Samita. Iraq insisted that this crisis should be solved bilaterally. However, it is believed that Saudi Arabian and Iran's tough stand against Iraqi encroachment was one of the main reasons which led Iraq to withdraw its troops from Kuwaiti territory.

Meanwhile, Iraq on April 23, 1973 suggested to Kuwait that Iraq-Kuwait border problem should be solved in

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3. Veledani, Ashar Jarafari, "Idda'aha-e Arzi-e Iraw Nirbat beh Kuwait" (Iraqi Territorial claims on Kuwait), Majollish Siyarate Kharji (Journal of Foreign Adicy) Tehran, Vol. IV, No. 3, Autumn 1990, p. 347-66, Quoted in Abidi, n.1, p.11.
 4. Pasha, A.K. "Genesis of the Kuwait-Iraqi Conflict: The Political Dimension", Pasha, A.K. (ed.) : The Gulf in Turmoil : A Global Response, (Lancer Books, N.Delhi, 1991), p. 34.

the larger interest of the Arab world and talks to demarcate the border should be resumed. Iraqi Foreign Minister at the same time emphasised the importance of the two Kuwaiti islands of Warbah and Bubiyan to Iraq and asserted that without them it could not be a "Gulf Power" and that it was prepared to give up all of Kuwait in return for the islands.⁵

In between 1974-1977, several meetings were held between Iraq and Kuwait but none of them reached fruition. Kuwait outrightly rejected any territorial concession to Iraq. Kuwait sources indicated that it would be happy to extend facilities on Kuwaiti territories if needed for non-military purposes. It also offered more financial aid to Iraq.

The Important reason why Kuwaiti rulers were not giving any territorial concessions to Iraq was that it did not want to antagonise the Shah of Iran and the US because by controlling the Bubiyan and Warbah islands, the power balance would have become more favourable to Iraq in the region.⁶

The Iranian Revolution in 1979 was another important event in Iraq-Kuwait relations. Both the

5. Agwani, M.S. Politics in Gulf (Vikas Publishers, N.Delhi, 1970), p. 62

6. Pasha A.K., N. 4, P. 28.

46

countries had a common concern i.e. to check the wave of Islamic Revolution from entering into their countries. Kuwait with substantial shia population and being close neighbour of Iraq and Iran became vulnerable with the start of Iran-Iraq war in Sept. 1980. Kuwait initially adopted a neutral stand. But this neutral stance underwent a significant change as the war dragged on with no clear-cut victory for Iraq in sight and Kuwait gradually shifted towards a pro-Iraqi position. Under the banner of Arab Nationalism and solidarity, Kuwait offered substantial financial, political and logistic support to Iraq during its protracted war with Iran.⁷

During the war Iraqis revived the question of controlling the islands, Warbah and Bubiyan, because of security reasons. Faced with the threat of hostile Iran at its door steps, the Kuwait rulers agreed to place three of its islands under Iraqi control in Nov.1984.

When Iran-Iraq ceasefire was signed, Kuwait asked Iran to accomplish the job of demarcation of the border. Iraq asked Kuwait to transfer Bubiyan island to it before demarcation. As before, Kuwait rejected it. It must be stressed that Kuwaiti rulers were well aware that yielding to Iraqi claims over Kuwaiti islands would be a serious provocation to Iran.

7. Abidi, A.H.H., 'Backgrounder', Abidi, A.H.H. & Singh K.R. (eds.), The Gulf Crisis, (Lancer Books: New Delhi 1991), p.14

Kuwaiti leaders were expecting a friendly attitude from Iraq because of the huge financial and other support to Iraq in Iran-Iraq war. But Iraq, instead put military pressure on Kuwait. Saddam Hussain's demands shocked the Kuwaiti delegation. He suggested that the support given by Kuwait to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war was not enough and more was expected. And that a immediate and amiable solution to the border dispute was not in the offing.

Prelude to the current crisis

The events between July 16 and Aug. 2, 1990 showed that the differences between Kuwait and Iraq had reached a critical stage. Saddam was facing actue financial crisis and his scramble for Arab leadership was making him impatient. He further increased pressure on Kuwait to case out Iraq from this situation.

Saddam Hussain claimed Iraqi sovereignty over whole Rumaila oil field which extended 3-2 kms. into Kuwait. Iraq also charged Kuwait of stealing oil from this oil field when Iraq was fighting Iran.

In various diplomatic efforts Iraq put following demands before Kuwait which the former called as legitimate rights.

- 1) Promise by Kuwait to abide by OPEC oil ceiling
- 2) Iraqi control over the entire Rumaila oild field

- 3) Kuwait to pay \$ 2.4 b as compensation for the oil extracted from Rumaila
- 4) Gulf war debt to be cancelled
- 5) Compensation for loss in oil revenues due to Kuwaiti over-production and
- 6) Some territorial concessions on 2 islands i.e. Warbah and Bubiyan.

Kuwait in the face of imminent threat agreed partly to some demands of Iraq like abiding by OPEC quota in oil production. It was also reported that Kuwait was ready to cancel the wartime debt in lieu of a favourable solution to the border problem.⁸ Kuwait was ready to give \$ 1 billion as compensation. This willingness to buy themselves out from the crisis came too late and Kuwait was not ready to give any political and territorial concession.

It was against this background that the Jeddah talks failed. Unlike in 1961, there was no serious effort by Arab League to defuse the escalating tension between Iraq and Kuwait. However, there were individual efforts by King Hussain of Jordan, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Yasser Arafat of the PLO. But these efforts proved ineffective and Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990. This inactivity of the Arab League led the initiative to slip away from its hands. This opened gates for the outside powers to take the charge and

8. Pasha, N. 4, P. 42.

deal with the crisis in a manner which finally led to the disastrous war in the region.

II Extra Regional Dimension

With the involvement of extra-regional powers in the crisis, it attained a wider dimension. In the history of the 40 years, which has seen many wars in the west Asian region, this is for the first time that a great power, rather a sole superpower, the USA, came from outside the area and involved directly in the conflict.⁹ The war demonstrated the reaction of the super power when its interests are challenged by a third world country. In the present crisis the global interests of a super power were in confrontation with the regional interests and designs of an emerging regional power i.e. Iraq. The war represented asymmetries in objectives, capabilities and strategies. It was a war which reveals some miscalculations on the part of Iraq, the arrogant and hegemonic attitude of the US and the willingness of the world community to be bulldozed into a certain line of action.¹⁰

The US supported Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war in 1980s. But soon after the war, the differences between the two countries surfaced up. In the post-cold war era, Iraq

9. Agwani, M.S. "War and Beyond", The Hindustan Times, Jan. 27, 1991.

10. Singh, K.R. "Power Without Greatness", Seminar, n. 301, May 1991, p. 32.

suspected the US's efforts to normalize relations with Iran after the death of Khomeini. After the 8-years long war with Iran , Iraq was facing many problems and the economic hadrship being the important one. It wanted to control the oil resource of Kuwait too. It also wanted higher prices of oil to meet its need for funds. Iraq's military strength was still intact and on its basis Saddam aspired to take up the leadership of the Arab world. He tried to give an impression that Israeli military strength could be countered only with Iraqi forces.

Saddam Hussain warned his fellow Arab states in February 1990 that with the weakening of the Soviet Union, the US remained the only real super power in the region and would now support Israel more strongly. He indicated that in the post-cold war world, there would be a number of regional power centres and Iraq would be one of these important brokers of the war power with a dominant position in the Arab World.¹¹

Iraq's pressure tactics on Kuwait, a close ally of the US, to obey the OPEC production quota, give territorial concessions to Iraq along with the new aid and cancellation of the war-time debt was a clear indication that Iraq was aspiring for something very high in the region, which could jeopardise the US interests. The US's chief interest of

11. The Hindustan Times, August 10, 1990.

cheap oil supply was in danger. Iraq's strong war-machine was another bone of contention for the US because it could challenge the security of Israel, a close ally of the US in the region. Saddam Hussain's efforts to arouse the sentiments of Arab-nationalism was against the US interest which was dreaming to establish a new world order to its advantage. It is important to note that these apprehensions of the US were shared fully or partially by the allies of the US in the crisis. Saddam Hussain and his policies were seen as a threat to the Western interest.

The role of the US before the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq was full of controversies. The US ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie's statement on July 25, 1990 "that the US has no option on Arab-Arab Conflict like your (Iraq's) border dispute with Kuwait", had convinced, Saddam Hussain that in the event of the hostilities between Iraq and Kuwait, the US would assume a neutral stand. The US claimed that it had no clue to Saddam Hussain's plans . The reality was different. It is hard to believe that a super-power like the US would have been unaware of military preparations and strategic plans of Iraqi President. Meanwhile, General Schwarzkopf, the chief of the US Central Command, who was later incharge of operation Desert Strom, was busy in special war practices meant for responding to an invasion that might affect the US interests. All these things were linked in such a manner that it was very difficult to

believe that US had no inkling of things to come. Yet amazingly, it did nothing to avert the crisis, either through a warning or diplomatic means. Why did the US not warn Baghdad ? asked Paul Balta, Director of Paris-based Centre of Modern Middle-East Studies.¹²

Against this background, the invasion of Kuwait was seen by the West as the beginning of damage to their interests in the region. The US acted with an unprecedented haste. First, convincing Saudis that their country would be next target of Saddam's scramble. Then the US sent the troops to Saudi Arabia. Thus the US did not give enough time to resolve the crisis by Arab efforts.

It must be noted that the US did not send its troops into Gulf merely for protecting Saudi Arabia, reinstating the Emir of Kuwait, withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait . But as the crisis deepened, the undefined objectives of the US and its allies became clear. They wanted to protect the Western World's access to Gulf oil. For it the liquidation of Iraqi military strength was necessary. The objective of the US and its allies was the destruction of Iraq and also its potential while the issue of Kuwait was only a pretext. This unstated objective of the Western powers to crush any threat to their interest was well illustrated when the Western powers refused to stop the

12. Shekhar, Chandra "How American Manipulated the Gulf Crisis", Probe India: March 1991, p.14.

war even after Iraq had withdrawn from Kuwait.¹³

Samir Amin takes the extreme position saying, "The Gulf War was a North-South conflict. Western powers trapped Saddam Hussain to set their hegemony in the new world and demonstrated that any challenge from the Third World countries to it would be dealt sternly".¹⁴

Thus, the war has shown that the wings of a country would be cut off, if it stood in defiance of the super power harming the latter's interests. And today the world knows that the US is capable of enforcing its dictates even at the cost of thousands of civilian deaths. At the end of the war, President Bush was able to tell, "Finally we have kicked the Vietnam syndrome once for all and the spectre of Vietnam has been buried for ever in the desert sands of the Arabian Peninsula." President Bush speaking over CNN summarises it all, "We taught the whole world a lesson. Don't mess with the US."¹⁵

It is interesting to note that all this was done by the US and its allies in the name of implementing the UN resolutions. Two questions arise here -

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- 13 Jansen, G.H., "Real Motives - Destructions of Iraq", Mainstream March 2, 1991, p.5.
 14. Amin, Samir, "The Real States in the Gulf War", Monthly Review, July-Aug. 1991, p. 16.
 15. Mehta, Vinod, "Don't Mess with Uncle Sam", Sunday, March 10-16, 1991, p. 8.

- 1) Whether the Gulf War was UN war or not ?
- 2) Did the UN authorise such a large scale destruction of human beings and material to bring peace ?

These queries necessitate explaining another dimension of the crisis i.e. role of the United Nations.

III. Dubious Role of the United Nations

During the Gulf crisis the UN played a dubious role. The world body was misused by the Western powers to legitimise their action against Iraq. Efforts were made to show the world that the UN had complete control over the crisis but the unfolding developments showed that it was virtually highjacked by the US for its own and allies interests.

Undoubtedly, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990 was clear violation of Article 2(4) of the UN charter.¹⁶ The UN security council responded swiftly by adopting a series of resolutions, condemning the invasion and demanding Iraq's withdrawal, imposing economic sanctions against Iraq and declaring the latter's annexation null and void. A large number of resolutions were passed within a small period of time. Resolution number 661 which imposed

16. All members shall refrain from in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or pol. independence of any state or in any other manner in consistent with the purposes of the UN.

economic sanctions and resolution number 678 which authorised to use "all necessary means to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait' were important ones. It was the US's shrewd move which did not give enough time for the Arab efforts to resolve the crisis under the regional organisation, as is advocated by Art. 52 of the UN Charter.

The Arab world was frustrated over the double standard of the Western powers in the UN to respond to Kuwait's complaint instantly and its unwillingness to act on Israel's clear violation of Palestinians rights. There were doubts in the minds of Arabs of the US motives in the UN which did not prove wrong through out the crisis.

In the new asymmetrical power balance in the world after the decline of USSR as a super power, the USA persuaded as well as coerced other countries to accommodate US objectives at the UN. It was particularly apparent from the fact that the critical decisions by US-led coalition were taken without serious consultations within the Security Council.¹⁷ The US succeeded in bullying the UN to pass the Security Council resolution 678¹⁸, despite the

17. Ghosh, B.N. and Singh, Nonica, Political and Economics of the Gulf War, (Deep and Deep Publications New Delhi, 1991) p. 124.

18. Resolution 678 (1) :
"It authorises Member states cooperating with the Government of Kuwait, unless Iraq on or before 15 Jan. 1991 fully implements, as set forth in paragraph 1 above, the foregoing resolutions, to use all necessary means to uphold and implement Security Council Resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area.

resolutions being counter to its spirit.¹⁹

Under the pretext of economic and military sanctions, the US arranged a naval blockade regarded by experts as illegal.

During the crisis, the US became more and more aggressive and it manipulated the UN at its will. When Secretary General, Perez de Cuellar, went to Baghdad before the war started, he had gone as a messenger not as a negotiator; but his efforts were shackled by the highly restrictive resolution number 678. It is stated that Saddam Hussain was ready for a package deal, and was ready to pull out if Iraqi side of the dispute was given an international hearing. Yet the war followed.

Many statesmen argue that the economic sanctions were not given enough time to prove effective. Had the sanctions been given reasonable time and if this failed, only then the Security Council should have resorted to a war with the assistance of its own Military Staff Committee under the UN flag. But the Western powers instead obtained Security Council's authorisation to wage a war upon Iraq. That was what resolution 678 implied.

The composition of the multi-national forces was dominated by the US and British troops. While the war

19. Makseud, Ghovis, 'The Arab World Quandry', World Policy Journal vol. III, No. 3, 1991, p. 23.

against Iraq was fought under articles 42 & 43 of the Charter, the Security Council was not informed of the happenings in the Gulf. Nor was any meeting of the UN held during the war period despite the efforts by non-aligned countries as they felt that Article 43 was being violated and pressed for convening of the meeting.²⁰ But no such meeting was allowed and the allies reasoned that it would be serve no useful purpose. The UN remained a silent observer and its authority remained confined to the wishes of the allies.²¹ The UN was used as an instrument to further the US interests regardless of the grave consequences.

Many questions were asked. Whose war was it ? Was it to uphold the UN mandate ? Was it to restore Kuwait's sovereignty ? Was it a war between the US and Iraq ?

When the hidden aims of the Western powers came to the surface, the Secretary-General of the UN made it clear that the Gulf war was not a UN war.²²

The UN could at least have ensured minimum damage to humanity. But the UN was made to take stand in line with the Western alliance, It was further illustrated

20. Dutt, Vijay, "United Nations in Peace and War", The Hindustan Times, Feb. 19, 1991.

21. Gosh, B.N. and Singh, Novika, n. 19, p. 125.

22. The Times of India, (Delhi ed.), Jan. 28, 1991.

when the Western powers continued the UN-authorized economic sanctions against Iraq, as long as Saddam Hussain remained in power. Thus to use the legality of the UN sanctions to achieve an unenvisaged political objective, as the US did, represented a serious abuse of the Security Council's legitimate and political mandate.

IV. Various Tactical Moves by Saddam Hussain

The Gulf crisis showed an interesting series of tactical moves or initiatives by Saddam Hussain. Iraq tried to play with time to divert the issues. Saddam Hussain throughout the crisis followed the method of making new overtures and creating new situations. Well before the invasion of Kuwait, Saddam's populist message attacking the West against continuing support to the Zionist regime of Israel generated support for Saddam Hussain in the Arab World.

After the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, to justify it, Iraq said that it had acted in response to an alleged plea for support by "the Interim government of Free Kuwait" of the revolutionaries who had overthrown Emir sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah.²³

A combined statement by the revolutionary Command Council and the Provisional Free Kuwait Govt. said that a

23. Keesing's Record of World Events, August 1990, 37633.

plan has been drawn up to begin the withdrawal of the troops from Kuwait on 5 August. It added that this plan would be put into effect unless something emerges that threatens the security of Kuwait and Iraq.²⁴ It gives indication that in the beginning Iraq was more interested in replacing the Emir of Kuwait by a government to dance to her tunes. The annexation of Kuwait was an after thought perhaps.

The crisis was precipitated with the landing of the foreign troops on the holy land of Saudi Arabia Saddam Hussain made another tactical move. He tried to raise the Muslim sentiments against the presence of non-Muslim forces. Saddam Hussain called Arabs and Muslims to defend Mecca which was captive to the spears of the Americans and the Zionists, he said. He called Saudi King a triator and betrayer of Islam. This appeal to Islamic sentiments and brotherhood was reiterated when the active hostilities started in January. He was expecting that the popular protests against non-Muslim troops would emerge to this advantage.

Finding himself isolated in the world over his action, in his effort to divert the issue, Saddam Hussain tried to project himself as the vanguard of pan-Arabism or Arab unity through August 12 proposal." I propose that all issues of occupations or the issues depicted as occupation

24. Summary of World Broadcasts, 355/ME/0855 i (a), Aug. 6, 1990.

in the entire region, be solved according to one set of principles and the premises, to be laid down by the UN Security Council.²⁵ This step caused an emotional wave in his favour in some quarters of Arab World,. But this proposal could not gain enough support to divert the real issue.

Saddam Hussain then embarked on a peace initiative with Iran in which he declared his acceptance of Algeries Agreement of 1975. Saddam Hussain said on Baghdad Radio, "Iraq had taken a number of decisions on relations with Iran which would provide a final and clear solution that leaves no excuse for anyone."²⁶ This made Iraq to reduce the military strength along with Iranian border and to depoly more forces in Kuwait. He was also expecting Iranian support to break the economic sanctions, if not the military help. But evidence suggests that Saddam failed on this account. Despite all concessions by Iraq to Iran, this initiative did little to promote the Iraqi position and Iran was the only party to benefit.

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In another significant move, Iraq took foreigners, mainly Westerners as hostages. To counter the threat of pre-emptive strike by Western powers, Saddam used them as a human shield. His purpose was to arouse the public opinion

25. Text of Republic of Iraq Radio, Aug. 12, 1990 in SWB/ME/0842 A/1. SWB/ME/0844, 16th Aug. 1990.

26. SWB/ME/0844, 16th Aug. 1990.

in West against their government's presence in the Gulf crisis. Iraq released a number of children, women and sick people in a bid to win world public opinion. Saddam's attempt to trade off the release of the hostage for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Gulf and pledge from President Bush not to use force against Iraq, and to end the economic blockade was an example of his ad-hoc strategy.

Saddam Hussain also tried to get the support of the poor Arab countries with a promise to free them from the unequal distribution of wealth. He raised the issue that many Arab countries were misusing Arab oil resources in the interest of America and its allies. In the glaring disparities between rich and poor Arab states, there was a feeling of resentment and a class tension among the people of the region.²⁷ This explained the positive response by the masses to Saddam to some extent. But they failed to see that Kuwait's oil revenue, would have been absorbed by Saddam's own power game.

V. Israeli Dimension

The Israeli dimension of the crisis by which Saddam Hussain first tried to establish a link between the crisis over Kuwait and the Israeli-Palestine conflict, and his attempt to involve Israel directly in the conflict were

27. Azad, Abul Kalam, "The Gulf Crisis : Politics Strategic and Economic Implications", Bliss Journal, vol. 11, No. 4, 1990, p. 61.

the trump cards in his strategy. It should be noted that the issues related to Israel have a strong emotional appeal to the Arabs. Arab rulers know the political utility of the Israeli dimension. Saddam Hussain was no exception, when he tried to involve Israel in the conflict.

The Iraqi Government repeatedly underlined that , for decades major UN resolutions on the Israeli-Palestine problem had only existed on paper, whereas mandatory sanctions had been imposed on Iraq, on the Kuwaiti question. Iraqi leader's provocative speeches to destroy Israel with its powerful military thrilled the Arabs.

The Israeli dimension gained prominence in a disturbing way on Oct. 8, 1990 when 19 Palestinians were killed by Israeli police during bloody clashes in Jerusalem. Saddam called upon all Arabs to liberate Jerusalem and renewed his threats to attack Israel with missiles and chemical weapons.²⁸

Iraq wanted to involve Israel directly in the crisis which had the potential of cracking anti-Iraq bloc. It must be noted that some Arab countries made it clear that if Israel involved, they might have to shift their allegiance to Iraq. This caused many uncertainties.

28. Braun, Urjula, "Epicentre Kuwait : International Political Dimension of a Regional Crisis", Aussen Politic, January 1991, p. 61.

Saddam used his propaganda machine towards this end. Besides rhetoric, the most concrete and consistent Iraqi attempt to drag Israel into the conflict was through Scud missile attacks. The Scud attacks on Israel failed to widen the conflict. Israel known for its policy of pre-emption and massive retaliation, refused to follow the logic. this saved many Arab and Islamic countries the embrassment of fighting alongside Israel against their Muslim Brothers or even kept them out of the conflict altogether.

CHAPTER - II

ISLAM AND ARAB NATIONALISM AS ISSUES

As a distant observer one finds many important reasons for the aggression committed by Iraq against Kuwait, like-Iraq's historical claims over Kuwait and many current economic and political issues. But what is intriguing about the whole event is how Saddam Hussain- a master tactician and survivor-could underrate the prohibitive military machine of his antagonists and their resolve to use it and go ahead with his suicidal (mis)adventure.

Any attempt to give a plausible explanation to this is to go back to the history of the region, to understand the concepts and sentiments of Arab Nationalism and Islam. This will give some insight into the event in question. The hypothesis is that Saddam had tremendous faith in the sentiments of Arab Nationalism and Islam, which he hoped could be aroused with a little change in his tactics and postures. He had, probably, calculated that with an appeal to these sentiments he would be able to project himself as the champion of Arab Nationalism and Pan-Islamism.

It speaks for the pull of Saddam Hussain's appeal to Arabism that many Saudis, not to speak of others such as Egyptians Syrians, Moroccans, Algerians and Tunisians should admire him. Similarly, it speaks for the pull of his appeal to Islam that a number of religious figures in Iran, victim

of Iraqi aggression for eight long years, should advocate support for him, and Pakistani leaders, including the army Chief of Staff, General Beg, should be willing to jeopardise their alliance with the United States and the future of the Nawaj Sharifs government in Islamabad.

Before one comes to the Arab Islamic responses to the Gulf Crisis, one has to take into account these two issues Arab Nationalism and Islam which would give a better insight into the current crisis. Also as to how Saddam perceived these two concepts and how they fitted into his tactical positioning and manoeuvres. The historical analysis of these two concepts, their meaning, nature etc. will be taken up in this chapter.

ISLAM

In theory, Islam is an inherently political religion. Classically, the state's legitimacy depended on its role as protector of the Islamic community or Umma and the preservation of the Sharia, or divine law, by enjoying the good and forbidding the evil. Despite many regional variations, the application of the Sharia over the course of 15 centuries has produced a remarkably homogenous international community. Islamic identity vis-a-vis rest of the world became a matter of practice and belief.¹

1. RUTHVEN, MALISE ; Islamic Politics in the Middle East, and North Africa, Europa Book 1988. P. 139.

The Qazis (who enforce and interpret Sharia) have never formally accepted their exclusion from the sphere of politics, who continued to uphold the principle that all sovereignty belonged to God. A major consequence of this development has been the continuance of Islam as a political factor as long as the principle has existed that Islam is a total way of life which makes no distinction between the provinces of God and Caesar people have sought to realize the Islamic ideal through political action.

Thus, to understand the tremendous significance of Islam in the life of Muslims, one should not view Islam as only a religion. It has a much wider meaning-it is a way of life. The Quran designates the Muslims as the best community ever raised up for mankind. Earnest men have taken this prophecy seriously to the point of trying to mould the history of the whole world in accordance with it. The distinctive mass society that emerged with its art and literature, social and political forms, its cult and creed all had the unmistakable Islamic imprint. As Islam spread over widely diverse claims the new society it created "came closer than any had ever come to uniting mankind under its ideals."²

It is this goal to create the best society according to Islamic ideals (there may be dispute as to what

2. Agwani, M.S. RELIGION AND POLITIC IN WEST ASIA (Vikas Pub. New Delhi 1992) P. 23.

exactly they are) that creates a feeling of solidarity among the Muslims all over the world.

For the purpose of our research it is Pan-Islamism which is more important. It can be described as a projection of Islamic revivalism in the domain of Islamic world.³ It is a tendency which seeks the lost unity of the Ummah (the aggregate of the believers or followers across the continents) and the state. Attempts in recent times to unite the Muslim World have varied in their motivation and thrust. The caliphate under the Ottomans, Afghani's manifesto and the attempts by Pakistan to create an Islamic Bloc, to name a few.

Jamaluddin-al-Afghani, articulated Pan-Islamism as a cementing force against imperialism. It is useful to reproduce the universal proclamation to all the people of Islam-1914⁴.

"Islamic people should be the same people and families and it is incumbent upon their individuals and their communities to strive and put forth every effort to deliver any people of Islam and any nation(s) which believe in the unity of God if they have fallen into the grasp of the infidels who are idolators and the oppressive enemies.

3. Agwani, N. 2, p.89

4. "The original is in a thirty page Arabic pamphlet, Balagh amm li-jami ahl at Islam nasharathu Jamiyyat al-mudafa al-milliya . A general proclamation to all muslims, published by the Associatioin of National Defence"

Yet it is an important duty of all the Muslims that they should despite all difficulties help their brethren in distress and whosoever violates this duty is guilty of great iniquity and whoever denies it deserves from God painful punishment in the hell continually".⁵

Thus among the Muslims there was a strong sense of solidarity. This feeling manifested itself from time to time, especially when a section of Muslims was in distress. The Italian attack on the Ottoman province of Tripoli in 1911 evoked a widespread and active feeling of sympathy among Muslims for their fellow Muslims. In the same year as the Italian attack on Tripoli, a group of Muslims from , Setif in eastern Algeria, and another from Tiemcen in western Algeria, decided, separately, that they could not bear to live under non Muslim rule. They abandoned their homes and immigrated to the Ottoman empire. The precise discontent which led to such a decision are not at issue here; what is remarkable is the character of the decision itself, namely that Muslims in difficulty sought a solution to their problems in taking up abode in the domain of Islam however, distant it was, and however, uncertain their material prospects were⁶.

5. "Extracts of Universal proclamation to all the people of Islam" in Landu, Jacob. M The Politics of Pan-Islamism (Oxford, 1990) P.351.

6. Kedourie, Elie :Islam in the modern world)London, 1980),P. 54.

It is believed by many Muslims as well as non Muslims that Muslims are a monolithic group the world over. Many think that the Muslim Ummah is united like a firm rock and react to major events concerning the world of Islam as a unified group. However it is more apparent than real.

In history too, Muslims were never united fully, not only in political but even on religious matters too. There arose a number of sects within Islam impelled by religious political motives. The first sect was that of Kharifites (secessionists) which developed soon after the death of Mohammad and which demanded the free election of the most worthy man as Caliph regardless of whether he belonged to the Quraysh tribe (Mohammed tribe) or not, and which also insisted on the rights of the community continually to check the leader and depose him if he violated his obligations. They dominated North Africa and established communities of their own where some of these descendants can be found even today.

There are major difference among the Shia's and the Sunni's. The claims of Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammad, to the Caliphate was the major of reason for contention. The followers of Ali consider Ali the first Imam and it was carried on by his descendants. The Imams are without sin and infalliable and are the authoritative interpreters of the divine will. Among the Shia's also there are various sects like the Druzes; the Nusairites, or Alawites; and the Ali-

ilahis. The Sunni Islam is also divided into several sects and sub sects, each sect holding firmly to its own beliefs. The Muslims faced near civil war situation within 30 years after the death of the Holy prophet. It should be noted that the Muslims could not unite fully to face western imperialism and its onslaught against them during the 19th century. It was the division within the Muslims which gave easy entry to the Western imperialists in the Islamic World.

Present day situation also reflects the division within the Muslim community. There are numerous examples of conflicts among Muslims states. The creation of Bangladesh out of Pakistan, various national animosities In pakistan (Sindis and Baluchis) exhibit the differences within the Islamic world. The eight year bloody war between Iran and Iraq is quite well known. There have been unabated skirmishes between Iraq, Syria and Turkey. The other Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qattar and the United Arab Emirates have been complaining of the threats in the past and these very threats have not been emanating from any non Muslim country.

In the present crisis US led coalition forces pitched against Iraq comprise forces from Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh - all are Muslim countries.

Thus looking at the present realities, Islamic community cannot be called monolithic. Jamalluddin

Afghani's thesis which advocates the unification of all Muslim people under the Islamic government over which the supreme Caliphate should be the undisputed leaders as in the glorious days of Islam does not hold true today.

After these preliminary remarks about Islam and Pan Islamism, the issue of Arab Nationalism, its evolution and relation to Islam leading up to the present situation, is taken up. According to Abdul-Rahman al Bazzaz the Arab Nationalism in which we believe is not based on the notion of racial appeal but on linguistic, historical and spiritualities, and on fundamental vital interests. The principal factors that bind all Arabs together are language, historical traditionalism and the community of the interest. The major ideological currents during the early phase of Arab Nationalism (1800-1945) were westernization, Islamic revivalism, combining Nationalism, reformism, revolutionary activism and consitiutionalism inspired by the European concepts.

From the nineteenth century onwards, western concepts have been incorporated into Arab Nationalist thought and seems to have formed an integral part of the Arab tradition. The introduction of the European ideas of nationality led to the reaction against Ottoman tyranny.

The Arab national movement can be traced back to the year 1875, when five young men in Beirut formed a secret society. It strove for the Arab Independence and their

modernisation. During World War I, these trends became more prominent. The callous and repressive attitude of the Turkish Governor Jemal Pasha fanned the sentiments of Arab Nationalism.

When the Ottomom empire was defeated and dismembered the feeling of Arab Nationalism was in a nascent stage . The initial jolt to Pan Islamism, though not as a challenge came from the Arab Nationalist who had deserted the Ottomam army. These were officers who had taken up the western ways of life and thinking and had adopted western political ideals first and foremost being Nationalism.

CREATION OF ARAB STATES

The World War I offered new opportunities to the Arab Nationalists and led to the collapse of the Ottomam empire. Five new states were created from the ruins of the Ottoman empire-Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Trans Jordan and Palestine: However, these countries were under foreign dominance. The status of the Arab people changed from being citizens to that of subjects. No sooner did the war terminate than most of the Arab countries found themselves occupied by war time allies. A system of colonial rule in the guise of mandatory trusts, was imposed on them against their wishes. There was a new basis for mutual sympathy and the aspirations for Arab unity in the struggle against

foreign dominations. It was accompanied by national uprisings in Egypt, Iraq and Syria.

Besides, the Belfour declaration of November, 1917 which called for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine created much dismay and frustration among the Arab and Islamic people.

In this environment the feeling of Arab Nationalism began to grow. As propounded by its most influential theoretician, Sat's Al'Husri, the doctrine of Arab Nationalism clearly differentiated between loyalty to Arabism and loyalty to Islam and it was in no doubt that the former ought to have primacy over the latter. However, this should not be taken to mean that there was some kind of antagonism between Arab Nationalism and Islam. The quest of the Arab Nationalists, the struggle for Arab independence and unity - a struggle directed against European Christian powers and Zionism - was in no way weakened or harmed by Islam. In fact it was complementing the struggle by uniting the people in a common bond and purpose because the Arab populace was overwhelmingly Muslim and they gave their full support and loyalty to their leaders. But what is significant to note here is that the category of nation emerged in a strong manner.

Islam and Caliphate which served as the principal factors of political solidarity before the war, were both incapable of the same in the post World War I period.

Ottoman empire had become irrelevant and Islam was being put to the background by the secular policies of Kemal Attaturk. The attention of the Arab was now focussed on gaining independence from european domination. Thus an anti-imperialist attitude was widespread among the Arab Nationalists and had more negative connotations than positive.

Another trend was that of Rashid Rida and his friend Shakib Arslan. Rida's "starting point for social reform and political organisation was Islam, but who, like al-Kawakibi before him, could not but emphasise the close bond between religion and Arabness.⁷ The formation of the Leagues of Arab states (25 March, 1945) was a culmination of desire of Arabs to have a collective body to share and bargain on Palestine. This event signified the desire of Arabs to promote closer cooperation in cultural, social, economic and political fields. The territorial integration and sovereignty of each country has to be maintained. This body recognises the existing borders in the region. Under clause(3) of the Leagues, the decisions of the body are not obligatory on the members. It shows the facade of the League as this provision diluted the commitment of this body to the cause of Arab Nationalism.

7. Cleveland, William L; "Sources of Arab Nationalism", Curtis, Michael, Religion and Politics in the Middle East. (Westview Press, 1981) P.62.

At the end of the World War the Arabs were quite hopeful but this soon turned into dismay and anger, by what the Arabs call the catastrophe - creation of Israel.

Post 1952 period gave rise to a more militant form of Arab Nationalism and unity under the leadership of President Nasser of Egypt. Nasser and his Nationalistic policies were seen as a challenge to the Western hegemony as in the case of Mohammed Mossadig of Iran. First abortive attempt to bring him down, in 1956, during the Suez war, sharply radicalised the Arabs. Nationalist forces threatened to overthrow virtually every pro western regime in the region. The British had to send troops to Jordan to save King Hussein's throne in 1958. The pro western monarchy of Iraq, however, could not be saved from the military coup of 1958. Even Kuwait became Independent. In 1961, a mutual understanding was reached between Abdullah-Ibn-Salim and the British. Iraq declared its sovereignty over Kuwait. But Britain's intervention saved Kuwait. Iraq's claims over Kuwait have continued to the present day.

With Egypt's defeat in June 1967 war, Naseer's influence in the region was much reduced, while pro western regimes like Saudi Arabia and Jordan asserted their power. Nevertheless the region had been further radicalised by the humiliation of defeat inflicted by the west. Syria and Iraq passed in the hands of more determined Baathist Nationalist officers and political leaders. M. Qaddafi seized power in

Libya in 1969 and challenged the West by having the U.S.A. vacate the massive Wheelus airbase and adopting an independent oil policy. Another important factor was the emergence of Palestinian Liberation Organisation as a strong and independent movement to fight for its people's right to self determination.

After the death of Nasser, this Nationalism manifested itself through the Palestinian struggle in the 1970's and 80's. the Intifada movement since 1987 was a new dimension in the struggle of the oppressed Palestinian people. This also did not generate any comment or response from the USA, the protector of Israel. Iraq with the Kuwaiti invasion seized the opportunity and brought the Palestinian issue to the centre stage. Buy this Iraq was able to evoke the Pan Arab feelings to large extent. Although, the pretext taken by Iraq to bring up the issue should not be taken as justification of its invasion of Kuwait.

There are three major forces at work in West Asia - Islam, Arab Nationalism and Territorial Nationalism. In modern Western liberal political discourse nation has primacy over other categorise having a distinct identify and interests of its own. However much the West Asians might have liked the three forces to be complimenting each other, the facts or reality has been much different from that. The Egyptian-Syrian merger in 1958 had to be revoked after 3 years in 1961. The Syrians then complained that their

country had been converted into an Egyptian colony. Indeed, it could not be otherwise. Ideologies do not dissolve identities, and loyalties and power struggles.⁸ Any attempts for merging into a larger entity has to contend with the intrigues of power struggle's and jealousies. Besides, no group in power is easily willing to surrender its powers to a larger entity. Thus colonel Gaddafi's attempts towards merger have not made any headway at all. Another example is that of President Assad of Syria, Arab Nationalist, who aligned with Iran, a non Arab, in the Iran-Iraq war and also joined the U.S.A. and its allies in their war on Iraq.

As regards the convergence of Arab Nationalism and Islam also, there are some negative examples. Iran has more often promoted its interest in the name of Islam and in competition with Arabism. At the time of war with Iraq, Iran revived Arab-Iranian ethnic antipathies. In this regard, M.S. Agwani comments "with the notable exception of Afghani, pan Islamism has been invariably used to promote the specific foreign policy goals of its sponsors rather than to unify the Muslim world. The Pan Islamic ideal is difficult to achieve for the same reasons that the one world dream remains unrealized. The diversities and conflict of interest that fragment the Muslim world are basically not different

8. JAIN, GIRILAL : ARAB NATIONALISM VERSUS ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM. Manthan (New Delhi, March-April 1991) p.97.

that those that divide the rest of the world. The realities of the Muslim States today are that there is far less economic interaction between each one of them and the various non Muslim states across the global and that more often than not Muslim states have engaged in violent conflicts against other Muslim states.

The British policies in Palestine greatly contributed to the feelings of Arab Nationalism and strengthened their sense of Arab unity. There was widespread resentment against the settlement of Jews in Palestine as was shown in the Arab revolt of 1936. But the Zionist pressure in U.S.A. and Britain prevented any concessions to the Arabs, with regards to stopping of Jewish settlements in Palestine.

After the creation of the Independent state of Israel in 1948, the relations were further excacerbated between the Arabs and Israel. The Israel factor has been an important one in fostering unity among the Arabs. Since the creation of Israel there have been four wars between Arab states and Israel on the question of Palestine. After more than 40 years of the existence of Israel, only two Islamic countries, Egypt and Turkey have formal relations with it, and only three Islamic countries - Egypt, Iran and Turkey in the Middle East had ever recognised Israel. Given this historical relationship between Islam and Israel, it was not surprising that this became useful for Saddam Hussain in his strategy to divert attention from Kuwait. Saddam tried too

evoke Arab Nationalist sentiments by highlighting the plight and sufferings of Palestinians and calling for immediate resolution of the Palestinian problem.

However, the above arguments should not be taken to mean that Islam and Arab Nationalism are spent forces, which will be missing the point. In fact, these issues are still powerful forces of integration uniting the Muslims all over the world.

Saddam Hussain tried to invoke these sentiments for consolidation for the political goals but he did not achieve much success because of deft handling of the crisis by the United States of America and its allies. Israel was prevented from any retaliatory action even after provocation. Besides, some Arab states like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, were manipulated to join the U.S. led bloc against Iraq.

In spite of the vast superiority of the economic technological and military superiority of the 'West', Saddam Hussain challenged them. All through the crisis Saddam received tremendous support from the masses in Arab and Muslim countries which speaks volumes of the strength and emotionalism of the forces of Arab Nationalism and Islam. This support for Saddam Hussain was successful in re-awakening the sentiments of Arab Nationalism, though it may be temporary. On the other hand, it acted as a catalyst to the resurgence of Islam and feelings of solidarity among the followers of Islam.

CHAPTER - III

ARAB RESPONSES

The invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent entry of the US forces into Saudi Arabia had a massive impact on Arab regional politics, causing alliances to shift and crumble. It once again exposed the fickle and fragile nature of Arab politics. The Arab response can be studied at three levels :

- 1) Organizational /collective level
- 2) Individual state/governmental level
- 3) Mass level

At the collective or governmental level the Arab response may be analysed under three sub heads as follows :

- i) The League of Arab States
- ii) The Gulf Cooperation Council
- iii) The Arab Cooperation Council

The League of Arab States

At the time of the Iraqi invasion, the Arab League Foreign Ministers had already assembled in Cairo as part of a meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). The first attempt by the Arab states to formulate an unified response to the invasion of Kuwait came late on August 3, over 36 hours after the invasion. The Ministerial Council of the Arab League denounced Iraqi invasion, called for

immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces and asserted their commitment to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the member state of the Arab League.¹ The Foreign Ministers opposed foreign intervention in the crisis but they also rejected Kuwait's demand to form a Joint Arab Force to counter Iraq's army.

The vote of condemnation at the Foreign Minister's meeting was significant, 14 voted affirmatively, 5 abstained. Iraq was ineligible to vote and Libyan Minister withdrew from voting because of lack of instructions.² Those who abstained apparently hesitated to name the aggressor in the resolution. It is plausible that they adopted their positions on the basis of either their regional affiliations with Iraq or their own assessment of the crisis according to their national interest or both.³

However, the ineffectiveness of the Arab League came into lime-light when Tariq Aziz (Foreign Minister of Iraq) pointed out that according to article 6 of the League, the resolutions passed by the council on August 3 should be considered null and void because of lack of required

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1. Keesing's Record of World Events. Aug-1990, 37636
 2. Affirmative votes - GCC countries, Djibouti, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Somalia, Tunisia, Algeria. Absentees-Jordan, the PLO, Mauritania, Sudan, Yemen.
 3. Abidi, A.H.H., "The Arab-Islamic Responses to the Gulf Crisis" Abidi, A.H.H. and Singh, K.R. (eds.) The Gulf Crisis, (Janer Books, New Delhi 1991), p. 72.

unanimity.⁴ Moreover the Ministers from the GCC countries issued a separate statement wherein they claimed that the clause which rejected the foreign intervention did not apply to the coercive measures to be taken by the U.N. Arab Summit

The proposed Mini-summit which was scheduled on August 5, 1990 in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) could not be held mainly because of (1) Saddam's refusal to sit with Kuwaiti rulers, and (2) Hosni Mubarak and King Fahd wanted a prior commitment from Saddam that he would withdraw from Kuwait. Thereafter the formal annexation of Kuwait on August 8 and arrival of foreign troops in Saudi Arabia, receded the already bleak chances of an Arab solution.

Iraq wanted the Summit to focus on the inadmissibility of foreign forces operating on Arab land. Anti-Iraq countries rejected Iraq's stand as an effort to divert attention from the real issue.

Jordan, the PLO, Libya and Yemen urged the Arab leaders to form a mediation team that would try to reconcile the parties without condemning Iraq. An Arab or peace-keeping force would separate them during the period of negotiations. The proposal could have yielded some positive results in resolving the crisis. But the GCC states, Egypt

4. "Letter from Tariq Aziz to Secretary-General of Arab League" Noorani, A.G., The Gulf Wars - Documents and Analysis Konark Pub., New Delhi, 1991), p. 53.

and Syria found that this proposal would delay the action and help Iraq to consolidate its position in the Gulf.

Due to stiff opposition from these countries, the proposal was not put to vote.⁵ Instead, condemnation of Iraq and support for US military intervention in the Arabian Peninsula became the central theme of the draft resolution tabled by Egypt and supported by other moderate Arab states, including hitherto radical Syria. Thus by the time emergency Arab Summit was convened in Cairo on August 10, inter-Arab differences had escalated. The Summit passed a 7 point resolution. It condemned Iraqi aggression, emphasised the restoration of the legitimate government in Kuwait that existed in Kuwait before the invasion, denounced the Iraqi threat to the Gulf states and supported the measures taken by Saudi Arabia and other Arab states for legitimate self-defence and decided to comply with the request of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states to dispatch Arab forces to support them in defence of their territories and territorial integrity against any foreign aggression.⁶

5. Lesch, Ann Mosely, "Contrasting Reactions to the Persian Gulf Crisis: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinians" Middle East Journal, Vol. 45, No. 1, Winter 1991, p. 169'.

6. Text in Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/0841, A/S August 13, 1990.

12 out of 20 countries which attended the Summit voted in favour of this tough resolution⁷. Iraq, Libya and the PLO opposed it. Yemen and Algeria abstained and Jordan, Mauritania and Sudan expressed reservations. The resolution implicitly endorsed the GCC's move to invite foreign troops to protect their territories. But as pointed out earlier, many Arabs argued that this resolution was not unanimously passed, so it had no legal validity.

Egypt, Syria and Morocco sent their troops to Saudi Arabia, and Somalia and Djibouti provided the staging facilities for the international force. But it was the influx of the US forces into Saudi Arabia which changed complexion of the crisis. From being a regional dispute, Iraq's occupation of Kuwait become an international crisis. The chance of finding an Arab solution to the problem that was essentially a product of an Arab context looked an uphill task.

Meanwhile, under Egyptian influence a still sketchy, 5-point peace plan, was decided at an extraordinary meeting of 13 Arab Foreign Ministers in Cairo (August 30-31). The resolution demanded Iraq to pull its troops out of Kuwait, pay war damages, release foreign hostages as the

7. Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatear, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, UAE.

condition for the solution.⁸ It, however, suggested that any solution to the crisis must have the League's mandate.

In this fluid situation there was an apparent agreement charted out by Yasser Arafat, Saddam Hussain and Chadli Benjadid. Under this plan, Iraqi and foreign forces would withdraw from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, simultaneously to be replaced by Arab and international forces of the region- Afterwards a referendum would be held in Kuwait on the unity with Iraq.⁹

This plan indicated that Iraq was more interested to remove Al Sabah Family from the power. The GCC countries were against it, because the eclipse of monarchy in Kuwait would have affected their countries also. They adopted a hard line approach and this Arab mediation was not given a chance to work out.

Thus in August, within Arab League, there emerged two blocs. One bloc included Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria and the GCC countries at the core of a group fully committed to secure Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait and get rid of Saddam Hussain and his expansionist policies even with the help of foreign military intervention. The other group, a pro-Iraqi bloc including Jordan, the PLO, Yemen,

8. "The Guardian Weekly", September 16, 1990 in Noorani A.G. (ed.), Gulf Wars - Documents and Analysis (Konark Pub, New Delhi 1991), p. 66. (KRWE)

9. Keesing Record of World Events, August 1990, 37635.

Tunisia etc. though did not endorse Iraqi invasion and annexation, yet favoured and supported an Arab solution.

After August 1990, the role of the polarized Arab league. was virtually sidelined and the UN took the charge to deal with the crisis under the dictates of the US.

The GCC's Response

The overthrow of Al-Sabah family in Kuwait was great shock to the other GCC states. However, the initial response was extremely low-key, with some states not even mentioning the invasion and not one of them criticising Iraq directly. The Sheikhdom's silence reflected a blend of fear of Iraq's and perhaps an understanding of Iraq's justification for taking such a drastic action against Kuwait. Peninsula Shield system proved defunct to safeguard a member country from the attack. The first public response came on August 3 from the ministers of the GCC states. It condemned the Iraqi aggression and called for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of her forces.¹⁰ Some GCC members asked their Western allies for the military help. The Sheikhdoms faced a dilemma by giving a call to the foreign troops because (1) Arab League Council had already passed a resolution against foreign intervention and (2) it

10. "The GCC - Ministerial Council Meeting", Noorani, A.G., Gulf Wars: Documents and Analysis (Konark pub., New Delhi 1991), p. 58.

gave Saddam Hussain opportunities to arouse and manipulate Arab and Islamic sentiments to legitimise his action. The GCC's resolution made it clear that the UN resolutions and measures could not be considered foreign intervention because Arab League Charter stipulates adherence to it.

The Ministerial Council met in Jeddah again on August 7 and reiterated its demand for unconditional withdrawal. After the presence of large sized outside forces, the GCC then focused on the internal security because of fear of terrorism. Many arrests were made in several GCC countries apprehending the trouble from them.¹¹

It is significant to note that while collective utterances were made at various GCC forums, hard political decisions were made outside the institutional context-- mostly by Saudi Arabia.¹² And the most important issues were an endorsement of the war option and the active participation in the event of war.

In preparation for the Doha Summit, the Foreign Ministers meeting on December 10, 1990, decided that there was a need for further coordination and warned that the military option could not be ruled out against Iraq if it

11. SWB/ME/U879 A/ 26 September 1990.

12. Dietl, Gulshan, Through Two Wars and Beyond, (Konark Books New Delhi 1991), p. 262.

failed to withdraw from Kuwait in the stipulated time period.

At the GCC Summit in Doha (22-25 December 1990) it was stated that the international forces confronting Iraq had come at the request of the GCC states and would leave the region when the GCC states requested. They extended full support to the Palestine issue seeing its sensitiveness.¹³

The confrontation with Iraq was accompanied by a radical change in the climate of GCC relations with Iran. Iran was seen previously as a major security threat and Saddam had tried to woo Iran by his peace offer. The Summit communique welcomed trends in Iran to improve and develop relations with the GCC members but noted that there would be serious work to settle the differences.¹⁴ The GCC states wanted to keep Iran away politically and out of any military confrontation if there were to be one. The Summit took a decision to set up a programme to subsidise development efforts in Arab and Muslim states. They tried to neutralise the effects of the issue of rich and poor Arab countries raised by Saddam Hussain.

The GCC states, possessing nearly \$ 100 billions worth of advanced welfare systems, contributed in a big way

13. KRWE, December 1990. 37927.

14. Ibid.

in the military operation against Iraq. But the significant GCC contribution to the war efforts was in the financial terms.

Economic Cost of the War born by the GCC States

Kuwait	-	\$ 16,000 Million
Saudi Arabia	-	\$ 17,000 "
United Arab Emirate (UAE)	-	\$ 15,000 "

Thus the GCC's response was shaped by the fragile internal political system of the member states and their weakness to defend their countries from the perceived Iraqi threat. These factors increased their dependence on the Western powers which precipitated the crisis and finally ended up with a disastrous war.

Arab Cooperation Council (ACC)

The ACC consisting of Iraq, Egypt, Yemen and Jordan, failed to act in any significant manner. When Egypt joined the US-led multinational forces, the sub-regional organization became dead and no formal meeting of the ACC could take place. Yemen having the distinction of being a member of the UN Security Council adopted a fluctuating stand, at times abstaining, opposing or favouring Iraq in the UN. Jordan tried to take a neutral stand but soon after the precipitation of the crisis, it fell close to the pro-

Iraqi bloc. But all the three were against Iraqi invasion and annexation which was not relished by Iraq.

Responses of Individual States

The responses of the Arab countries to the invasion and annexation of Kuwait varied from country to country. Egypt, Kuwait, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria etc. demanded an unconditional withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait. Jordan, the PLO, Yemaen etc. favoured the linkage of Israeli withdrawal from Arab territories and looked at the current crisis as the Western designs to interfere in the Arab matters for their own interests.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti leaders reacted in a strange manner to the invasion. With 2-3 exceptions, the entire Sabah family managed to flee to Saudi Arabia leaving the country without any responsible leader. One Prince, Sheikh Fahd Ahmad al-Sabah, a brother of Emir and the commander of a paratroop regiment, died in the shoot out in the Royal Dasaman Palace.¹⁵

Emir of Kuwait called in the barbaric invasion from Saudi Arabia. Kuwait's ambassador to Washington Saud Nasi Al Sabah said, "The US intervention at this stage is of

15. New Straits Times, August 3, 1990.

paramount importance in the Gulf¹⁶ Though it would have been suicidal to 20,300 Kuwaiti army to fight against battle hardened one million army, yet the utter immobility of Kuwaiti forces raised many questions over the efficiency and faith of people in Kuwaiti defence system.

After the invasion and occupation of Kuwait, Saddam had made removal of Al Sabahs as one of the important conditions for the withdrawal from Kuwait. Saddam's claim that 'New Provisional Government had taken over the power was a ploy to take the advantage of emerging anti-regime discounted in Kuwait. But he could not get support for a puppet, provisional government in Kuwait. In a humiliating move to Iraq, Ahmed Khatib, leader of Kuwaiti Democratic Movement, and Jassem Al-Qatami, leader of Patriotic Movement (both London based) refused Iraq's offer to head the provisional government and strongly advocated the need to protect and restore the sovereignty of Kuwait as the immediate and common goal despite their differences with the Emir of Kuwait.¹⁷

Taif conference (October 15, 1990) called by Emir was attended by most of the opposition and pro-democracy leaders reaffirmed their patriotic/nationalistic stand.

16. The Hongkon Standard, August 3, 1990.

17. The Middle-East, October 1990, p. 19.

It was reported that the Kuwaiti opposition was in favour of a peaceful solution of the crisis and saw economic sanctions as the means to resolve the issue. But the Sabah family had no faith in such means and opted for a military showdown which was strongly supported by GCC states alongwith the Western powers.

Among the GCC states Saudi Arabia undoubtedly played a key role in the decision towards Gulf war. Kuwaitis finding the going difficult feared that the crisis might drag on without being resolved soon.¹⁸ Kuwaiti rulers feared that in case of a peaceful solution, their own and Kuwait's interests might be sacrificed. They stressed for the early military action. It must be noted that Kuwaiti rulers had little control in this decision. Kuwait helped allies war efforts with all possible military and financial means.

Thus, after the invasion, Kuwait's responses did not influence much the events throughout the crisis. It played a role of follower of the allies and keeping the opposition to the regime away from the pro-Iraqi stand with its promises of political liberalization in the liberated Kuwait.

18. Pasha, A.K., "Kuwait After Liberation" Stability or Turmoil", Pasha, A.K. (ed). The Gulf in Turmoil: A Global Response (Lancer Books, New Delhi), p. 345.

Saudi Arabia

During the Gulf crisis, Saudi Arabia held a pivotal position. Even before the invasion of Kuwait, King Fahd tried to defuse the impending crisis between Iraq and Kuwait. Iraq was told by King Fahd not to use force. Assurances from Baghdad in this regard were given to King Fahd by King Husain of Jordan who had met Saddam in Baghdad. But when Iraq invaded Kuwait, Saudi Arabia was worried about its capacity to defend itself. There is still a controversy whether Iraq had really planned to attack Saudi Arabia after invading Kuwait. The US tried to convince King Fahd that according to the information at their disposal, Saddam Hussain was about to march on Saudi Arabia. But, at this stage King Fahd was still confident of King Hussain's efforts to reach a negotiated settlement and to persuade Iraq to withdraw.¹ President Bush offered US help to Saudi Arabia. King Fahd agreed only if things got worse.

There were some reports that King Hussain had persuaded Saddam Hussain to discuss withdrawal from Kuwait at a proposed mini summit on 4th Aug. But when the Council of Arabs League (Aug. 3) condemned Iraq, the proposed mini-summit could not be held. This was a big blow to King Hussain's efforts. The first Iraqi denial came on 5 August when the Iraqi Ambassador to the US, Mohammad Sadiq Mashat, stated that Iraq would not attack Saudi Arabia and he denied

mobilization near the Saudi border.¹⁹ Saddam Hussasin firmly denied any plan to attack Saudi Arabia. He stated that Iraq would honor non-aggression and non-intervention treaty.

In the meantime the US provided fresh informations about Iraqi concentration on the Saudi border. This time King Fahd looked receptive to Bush's proposal of military help. King Fahd after some hesitation decided in favour of the US proposal, Saudi Arabi's conditions were that the Western powers should not establish permanent military bases on its soil (2) announcement regarding this decision to be made after the arrival of the US troops in Saudi Arabia.²⁰

Though Saddam Hussain held that he had no intention of invading Saudi Arabia, there was a great scepticism because he had given similar assurances just before he invaded Kuwait. There are reports that the US, to make her foothold in the region, pressed Saudis to realise that an attack was imminent.

At the same time the US pressed Saudi Arabia to cut off the vital Iraqi oil pipe-line to the Red Sea outlet at Yanbu, which Saudis did on August 7.

The invitation to the US troops was risky one. There was a danger to Saudi Arabia to be termed as the

19. Abidi, n-3, p. 77.

20. Salinger, Pierre and Laurent, Eric, Dossier, Secret: The Hidden Agenda: Behind the Gulf War, (Penguin Books, London, 1991), p. 156.

surrogate of the US. It exposed the state of affairs of the country's security. There was some opposition from within the country, notably from the royal puritan Wahhabi and the Muslim fundamentalists. Besides, there were some reports, though unconfirmed, that many Islamic clergies, intelligensia and some army men were not happy with the decision Saudi government on its part tried to convince the people that the US forces and its territory would not be used for an attack on any brother Arab state.²¹

Saudi Arabia stressed the role of Egyptian, Moroccan, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Kuwaiti and Syrian contingents in the multi-national forces. By doing so, it sought to counter allegations by Saddam Hussain, the PLO and all those opposed to the USA's policies in West Asia that by allowing the deployment of US forces in its defence, it had allowed itself to become an instrument of US strategic interests.

After the shaky response to the crisis in the beginning, Saudi Arabia adopted a tough posture. It implemented retaliatory measures against Jordan and Yemen for the pro-Iraqi stand taken by them. In late September 1990, Saudi Arabia expelled some diplomats of Iraq, Jordan and Yemen. The emergency supplies of oil to Jordan were

21. The Times of India (Delhi edn.) November 14, 1990.

terminated. Privileges enjoyed by the estimated 1.5 millions Yemeni expatriate workers in Saudi Arabia were withdrawn.

The deadline to Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait was approaching, but Saddam Hussain was in no mood to leave Kuwait. Saudi rulers were scared of using force against an Arab State (Iraq) to resolve the crisis. It did not want to be blamed for the destruction of an Arab country who stood against the West. Therefore King Fahd agreed to go along with the pan-Arab peace initiative launched by President Chadli Benjadid. The Saudi position was that so long as the Iraqi start to pull out of Kuwait, the Kingdom would sit down and talk to Iraq about regional issues, including withdrawal of the US troops from Saudi Arabia. Saudi King called on Iraqi President to avoid the catastrophe of war, and pledged to support a settlement of Iraq's territorial dispute with Kuwait, if the former withdrew its troops from the conquered Emirate ²². However, all these efforts were in vain.

When the war finally started, Iraq launched 35 Scud missiles mainly against urban targets in Saudi Arabia. Saddam Hussain and King Fahd accused one another for betraying Arabs and Muslims. Iraq called to wage Jihad against King Fahd in order to protect the two holy cities, Mecca and Medina. Iraq tried to create discontent in Saudi

22. Business and Political Observer, January 8, 1991.

Arabia through its media. Supreme Ulema Council of Saudi Arabia blessed the government's decision to seek help from non-Arab States on August 13. During the war, a three-day event leveled as Jihad Rally was organised by the Imam Mohammed Bin Saud Islamic University. Its purpose was to muster Muslim support against President Saddam Hussain over his occupation of Kuwait.²³ Throughout the crisis, Saudi government's position carried support from the masses. However there were some exceptions particularly the Palestinians and Jordanians staying in Saudi Arabia were accused of being pro-Iraqi.

Egypt

Egyptian leaders were shocked by the invasion. The invasion posed a potential threat to Egypt's economic and political interests in the Gulf. Moreover, Mubarak found himself betrayed by Saddam Hussain because the latter had assured Mubarak that he would not attack. It was obvious that Egypt could not accept the consequences of the invasion. On August 3, Egypt issued a carefully worded statement calling for the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. This was an opportunity for Egypt to retain the regional pivotal role which was threatened by Saddam's various actions. The crisis also provided opportunity for Egypt to return to Arab camp after its

23. Business and Political Observer, February 19, 1991.

ouster from it because of signing of Camp David Agreement 1979. Thus it was quite obvious for Egypt to be active in this crisis.

Mubarak held meetings with the leaders of Jordan, Yemen and the PLO to articulate the need to find an Arab solution to the crisis. But this stance of Egypt came under pressure around 7-8 August when the US made it clear that US's military and economic aid to Egypt would be stopped, if, it did not support the former's policy towards the crisis.²⁴ Being a client state²⁵ Egypt had to fall in line with the US.

Moreover, Arab Summit's inability to unanimously condemn the aggression and demand Iraq's withdrawal, left Mubarak disillusioned. Egypt decided to support the international effort to remove Iraq from Kuwait. It endorsed all security council resolutions, allowed Suez Canal to be used by the US warship. Egypt contributed approximately 35,000 troops to the multinational forces. Hosni Mubarak stated that the Egyptian troops in the Gulf were under Saudi command and they were purely for the defensive purposes. The emphasis on the defensive nature of Egyptian deployment in the Gulf was the design to defuse any popular upsurge in

24. Sreedhar, War for Kuwait: An Indocentric View (ABC Publishing House, New Delhi) p. 47.

25. Egypt gets largest aid from US after Israel.

favour of Saddam Hussain. The West hailed Cairo's courage to give support to the former to stand against an Arab country. The US wrote off Egypt \$ 76 billion military loan and many Gulf countries canceled Egypt's loans.

This invasion occurred at a time when internal Egyptian politics was unsettled. The government's pro-Kuwait position enjoyed support from the Egyptian people. Public condemnation of the invasion was nearly unanimous, although many people did not have sympathy for Kuwait. They were not taken in by Saddam's rhetoric of a battle between the Arabs and the West. A few dissenting voices were heard, most notably from the socialist labour party - an Islamic party - and some leftists, who believed that an American presence in the Gulf was more disastrous than Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.²⁶ The government took strict measures against possible opposition to the official policy as a precautionary measure. However, there was no major demonstration against the governmental policy. This position led the government to act with a lot of freedom during the war.

Saddam Hussain tried to raise the sentiments of Arab nationalism to pull Egypt and other Arab countries out of allies ranks. But Egypt remained on the American side even after the Iraqi-Missiles attacked Israeli cities.

26. Dessouki, ALi, Hillal, "Egypt's Response to the Persian Gulf Crisis" in Current History, January 1992, p. 35.

As far as the involvement of Egyptian forces in the Gulf was concerned, official reasoning was again refined. In August the troops were needed to defend the Holy places. In December it was to defend Saudi Arabia. Then it was to liberate Kuwait and apply the will of the international community.²⁷

The Egyptian response to the Gulf crisis was a pragmatic one. It had allied itself with the winning side and had proved its worth in the process. Egypt was accepted back into the Arab community and it prepared the ground for Egypt to play a dominant role in subsequent Arab politics.

Syria

Syria's response to the crisis was enigmatic.²⁸ Hafiz al-Assad (an arch enemy of Saddam Hussain) viewed the crisis as a fundamental threat to the Arab regional system and accused Saddam of playing into Israeli hands.²⁹

Politically, Syria joined Egypt and Saudi Arabia in what became the core of the anti-Saddam coalition in the Arab World. Syria supported all the security council resolutions, denounced Iraq's invasion and called for the

27. Rodenbeck, M., "Egypt, Relief but Apprehensions" in Middle East International (London, 25 January 1991), p. 11.

28. Abidi, no. 3, p. 72.

29. The Times (London) August 8, 1990.

unconditional withdrawal of Iraq, favoured to send an Arab force to Saudi Arabia and sent its troops to join the multinational forces. Many observers were taken by surprise that a hard core anti-West country's forces would fight along with the US and British forces against an Arab country. Assad said that Syria was siding with the US-coalition for the purpose of liberating Kuwait, the victim of inter-Arab aggression.

But the real motives behind this pro-US stand can be attributed to the following reasons:

- a) Historical enmity with Iraq based on ideological and political disputes,
- b) Syria's desire of rapprochement with Egypt and Saudi Arabia.
- c) Syria found it as an opportunity to come close with the West to break its political isolation after being neglected by the USSR.
- d) Assad's scramble for Arab leadership, and
- e) Syria's expectations of funds from the GCC countries.

Syrian decision to support the US-led coalition militarily was indeed a dangerous gamble on the part of the Assad regime. The Syrian people reacted with stunned silence and senior party leaders had a hard time convincing young

cadres about the regimes decision to join hand with the Americans.³⁰

Assad took the precautions to check any wrath of the pan-Arab sentiments against the official line. Assad tried to convince his countrymen when he said that Syrian troops would not participate in any attack on Kuwait or Iraq.³¹ Still internal criticism was there. There was a considerable disagreement over Assad's stance. Some Syrians viewed Saddam as an Arab hero and welcomed Kuwait's unity. A broad spectrum of citizens opposed the presence of the foreign troops in the region.³²

Knowing the sensitiveness of the Palestinian cause, Assad delivered many speeches supporting the Palestinian cause. He charged Saddam of harming Palestinian cause by wasting Arab military resources in fighting with other Arab countries.

Just before the start of the hostilities, according to many reports, the popular mood though suppressed, was in favour of Saddam who had challenged the might of the US.. At this stage, Assad said that if an aggression was committed on Iraq after Iraqi withdrawal,

30. Abidi, n. 3, p. 86.

31. TOI, November 14, 1990.

32. Lesch, Mosley; "Contrasting Reactions to the Gulf Crisis" Middle-East Journal, Winter 1991 p. 43.

Syria with its all material and moral strength would stand firmly by Iraq's side.

During the active hostilities, Syria rejected Iraqi argument that the current war was an Arab nationalist struggle against America. Like Egypt, Syrian forces took active part in uprooting Iraqi forces from the occupied Kuwait.

Syria was later rewarded handsomely for its support and its contribution. Saudi, Kuwaiti and other financial grants of almost \$ 2 billions alleviated its economic problems. Syria's relations with US also improved dramatically during the course of the crisis.

Thus Syria's response was largely shaped by leadership's perception of the crisis as an opportunity to serve its own as well as national interests. For this end the government supported allies even against the popular mood.

Jordan

Jordan presented a stark contrast to Egypt and Syria. King Hussain tried to strike a balance in reacting to the crisis. But Jordan's geographical vulnerability to Iraq and vast Palestineans population (around 60% of total population) led King Hussain to keep the dictator Saddam Hussain appeased.³³

33. The Bangla Desh Observer, August 11, 1990.

King Hussain expressed considerable sympathy for Saddam's moves. In the Cairo Summit (August 10), he justified the problems faced by Iraq. He was of the opinion that the world should not expect Iraq to withdraw unconditionally, without recognising its legitimate claims. The King condemned the presence of Western troops in the region. On the other hand, he rejected the annexation of Kuwait and recognised the Sabahs as the legitimate rulers. King Hussain welcomed Saddam's proposal of 12-August linking withdrawal from Kuwait with Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon.

Nonetheless, King Hussain tried to assume the role of mediator to defuse the crisis. He visited Iraq on August 13 and Washington on August 15-16. King Hussain presented a peace plan along with King Hassan of Morocco and President Chadli Benjedid of Algeria. But it could not yield anything substantial. This mediatory role of Jordan between the US Saudi alliance and Iraqi President Saddam Hussain was rebuffed by the Saudis.

Economically, Jordan was in severe trouble because of its dependence on Iraqi economy and Western aid. After many cost benefit calculations, Jordan formally joined the international economic sanctions against Iraq. It inflicted a blow on Jordan's economy. But Jordan's political support for Saddam Hussain clouded the prospects for future economic

aid from his traditional benefactors.³⁴ Saudi Arabia halted the sale of oil and stopped all aid to Amman, Jordan's appeal for UN assistance and Western and Japanese aid to save her from the economic collapse could not get a favourable response. The brunt of the embargo and the burden of sheltering evacuees, however, was borne by Jordan itself. It fuelled the anger and resentment that Jordanians felt toward rich Arabs and the West.³⁵

When the war started Jordan openly took pro-Iraqi stand. King Hussain said. "This war in the Gulf is against all Arabs and Muslims, not only against Iraq. Its real purpose is to destroy Iraq and rearrange the Arab nations, so as to put its aspirations and resources under direct foreign hegemony." Such a speech, playing the themes of Arabs and Muslim unity and foreign designs on the region, sounded a lot like the pronouncements made by Iraq. This official policy was clearly influenced by the popular opinion in Jordan.

The massive scale of air bombing of Iraq had stunned and outraged Jordanians. The death of many Jordanian truck drivers in bombing further influenced the emotions. Jordanians were thrilled to see Iraqi missiles strikes on Israel, though it was insignificant militarily.

34. Rodman, Peter W., "Middle East Diplomacy after the Gulf War", Foreign Affairs (New York, Spring 1991, p.

35. Lesch, Mesley, n.5, p. 45.

During the war, with Iraqi defeat in sight, the King pressed urgently for military de-escalation and the relaxation of the sanctions. Caught in double bind, the King sought an outcome which would have left Iraq's strategic power intact, hasten the withdrawal of foreign troops and serious effort to solve the Palestine problem. Being a supporter of the defeated side, no body cared for the King.

Thus Jordan's response in the crisis was more or less in accordance with Saddam's designs i.e. emotionally charged people influencing the government's policy in favour of Iraq, instead of the fact that Jordan had close relations with the US. But this policy proved counter productive to the Jordanian interests. It angered the GCC, irritated the West and undermined any significant role to Jordan in the regional politics in the future.

Palestine

The Palestinians response to the Gulf crisis was highly emotional and patently partisan. The basic position taken by the PLO was to disapprove Iraqi action, favour an Arab solution and oppose the Western presence and moves in the regions.

Yasser Arafat had been a master of art of survival. By assuming the role of the mediator, Arafat thought that he could enhance the prestige of the PLO not

only among Arab heads of state but also in the West. He had refused to condemn the invasion and considered it as a trump card that allowed him to remain in close contact with Saddam Hussain. But far from being a strength, his refusal had, in fact weakened his position. The Gulf States denounced his stand.

Iraqi invasion of Kuwait had raised many issues before the PLO. Iraqi invasion was a violation of the principle from which the Palestinian cause drew its legitimacy and moral strength.³⁶ This explains the opposition of the PLO to the invasion and annexation of Kuwait.

The PLO and the Palestinians have been long preoccupied with Israel and the extensive support the latter receives from the US. They were opposed to anything which makes the Arabs more dependent on the US. For this reason Arafat tried to solve the crisis within the Arab world. But his efforts were rejected in the Cairo Arab Summit (August 10).

Yasser Arafat, the PLO Chairman's creditability was under attack because of failure of Intifada. Israel had become more militant and uncompromising even after the concessions made by the PLO. He rode the popular tide and

36. Muslih, Muhammad, "The Shift in Palestinian Thinking", Current History January 1992, p. 22.

took a pro-Iraq stance. However, there was a disagreement among Palestinian intellectuals. They wanted the PLO to distance itself from Saddam.

Saddam's linkage of the issue of withdrawal from Kuwait with Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories as seen in the world as a cynic and empty gesture. But many Palestinians were thrilled over this proposition. It had some effect of legitimising Saddam's action.³⁷ The prompt US sponsored action by the UN against Iraq was seen as a double standard of the West because it had failed to respond vigorously to more than 23 years of Israeli occupation. There was a deep sense of outrage. There was bitterness towards the US and its ally Egypt (mistrusted since Camp-David Accord). These intense anti-American feelings were transferred into support for Iraq.

Though the PLO did not fight in the Gulf war but its anti-US stand continued. The Palestinian unified national leadership of the Intifada on January 30, 1991 called upon the masses of Arab homeland to support steadfast Iraq in facing the American-Zionist-Atlantic invasion.³⁸

The PLO stopped short of endorsing Saddam's call for attack on allied interests around the world. Such a move

37. Levitt, Wendy K., "All at Odds", The Middle East October 1990, p. 23.

38. KRWE, January 1991, p. 37940.

would have marked a great leap backward and would permanently burn its bridges with the West.

Maghreb States³⁹

When the Arab League met in Cairo on 10 August 1990, following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Egypt forced a tough resolution condemning the invasion and supporting the sending of Western and Arab forces to the Gulf. The response of the Maghreb states was generally negative. The resolution was opposed by Libya. Mauritania expressed reservations while Algeria abstained and Tunisia boycotted the meeting⁴⁰ It was Morocco only which adopted a clear pro-US stand mainly because of her compulsions as Gulf states like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had provided crucial financial and political support during Morocco's 15-year war against the POLISARIO in the Western Sahara and throughout the 1980s economic crisis.

In general, the governments of the Maghreb were in favour of 'an Arab solution' and pressed consistently during November and December for mediation and compromise. They generally condemned the invasion of Kuwait and were prepared to impose sanctions to help effect a withdrawal; they also condemned the use of force and refused to embargo food and medicines.

39. Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Yemen.

40. KRWE, August 1990, p. 37637.

The Maghreb states reacted first with disbelief, then with horror, to the outbreak of the hostilities. All precautionary measures were taken and the security forces were put on an alert. Governments began publishing messages of condemnation and appeal. In Morocco, king Husain proposed sending Maghreb forces to replace Iraqi troops in Kuwait, thus giving Saddam a face-saving way-out.⁴¹

A few days later after the bombing raids on Kuwait and Iraq by allies forces began on 17th January, the 5 members of the Union of the Arab Maghreb called for an urgent meeting of the Security Council of the UN to discuss the Gulf War.⁴²

These passions had grown so high that they threatened to destabilise the governments of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia the onslaught on by multinational force increased pro-Iraqi passions in Maghreb.

The wave of protest against the Gulf war in North Africa had become so strong in Morocco that King Hassan had to bow to the popular pressure and allowed a series of huge pro-Iraqi demonstrations. But this was the only concession given by the King.

In Algeria, fundamentalists held huge rallies against the war. But, these rallies were more of anti-

41. Hietta, Peter, "Maghreb Horror and Disbelief" Middle East International (London, 25 January 1991), p. 13.

42. Seddon, David, "Responses to the Gulf Crisis", Review of African Political Economy No. 50, pp. 70-74.

government nature. The demand for the opening of the training camps for the volunteers for Iraq was suspected. It was feared that the true purpose was to set militias which could be used to impose their will by violence or even to seize power. Riding the popular fervour President Chadli Benjeadid proclaimed in January, "Algeria stands with Iraq."⁴³

The Tunisian Parliament published a statement denouncing the coalition's attack on Iraq and expressed its solidarity with Iraqi people in its resistance. Tunisian President Ben Ali tried to back the popular (pro-Iraqi) mind and condemned the destruction and devastation of Iraq, which he said went beyond the tolerable.

Popular Responses

Immediately, after the precipitation of the crisis, Saddam Hussain turned his attention towards the Arab masses for their support by whipping up emotions of the people. He tried to take the advantage of the rising discontent among the people against their regimes. He tried to exploit the historical anti-imperialistic and anti-West sentiments of the Arabs Saddam used his propaganda Machine to expose the unpopular character of the rich sheikhdoms, those had taken an open anti-Iraq stand. He raised the issue

43. Crescent International New Magazine (Tehran) March 1-15, 1990.

that these countries were playing in the hands of the Western countries and helping the latter at the cost of the Arab interest. He highlighted the inequalities in the distribution of Arab-wealth. By doing so he tried to evoke the sentiments of Arab nationalism.⁴⁴

He raised the issue of the presence of the infidels (non-Moslems) in the holy land of Saudi Arabia. He gave a call for Jihad against King Fahd and the Western forces. He blamed King Fahd for inviting the foreign forces and thereby betraying Arabs and Muslims. He projected his confrontation with the West as a struggle against the US hegemony. He called it as the Mother of Battles and declared that Iraq was destined to win the war.

On 12th August, 1990 Saddam Hussain touched the core of the Arab sentiments when he linked the demand for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait with Iraqi pullout from the occupied territories. This attempt of widening the scope of the crisis was further tried by Saddam when Iraqi scud missiles hit Tel Aviv and Haifa. Thus Saddam Hussain addressed various interests and segments of Arab people.⁴⁵

Saddam's various moves and rhetoric influenced a sizeable section of Arab population. Issues raised by Saddam

44. Abidi, n. 3, p. 88

45. Ibid.

Hussain gained currency among them. They failed to see the real intentions and sincerity of these issues. The fickle and fragile nature of Arab psyche was evident⁴⁶.

The support for Saddam Hussain among Arab masses was due to two factors. Psychologically, it was the expression of disgust of have-nots against the rich Arabs and their life styles which were, in their eyes, against the traditional life styles of the Muslims. This disquest was not only against the rulers but also against their government and the ruling elites. Politically Saddam Hussain, evoked a positive response because he was seen as an Arab leader who stood against the Western hegemonic designs in the region. This support was not due to the feelings of Arab nationalism or pan-Arabism but essentially an emotional response in which the basic issue war blurred.⁴⁷

The popular support to Saddam Husain came in form of demonstrations in favour of him, mainly. Jordanian Yemenies Palestinians and Algerian had loudly and spontaneously surged in favour of Iraq. To them Western interference in the Arab matters was unacceptable. Conservatives and fundamentalists were particularly dismayed

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid

by the presence of non-Muslim soldiers in the Kingdom' end the destruction of a neighboring Arab country.⁴⁸

After the hostilities began, Saddam's efforts to raise Arab support by appealing to the emotions of the people was under test. It could have been very crucial for the final outcome of the crisis. Each day that allowed Saddam Hussain to survive in the war, was seen as rise in Saddam's prestige among the ordinary Arabs and so did hatred towards the US and its coalition partners, at least in some quarters. The Arabs were disturbed by the ferocity of the war.

Public opinion in some Arab countries (like Jordan, Yemen, Algeria, Morocco etc.) and the PLO influenced the official policy in form of either not condemning Iraq in Arab summit or allowing to demonstrate to showing solidarity with Saddam Hussain or to volunteer to fight for Iraq. It is interesting to note that in the countries which took clear cut anti-Iraq stand and collaborated with the Western countries through out the crisis, the public opinion, though muted, was generally pro-Saddam and anti-West. But it was very difficult to know how much support Saddam Hussain get from the people of the countries which were pro-West. This was mainly due to the repressive measures taken and total control over media by the respective governments.

48. Beyer Lisa, "The Fuse Grows Shorter" Times International, Feb. 15, 1991, p. 6.

Thus, despite the indefensible act of invading and annexing Kuwait, Saddam Hussain aroused support for himself at the mass level. This was partly because of his various populist moves, partly due to the responses of some Arab governments and mostly because of the blatant hypocrisy of the US. However this support fell too short as was expected by Saddam Hussain to tilt the balance of the crisis in his favour. Beside many other reasons, this was mainly because of the failure of the sentiments of Arab Nationalism and pan-Islamism to consolidate at the political level and the remarkable degree of success of the allies to control the popular upsurge in favour of Saddam Hussain within the tolerable limit.

CHAPTER - IV
ISLAMIC RESPONSES

Having studied the response of Arabs to the Gulf crisis in the previous chapter, the Islamic responses pertaining to this crisis, will be highlighted in the present chapter.

Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC)

The Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic conference were meeting at Cairo, when Kuwait was over-run by Iraq on 2 August 1991. Surprisingly it offered a muted response. It failed to take cognizance of the explosive situation which was engendered by the action of Iraq. Neither the conference ventured any step to prevent or defuse the crisis.

The Iraq representative, Interior Minister, Mohammad Abdul Wahab, gave a broad hint and also its decision when he broke off his participation and, abruptly left Cairo on 1 August 1991.¹ In the wake of the invasion, the OIC Secretary General issued an innocuous statement expressing regret over the tragic developments. The general position of the OIC was summed up in a separate resolution on Kuwait.

1. Abidi, A.H.H., "Arab Islamic Responses to the Gulf Crisis" Abidi, A.H.H. and Singh, K.R., The Gulf Crisis (Lancer Books, New Delhi, 1991), p. 89.

The resolution,² inter alia, condemned "that Iraqi aggression against Kuwait" , rejected " any consequence there of, could not accept" the results of this aggression" and called for "an immediate withdrawl of Iraqi troops from the Kuwaiti soil., adherence to the priniciples of the OIC Charter, particularly, those related to the peaceful settlement of disputes among member states and non-interference in each other's internal affairs." In the name of the OIC, the resolution supported the "legitimate system of Government in Kuwait under the leadership of Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al Sabah..." and reaffirmed its full solidarity with the Amir, the Government and the people of Kuwait.³

Hence, the resolution of OIC asked for the immediate and unconditional withdrawl of Iraq from Kuwait, proclaimed its faith in the integrity and sovereignty of Kuwait and condemned the annexation of Kuwait as illegal and against the canons of International law.

Iraq refused to abide by the resolution. It even went to the extent of challenging the presence of Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdul Rahman al-Awadi, by stating that the Kuwaiti government was overthrown in a coup: Besides Iraq, five other members of the OIC abstained from voting.⁴ This

2. Next in SWB, ME/0835, A/5-6, 6 Aubust 1990.

3. Abidi, n. 1, p. 90

4. The countries were besides Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Palestine, Sudan and Yemen.

should not be taken as total support to the Iraqi position since abstaining implies equivocation which all the five adopted. On the one hand they endorsed UN Security Council resolutions, which condemned Iraqi aggression, rejected annexation of Kuwait and imposed economic sanctions, but on the other, they made reservations on measures, which indicated their defence of Iraqi position. Hence the clear contradiction in the actions on non-Arab countries was apparent. This made the situation even more complex.

Thus a majority of the OIC members adopted as a general matter of fact and formal position on the original crisis, in Kuwait, namely its invasion and occupation of Kuwait by Iraq. They did not take any collective stand. Dissension was all the more apparent. Hence, in essence, it can be said that the role played by the OIC was a passive one, though it could not be termed as a negative one, as the stance which was implicit in the resolution was anti-Iraq and it also endorsed the resolutions, passed by the Security Council.

Moa'tamar Alam al-Islami

The Saudi propped Moa'tmar Alam al Islami (World Islamic Congress) was held at Mecca from 10th to 12th September 1990. It was convened to discuss the current

situation in the Gulf. The congress was addressed by King Fahd.⁵

Dr. Aamin Aql Attass, Assistant Secretary General of the Congress responding to the question about holding the conference at the particular time, expressed the hope that perhaps, in this meeting which brings in the wisest and the most virtuous Muslim Ulema will be what would benefit the Muslim nation, God willing for the sake of keeping the ghost of war away from them.⁶ Following the deliberations, a statement was issued.

The 14, point Mecca Document issued at the conclusion of the conference, denounced the action of Iraq. It termed Iraqi action, a sin and anti-Islamic. It also urged the Iraqi regime to pull out its forces immediately and unconditionally. It deplored attempts by the "Baghdad regime" to involve the holy places in Saudi Arabia and in the current crisis and so no justification for involving ... Mecca and Medina in the political and media dispute". The ulema who attended the congress, justified the action of Saudi Arabia to call foreign troops on the holy land. The conference held President Saddam Hussain responsible for such state of affairs. The conference also called for the

5. More than 480 Muslim dignitaries representing 86 countries around the world, including India, Unites states and the Soviet Union participated in the conference. Mawana Miyan represented India. Text of King Fahd's address in SWB, ME/0868 A/1, 13 September.

6. Abidi, n. 1, p. 97.

formation of the permanent Islamic force under the supervision of IOC, which the Islamic states could take resort to in case of disputes between themselves.⁷

Although resolutions of the Moa'tamar were not binding on the members, Dr Attas, underlined the fact that they were passed unanimously. This, according to him gave them validity.⁸

The Mecca meeting and its rulings were ridiculed in an "appeal" issued by the "Popular Islamic Conference"⁹ and it was broadcasted by Radio Iraq. It described Saudi's and Moa'tamar Alam al-Islami as a betrayer of two holy Mosques . Responding to the "Mecca Document" in religious terms the commission of Iraqi Ulema issued fatwa (12 September) justifying jihad against foreign forces.¹⁰

Response in Non-Arab Muslim Countries

Iran and Turkey (which were geographically close to the region of conflict) and Bangladesh and Pakistan were the non-Arab Muslim States which were involved in the crisis directly or indirectly. Therefore, a detailed study of these four countries is undertaken. Their responses were not

7. SWB ME/0869, A/9-10, 14 September

8. Abidi, n. 1. p.91

9. SWB ME/0871, A/5, 17 September 1990.

10. SWB ME/0871, A/5, 17 September 1990.

identical as each reacted according to its constraint and national interest. In fact, the responses in these countries were influenced by the national interests, national politics and pressures.

Iran

During the Gulf crisis, Iran's geographical location, size, resources, long border with Iraq, and political orientation gave it a pivotal position.

The UN sponsored resolution 598 which resulted in the cessation of hostilities between Iran and Iraq in August 1988 proved to be a turning point for Iran as far as her domestic and external policy was concerned.

At the domestic level, Iran shifting from its proselytising revolutionary position, looked inward and concentrated on fostering political stability and national reconstruction. In its foreign policy it gave signals of becoming a conservative force, committed to preserve the status quo.¹¹

Iran's policy of regional reconciliation and solidarity received a boost from a seemingly unexpected quarter when President Saddam Hussain, initiated the process of rapproachment in April 1990. As part of his own plan

11. Abidi, A.H.H., "Challenges before Iran", World Focus, (Delhi--1991) p. 31

Rafsanjani, however responded with caution. A turning point was reached during the emergency session of the OPEC, (July 1990), in which the Iraqi and Iranian representatives were reported to have secretly crafted together their policy on the oil quota and price. This, however, should not imply that Iran became privy to the subsequent move of Iraq.¹²

When Iraq invaded Kuwait, Iran did not approve the action of Iraq. The Iranian Foreign Ministry issued a forthright statement (2 August) which, inter alia, condemned Iraqi invasion, apprehended increased presence of hegemonistic powers, called for immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops to recognise international borders and suggested a peaceful solution to the dispute.¹³

Hence, Iran punctuated its condemnation of the United State military presence with equally strong denunciation of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. Tehran was obviously in no mood to allow the Americans to decide the balance of power in the Gulf. It was well aware of the fact that in 1980s they befriended Iraq to take on Iran. and now they were busy in mobilising the regional countries against the "Frankenstein monster" which was cultivated by Washington.¹⁴

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Mushahid Hussain, "The Persian Gulf Crises : Impact on the Muslim World", Strategic Digest, Vol. XXI, No. 8, August 1991, p. 1422.

Iran, no doubt, endorsed all Security Council resolutions, but the increasing involvement of the western powers, politically and militarily, in the region, was a matter of concern for Iran. Iran urged the UN security Council to defuse the crisis and stated that the deployment of the US troops in Saudi Arabia was a violation of the international law.¹⁵

Iran's significance in the crisis was well illustrated when in mid-August Saddam Hussain unexpectedly conceded all major demands of Iran by accepting Algeries Accord (1975). He offered to release all prisoners of war and withdraw Iraqi troops from the territory taken in the war. Iran welcomed this step of Saddam Hussain. Iran stuck to its neutral stand. Tehran made it clear that peace with Iraq was independent of other issues. It rejected any geographical change in the area by stressing Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

The stated purpose of Iraq was to reduce the military strength along with Iranian border and to deploy more forces to confront the US. In return Iraq was, expecting Iran to break the economic sanctions against Iraq by allowing food and other goods to transit through its territory. Iraq was hoping that the anti-US attitude of Iran might generate a support for the former. But Iran

15. Abidi, n. 1, p. 94.

responded very carefully in this situation where both the belligerent parties were trying to woo Iran. Iran interpreted the Security Council economic sanctions in its own way by saying that it did not include food and medical supplies. Thus, by endorsing security council resolutions along with providing food and medical supplies to Iraq, Iran was successful in not displeasing any of the two parties. Tehran condemned both Iraqi military invasion of Kuwait and the US military presence in the region. It advocated a peaceful settlement by the Gulf states. In such a course, Iran visualised a prominent possibly a dominant, role for itself. This move was vetoed by the nervous GCC states.¹⁶

Undoubtedly, this crisis placed Iran in a favourable position. Any concession to Saddam Hussain, in the present crisis was seen by Iran as a potential threat. If Iraq was able to retain Kuwait it would have emerged stronger. In that case, it might again confront Iran. Thus Iranian leadership insisted that Iraq must withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait. Similarly, Iran was apprehensive of the US presence in the region because in the long-run it could pose a threat to the Iranian interests.

When the hostilities began, Tehran stuck to its position of neutrality. Official policy was under attack from some radical quarters, notably the former Interior

16. Abidi, n. 1, p. 31.

Minister, Ali Akbar Mohtashimi. But the latter failed to win the full support even of the hardline camp for his stand that Iran should join Jihad. Even Iraq's missile strikes on Israel and its claim that the allies had bombed Shi'ite holy places in Najaf and Karbala, failed to cut much ice.

But as the coalition onslaught got underway, Iranian leaders became increasingly alarmed. They feared that the destruction of Iraq might lead to its disintegration as a nation state. The fear of spill-over effect of the balkanisation of Iraq, made Iran to declare that it was committed to Iraq's territorial integrity and opposed any geographical change in the region.

When Iraqi war planes landed in Iran, Rafsanjani's neutrality faced a challenge. Many observers thought that this development would drag Iran into the conflict. The West feared that Iran would crack under the pressure of its anti-American wave and threw its lot with Iraq.¹⁷ But Iranian government stated that Iran would not abandon its neutrality unless its national security is endangered.

During the hostilities, Iran intensified the diplomatic efforts to secure a ceasefire. This included talks with Algeria and Yemen's Foreign ministers in Tehran

17. Daneshkhu, Scheherazade, "Iran Virtue out of Necessity", Middle East International, February 8, 1991, p. 9.

and the non-aligned movement leaders in Belgrade. Iraq facing the unprecedented destruction of its country, agreed to participate in these talks. President Rafsanjani reiterated his call for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and allied forces from the region. The plan opposed any territorial changes in Kuwait or Iraq and insisted that the Iraqi people should be left free to determine their own future.¹⁸ This was the first time, Iran indicated that it was interested to remove Saddam Hussain from power. Iranian peace moves were welcomed by the UN Secretary-General, Perez de Cuellar.

But Iranian peace plan failed to change the situation. Iraq found nothing new in this offer. At this stage of war, Iraq did not show any flexibility in its stance. This plan was not in accordance with the US designs in the region, so it quickly brushed it aside.

It is important to look into the reasons of this peace move, in this context. By seizing the initiative in peace moves, Iran was hoping to be able to bring an Islamic solution, particularly one in which Iran would have a big say in the post-war security in the Gulf. Iran feared that the US forces might stay back in the area which would be a threat to her security and a challenge to its revolution¹⁹.

18. Abidi, n. 11, p. 32

19. Ibid

Iran feared a spillover effect on its western provinces if Kurds were able to create a homeland for themselves by seceding from Iraq. With the continuous destruction of Iraq, Iran anticipated a rush of shi'is refugees to Iran - a factor which would have serious socio-political repercussions at home, particularly boosting the position of conservative extremists against moderate Rafsanjani.²⁰

Thus Iran's response was a pragmatic one. It knew that it held many trump cards. Rafsanjani very carefully criticised Iraq and the US and its allies, extended humanitarian assistance to Iraq in form of food and medicines in order to maintain the delicate balance of Iran's neutrality.

Turkey

Turkey, a non-Arab Muslim country which has a common border with Iraq, assumed a significant place in the Gulf crisis. Its response to the crisis was largely determined by the economic and political considerations. When the US involved directly in the crisis, Turkey found itself in tight corner because its interest were linked with both the parties involved. In the crisis, Turkey was earning around \$ 300 million revenue as transit fees by carrying Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean through two pipe lines. On the other hand, Turkey, a memeber of NATO, was

20. Ibid

looking for the membership of the EEC. Therefore, Turkey was not in a position to displease any party in the crisis.

In this stage of indecision, Turkey was persuaded by President Bush to take the side of the allies. Two days after the invasion of Kuwait, President Bush suggested to Turkey to cut off Iraqi pipelines. Turkey did not respond to it. But because of the economic sanctions, Iraq closed one pipe line and reduced the flow in another by 30 per cent. Therefore, Turkey banned Iraqi oil export and froze Iraqi assets in Turkey. To fall in the line with the West, Turkey was assured financial compensation as well as military protection by the US. Oil shortage was removed by the supplies offered by Saudi Arabia.²¹

Turkey did its best to help the US and allies in dealing with the crisis. It swiftly complied with the UN resolution for economic sanctions against Iraq and resolutely condemned the invasion of Kuwait. President Bush pressurized both Riyadh and Ankara for a Turkish contingent to join the multinational force in Saudi Arabia. The idea was that Turkish troops, all Muslims and members of NATO, would be stationed at Mecca and Medina. By doing so, the presence of foreign forces would be legitimised to some extent.²²

21. Abidi, n. 1, p.97

22. Parker, Mushtak, "Turkey : Wary of Western Involvement." The Middle-East, October 1990, p.32.

Despite the fact that Turks in general supported President Turgut Ozal for his handling of the crisis, there were signs of confusion in the public. Opinion poll indicated that 61.4 percent of the people were of the view that Turkey should not take sides in the event of war. There were general anti-war demonstrations. One such was in Istanbul's industrial suburb of pendik on 13 January, which brought out 40,000 people.²³ Despite increase in the Turkish troops in the border region and the deployment of additional US and NATO aircrafts, president Ozal continued to stress that Turkey had no intention of opening second military front against Iraq. It further stated that Turkish forces would continue to guarantee Iraq's territorial integrity. Because disintegration could have strengthened the hands of Kurds living in Turkey. Turkish leadership was also worried over the large number of people leaving the south-eastern region because of fear of war.

Turkey threw its lot fully with the anti-Iraq allies by allowing the US aircrafts to conduct bombing missions in north-east Iraq from NATO bases in Turkey. Turkey was rewarded by the US with the rise in economic and military aid in exchange for the support in the war. But Turkey found this aid too-small. It was around \$ 400 million over 2 years which was, quite less as compared to Egypt's \$ 7 billion loan write off.

23. Pope, Hugh, "Turkey : Heads out of the Sands", The Middle East International, January 25, 1991, p. 10.

Thus Turkey's response was based on its political and economic calculations. It saw more gains by adopting a pro- US and allies stand than the gains from the trade with Iraq. By showing loyalty to the West, Turkey was hoping that it could win the membership of EEC. Therefore it was the national interests which became the determining factor in Turkey's response to the gulf crisis.

Banqladesh

Banqladesh's government reacted with caution to the invasion of Kuwait. The uncertainties in the domestic politics and the divison among the Islamic forces on the issue of supporting Saudi Arabia and Kuwait or Iraq made the job of the governeemt more difficult to come out with a clear cut policy.

The US and Saudi Arabia wanted more and more Muslim countries to join the multi-national forces in Saudi Arabia against Iraq. The purpose was to neutralise Saddam's efforts to portray this conflict as infidels (non-Muslims) versus Muslims. King Fahd sent his special envoy to Dacca to seek support from Banqladesh. After some hesitation, the government agreed to send its troops to Saudi Arabia. Banqladesh could not afford to offend America and its allies. The country was receiving on an average \$ 135 million in aid annually, which might not seem to be very large sum to others, but for a poor country like Banqla desh, it was vital.

The government knew that there might be some opposition to the official line. The foreign office spokesman explained that Bangladesh's primary objective was to help arrest the growing division between Islamic countries in the region. The Awami League, headed by Sheikh Hasina Wajed, called for half a day strike to protest against the government's policy. President Ershad tried to give an impression that his Jatiya Dal was inclined towards Iraq.²⁴

In this situation of pressure and constraint, Bangladesh tried to convene a meeting of Asian Muslim states.²⁵ President Ershad visited these countries with a hope that their combined efforts would bring a negotiated solution to the crisis. But the rigid stand taken by Saddam Hussain (not to withdraw from Kuwait) led this move into an utter failure.

After the start of the hostilities, there were many pro-Saddam demonstrations, Islamic fundamentalists backlash loomed large as thousands of demonstrators carrying portraits of Saddam Hussai streamed out of mosques calling for Jihad against the US and the western countries. The government was able to deal with these demonstrations effectively and did not allow the situation to go beyond control.

24. Abidi, n. 1, p.92.

25. Bangla Desh, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives and Pakistan.

Thus Bangladesh compelled by her economic dependence on US and Saudi Arabia, stuck to its pro-West policy in the Gulf crisis.

Pakistan

The Gulf war proved a divisive issue in Pakistan. Iraqi aggression was widely condemned by Pakistan's newspapers but the government's initial response was a muted one. The government did not take a clear cut stand. It condemned Iraq for invading Kuwait but it refused to endorse the economic sanctions against Iraq. Pakistan was trying to assume the role of mediator by keeping contact with Arab and Muslim states. Pakistan was hopeful of a peaceful solution to the crisis.

In the first week of the crisis, Benazir Bhutto's government was sacked by President Ishaq Khan. The new Establishment in Islamabad discarded Benazir's wait and watch policy. Like in Bangladesh, King Fahd's special envoy visited Pakistan for the support of Pakistan against Iraq in the crisis. Pakistan agreed to send its troops to Saudi Arabia.

Deployment of Pakistani troops in Saudi Arabia served more a political than a military purpose—that of mellowing the widespread Arab resentment against the US intervention in intra-Arab politics and conflict.²⁶

26. Abidi, n. 1, p.96.

Pakistani leaders saw it as an opportunity to win back Pakistan's regional usefulness to serve American interests in the region, after being ignored by the latter after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Islamabad was also looking for quick gains, both with the US over the nuclear issue and with the Saudis, who had become tight fisted in giving economic aid to Pakistan.

Another reason was part of the long-term objective of building up a strategic consensus among the Islamic countries of West Asia, with the Saudis being the economic fulcrum and Pakistan the politico-military gabre who would maintain the balance in West Asia.²⁷ This crisis provided an opportunity for Pakistan to go ahead with its plans.

Initially, there was a dormant opposition to the official policy. Fundamentalists were not happy with the stand taken by the government. Issue of the stationing of the US troops in the holy land of Saudi Arabia was condemned by them.

In order to stop the growing discontent among the masses, the government assured the people that Pakistani troops would be used only for defensive purpose. Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan went on a five-nations tour covering Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain. His mission was

27. Dixit, Abha, "Pakistan's Double Faced Gulf Policy" The Hindustan Times (Delhi Edition), 25 January, 1991.

to exchange views on the crisis and to secure repatriation of stranded Pakistanis in Kuwait and Iraq.

When the war began, Pakistan was rocked by the protests and there was a wave of sympathy for Saddam Hussain. A few clashes took place between the police and the demonstrators. Leaders of the opposition parties demanded convening of a parliament session to discuss the situation.²⁸

On the other hand, Pakistan could not reap the expected fruits by siding with the US camp. The US did not resume the aid, Saudi Arabia refused to entertain another 10000 large contingent from Pakistan. There were reports that Pakistani President Ghulam Ishaq Khan was also unhappy at his country's policy.

Thus with none of the expected gains accruing from the hastily constructed Gulf policy, and increasing pressure from the masses to abandon pro-US stand led Pakistan to rethink its Gulf policy. General Aslam Beg fired first by complimenting the people of Iraq in resisting strategic military intimidation. Ishaq Khan called for Islamic unity. The government tried to look for a peaceful solution and Nawaz Shrif tried to justify his Gulf policy by saying that Iraq had never supported it on Kashmir. However it could not convince the Pakistani people who were pro-Saddam.

28. Business and Political Observer, 22 January 1991.

Thus Pakistan's response was double-faced. It wanted to extract benefits by aligning with the Western power. But when things did not work as expected, it moderated its response.

CONCLUSIONS

After going through the intricacies of the West Asian ground reality certain trends can be identified (are discernible), though any claim to be authoritative would be an under estimation of the complexities involved.

Iraq has had historical claims over Kuwait, though, it can be said that its domestic compulsions and economic interests were also major factors which shaped Saddam Hussain's decision to invade Kuwait. Iraq had been pressurising Kuwait for territorial concessions. It reached its high point with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2nd August, 1990, resulting in the Gulf Crisis.

The role of United States of America in the crisis was quite crucial. The U.S.A. had two primary interests in the Gulf viz-a-viz to protect and maintain its oil interests and to maintain its strategic interests and further its position as the unchallenged global power. The involvement of the U.S.A., turned what was a local intra-Arab dispute into a conflict having wide international proportions and dimensions.

The world community and its representative - the United Nations responded in a surprisingly cohesive manner. Economic sanctions were approved and also the possibility of the use of force (Resolutionn 678). Although at later stages the United Nations invited criticism because of

excessive use of force in Iraq and there was a feeling that the United Nations was in general ratifying the proposals of the United States of America.

It seemed that Saddam Hussain did not have a clear cut plan. He kept on changing the tactics and postures and was very tentative throughout the crisis. Initially, Iraq claimed that Kuwaiti government has been over thrown by the revolutionaries and the Iraqis were called by the revelutionaries to help them. Then he gave a call for Jihad against the infidels. He linked the issue of withdrawal from Kuwait with other occupations in the region. He tried to buy peace with Iran and accepted Algeries Agreement (1975). By doing so Saddam surrendered the gains of eight years long war with Iran. Saddam Hussain took foreigners (Westerns) as hostages and tried to use them as human shield. He also raised the issue of unequal sharing of Arab wealth. Thus, there was an adhocism in Saddam's policy during the Gulf crisis.

Israel became crucial to Saddam Hussain in his tactical manoeuvres. He attempted to incite Arab nationalist feelings by involving Israel and hoped for support from Arab nations in his pursuit by virtually isolating the United States in the Gulf. But, partly under US persuasion and partly due to their patience the Israeli leaders refused to be provoked. Thus, Saddam's calculated gambit failed.

Moreover, Saddam failed to carry the Arab governments with him. None approved of his invasion and occupation of Kuwait. However, there were sharp differences among the Arabs as regards the method of resolving the conflict. These differences were reflected in the meetings and resolutions of the League of Arab States. The Arab League was divided into two blocs, one bloc, involved Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria and the GCC countries at the core of a group fully committed to secure Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait and to accomplish it even with the help of foreign military intervention. The other group, a pro-Iraqi bloc, including Jordan, the PLO, Yemen, Tunisia etc., though did not endorse Iraq's invasion yet favoured and adopted an Arab Solution. Thus the League of Arab states was exposed as an ineffective body owing to its basic nature. Article III of the charter states that no decision of the body is binding unless it has been arrived at unanimously.

The GCC states were afraid of growing influence of Iraq in the region which these states considered detrimental to their own integrity and security. To counter this self conceived threat, they invited extra regional military intervention. They also used their financial clout in garnering support for the allies and funded the war effort.

Egypt and Syria supported the allies mainly for reasons of national interest and leadership perceptions.

Their hope of foreign debt being written off shaped their policies. Jordan and the PLO supported Iraq's position (except the invasion and annexation of Kuwait). The factor influencing the decision of Jordan and the PLO to support Iraq was the presence of large segment of Palestitians in these countries who were vociferously pro-Saddam Hussain.

The responses from the Muslim states and organisations were not very cohesive. The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) consisting of 47 Muslim states though condemned Iraq for its aggression, played a passive role and did not take any effective initiative to resolve the crisis.

The Moe'tamar Alam al-Islami, held a conference on the initiative of Saudi Arabi and approved the stationing of foreign troops in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, Saddam Hussain organised the popular Islamic conference at Baghdad and had a Fatwa issued against the foreign troops.

Among the non-Arab Muslim states Iran assumed importance because of its size, proximity to Iraq, strategic location and the nature of political organisation. Iran decided to remain neutral in the crisis. Iran neither wanted the influence of the United States to grow in the region nor did it want the Iraqis to become powerful in the region.

The decision of the Turkey to go along with the allies was shaped by its economic and political interests. It hoped that the US might write off its 7 billion dollar foreign debt. Turkey also wanted to join the EEC. Turkey joined the multinational forces and also allowed them to use its air bases.

Bangladesh's response was largely shaped by its economic compulsions and its dependence for the economic aid on rich Gulf states and the US did not allow it to repond positively to the popular mood which was largely pro-Saddam.

Pakistan found this crisis as an opportunity to win back the friendship of United States. So it sided with the allies in the crisis. But in the closing stage of the crisis Pakistan found that its expected gains were not realised and there was criticism by the masses and even within the government. The government moderated its stand and came out with peace initiatives.

During the course of the crisis, the US led collision saw many ups and downs but it was Bush's remarkable achievement in securing continuous Egyptian, Syrian and Saudi backing, convincing Isreal not to attack Iraq and to contain the popular Arab -Islamic upsurge to a tolerable extant and this finally led to the humiliating defeat of Saddam Hussain as the final outcome of the crisis.

Finally, the crisis exposed many internal contradictions and conflicts present in the Arab and Muslim world. Saddam Hussain failed to reawaken the Arab Nationalism and pan-Islamism in a big way. Nonetheless, the appeal of Arab Nationalism and Islam was powerful at individual level but it could not consolidate itself at the political level due to the personal rivalries, clashes of ethnic and national interests and various other reasons.

APPENDIX I

(1) Boundary Settlement Between Iraq and Kuwait

Letter dated 21st July, 1932 from Noori Pasha al-Saeed to Sir F. Humphrey

I hope that Your Excellency will agree that the proper time has come to confirm the existing boundaries between Iraq and Kuwait.

Therefore kindly take necessary measures to take approval of the concerned authorities in Kuwait about the details of the existing boundaries between the two countries.

From the crossing of AL-AWJA valley in AL-BATIN towards the north of AL-BATIN line upto the point situated in the south of the latitude of SAFWAN. From there towards the east passing through the south of SAFWAN wells, SANAM MOUNTAIN, UMMO QASR, upto Iraq and likewise upto the crossing of KHOR ZUBAIR, KHOR ABDULLAH.

The Islands of WARBAH, BOBIAN, MASKAN FELEKA, OHA, KOBAR, KAROO and UMMUL MARADIM belong to Kuwait.

APPENDIX II

2. ARAB LEAGUE RESOLUTIONS

- (I) Arab League Ministerial Council Statement (3 August 1990)
- (1) To condemn the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait, to reject any consequences resulting from such aggression and not to recognise its repercussions
 - (2) To denounce bloodshed and the destruction of installations;
 - (3) To ask Iraq for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi forces to their positions prior to 1st August 1990;
 - (4) To raise this matter with their majesties, highnesses and excellencies, heads of the Arab countries, to consider the convening of an emergency summit conference to discuss the aggression and to find ways to reach a permanent negotiated solution acceptable to the parties concerned in line with the Arab nation's heritage and the spirit of brotherhood and solidarity and with the existing Arab legal system;
 - (5) To affirm the Council's firm commitment to preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the member states, to reiterate its concern for the principles stipulated by the Arab League Charter on not resorting to the use of force to resolve disputes may arise among the member states, to respect these states current internal systems and not to undertake any action aimed at introducing changes in these systems; and
 - (6) To reject categorically any foreign intervention or attempt to intervene in Arab affairs, to entrust the Secretary-General with following up on the implementation of this resolution and informing the Council of any developments and to consider the Council's extraordinary meeting as in continuous session.

Fourteen countries endorsed this resolution while six other countries abstained. They are: Yemen, Jordan, Palestine, Iraq, Sudan and Mauritania.

APPENDIX III

3. Resolution Issued by Emergency Arab Summit in Cairo (10 August 1990)

The extraordinary Arab summit conference which ended in Cairo this evening issued the following resolution:

Resolution issued by the Arab summit on 19th Muharram AH, corresponding to 10th August 1990:

After taking cognisance of the resolution adopted by the Arab League Council which convened in an extraordinary session on 2nd and 3rd August 1990; after perusing the statement issued by the 19th conference of the Islamic states in Cairo on 2nd August 1990; proceeding from the provisions of the Arab League Charter and the Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty among the Arab League states; proceeding from the UN Charter, especially Clause Four of Articles 25 and 1; realising the grave historic responsibility that is dictated by the difficult circumstances resulting from the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and its serious repercussions on the Arab homeland, Arab national security and the Arab nation's sublime interest, the extraordinary Arab summit that convened in Cairo on 19th Muharram AH, corresponding to 10th August 1990, decided the following:

- (1) To confirm the Arab League Council resolution issued on 3rd August 1990 and the Organisation of Islamic Conference statement issued on 4th August 1990.
- (2) To confirm commitment to UN Security Council Resolution 660 of 2nd August 1990, 661 of 6th August 1990 and 662 of 3th August 1990 which express international legitimacy.
- (3) To denounce the Iraqi aggression against the fraternal state of Kuwait; not to recognise Iraq's decision to annex Kuwait or any other consequences resulting from the Iraqi forces' invasion of Kuwaiti territory; and to call on Iraq to withdraw its forces from Kuwait immediately and return them to the positions they were in on 1st August 1990.
- (4) To affirm Kuwait's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity on the grounds that it is a member state of the Arab League and the United Nations, to emphasise the restoration of the legitimate system of government that existed in Kuwait before the Iraqi invasion and to support it

in all the measures it takes to liberate its territory and establish its sovereignty.

- (5) To denounce the Iraqi threats to the Arab Gulf states and Iraq's concentration of its armed forces on the borders of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to emphasise complete Arab solidarity with Saudi Arabia and the other Arab Gulf states, to support the measures the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the other Arab Gulf states take in implementation of the right of legitimate defence in accordance with the provisions of Articles Two of the Joint Defence and Economic Co-operation Treaty among the Arab League states, Article 51 of the UN Charter and UN Security Council Resolution 661 of 6th August 1990. These measures will cease immediately upon the Iraqi forces' complete withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of the legitimate Kuwaiti authority.
- (6) To comply with the request of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the other Arab Gulf states to dispatch Arab forces to support their armed forces in the defence of their territories and territorial integrity against any foreign aggression.
- (7) The emergency Arab summit shall authorise the Arab League Secretary General to follow up the implementation of this resolution and to present a report on this to the Arab League Council within 15 days so that it may take what measures it deems fit in this regard.

APPENDIX IV

4. GCC Ministerial Council Statement (3 August 1990)

The Ministerial Council of the Gulf Co-operation Council has condemned "the Iraqi aggression" against the fraternal State of Kuwait and called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi forces to the positions they held before 1st August 1990.

In a statement issued following its emergency meeting in Cairo today on the periphery of the Islamic conference, the GCC Ministerial Council declared its rejection of aggression and of any resulting effects and its non-recognition of its consequences. It called on the Arab League to take a united Arab stand on the basis of the principles and spirit of the Arab League Charter to end the aggression and remove its effects and preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the fraternal State of Kuwait.

In the statement, the GCC Ministerial Council expressed its utmost denunciation of and deep regret over this aggression by one fraternal Arab country against another, an aggression which shows disregard for all the bonds and ties that link the fraternal Arab countries and is contrary to all relations of fraternity and neighbourliness.

- (i) The statement noted that the Council held a meeting under its current chairman, Yusuf Bin Alawi, Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and in the presence of UAE Foreign Minister Shaykh Rashid Abdullah al-Nu'aymi, Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin Mubarak Al Khalifah, Saudi Foreign Minister APrince Sa'ud al-Faysal, Qatari Foreign Minister Mubarak Bin Ali al-Khatir and Abdal-Rahman al-Awadi, Kuwaiti Minister for Cabinet Affairs, to examine the dangerous situation arising from the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and the consequences resulting from such aggression, which constitutes a flagrant violation of the independence and sovereignty of a member of the GCC, the Arab League and UN assnd well as a blatant violation of all Arab, Islamic and international charters, norms and laws.
- (ii) The Foreign Ministers of the Gulf Co-operation Council member countries issued a statement this evening in which they emphasised their opinion that point six of the resolution issued bny the Arab League Council's emergency meeting, stating

the Council's absolute rejection of any intervention in Arab affairs, does not apply to collective international measures at the UN and Security Council.

The statement, which was read by Omanin Foreign Minister, Yusuf Bin Alwi, said that, proceeding from the commitment to the UN and Arab League Charterrs, the UN is the international body charged with maintaining security and peace in the world.

The statement added that UN resolutions and measures cannot be considered foreign intervention because the Arab League Charter stipulates adherence to them.

APPENDIX V

5. OIC STATEMENT

The text of the statement issued by the Islamic states Foreign Ministers' conference on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait:

The Conference received with deep regret the news of the tragic events which occurred between Iraq and Kuwait, two OIC members. These events coincided with the convening of this Conference and took place at a time when hopes were pinned on the imminent success of direct contacts which sincere brotherly Arab good offices have made to contain the crisis between two fraternal countries and achieve a peaceful settlement to resolve their differences.

The Conference expresses its support for the statement which His Excellency the OIC Secretary-General issued in this regard on 11th Muharram 1411, corresponding to 2nd August 1990.

The Conference condemns the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait, rejects all its effects and does not recognise its consequences. The Conference calls for the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwaiti territory and the return of these forces to the positions they occupied before 10th Muharram 1411, corresponding to 1st August 1990. It also calls for abidance by the principles of the OIC Charter, particularly its provision regarding the need to settle conflicts between member states by peaceful means and non-interference in the internal affairs of any state. It also calls on the two countries to take into consideration the requirements of good-neighbourliness; not to try to change the internal regime in either of them by force; to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each state; and to refrain from the use or threat of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of either of them.

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