

**THE U.S. ENERGY SECURITY IN THE
POST GULF WAR PHASE**

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RAM NIWAS ARYA

**AMERICAN STUDIES DIVISION
CENTRE FOR AMERICAN AND WEST EUROPEAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
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जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067


CENTRE FOR AMERICAN AND
WEST EUROPEAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES


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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation titled THE U.S. ENERGY SECURITY IN THE POST GULF WAR PHASE submitted by Mr. RAM NIWAS ARYA in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**, has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other university. This is his own dissertation.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


Dr. K. P. VJAYALAKSHMI
(Supervisor)


PROF. CRISTOPHER S. RAJ
(Chairperson)

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PREFACE

The present study focuses on the US stakes in the Middle East and examines the role of the US in the Gulf Crisis. An attempt is made to establish inter-linkages between various interests of the US and the implications of the Gulf War on the US energy security. It also examines the vital questions emanating from the US actions against Iraq and the long term effects of the US intervention in this crisis.

This study attempts to go into the factors that were responsible for why and how America responded the way it did in this crisis, given the domestic and external realities. It endeavours to analyse the role of the public opinion in the evolution of this response. It critically examines the congressional role in shaping and carrying out these and other policy initiatives of the Bush administration during the conflict. The study attempts to highlight the linkage between the political turbulence of the Gulf region and the American energy security. The present dissertation constitutes of five chapters, and a select bibliography.

The chapter one, titled 'United States Energy Security Policy and the Gulf Region'. The chapter introduces the subject matter and goes on elaborating on the evolution of oil as an important factor in the foreign policy of the US ever since oil began to be explored commercially in the Middle East. Later, the Persian Gulf crisis of 1990-91 is introduced and the analysis of US intervention

in the crisis is made.

The chapter two, titled 'American Stakes in the Gulf' deals with how energy security forms a significant part of the US' foreign policy ever since the World War II. After the war, the US emerged as the strongest power in the world which led to its mass industrialization, eventually creating a massive demand for oil. This is how the Middle East became so important to the US.

The chapter three, titled 'Domestic Dynamics: the Congressional role in the Gulf Crisis'. It gives detailed account of the Congressional debate that took place before the US military forces were sent to the Gulf, and the domestic political pressure the members of the Congress had to endure.

The chapter four, titled 'Gulf War and Media's Role in Generating Public Opinion' is a description of media's immense power to generate public opinion and influence policy making in the government. It also emphasises the images it creates in the minds of the people of events so far reaching in importance.

The last is conclusion of the present dissertation. It sums up what the present researcher sought to examine.

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Ram Niwas Arya

UNITED STATES ENERGY SECURITY POLICY AND THE GULF REGION

The Gulf region has constituted a major focus of United States foreign policy since World War II. The strategic importance of the countries of the region is enhanced mainly by the presence of key international waterways and abundant oil reserves. The demand for various mineral resources has increased greatly since late 1950s for there was rapid technological and industrial development called for reconstruction of war-torn economies of the world. Among various minerals needed for post-war industrialization, oil was one of the most demanded one as most capital intensive industries run on oil. Another important development of the post World War II era was ideological rivalry between the United States and the erstwhile Soviet Union that led to unprecedented militarization by both these countries resulted in significantly heavy demand for oil. Oil is a key raw material which makes possible the effective functioning of the energy, transportation, and chemical industries. It is also very essential for the maintenance of a military establishment.

World-wide extraction of oil continued to increase during each post-war year, as did the rivalry over the control of sources. From the very beginning of the post-war period the situation was favourable for the US, and continued to become increasingly so. In the Pacific region, British and Dutch oil interests had suffered more seriously than those of the US owing to the wartime seizure by Japan of Royal Dutch Shell holdings in South-East Asia. In the Middle East, the US companies had unilaterally annulled the so-called 'red line' agreement. The 'red line' agreement regulated the sharing of oil concessions among US, French, British, and the Dutch companies. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, in which the British government had an ownership interest, was mainly for the purpose of exploiting the crude oil reserves of Iran. Iran nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil company in 1951 jeopardizing the British oil interests. The Persian Gulf was vital to Britain in the early twentieth century as a fueling station for the British fleet in protecting the Empire's routes to India. With the defeat of the Central Powers during the World War I, Ottoman Empire quickly disintegrated. While, the US wanted, the European members of the victorious allied coalition, France, Great Britain, reshaped the pieces into spheres of influence, drew boundaries and set up dynasties. The years after the war saw the emergence of a spate of new Middle East kingdoms and protectorates.

At the end of the World War II, the United States emerged as the most powerful nation in the world. This turned out to be a tremendous asset to oil companies like, "Standard Oil" of New Jersey, (now Exxon). As one commentator

wrote...."for decades, the oil company had found its international ventures stymied by the Europeans, primarily the British."¹

After World War I, for example, the company had been barred from drilling in Burma, in Libya and in both Iran and Iraq. The Standard Oil complained to the US State Department about European "closed door" policy. In response, the State Department asked the British Foreign Office in early 1920s for a redressal of the problem. This began the US Government's interest in the Gulf oil. Since then, the US has never ceased to consider this region as strategically important for its vital interests, especially the oil.

The exclusion of American companies from drilling in this region was highly objectionable for the US who insisted that "the territory of the former Ottoman Empire should be open for oil development to all of the nations of the world on an equal basis."²

The State Department had supported Standard Oil's complaints on the understanding that it was opening the door for all American companies on an equal basis. Gulbenkian, the owner of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) along with its European partners acceded to the American demands. Standard and other American partners, principally Socony-Vacuum (now Mobil), obtained a nearly 24% share in the IPC. By 1927, it was clear that the Iraqi concession was

¹ Judith Miller & Laurie Mylroie, *Saddam Hussein and the Crisis in the Gulf*, A Times Books Special report (London : The Times, 1990), p. 178

² Ibid.

a potential bonanza.

In the view of the experts, reasonable prices and safe access to oil were the major motivation behind the US' interest in the Middle East in the pre-World War II era when factors like Israel and containment of the former Soviet Union were not on the agenda of the US foreign policy. In 1928, US companies first entered the area, i.e., the Middle East by acquiring close to a quarter of the equity in the international IPC. However, the US companies were bound to adhere to a restrictive clause of the Red Line Agreement (RLA), which denied American companies separate concessions in the areas of the former Ottoman Empire. The RLA's restrictive clause was a major hurdle in the promotion of US interests and it tried hard to circumvent this clause. Fortunately, the Standard Oil of California which was not a partner in IPC was not bound by any restrictions in its operations. Standard Oil was free to expand, "it secured a concession in 1933 in Saudi Arabia, a historic step that led to the Arabian-American Oil Company (ARAMCO) and inaugurated an era of US predominance in the Middle East oil. The US presence was further enhanced by the out-of-court settlement repudiating the Red Line's restrictive clauses, a step that permitted such giants as Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony-Vacuum to enter the Middle East on a major scale."³ Two other important developments enhanced American involvement in the region. They were, construction of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline (Tap line) linking the Gulf with the Mediterranean and the massive entry of the

³ Dennis L. Bark, ed., To Promote Peace: US Foreign Policy in the Mid-1980s' (California: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1984), p. 169.

US companies into the Iranian oil consortium following Mossadegh crisis in the 1950s.

The mutual friendship between the US and some of its strategic partners in the region began not much before the World War II. For example, official contacts between the US and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were established only in 1942, ten years after the proclamation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Prior to the 1930s, the US contacts with the Arabian peninsula consisted mainly of the limited and transient activities of traders and missionaries. Oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia in the thirties; in 1933 the first concession agreement between an American oil company and Saudi Arabia was signed, and the company that later was to be known as ARAMCO began its explorations in the deserts of eastern Arabia. Commercial production of the company began in 1938, but large-scale production was begun only after the Second World War.

Even though, America had partnership in ARAMCO, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was apprehensive of establishing any official relations with Saudi Arabia as was indicated by his note on a policy paper on Saudi Arabia in 1940. The President wrote, "Arabia is too far afield for us. Can't you get the British to do something?"⁴ In that same year, the Secretary of State Cordell Hull got a report that "the development of American interests does not warrant the

⁴ David H. Finnie, Pioneers East (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p.2.

establishment of any sort of official representation at Jidda."⁵ However, US gave Saudi Arabia official recognition by sending American charge d'affaires to the court of king Abd-al-Aziz in 1942. It was only in the post-war world order that Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries of the region came to be recognized as important regional partners in American answer to Soviet led communist threat in the Persian Gulf region.

THE US OIL COMPANIES AND THE AMERICAN INTEREST:

The United States, through its private enterprises, developed a policy with three objectives with respect to oil. According to the experts these three objectives were "gaining physical access to oil through exploration, production, and transportation; protecting existing concessions by promoting a political climate conducive to their preservation; and finally ensuring that oil was available at accessible prices beneficial to the producing and consuming states alike."⁶ Protection of concessions, however, was decisive for the fact that it provided a functional framework within which the remaining objectives could be easily attained without major crises or confrontations.

The Standard Oil Company of California (now Chevron), "Socal" as it was known, first obtained a concession in Bahrain; then, in Saudi Arabia. Similarly

⁵ Joseph J Malone, " American and Arabian Peninsula: The First Two Hundred Years," Middle East Journal, Summer 1976, p. 419.

⁶ Bark,f.n.3. p. 170.

other American companies gained control of the Arabian oil. In 1947, the ARAMCO deal was sealed, leaving the four American companies -- Texas, Socal, Standard Oil of New Jersey, and Socony-Vacuum - firmly in control of the Arabian oil concession. But the ground realities were changing too rapidly and new rules of the game setting in. In March 1951, Iranian parliament "defiantly" nationalized Anglo-Iranian Company resulting into big blow to the British oil interests. This in fact, was a favourable incident for the US Oil companies as Britain was their principal rival. However, the US mediated to bring harmony in relations between the Anglo-Iranian Company and the Government of Iran. "When the Iranian government was overthrown in 1953 with the support of both the US and United Kingdom, Iran again denationalized its oil industry. In the newly established Iranian oil production consortium, US companies received a 40% share, Anglo-Iranian Company another 40%, Royal Dutch Shell 14%, and Compagnie Francaise de Petroles the remaining 6%."⁷

The American government was alarmed. If Iran was permitted to nationalize Anglo-Iranian's properties, then other governments in the region might well follow its example. The issue was debated in January 1953, in the National Security Council, and a paper was jointly issued by the Department of State, and (Defense and Interior). This paper concluded that since oil was the principal source of wealth and income in the Middle Eastern oil producing countries, their economic and political existence depends upon the rate and terms on which oil

⁷ Arthur H. Westing, ed., *Global Resources and International Conflict: Environmental Factors in Strategic Policy and Action* (London: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 25.

is produced.⁸ The operations of the American companies in these countries -- how much oil they produced and marketed and the price they paid for it -- are, for all practical purposes instruments of American foreign policy towards these countries. Experts believed that what these countries did and how they did it determined the strength of US ties with the Middle Eastern countries and the ability of the US to resist Soviet expansion and influence in the area.

The fundamental premise of American oil policy, the aforementioned paper stated further, rested on the presumption that the interests of the oil companies and the US government were parallel. "[T]he companies were reliable instruments to achieve the goals of American foreign policy. It was in the national interest of the United States to preserve the international oil industry in its existing form"⁹ Major American companies were now the dominant forces in the Middle East. Where as before the World War II, the British-owned Anglo-Iranian had held an exclusive concession in Iran; that concession was now shared with the American majors. The British had been the political mentors of the Arab-oil producing Sheikdoms before the war, but in the post World War II era, American political influence would increasingly predominate. Saudi Arabia, the premier oil producing country with the largest potential known reserves, rested securely in the hands of four American companies, viz., Texas, Socal, Standard Oil of New Jersey, and Socony-Vacuum.

⁸ Miller and Mylroie. f.n. 2, p.182.

⁹ Asad seale Patrick, 'The Struggle for the Middle East, (Berkeley: University of California, 1989), p. 27

The primary market for Middle East oil production was to be Western Europe and Japan, not the US. In 1956, the US domestic oil industry was protected against the importation of cheap Middle East crude oil import quotas, which was subsequently made mandatory. The US market was effectively closed to oil produced in the Middle East. The outlet for that oil, thus, had to be the markets of Western Europe and Japan. By virtue of their strong position in the Middle East oil producing concessions, the American companies were well positioned to take advantage of the conversion of that energy market from coal to oil.

In the period following World War II, there were three major issues that compelled the US to pay close attention to the Middle East. They were: Soviet threat, oil, and Palestine. The cumulative importance of the three factors led the US to consider this region strategically a very important area. Washington had little choice but to define its perceptions towards the oil resources of this region. Containing some two-thirds of the world's petroleum reserves, the Middle East soon emerged not only as chief supplier of petroleum to the US' allies in Europe but also, from 1970 on, as a source of much needed energy for the US. Another reason for a continuing US interest was Palestine. Forceful implementation of the Zionist programme for establishment of a Jewish national home in a country with an overwhelming Arab majority was bound to produce an explosive international reaction. Because of domestic politics and the strategic importance of Palestine, the US was drawn into a conflict, partly as a supporter of Jewish statehood and partly as a mediator and peacemaker.

AMERICA'S PERCEPTION OF AND RESPONSE TO SOVIET CHALLENGES:

As early as 1940, Foreign Commissar Molotov of the former USSR in negotiations with the German ambassador in Moscow described the area south of the Bak-Batum line in the direction of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean as "the centre of the aspirations of the Soviet Union."¹⁰ Policy makers in the US perceived Soviet threats to the territorial integrity and political independence of Middle Eastern states which became manifest immediately after the end of World War II. The Soviets established so called puppet regimes in Iranian Azerbaijan and Kurdistan in late 1945 and refused to withdraw from Iranian territory after the end of the war. Soviet policy towards Turkey was similarly perceived "threatening and heavy-handed".

Britain after the World War II, was no longer capable of protecting Greece and Turkey. President Truman made a major policy statement, known as the Truman Doctrine, on March 12, 1947, in which he pledged economic aid and military advisory assistance to these two countries.¹¹ In a subsequent declaration, Secretary of State Dean Acheson extended this pledge to Iran. These acts laid the foundation of the policy of containment, directed at the Soviet Union and international communism, a policy initially articulated by George F. Kennan in an article in 'Foreign Affairs' in June 1947. The strategy of containment given by George F. Kennan was "confronting the Russians with unalterable counter force

¹⁰ Department of State Publication 303 (Washington DC., 1948), pp. 257.

¹¹ Ralph H. Magnus Documents on the Middle East (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Research, 1969), pp. 63-67.

at every point where they show sign of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful world."¹² Kennan's containment article which is famous as 'X-Article' later became basis of the US foreign policy of containment during the cold war years. The article, however, had a few serious deficiencies which Kennan himself admitted later in his memoirs. One very serious failure was that it did not make clear whether containment of Soviet power was to be achieved by military means or it was a means of political containment without military means. The 'X-Article' called for "adroit and vigilant application of counter force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points."¹³

The Soviet designs of expansion southward caused Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to promote an alliance of states situated close to the Soviet Union. This in fact, was manifestation of Kennan's model being put into action. The Suez Canal crisis of 1956 and the subsequent Soviet political penetration of the Arab East led Washington to devise new means to combat Soviet advances. In the Eisenhower Doctrine, a policy statement of January 1957, the President pledged "US economic and military assistance to any country in the Middle East threatened by international communism."¹⁴ Like the Truman Doctrine ten years earlier, the Eisenhower declaration represented a policy of commitment but went a step further by pledging the use of US forces.

¹² George F. Kennan, Memoirs 1925-1950 (Boston: An Atlantic Monthly Press Book, Little, Brown and Company, 1967), p. 359.

¹³ Ibid. p. 359.

¹⁴ Magnus, f.n. 11, p.86.

Washington justified the landing of US troops under Eisenhower Doctrine, in Lebanon to protect the government of President Camille Chamoun against armed rebellion by groups aided by the Egyptian-dominated and Soviet influenced radical regime in Syria in 1958. As a result of this development two groups emerged in Arab world: the radical versus the moderate states. The first group followed the ideology of Egypt's Gamal Abdul Nasser; and the second was led by Saudi Arabia. This gave rise to a closer relationship between Riyadh and Washington. At the same time the two Arab camps engaged in what became known as 'Arab cold war', a process of mutual hostility, occasionally, as in Yemen in the 1960s, punctuated by hot war fare. In this Cold War the radicals, as rule, were on the offensive.¹⁵

Iran was an important country in American policy of containment and had three significant factors of distinction from other states in the region. Iran was a direct neighbour of the Soviets; it was a major oil producer, and it was the most powerful riparian state in the Gulf region. Apart from these what distinguished Iran from other states was its ruler himself, who had a staunch opposition to communism. His appraisal of the Soviet threat, and his drive for modernization made him particularly eligible for security guarantees from Washington's point of view as the American foreign policy analysts felt. Moreover, Iran was the natural candidate to fill the vacuum created by the British decision to withdraw from the

¹⁵ Malcolm Kerr, The Arab Cold War: A Study of Ideology in Politics, 1958-1967 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 119-126.

Gulf region by 1971. This together with the Nixon Doctrine of 1969, committed the US to reducing direct military involvement in various areas of the world and helping regional powers strengthen their defense through economic, technical, and military advisory assistance.¹⁶

Expert on Middle Eastern studies held the view that the US containment policy in the Middle East, conceived and pursued on a bipartisan basis from Truman to Nixon and Ford, was a success. The former USSR was prevented from violating the sovereignty and integrity of its Muslim neighbours, and peace based on military and economic support from the industrial West prevailed in this region till late 1970s. So long as Washington assigned a high priority to the defense of this region, the system worked despite certain difficulties. When US resolve began to waver and when new priorities appeared during the Carter administration, the carefully constructed security system was shaken. As a collective enterprise, it had collapsed by 1979.¹⁷ Change of guard in Iran in the year 1979 was the most perceptible manifestation of breakdown of the regional security. The right wing was supporting the Shah of Iran and the left was undermining him. This ultimately led to formation of a religious regime in Iran which was not of much help to the US.¹⁸

Among the new priorities of Carter administration the most prominent was a

¹⁶ Melvin R. Laird, The Nixon Doctrine (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1972), pp. 67-73.

¹⁷ Bark, f.n. 2. pp.166-169.

¹⁸ *ibid.* p.173.

constant vigil over Moscow's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. On the Persian Gulf front, Iran with whom US had very good relations came to an end once Khomeini's religious regime took over the country. The relations further suffered due to hostage crisis which practically terminated US- Iranian relations.

The years 1979 and 1980 were tumultuous years in the American foreign policy experiences. On January 22, 1980, in a major policy statement some twenty days after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Carter declared that the US would resist any attack on the Persian Gulf region, with military force if necessary. The Carter doctrine's objective was to be achieved by creation of a Rapid Deployment Force to be employed in the Persian Gulf region of Indian Ocean.¹⁹

THE OIL CRISIS OF 1973 AND THE US ENERGY CONCERNS IN THE SUCCEEDING YEARS:

The oil crisis of 1973 triggered off a major problem for the industrial democracies. In fact, the problem was much deeper than what it appeared on the surface. It was not simply a question of oil prices, but in essence the problem encompassed relations among the Western countries and Japan as much as the security and price of Middle East oil. The oil embargo of 1973, imposed on the US and other Western nations in the aftermath of the October Arab-Israel War

¹⁹ Carter Doctrine's text in New York Times, January 24, 1980.

was a serious concern to the countries concerned. The embargo was directed primarily against the US and the Netherlands, with British and French having been declared "friendly" nations by the Arab ministers coordinating the embargo policy. The US in the course of time realized that it could no longer manage its relationship with the Persian Gulf states through the oil companies. It was forced into a more direct role in negotiating with the Gulf States. Oil production and price decisions became more overtly linked to decisions with respect to arms and politics.²⁰ In 1972 and 1973, Saudi King Faisal had used the ARAMCO parent companies as intermediaries to convey a sense of urgency about the need for a change in US policy in the region if the American were not, "to lose everything." But after the embargo the Saudis had no need for intermediaries. They were heard directly by policymakers in the US.

The Arab oil ministers decided to divide consuming countries into three broad categories: friendly, neutral, and hostile. They designated the US as the principal hostile state and subjected it to a total embargo of crude oil and oil-derived products. The US' pro-Israeli policy, specifically President Nixon's decision to grant major financial assistance to Israel when it was at war, precipitated this decision.²¹ Shortages of oil caused by politically motivated production cuts and embargoes were bound to have economic consequences as well. By the end of 1973, Organization of Petroleum Export Countries (OPEC)

²⁰ Miller and Mylroie, f.n. 2, p. 185-86.

²¹ George Lenczowski, Middle East Oil in a Revolutionary Age (Washington, Dc: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1976), p. 56-63.

had quadrupled the price of oil. In what had become seller's market, OPEC continued its policy of price boosts throughout the 1970s, culminating in a price level of around \$34 per barrel by 1980, compared with about \$3 per barrel in January 1973. Prof. George Lenczowski argued how these steep increases further aggravated recessionary trends in many industrial countries, European as well American, while proving extremely ruinous to a number of poorer Third World importing countries.²² Apart from these, important changes were taking place in the legal status of the oil companies. Their exclusive long-term concessions were gradually eroded or, in some cases, cancelled. By the end of 1970s, the old pattern of concessions had been replaced by the new one of a host country's owing fully or partly its oil resources and its producing and refining facilities. As a result, foreign oil companies were transformed into service contractors running the operations for a fee and buying oil with or without a preferential status. Those trends corresponded to the general assertion of nationalist and often socialist policies in the host countries which were against the US interest.

The importance of oil to the US and its allies caused both the Carter and Reagan administrations to treat Gulf security as a vital interest. In the words of Jimmy Carter's January 1980 State of the Union Address, "Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United

²² Ibid. pp, 31-34.

States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary including military force."²³ Just over a year later, the importance of this region was reiterated by a leading figure in the Reagan administration, "the umbilical cord of the industrialized free world runs through the Strait of Hormuz into the Arabian [Persian] Gulf and the nations which surround it..., we cannot deter [the Soviet long range objective of denying access to oil by the West] from seven thousand miles away..... we have to be there in a credible way."²⁴ The Carter Doctrine elicited active allied cooperation where oil supply was concerned, the US, however, did not always find the allies' response adequate in the face of related developments during this period. It was obvious that the US' energy security was in jeopardy after the oil embargo of 1973 began to operate because the prices shot up many times. Table 1 gives a clear picture of the prices of oil and the effects they might have had on the consumers.

The compounded effect of high price rises and rising US imports of oil was something the US was not able to come to terms with. From 1973 to 1978, US oil consumption climbed by 11.8% and imports by a stunning 28.5%. Where as in the case of Europeans and Japanese it was declining by 2.3% and imports by 2.2% in the same period. It was also observed that the US was also using up to twice the amount of oil per capita as compared with the French.²⁵ The experts viewed these trends to be harmful. Growing US oil imports also ensured

²³ US Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, "President Carter: State of the Union Address", Washington, DC. January 23, 1980. (current policy no. 132).

²⁴ Statement before the Senate Armed forces Committee, March 4, 1981. Text in New York Times, March 4, 1981.

²⁵ Economic Outlook (Paris), no. 25, July 1979, p. 63.

continued strong demand for Middle Eastern oil and thus greater World vulnerability to price increases and disruptions of supply. The sharp reduction in US oil imports in 1979 (see Table 2) however, did help to lessen allied resentment over this problem.

In the course of time US policy in the Persian Gulf had evolved from indirectly managing the region through the oil companies, to enlisting the two most important states as "local gendarmes", to assuming direct responsibility to protect the largest oil producer, Saudi Arabia, from both internal and external challenges. The question that continued to loom large was whether the US was in position to have control over the internal problems of the countries of the region? The best illustration of such problem was the long drawn Iraq-Iran war and later Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The latter harmed the American interests directly. The nation's dependence on petroleum in readily available amounts and at relatively low and steady prices has been a mainstay of American foreign policy since the World War II. This perhaps explains why the US sent forces to Gulf to "liberate" Kuwait.

TABLE - 1: OFFICIAL SELLING PRICE OF SAUDI ARABIAN LIGHT MARKER CRUDE OIL

Date	Dollars per Barrel
January 1, 1970	1.39
October 4, 1973	2.70
January 1, 1974	8.32
March 1, 1974	10.46
January 1, 1977	12.09

January 1, 1979	13.34
June 1, 1979	18.00
November 1, 1979	24.00
January 1, 1980	26.00
April 1, 1980	28.00
July 1, 1980	30.00
November 1, 1980	32.00
October 1, 1981	34.00
March 14, 1983	29.00
February 1, 1985	28.00
March 1, 1986	15.00

Source: US Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, Weekly Petroleum Status Report, June 5, 1981, p. 20.

TABLE - 2: UNITED STATES OIL IMPORT DEPENDENCE

Year	Total Oil Consumption (mbd)	Net Imports (mbd)	Net Imports (%)
1973	17.3	6.0	35
1974	16.7	5.9	35
1975	16.3	5.8	36
1976	17.5	7.1	41
1977	18.4	8.6	47
1978	18.8	8.0	43
1979	18.6	8.0	43
1980	17.0	6.4	38
1981	16.1	5.4	34
1982	15.3	4.3	28
1983	15.2	4.3	28

1984	15.7	4.7	30
1985	15.7	4.3	27
1986	16.1	5.3	33

Source: US Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, Monthly Energy Review, May 1987, p, 43.

On August 8, 1990, the US President George Bush made it clear in his speech delivered at the White House that American troops had been sent to Saudi Arabia not only to defend that country against possible Iraqi invasion but also to protect vital US interests in the region. President Bush also stated that the US "now imports nearly half of the oil it consumes and could face a major threat to its economic independence and is even more dependent upon imported oil and is even more vulnerable to Iraqi threats."²⁶

The American oil interest in the Gulf region is not of recent origin. The US since 1940s has shown interest in the oil resources of the distant regions, mainly the Middle East. The main objective was to explore resources of other countries first and keep the oil resources within the US intact as long as it was economically and strategically viable.

The US has considered energy a security issue for at least the past five decades. The Middle East region is the cornerstone of America's oil policy abroad. The Gulf area in consequence became a major focus of US foreign policy. Its oil resources were considered to be vital to the well-being of the West

²⁶ George Bush, Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait, speech delivered at the White House, August 8, 1990, Vital Speech of the Day, vol. 50, no. 22, September 1, 1990.

and has, since the advent of the Cold War also become a potential area of East-West confrontation.

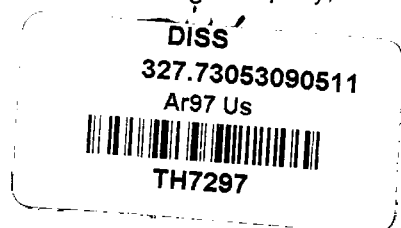
Even in the post-Cold War phase the US energy policy in the context of Middle East oil has undergone little change and still continues to be the backbone of its bilateral relations with the countries of the region.

Developments occurring anywhere in this region that have a bearing on the demand or supply of oil, whether political or economic in nature, affect the overall balance of relationship between the US and these countries. When a serious dis-equilibrium occurs, the effects are felt globally, and even more so in the case of the US which is highly sensitive to its interests in the region. There are three US core-interests in the area which have existed for five decades. They are, maintaining the unimpeded flow of oil from the Gulf to the West, blocking Soviet expansion southwards, and maintaining an active presence in a geo-strategic part of the world.²⁷ Of these three the most important one is the unimpeded flow of oil from the Gulf. Any significant disruption in Gulf oil supplies would cause world oil prices to rise, plunging the market economies of the free world into a crisis similar to those experienced in 1973-74 and 1979-80.

The US preoccupation with the Gulf oil issue seems unrealistic, on the surface, because only 5% of US domestic consumption of oil is currently imported from

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²⁷ Philip Robins, The Future of the Gulf Politics and Oil in the 1090s Energy Paper, no. 25, Energy and Environment Programme (Dartmouth, England: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1990), p.89.



the Gulf. But when it comes to the level of import of the Gulf oil by the Western Europe, ally of the US, the region and its oil acquire all the more significance for the US. The fact that Western Europe receives 30% of its oil from the Gulf and Japan almost 60% is held up as amounting to Western strategic dependence. It is pointed out that if the supply to Europe and Japan was cut off, the US would certainly suffer indirectly through the effect on prices that the sharp reduction in supply would engender. The two previous oil price shocks were triggered by less than a 5% reduction in supply. In 1987, the Gulf accounted for 22% of the world oil production.²⁸

Of the various interests the United States has in the Middle East, security and economic interests have remained paramount since at least 1973. All the American policies directed towards this region are influenced by these two cardinal interests. As far as security interests are concerned, US foreign policy stressed containment of the erstwhile Soviet Union before its collapse through a balance of power structure, which is gradually in transition from loose bipolarity to multipolarity. The countries of the Gulf region played an important part in the US security calculations since events there could adversely affect the psychological, economic, and military elements of the overall balance of power. The psychological element had to do with perceptions of which side was gaining or losing and with each one's credibility. The economic aspect of overall balance of power acquires a key importance in the US policy, since it achieved many an

²⁸ Ibid. p. 84.

objective during the cold war through various economic means. It was evident during the 1980s when in US economic problems began to mount; a major oil crisis was to be avoided with all possible measures. "A major disruption in the flow of Gulf oil during a period of greater dependency and worsening US economic problems severely undermine US capability to wield the economic instrument of statecraft."²⁹

According to experts any oil crisis always casts a long shadow over the military operational readiness in case of a war. "The prospect of a future oil crisis portends grave problems for military power. In the short term, it could reduce operational readiness on land, at sea, and in the air, and it could place great strain on the Western alliance -- as indeed happened in 1973."³⁰ Such oil crises would also result in exacerbation of US economic problems leading to cutbacks in and diversion of resources that substantially damages the industrial underpinnings of military strength.³¹ Evidently, such logic prevailed on the policy makers in framing US policy in the Middle East.

The arguments that the potential impact of a major oil crisis in the Persian Gulf on the US security and its possible effects on the international economy and the US economy were substantial, were duly stressed by each of the American administrations ever since the oil embargo of 1973. The disintegration of the

²⁹ Robert O. Fredman, ed., The Middle East after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), p. 19.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

Soviet Union and a more congenial atmosphere in US-Soviet relations thereafter, and an evolving effort to resolve superpower competition in several areas of conflict led to a different kind of a period of transition in the region. Iraq emerged as the strongest player in the region, and its President Saddam Hussein went on to invade Kuwait. This was a serious act of aggression, potent enough to disturb international peace and stability. The US acted rapidly and moved in an international coalition of military forces which

freed Kuwait. By early 1990, Saddam Hussein was making his demand known. "He wanted Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to write off the billions of dollars of loans extended during the Iran-Iraq war; he wanted Kuwait to come up with an additional \$ 10 billion in aid; he wanted OPEC to push oil prices to \$25 per barrel; and he wanted Kuwait to yield two islands that controlled access to Iraq's port at Umm Qars, as well as to pay some \$2.4 billion for oil taken from the Rumailah oil field."³² Saddam made these demands at a meeting of the Arab league in May 1990.

What was at issue was not so much the invasion of Kuwait, terrible though it was, but rather the potential Iraqi invasion or domination of Saudi Arabia. Together, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq contain about 40% of the world's known petroleum resources.

³² William B. Quandt, "The Middle East", Foreign Affairs, vol. 70, no. 1., p. 52.

Senator Edward Kennedy, however gave different explanation for why America thought it necessary to go in for war instead of resorting to other viable measures. The answer is that the US could not countenance Iraq's aggression for fear of the message it would send about America's role in the world. Oil, of course, he suggests was "no less an important factor as both Kuwait and Iraq before August 2, 1990 supplied 4% of the US oil consumption which is not very substantial."³³ However, the oil supply to the allies of the US was a powerful motivating factor that led the US vital interest in the region to be safeguarded by its intervention.

³³ Paul Aarts, "Democracy, oil and the Gulf War", Third World Quarterly, vol. 13 no. 2, 1992. p.526.

AMERICAN STAKES IN THE GULF

The demand for various minerals, especially oil, increased greatly following World War II as a result of rapid technological progress and industrial development. Since the end of the World War II extraction of oil has continued to increase with US companies occupying a position of dominance over its rivals, the European companies. From the very beginning of the post-war period the situation was favourable for the US and continued to become increasingly so. Control over the oil resources available to the capitalist world shifted away from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands towards the US after the World War. For example, in the late 1930s, the United Kingdom plus the Netherlands had control over 36% of oil deposits, but only 30% at the end of the war, but the US's position moved to a control of 57% of oil deposits. ¹

The US from a position of pre-eminence in oil resources and its control over Gulf oil moved to a position of dependency over the years. The first perceptible signs

¹ Santalov, 1954, p.213, in Arthur H. Westing, ed., Global Resources and International Conflict: Environmental Factors in Strategic Policy and Action (London: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.26.

appeared in 1973 oil crisis when the US economy started feeling pinch of the oil shortage in the world market.

The nature of dependency was such that it continued to increase. For example, in 1980s and early 1990s, the US with 5% of world population consumed 25% of world oil. It is true that, at present, US dependence on oil imports from the Gulf region is still modest compared with Western Europe and Japan (11%, 32% and 60% respectively). The US thirst for oil has strongly increased in recent years which it has wanted to decrease by taking some strong measures. In a 1997 Energy Overview conducted by the US Department of Energy (DOE), the main emphasis was to advance the nation's priorities in the area of energy security, environmental quality, national security and science and technology.²

The key goals for the Department was outlined as following :

- Leverage in DoE's unique science and technology capabilities to provide knowledge
- Reduce the global nuclear danger through its national security and non-proliferation activities .
- Restore , enhance ... , protect the environment.
- Develop and promote clean efficient technologies to enhance energy security .
- Stimulate US economic productivity by maintaining US competitiveness .

² US Department of Energy, Energy Overview 1997(Washington, DC, 1997).

The overall impact of such a vision clearly based on the understanding of the oil crises that occurred in the past and are likely to come in the future. The key fact to be noted is that a recent Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Chief Jon Duleh, and prominent oil experts started about a possible oil crash.

The geographical concentration of low-cost oil reserves in the countries of the Gulf is a major reason for the strategic importance of the region. Over the past decades, especially since 1973, there have been periodic reminders of this fact as domestic and foreign policy actions by regional governments, as well as incidents within and between countries, have combined to affect levels of oil production and exports, and hence world oil prices, with sharp repercussion on the world economy. The Gulf countries account for 51.2% world's proven reserves of oil which puts these countries in the central stage of world oil production and matters of international oil security.³

According to the National Energy Strategy of 1991-92, which is a document prepared by the US Department of Energy, the oil fields of the Persian Gulf alone provide one-fourth of the oil the world presently consumes. They contain nearly two-thirds of the world's proved oil reserves.⁴

³ Philip Robins, The Future of the Gulf, Politics and Oil in the 1990s, Energy Papers, no.25, Energy and Environmental Programme, Royal Institute of International Affairs (Dartmouth: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1989), p.123.

⁴ US Department of Energy, National Energy Strategy 1991-92: Powerful Ideas For America, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, p.3.

For the past many years several US administrations have sought to balance the economic benefits of using low-priced imported oil with the foreign policy risks and the security costs of ensuring oil's free flow. The United States in the past has experienced that it was dramatic changes in the world oil prices than the average price rise over the long term that harmed the United States and other nations. The US "vulnerability to price shocks is not determined by how much oil we imported. Our vulnerability to oil price shocks is more directly linked to: (1) how oil dependent our economy is; (2) our capacity for switching to alternative fuels; (3) reserved oil stocks around the world; and (4) the spare world-wide oil production capacity that can be quickly brought on line".⁵

Any increase in the world price of oil, brought about by any event, in any place, would raise the price of US oil and the price of oil to its allies and trading partners which ultimately would affect the US energy security. The National Energy Strategy review submitted that no feasible combination of domestic or/and international energy policy options can make the United States completely invulnerable to oil supply disruptions during the years to come in future. It also confirmed that both the US and the world would depend more on the Middle East oil supplies under any realistic scenario for the foreseeable future.

According, the review suggested that in the order to reduce America's oil vulnerability, a set of policy actions have to be applied, that would substantially

⁵ Ibid.

increase America's energy security. These broad array of actions are : maintaining adequate strategic reserves, increasing the efficiency of the entire fleet of cars, trucks, trains, planes and bases; increasing US petroleum production in an environmentally sensitive manner ; further deregulation of the natural gas industry and using alternative transportation fuels.

American oil policy began to adopt measures that would reduce imports in such a way that there was a balance between economic, environmental and energy security objectives. The national oil strategy aims to diversify the sources of oil supply outside the Gulf region by encouraging environmentally sensitive production the United States, including certain areas of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), other parts of the Western Hemisphere, Europe, and Asia and to further develop and maintain contingency mechanisms (including strategic oil reserves and stocks) and excess world production capacity. National oil security would reduce the import of oil to the US economy through conservation, efficiency improvements, and oil displacement by the use of improved technologies and alternative fuels. See figure 1.⁶

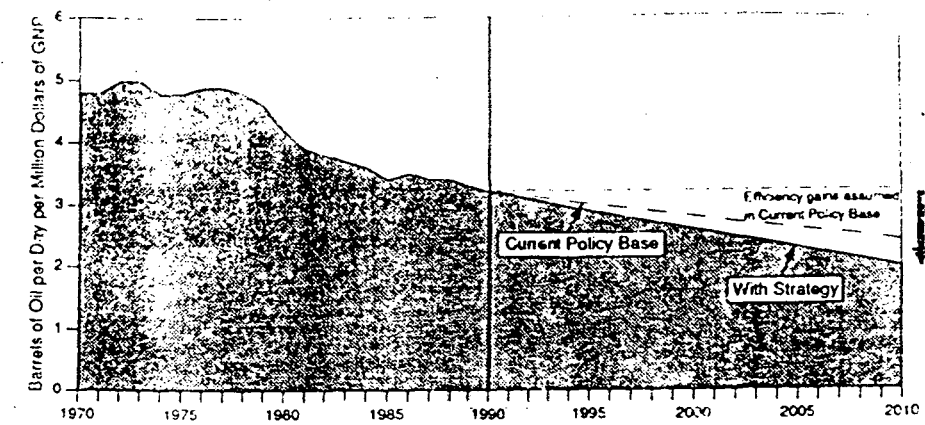
The measures mentioned above are expected to decrease US oil consumption by 1.3 million barrels per day below projected year 2000 levels and by 3.4 million barrels per day below projections for the year 2010, mainly due to replacement

⁶ Ibid. p. 5.

of oil by alternative sources of fuels like compressed natural gas, electricity, biomass, coal and alcohol from natural gas. As the technologies to use them become more cost-competitive, they will become available across the country to a large and growing number of fuel-flexible and alternative-fuel vehicles and gradually erode petroleum's dominant role in the transportation sector. The effects of these initiatives on total US oil consumption is shown in figure 2.⁷

The Department of Energy estimated that such strategy initiatives could increase domestic oil production by 1.8 million barrels per day above the levels projected for the year 2000, largely because of the use of advanced oil recovery technology made possible by new investment in federal and private sector R&D, and by environmentally responsible development of promising areas like ANWR and OCS. By the year 2010, domestic oil production could be augmented by 3.8 million barrels per day as shown in figure 3.⁸

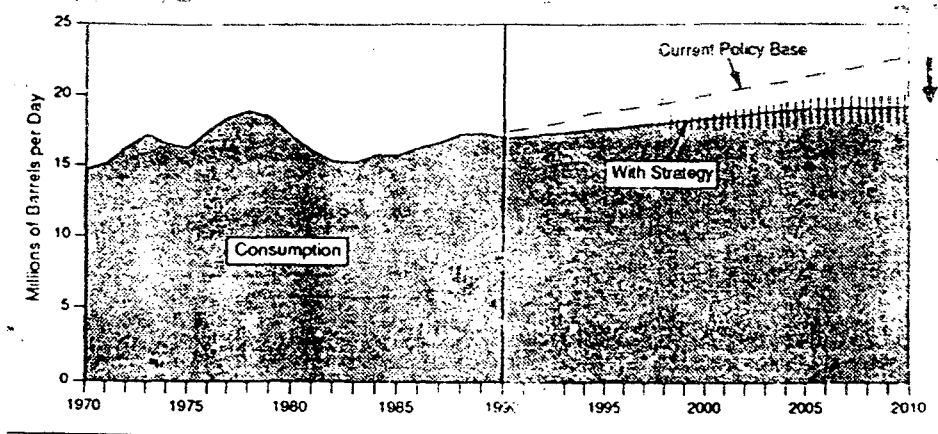
Figure 1. Reduced Exposure to oil Price Shocks



⁷ Ibid. p. 6.

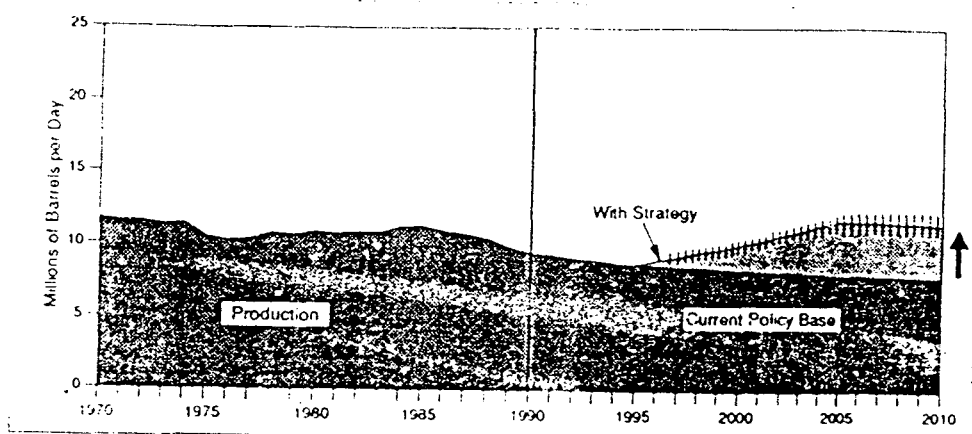
⁸ Ibid. p. 7.

Figure 2. Effects of the National Energy Strategy on US Oil Consumption



As illustrated in figures 1 and 2, the national oil security embodies a sustainable, balanced approach to increasing supply and reducing demand. The oil strategy is not specifically targeted at the problems of the moment. With regard to the short term, the strategy builds upon a decade of energy market deregulation that has allowed rapid and appropriate market response to the Iraqi crisis. In addition, the Strategic Petroleum Reserves used as part of a coordinated international response, has demonstrated its capability to effectively address short oil market disruptions.

Figure 3. Effects of the National Energy Strategy on US Oil Production



The Bush administration often justified Iraq's expulsion from Kuwait in terms of American and Western oil interest. Some commentators have argued that even if no action at all had been taken against Saddam since the seizure of Kuwait, oil would have continued to flow to the West unimpeded for years to come. For Iraq is as dependent on oil as the West is: more than 90% of its export income and 61% of its GDP derive from oil⁹. The Gulf oil would have flowed unimpeded, but what mattered most to the US, was in whose hands were the keys to the oil production of Kuwait. As in fact "so long as no nation monopolizes Middle East oil, it does not matter to oil consumers whether the oil of Kuwait is in Iraqi or Kuwaiti hands. Whoever owns the oil must sell it at the world market price."¹⁰

Before August 2, 1990, Iraq and Kuwait provided less than 7% of world oil supplies. Their exports covered less than 4% of US oil consumption¹¹, further, other oil exporting countries, led by Saudi Arabia, easily absorbed the loss of Iraqi and Kuwaiti production. Even accepting the hypothesis that, after some time, the idea of securing maximum income by producing less oil at a higher price entered Saddam Hussein's mind, it would only have meant short-term relief. For then the history of earlier oil price hikes (1973-1974 and 1979-1980) would be bound to repeat itself. It would perhaps lead to price induced energy

⁹ Paul Aarts, "Democracy, Oil and the Gulf War", Third World Quarterly, vol. 13, no.2, 1992,

¹⁰ Robert Brenner, "Why is the United States at War with Iraq?", New Left Review, January/February 1991, p. 129.

¹¹ Political Ecology Group, War in the Gulf: an Environmental Perspective (San Francisco: Political Ecology Group, January 1991), pp. 15-16.

savings and a quest for oil in politically safe, non-OPEC quarters, and to face drastic decline of OPEC's share in world oil production (from 54% in 1973 to 30% in 1985)¹². An over-elevated oil price is thus tainted by an excessive array of undesirable side effects, and will therefore not easily be resorted to in order to maximize revenue. In all, there was sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that Iraq's occupation of Kuwait would not seriously have imperilled short-run oil supplies. Yet, it was argued that it was not in America's interest for any regional country to emerge as most powerful country in the region so much so that it controlled practically oil resources of weak country like Kuwait. It directly hits the US interest, by destabilized oil regimes and threatens U.S. credibility as a powerful ally.

Apart from the much-debated theme of oil supplies and oil prices, a number of other oil-related interests merit attention. Oil as an energy resource is the mainstay for growth and prosperity in most industrial nations. Oil revenue represents economic value, which is true for oil-exporting countries, but same observation is true for Western economies and the US which receive a substantial part of this oil revenue from those oil exporting countries in banking and financial sector. Saudi Arabia is one major investor of petrodollars in the US economy. "Oil revenues have become great lakes of rentier capital, the flow of

¹² Aarts, f.n. 9, p.26-29,47.

which, influenced critically by political factors, is vital for the entire structure of global finance capital, and banking interests.¹³

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have invested substantial share of their petrodollar surpluses in countries like the UK and the US. These oil dollars play a crucial part in the chronically deficient economies of these countries. On a global scale, there are presently only three capital-generating sources: Germany, Japan and few oil producers in the Gulf. For obvious reasons, the first two of the countries do not want to give a helping hand to their economic rivals, the UK and US. But for equally obvious reasons, the Saudis and Kuwaitis are willing to do so. This explains the particular stakes for the US and UK in the Gulf.

While the exact amount of oil dollars invested in the West is yet unknown, the figures at hand diverge widely. The highest estimates of Gulf countries investments in the US alone hover around the 1 trillion dollar mark.¹⁴ It is self-evident that ensuring the 'political well-being' of ruling monarchs in Gulf states is of prime concern to London and Washington. By the end of 1983, according to Treasury Department statistics, the level of investments by Middle East oil exporters in the United States stood at \$ 74.6 billion. This group includes Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates(UAE). Of the \$ 74.6 billion held by these countries, \$39.9 billion - or

¹³ Peter Gowan, "The Gulf War, Iraq and Liberalism", New Left Review May / June 1991, p. 48.

¹⁴ Craig Hulet, The Secret Agenda in the Gulf War (Westfield: Open Magazine Pamphlet Series), February 1991, p.10.

53% was in the form of US government securities such as treasury bills and bonds.¹⁵

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had accumulated financial assets, in 1970s and 1980s, in billions of dollars. These countries placed their surplus funds in the most secure and stable financial markets. Most of such funds were invested in prominent multinational banks like Chase Manhattan, Citibank, and Morgan Guaranty. This was an issue of concern to the senate Sub-committee on Multinational Corporations, chaired by Frank Church who began to look into the relationship between the burgeoning international debt, the growing concentration of petrodollar surplus revenues in American banks, and the pressures on American foreign policy. Way back in 1975, the Senate Sub-committee on Multinational Corporations sent a questionnaire to thirty-six major banks asking for a breakdown of deposits from twenty-two countries, including the OPEC investments to these banks who refused to comply. In September 1975, Kuwait's Minister of Finance, Abdul Rahman Atiqi, warned Senator Charles Percy and Assistant Treasury Secretaries Chester Cooper and Gerald Parsky that "Kuwait would definitely pull its funds out of US banks if its position was revealed as demanded by the sub-committee."¹⁶

Two years later, the same sub-committee released an exhaustive study entitled

¹⁵ Steven Emerson, The American House of Saud: The Secret Petrodollar Connection (New York: Franklin Watts, 1985), p.315.

¹⁶ US Senate Foreign Relations Sub-committee, Hearings on Multinationals (Washington, DC, 1957) pp.160-61.

'International debt, the banks and US foreign Policy.' The report presented a shocking portrait of the potential foreign leverage wielded over the banks and the American Government. The report warned of the emergence of a "money weapon" owing to the \$ 50 billion in assets in the United States held by the oil producers. "At least half of these assets are highly liquid, such as treasury bills and short-term bank deposits which could quickly be withdrawn or converted if the need arose. Any sudden movement of this volume of funds could be extremely disruptive of the financial system."¹⁷

The report stated: "In the event of another major outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East, in which the United States and Saudi Arabia are likely to find themselves on opposite side, can one be sure that they would continue to act in the best interests of the Western financial system? Saudi-Arabia did not hesitate to use the oil weapon against the United States in the last Mid-East war, despite earlier warm US Saudi relations: There is no guarantee that next time they won't wield the money weapon too."¹⁸

It is quite clear from the above facts the importance petrodollars have in the US economy. An abrupt withdrawal of these funds from the US would spell catastrophic disruptions in all walks of American life. Their funds are ever increasing as the OPEC countries are constantly investing in the American

¹⁷ Emerson, f.n. 15, p.321.

¹⁸ Ibid.

financial sector. One major reason for these ever increasing funds is that the economies of Gulf countries are still far backward and are in no position to absorb the surplus of funds from the oil production in these countries. As a result these funds are finding their way into the US economy. Any disruption in oil exploration, owing to regional factors or international interference, causes immediate effects on the American economy because then the flow of petrodollars into its economy is halted to the disadvantage of both the US and the Gulf countries. This is another main reason why the US considers this region as one of vital national interest.

The flow of petrodollars to the United States is immense. Not only that, as of the end of 1983, Saudi Arabia constituted the sixth largest export market for the United States. This is only possible due to huge amount of money Saudi Arabia is earning from its oil resources. This serves both the US and Saudi Arabia. That is why US is always on the lookout to avert any event, or aggression or threat to the regional stability, that may undermine its short term as well as long term interests like oil and US economy. Both the issues are interconnected in nature. First affects the second no later than the event takes place, or more precisely even before the event occurs.

Over four hundred American companies had offices in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; and two thousand companies regularly conducted business there. Collectively, Arab purchases in 1983- \$14 billion accounted for one out of every

ten dollars of total American exports.¹⁹ And combined with the dependence of the West in 1983 on 13 million barrels a day of Middle East oil of which 8 million flows through the vulnerable Persian Gulf. The Arab oil producers, led by Saudi Arabia, continued to wield influence over American policy. Moreover, American dependence upon Middle East oil increased by 44% in the first half of 1984 (including a 68% in areas in the use of Saudi oil); and even today, the United States finds itself precariously dependent upon Saudi oil as it did in 1973 and 1979. So far the United States has been successful in keeping a fine balance between oil import and prices, the economy and its national interest. There are a few widely accepted conclusions about the international oil market. First, the possibility of another price explosion as long as the world depended on oil from the Gulf. Second, the oil importing industrialized countries in general and US in particular did not necessarily learn from the market crisis of the past. Third, there is a danger that the oil market might acquire the characteristics of a classic commodity market in which relatively small mismatches between supply and demand could produce major price movements.²⁰ Given the enormous size of the energy sector and the importance of the international oil market as the balance of energy supply and demand, wild cyclical movements of oil prices could create havoc in the world economy.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 410.

²⁰ Judith Rees & Peter Odell, The International Oil Industry : An Interdisciplinary Perspective (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1987), p. 20-21.

²¹ Ibid.

"Commercial ties between oil-producing countries and their main markets in the consuming industrial countries will be transformed, investment partners will shift radically, and energy policy in the United States will take on a new meaning."²² This was the observation of Edward L. Morse, an influential publisher of New York based 'Petroleum Intelligence Weekly'. In an interview to Miami Herald in August 1997, he argued that there may be a very high probability of a disruption of Middle East oil supplies within the next five years. Such disruption in the oil supply could come from internal conflicts in Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia or from terrorist attacks anywhere in the region, he argued. If it happens, the world is not as well prepared as it was during the Gulf War in 1990, when industrialized nations' oil reserves were much higher. Prices would skyrocket - everyone including the oil importers of Latin America would suffer. John Dutch who stepped down as CIA chief in early 1997 said in a conference on '21 supreme threats' "that one of his worst fears for the near future was a major disruption of oil supplies because of the tremendous growth in the political instability in the Middle East."²³

While many did not consider Saddam Hussein responsible for transformation in petroleum sector, arguments were made that he just accelerated an already rapid pace of change that was transforming the petroleum sector even before

²² Edward L. Morse, "The Coming Oil Revolution", Foreign Affairs, vol. 69, no.5, Winter 1990-91, p.36.

²³ The Miami Herald, 18, Aug. 1997.

summer invasion of Kuwait by Iraq.²⁴ The Iraqi attack on Kuwait produced world-wide reaction affecting Iraq's standing in international comity of nations. The immediate repercussion of the international trade embargo on Iraq and Kuwait was doubling of the price of oil. But even without the war in the Middle East, higher oil prices - \$ 40 a barrel were almost a certainty for the 1990s. According to experts, the United States as an energy rich country, nonetheless depends on oil imports, and therefore its energy security requires a combination of various elements.

Surprisingly enough, during the Reagan administration in the 1980s, the US government had a de facto energy policy that minimized gasoline consumption, and relied increasingly on energy resources concentrated in oil and gas. Two issues confused the debates over the development of domestic oil and gas. First, when oil price collapsed in the mid- 1980s, there was much discussion on border taxes as a means of artificially raising domestic oil and gas prices to subsidize high-cost local production. Second, debates over environmental issues focussed attention on issues of land management rather than on how oil and gas production could be spurred on existing exploration lands. While the oil industry has been its own worst enemy, pushing for lower taxes rather than reform, the Reagan administration instituted a series of tax changes that actually hurt the oil and gas industry.

²⁴ Morse, f.n. 22, pp.52-53.

The federal government ever since the crisis began engaged itself in formulating and implementing policies to encourage production and discourage consumption of oil . However, research and development , especially in areas that look to be far removed from the immediate commercial interests of the industry , were to be main thrusts of the government. This included research in alternative transportation fuels, especially natural gas. Energy security policies aimed at production, consumption and use of alternative fuels all are geared to a longer-term time horizon. In the short-term, the government takes measures to deal with immediate disruption in Gulf oil-flow.

THE AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY DURING AND AFTER THE WAR :

The year 1989 was a watershed in the arena of international relations as it saw a series of unprecedented events one after the other. George Bush's Presidency provided a sudden, unexpected victory for the US. In many ways, communism in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania collapsed under the weight of their own ideologies which resulted into the new governments in these countries proclaiming a commitment to democratic policies and market economies and long awaited withdrawal of erstwhile Soviet troops from Europe. This ended the long drawn war fought between the US and the former USSR in the form of Cold War. Thereby, paving the way for cooperation between the two great global powers.

The year 1990 could be described as the first test of US Middle East policy in the post-Cold War era. It was, as one analyst put it, a time for "dynamic rethinking." Given dramatic developments in the Gulf and the breaking down of Arab-Israeli talks. The intervention in Kuwait crisis reiterated the emergence of Middle East as a continuing high priority for US policy. It was the first time that American troops were sent to fight a regional conflict. However, it was, also the first time that the US alliance with several Arab States were able to fight a common enemy. This approach served American interest well. Events were taking place favourable to the US. "Starting in the background, taking care not to insert the United States into the middle of things was the proper course of action. The qualities most characteristic of the Bush presidency caution, modest public pronouncements and a fondness for private communications were admirably suited to the moment."²⁵ But when it came to the American foreign policy's role in the Middle East, it was no more wait and watch policy.

Events of 1989 and 1990 were so rapid and dramatic in nature that in the beginning no immediate response was forthcoming from the US side. Madeleine K. Albright and Allan E. Goodman, both professors of international affairs at Georgetown University then, highlighted the reasons for substantial upheavals in 1990 because: "the end of the Cold War may make regional conflict and intervention more, rather than less likely; the effect of such conflict may be magnified due to economic interdependence; and the saving anticipated from

²⁵ Michael Mandelbaum, "The Bush Foreign Policy", Foreign Affairs, vol. 70, no. 1, 1991, p. 9.

nuclear arms control and force reductions in the European theatre may have to be spent offsetting the high cost of regional crises and on re-equipping the military establishments of both the US and USSR for rapid and prolonged deployment in places and against threats (especially chemical warfare, terrorism and drugs trafficking) that will be very hard to counter. “²⁶ The Gulf Crisis illustrated the change that the end of the Cold War has brought about in the international politics. First time since the World War II, both the US and the erstwhile Soviet Union put up a combined front against Iraq. This made possible to assemble an international coalition of unprecedented strength to oppose Saddam Hussein from “swallowing Kuwait”, a sovereign country. The cooperation between the US and USSR to fight a “formidable aggressor” helped the United Nations, whose machinery, especially the Security Council implement its resolutions. The end of the Cold War brought the two superpowers together for a common cause, and finally undertook a military coalition to defeat Iraq.

In his remarks to the White House reporters on August 2, 1990 , President Bush made it clear that it was important for the US to take whatever steps necessary to defend its long-standing, vital interests in the Gulf. The next day in his message to the Congress on national emergency the President announced two executive orders that sought to contain Iraq. On August 3, 1990 the President in his address to the nation talked about four principles that guide the US policy. “

²⁶ Madeleine K. Albright and Allan E. Goodman, "US foreign Policy after the Gulf war", *survival*, Vol. XXXII, no.6, Nov./Dec., p.533.

First, we seek the immediate, unconditional, and complete withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Second, Kuwait's legitimate government must be restored to replace the puppet regime. Third, my administration, as has been the case with every president from president Roosevelt to President Reagan, is committed to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf. And fourth, I am determined to protect the lives of American citizens abroad."²⁷ However, it was in line with these principles that "the United States sent forces to the Middle East for two reasons: to support the principle that larger powers must not swallow up weaker neighbours, and to prevent a large fraction of the world's oil reserve from coming under the control of a brutal, aggressive and unpredictable tyrant."²⁸ The United States committed itself to Kuwait's freedom and independence; solely for this reason it sent 400,000 troops to liberate it. In fact, it was oil, a uniquely valuable resource, which is central to West's most industrial and transport activities that makes the Persian Gulf the only part of the Third world where Western interests are sizeable enough to justify a large war.

President George Bush, in the wake of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, outlined his idea of a "New World Order" in his speech before the United Nations on October 1, 1990. He said, open borders, open trade, and most important open minds would characterize the New World Order. The economic aspect of Bush's New World Order proposal in fact was an old slogan, which he kept emphasizing time and

²⁷ Historic Documents of 1990 , Congressional Quarterly Inc., Washington,DC,1991, p.538.

²⁸ Mandelbaum, f.n.25, p.11.

again. But the crux of the proposal was the political and diplomatic contents which significantly made it clear that " a new partnership of nations based on consultation, cooperation and collective action was needed."²⁹ The United States didn't want to go it alone, as it had learnt from its Vietnam fiasco. Bush seemed determined to oust the Iraqi forces from Kuwait in cooperation with the Arab countries and as many more possible. The objective of the United States was to lead the coalition of forces by making best use of opportunities made available by ongoing changes in the global balance of power. The New World Order's characteristic features the consultation, cooperation and collective action were realized as desired by the US in its war with Iraq.

The concept of New World Order was never clearly spelled out by the US President but it gave rise to an era of collective action by many nations including Socialists and Arabs. It was not possible during the Cold War. Lee Hamilton, Chairman of the House Sub-committee on the Middle East held the view that the US would emerge as a power of greater influence and greater risks in the region. Therefore, a strong American military presence in and around the region with stronger security cooperation with the regional countries was perceived as important.³⁰

Richard Cheney, US Secretary of Defense told the members of the US Congress on February 7, 1991, "in the coming years the United States will continue to rely

²⁹ Bangkok Post, 20 Jan., 1991.

³⁰ International Herald Tribune, 26-27 Jan., 1991.

on a force structure which is composed of an alliance system, uses forward deployed US forces, preserves sufficient forces in the continental United States to respond to contingencies, maintains a robust Navy, retains the ability to build the forces back, if necessary, and maintains a strategic offensive and defensive capability."³¹

James Baker, secretary of State outlined a leadership role for the US in this region in the areas of trade, investment, and economic development. Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he urged the consideration of a Middle East Bank for reconstruction and development for expanding free trade and investment, assisting development and promoting growth oriented economic policies in the region.³² The main motive of such policies was to help America achieve complete leadership by help of non-American fiscal resources. The objectives of the United States in the context of contemporary Middle East have not changed what it was in 1952. The National Security Council (NSC), recommendations of 1952 included among other objectives of the US to overcome or prevent instability within these countries which threaten Western interest, and to ensure that the resources of the area are available to the United States and its allies for use in strengthening the free world. After the Gulf war was over, President Bush declared a new American century, which clearly

³¹"US Defense Effort Focusses on Regional Contingencies", Middle East Update, US information service, 8 Feb., 1991.

³² Gregory F. Gause III, "The Illogical of Dual Containment", Foreign Affairs, March / April 1994, Vol. 73, no.2, p.73.

highlighted the American perception on the kind of role it envisaged for itself in the coming years.

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON'S POLICY OF DUAL CONTAINMENT :

President Clinton's administration framed arguably clear and well-defined foreign policy in the Gulf region. The administration identified both Iraq and Iran as significant threat to America's interests in the region. "Dual containment", a policy developed by President Clinton's administration, deals with the regional threats mainly by isolating both Iraq and Iran regionally, cutting them off from the world economic and trading systems, and also by encouraging a regime change in Iraq.³³

"Dual containment aims to support all UN imposed sanctions on Iraq, at the same time it persuades Europe, Russia and Japan to deny Iran access to international capital and arms of mass destruction.

Critics of this policy view it as a policy that plays Iraq against Iran. However, it has been pointed out that it contains both the countries simultaneously. Clearing the doubts from the minds of the critics of this policy, Mark Indyk, the special assistant to the President for Near East and South Asian affairs at the National Security council, on May 18, 1993, in a speech to the Washington

³³ Ibid.

Institute for Near East policy, said that, the US did not believe in balancing Iraq against Iran as such a policy would entail upon the US to depend on one to counter the other. Instead, it relied upon American strength and that of its allies in the region Saudi Arabia, Israel, Egypt, Turkey and the GCC which would allow the US to counter both the countries. Regime change in Baghdad was the ultimate goal of American policy as the administration's main goal was to establish clearly and unequivocally the current regime in Iraq which was a criminal regime, beyond the pale of international society. The Clinton administration's policy of containment recognized the importance of European and other countries in carrying it out successfully in the region. Indyk, in his speech, made the American stand clear by stating that Washington would work energetically to persuade other countries not to have commercial and military transaction with Tehran as, he said, it was a bad investment in both commercial and strategic terms. There are a number of other charges that seemed to warrant American containment of Iran: one, Iranian support to terrorism and assassination across the globe. Two, Iran's principled opposition to Arab-Israeli peace process. According to Americans Iran has been supporting terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas. Third, Iran's efforts to subvert friendly Arab governments. Four, Iran's military build up aimed at dominating the Gulf region. Five, its quest to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

The "dual containment" policy however, carries with it many of the elements of American foreign policy of earlier administration. Firstly, it aimed at guaranteeing the uninterrupted flow of oil to the US and its allies lest it affected

their economies. Secondly, it aimed at preventing any country's efforts that created problems for America acquiring and retaining position of supremacy in the region. Thirdly, the protection of Saudi Arabia and smaller Gulf States and countries of GCC and of course Israel was also protected. However, one significant departure in American approach to this region unlike earlier times has been to disavow the need for any kind of political relationship with neither Iran or Iraq in influencing matters in this region.

The policy analysts view dual containment as a less practical approach as they feel that without the cooperation of either one of the two countries, Iran and Iraq it is difficult to contain them. American allies in the region and elsewhere are not enthusiastic with such a policy. This makes the implementation of the policy highly difficult. Moreover, dual containment does not offer any guidelines for change in the region. Critics worry that it assigns to the US a role, unilateral in nature and less feasible in practice.

DOMESTIC DYNAMICS: THE CONGRESSIONAL ROLE IN THE GULF CRISIS

George Bush's second year in the White House provided one defining event of his presidency, the war in the Gulf. In the initial stage of the war itself, he decided that the Iraqi aggression had to be reversed and seven months later he was triumphant having achieved his objective. President Bush manoeuvred a very successful mandate from the Congress for going to the war in the Gulf. The Congress as always indulged into serious debate over the issue of war. The Congress which had the Republicans in a majority gave its assent for the war only after long drawn debate.

On his return from Camp David on 5 August, 1990, the President spoke to the press: "our determination to reverse out this aggression, this will not stand, this will not stand this aggression against Kuwait."¹ Two days later President Bush appeared on television to announce to the nation the deployment of American troops to the Middle East saying that "the sovereign independence of Saudi

¹ The Washington Version, Television Documentry on the Gulf Crisis Decision Making Process made by the American Enterprise Institute and the BBC, 24 March, 1991.

Arabia is of vital interest to the United States."² The President also made it clear that " the mission of our troops is wholly defensive."³

President Bush opposed the views of eight out of nine secretaries of defense who opposed the war. Bush skilfully avoided sending war resolution to Congress before he sent a considerable military force to the Gulf. Congress might have refused to vote in President's favour. Congress could hardly deny its support to American men and women in uniform whom President had already sent to the battlefield. General Schwarzkopf, the Commander-in-Chief of the allied forces in the Gulf publicly admitted to the planning and preparation of war campaign 18 months prior to the real action.

President Bush, in August 1990 itself, made his decision to go to war against Iraq. A major decision involved doubling of troops in Saudi Arabia by bringing in 200,000 more American NATO troops from Germany in November 1990. He brought them as against his initial announcement to rotate them, but to add them to the already stationed troops in Saudi Arabia. This, in fact, was a major shift from the supposed defense of Saudi Arabia against a possible attack by Iraq to the liberation of Kuwait through a planned American attack mandated by UN Security Council.

² The Gulf Crisis: A Chronology, July 1990-91, USIS, US Embassy London, 1991, p.2.(Here after cited as chronology).

³ Ibid.p.3.

An important thing to be noted is that all through the crucial decisions the congressional authority was bypassed by the President, and far reaching decisions were made before the November 6, US congressional elections. They were deliberately withheld from the public and Congress before the elections and only implemented thereafter. Congress was denied its constitutional mandate to exercise checks and balances on the President and especially on his ability to wage war. At the beginning of October 1990, the US Congress gave overwhelming support to the Bush administration's efforts to deter Iraqi aggression, by a vote of 380-29 in the House and 96-3 in the Senate. On 8 November, the President at a news briefing announced that the size of the forces committed to 'Operation Desert Shield' was to be increased by 200,000", to ensure that the coalition has an adequate offensive military option should that be necessary to achieve the common goals.⁴

Bush's policy to intervene in the Gulf for liberating Kuwait from Iraq was pursued with all efforts. On 25 August, the UN Security Council voted 13-0 in favour of a resolution effectively authorizing military action to enforce the sanctions against Iraq agreed earlier. This was the first occasion in the history of the UN that individual countries were authorized "to enforce an international blockade, an extraordinary diplomatic victory for the administration."⁵

⁴ Ibid.p.15.

⁵ Bob Woodward, The Commanders (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), pp.225,231.

But on domestic front the President faced problems with the Congress opposing his moves to commit the US troops in the Saudi Arabia in the name of its protection, but in reality to use them for offensive purposes against Iraq. On 5 December, 54 Democrats of the US House of Representatives sought a federal court injunction that would have prevented the President from embarking on offensive. These members of the house along with others wanted the President to first obtain explicit congressional authorization. But contrary to their stand the suit was dismissed by the US federal district court Judge Harold Greene on 13 December on the grounds that there was "lack of evidence of an imminent clash between the executive and legislative branches, lack of evidence that either the administration is on the verge of launching a war, or that a majority of Congress deems a declaration of war imprudent".⁶

President George Bush admitted that Congress had any formal role in the ultimate decision to go to war. However, on 8 January 1991 he requested a congressional resolution authorizing the use of force. The Senate on 12 January by a vote of 57-42, a resolution that gave the President authority to use military force against Iraq in order to achieve the implementation of the various relevant Security Council resolutions. Later the same day, the House voted 250-183 in favour of an identical resolution.⁷ The resolution authorized President

⁶ Chronology, f.n.1, p.21.

⁷ Congress and the Nation, Vol.VIII, 1989-92 (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1993), pp.309, 1061.

Bush to begin a war against Iraq if Iraq failed to withdraw from Kuwait by January 15, as ordered by the United Nations. "The historic vote marked the first time since America's entry into World War II that Congress had directly confronted the question of sending large numbers of American troops into combat."⁸

Most of the Democrats were opposed to the war. House member Andrew Jacobs Jr., said that it was a "total war." Representative Barbara Bouer of California said that the "Persian Gulf issue is about blood on our kids." Another representative made a strong point when he said, "we are not under attack, Iraq has not claimed a single American life. It occupies not a single square foot of American soil. We do not need its oil." Senator Tom Harkin argued against any policeman role for the United States of America.⁹ Richard G. Lugar, an important figure of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, stated that "Saddam Hussein must either leave or be removed."¹⁰ The House, therefore, was divided over the question of American offensive on Iraq. For many, the concentration of US and allied military force in the Persian Gulf indicated an American acquisition of supreme leadership it had not enjoyed since World War II.¹¹

⁸ Historic Documents of 1991

⁹ Willim Schneider, "War in the Gulf Would be a Partisan War", National Journal, no.3, January 19, 1991, p.194.

¹⁰ Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, Vol. 48, no. 35, September 1, 1990, p.2777.

¹¹ Congressional Quarterly, Editorial Research Report, Vol. 1, September 14, 1990.

President Bush concentrated all his efforts in garnering adequate support from his European and Arab partners, leaving the congressional vote for the last moment for he did not deem congressional authority necessary for committing American troops abroad for combat. The President was certain of his constitutional powers which authorize him to go to war without a congressional authority as he is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of the United States. Notwithstanding opposition to immediate authorization of the Gulf War by many Congressmen, including influential members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, such as Senate Majority leader George J. Mitchell, Senators, Robert Kerry, Sam Nunn and House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt, the US Congress voted a resolution on 12 January 1991, authorizing the US President to wage a war, if necessary, in the Persian Gulf.

Though, support for the Gulf war in the Congress was not so impressive as in many other cases of the past, for instance, for World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam war, attitude of the Congress changed after the bombing of Baghdad by the allied forces began. On 17 January, the Senate adopted a resolution 98-0, and the House of Representatives approved 399-6 the following day, which commended and supported the efforts and leadership of the President as Commander-in-Chief in the Persian Gulf hostilities, and unequivocally supported the men and women of the US armed forces. Public opinion too began to change in favour of President Bush whose approval rating

during war stood at 84% - one of the highest ever recorded for a US President.¹² But this was mainly because the American credibility was at stake and also American lives were at stake.

However, there was a general impression among the American public that "the crisis had not been properly handled within the White House. One source for instance, claimed that 'rational' procedures were notably absent and it further argued that the President and his National Security Adviser alone determined the crucial steps towards war with Iraq."¹³ One notable author, criticized the President's decision-making in the following words: "Throughout the crisis, Bush acted with a small coterie of subordinates. Expert opinion was screened out, and the NSC rarely met in structured fashion. Means and ends were never reconciled, policy alternatives were not canvassed, structured analysis was not rendered. The executive branch of the government moved at the President's command and no institutional checks were provided."¹⁴ The criticism given the widest currency in the literature on the Gulf War was the claim that policy-making was restricted to an inner circle that quickly developed a consensus on a military solution and gave scant consideration to alternative courses of action. General Brent Scowcroft (Retd.) - Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, however, accepted that the decision-making was rather limited, but

¹² Chintamani Mahapatra, "Gulf War: Aspects of American Approach", Strategic Analysis, Vol. 14 (Apr- July), 1991, p.210.

¹³ David Mervin, George Bush and Guardianship Presidency, (London : Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), p.185.

¹⁴ Ibid.

emphasized that those who were supposed to attend NSC meetings attended. As a matter of fact to NSC meetings only a limited staff was invited. This was done keeping in mind national security. "We felt it was important when we began planning for a military solution that it should stay closely held so that we would not signal to Saddam Hussein what it was we actually had in mind."¹⁵

Those who were involved in decision-making, especially Scowcroft and Richard Haass, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, defended the charges levelled against President's style of decisions for American approach to the crisis. Haass also denied the allegations that a proper airing of alternative course of action had not taken place, and emphasized that instead of "adhococracy" "multiple advocacy" had occurred.

According to Scowcroft there were regular discussions with Congress, and Congress was consulted both individually and in groups. But the criticism that the Bush Administration had erred in not keeping Congress informed about the decision, at the end of October 1990, to double the number of US troops in Saudi Arabia, continued. Bush, in fact, waited until the mid-term elections were safely past before announcing that he had directed the Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney to increase the size of US forces committed to Desert Shield to ensure that the coalition had an adequate offensive military option should that

¹⁵ Interview with Gen. Scowcroft as quoted in Ibid., p. 185.

be necessary to achieve the set goal of liberating Kuwait from Iraq. This was a major decision for it involved high level of commitment and war with Iraq was almost certain with each passing day Saddam showing no withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Congress, however, had no foreknowledge of this decision, even though the White House had regularly briefed congressional leaders on the Gulf crisis.

Tom Foley, the Speaker of the House, explained: "There was a call from Secretary Cheney in the morning not very elaborate, just an announcement that the Administration was doubling the forces. This, of course, had never been discussed with the congressional leadership group that had been visiting the White House in recent weeks.¹⁶ This has been seen as a serious aberration in the decision-making process of the White House. Scowcroft later accepted that it was Administration's "serious mistake" to not to have kept Congress informed on the doubling of the forces which implied near certainty of combat with the Iraqi forces if Iraq did not abide by the UN resolution to pull out of Kuwait by January 15, 1991. Richard Haass in an interview on BBC (March 24, 1994) admitted that the decision to double the forces and not having informed Congress about it was probably the worst handled piece of decision-making of the crisis and it was clumsily done in the consultative area with the Congress. In fact, the doubling decision created more problems with the Congress than necessary. But the President was too clear in his mind that he would go it alone

¹⁶ Washington Version, f.n.1.

if the Congress were not in a mood to endorse his decision. In an interview to the *Time*, he said: "I have the powers of the Commander-in-Chief. There are a lot of historical precedents involved in all of this. You have the War Powers Resolution, you have the fact of some 200 applications of force, five of which were solemnified by a declaration of a war. So we look at history, and we talk to lawyers. We consult (with Congress)."¹⁷ The President seemed quite determined to invoke his War Powers. History was also on his side as there have been many a time when President had sent his forces abroad without a formal congressional authorization. But the President was too sure of importance of the congressional endorsement. President Bush in the same interview stressed the significance of going to Congress for its approval and authorization of President's decision to send forces into Saudi Arabia for its protection and liberation of Kuwait. He said: "...if Congress wants to clearly endorse the policy of the United States Government and wants to endorse what the United Nations has done, that would be one good way to take a good step for peace. Because that would remove one of the questions that is in Saddam Hussein's mind. The question is, how divided is the country? And if they saw a Congress united behind the President, that would send a very powerful message to Saddam Hussein."¹⁸ But if Congress had faltered in giving its overwhelming support to the President then it would have conveyed a different message that

¹⁷ Interview by Heusy Muller and John Stack with President George Bush in *Time*, 7 January, 1991, p.23.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

might have bolstered President Saddam Hussein's position. Thus, President Bush cleverly attached national interest over partisan interests in consolidating his support from the Congress.

Once Bush had vowed to liberate Kuwait, General Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, urged him to deploy a force so massive that if war became necessary, it could be fought all out and won quickly, unlike Vietnam. By November, Bush had authorized a doubling of the US force to 430,000, giving the allies the capacity to go on the offensive if Saddam refused to meet the January 15, deadline set by the UN for Iraq to quit Kuwait. Democrats on Capitol Hill grew increasingly critical of what they viewed as an ill-considered rush to war. "He has brushed aside Congress' insistence that the Constitution empowers it also to declare war. In private, Bush disdainfully insisted he could ignore Congress as long as there was no consensus for or, against his Gulf policy."¹⁹ But this was not his public stand. In reality, it was argued that he was all for an overwhelming support from Congress, and he wanted the entire nation to back his Gulf Policy. He did not want any major opposition as that would weaken the fighting forces' moral on the battlefield and also attract both international and domestic criticism. He perceived for the US, a leading role for his "new world order" based on East-West cooperation in the wake of collapse of the erstwhile Soviet Union.

¹⁹ Ibid. p.16.

The White House was hoping that a decisive victory would buoy not only Bush's political fortunes but the entire country as well. A Bush aide said: "A successful outcome to this war will give us all sorts of opportunities, first of all in national confidence, which is key to economic recovery. We can end the post-Vietnam syndrome that fears involvement abroad. We can have confidence in our diplomacy, our technology, our all volunteer Army and reserves."²⁰

Asserting his constitutional role as Commander-in-Chief, Bush had made it clear that he considered the decision to go to war as his alone. The debate that erupted in both congressional chambers was a sure sign that many of the lawmakers disagreed not only with the President but with their own leadership on that question. Could President Bush send US troops into battle without congressional approval? Only after the November congressional elections, as George Bush ordered US troops strength doubled and pressed the UN to adopt its January 15 ultimatum, did some of the Senators and Representatives speak up. The urgency of participating in a major national decision finally came home last week as the 102nd Congress convened in Washington for the first time. Barely half an hour into the Senate's opening session, Iowa Democrat Tom Harkin upset the plans of majority leader George Mitchell to delay a floor fight over US policy. When Mitchell proposed to the chamber that no resolutions on the Gulf would be submitted before January 23, unless the leadership approved, Harkin, declared that it was the right time and right place to debate on the issue.

²⁰ Dan Goodgame, Bush's Biggest Gamble, *Time*, 28 January, 1991, p.23.

He introduced a resolution co-sponsored by fellow Democrat Brock Adams of Washington that would prohibit Bush from attacking Iraqi forces without "explicit authorization" from Congress. The fight quickly spread to the House of Representatives despite Democratic Speaker Tom Foley's efforts to contain it. Democrats Richard Durbin of Illinois and Charles Bennet of Florida announced a resolution similar to the one Harkin and Adams had introduced in the Senate. Though neither resolution would be binding, both represented a clear message to the President that he must make Congress a partner to any decision to use force. The congressional leadership's reluctance to challenge the President reflected the fears of the legislators from both parties. Many dovish law-makers preferred to sit on the fence as long as it remained unclear whether the military option could succeed at acceptable cost. Though some loudly questioned, White House policy, few had ventured to challenge it. That suited Bush. He kept stressing his commitment to continue "consulting" with Capitol Hill leaders, but President's critics accused him of making no effort to seek outright congressional approval for his push towards war. According to them his concern was that anything less than an overwhelming endorsement of his policy by the Congress would convince Saddam that the US was divided and therefore reluctant to fight.

Washington deemed congressional pro-active role a positive step towards the American efforts to bring peace to the region by a positive determined action. If the President hoped to convince the Iraqis that the American public was behind

him, no move would have sent a stronger signal than a congressional declaration of war. Georgia Democratic Senator Sam Nunn warned that once the troops went into battle, it would be too late for Congress to be arguing the propriety of war. "The time for debate", he said, "is before that occurs."

The hesitation of Congress, to a large extent, echoed the ambivalence of the American public. Most polls showed that a majority of Americans supported the US goal of expelling Iraq from Kuwait. Yet, the American people were divided on the war timetable set by the President. Many members of the Congress reported that their constituents strongly favoured giving sanctions more time to work.

The constitution, however, is very clear on the issue of declaration of war. The constitution grants the Congress the power to declare war. The reason was clearly explained by James Madison who went on to become the President of the United State of America. Madison was one of the key framers of the constitution. The constitutional authority to the Congress notwithstanding, President Bush persisted in focussing on the presidential prerogatives with regard to war. President Bush, preferred to emphasize the passage that designated the President as the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. His staff members pointed out that in 200 years history, Presidents sent American troops abroad 211 times, whereas Congress declared war on only six occasions. But those presidential expeditions rarely involved massive troop deployments or a prolonged buildup to war. To them the Gulf crisis, in contrast, was a classical

case when Congress was to be a part of the decision. Further, Vietnam was regarded as a warning that disaster awaited any President who led the US into a lengthy war without the support of Congress.

For months after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, Bush refused to acknowledge that Congress had a formal role in deciding the use of force against Iraq. As the deadline drew near, the Senate opened debate on his Persian Gulf Policy. Bush sent identical letters to key congressional leaders urging that Congress formally endorse a UN Security Council resolution of November 29, 1990. That resolution authorized "all means necessary" to remove Iraq's military forces from Kuwait if the Iraqis did not remove themselves by January 15, 1991. President Bush told Congress to send Iraqi President Saddam Hussein "the clearest possible message" of America's resolve in the crisis by passing a war resolution such as he requested. But it led to a heated debate in both the houses of the Congress. Underscoring much of the debate was a sense that the legislative branch had acted too late to have any real choice except to back Bush in his show-down with the Iraqi leader.²¹

There was a significant recognition from within the White House that consultation with Congress could have been better handled. However, there is enough evidence to support the conclusion that President Bush was prepared to

²¹ Congress on War with Iraq, Historical Documents of 1991, Congressional Quarterly, Washington, DC, 1992, p.4.

go to war without congressional approval if that became necessary.²² Whenever his constitutional authority was at stake, Bush was a tough and uncompromising President determined to defend his prerogatives. His doubling of US forces in the Gulf in the fall of 1990, without consulting Congress alarmed members of the legislature concerned that an irreversible military build-up was taking place jeopardizing the congressional war power. Senator Sam Nunn, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, was among those who opposed the war resolution of January 12, 1991. He said that they backed the goal of facing an Iraqi withdrawal, but he argued further that if the economic sanctions already in operation were allowed more time, military force might not have been necessary. Majority leader George Mitchell who opened the Senate debate made a strong plea for economic sanctions as an effective way to force Iraq to obey UN decision to withdraw from Kuwait. The same way Speaker of the House of Representatives, Thomas S. Foley supported sanctions over force. Whereas, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Republican Les Aspin, concluded that in the given circumstances war was a reasonable option.²³ Republican Dante B. Fascell, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was of the view that war was the only way out. Senator Charles S. Robb, who supported Bush, said it would be a "fundamental mistake to give even the appearance of withdrawing our trust and support."²⁴

²² Michael Glennon, "The Gulf War and the Constitution", Foreign Affairs, Spring 1991, Vol. 70, pp.84-101.

²³ See f.n.21, p.4.

²⁴ Ibid.

Florida Democratic representatives Charles E. Bennet and Sam M. Gibbons, both World War II veterans, spoke of the deep burden they felt for having voted for the Gulf of Tonkin resolution that made the Vietnam war possible in which America faced a humiliating defeat. They urged colleagues not to repeat the mistake. But Minority leader Robert H. Michel, another veteran of World War II, made an emotional plea to members not to forget a different lesson from the past. "Those of our generation know from bloody experience," he said, alluding to the appeasement of Hitler before World War II, "that unchecked aggression against a small nation as a prelude to international disaster."²⁵

Some members of the Congress got so emotional that they even offered prayers for the country, the President and the men and women who were to fight on the Iraq-Kuwait border. House Speaker Thomas S. Foley said, "I have never seen this House more serious nor more determined to speak its heart and mind on a question than they are at this time on this day."²⁶

However, Bush more than once made it amply clear that if forced into it he would embark on military action, even in the face of unanimous congressional opposition and hostile public opinion. "If I have to go, it's not going to matter to me if there isn't one Congressman who supports this, or what happens to public

²⁵ Ibid. p.5.

²⁶ Ibid.

opinion. If it's right, its gotta be done."²⁷ Although, the President was making such statements, but he was too well aware of the political consequences of going to war without the Congress supporting him. As Scowcroft explained, the President never doubted his right to take military action without congressional approval, but he was constantly reminded of desperate difficulties Lyndon Johnson had to endure during the Vietnam war and recognized the significance of having or not having congressional approval. The question of whether the President should seek congressional authorization for the use of force was heavily debated within the Administration. Several members of the inner circle, including Dick Cheney, Baker and Scowcroft and Sununu, were against going to the Congress. Their fear was that Bush might lose the vote. Vice-President Quayle and Gray were strongly in favour of going to Congress, without which the policy might face disaster.

President Bush got the resolution passed from the Congress supporting his use of force he did not intend to concede the constitutional point, which he explained in a statement which he signed. The statement read: "As I made clear to congressional leaders at the outset, my request for congressional support did not, and my signing this resolution does not constitute any change in the long standing positions of the executive branch on either the President's

²⁷ Tom Mathews, "The Road to War", Newsweek, 28 January, 1991, pp.34-45.

constitutional authority to use the Armed Forces to defend vital US interests or the constitutionality of the War Powers Resolution."²⁸

²⁸ Daniel Hallin, "TV's Clean Little War" , The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Vol. 117, no. 4, May 1991.

GULF WAR AND MEDIA'S ROLE IN GENERATING PUBLIC OPINION

According to liberal democratic theory leaders are chosen to reflect societal values by converting public preferences into policy. By extension, then, American foreign policy is or should be , an expression of American sentiments. As a former defence secretary put it, "foreign policy does not reflect upon a definition of national interest . It rests upon public opinion."¹ How far is this a true assessment ? As far as the Gulf war 1990 was concerned public opinion played an important role in shaping American policy. It displayed divergences in its attitude to the war, yet remained supportive of the larger goals of US foreign policy in the region . While most experts point out a "disjunction between elite and mass preferences "as a large one yet, disparities led the role of the mass media and other opinion leaders to become critical to the US policy making. While the question of whether the elected leaders devise policies that reflect general preferences or cater to a privileged elite from which the leaders themselves are drawn? Or the policies appeal to specialized interests continue

¹ Arthur Schlesinger Jr., "The Legislative -Executive Balance in International Affairs: The Intension of Framers", Washington Quarterly, no.12, Winter, pp.90-107.

to be raised, the transference of societal preferences into political processes are undoubtedly through the mass media.

THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE OPINION MAKING AND POLICY PROCESS:

The media industry in the US plays two or three pivotal roles. First, public attitudes may be influenced by the media - which essentially argues for "media as a separate actor". The other one is based on the argument that sees media as largely an accomplice of the government policy, and more often supportive, than critical of official action. Yet, a third role portrays the media and the government in a "mutually exploitative" relationship in which each gain from the other.² While all these roles prescribed by the media often intermingle in any given situation, the last appears to best represent the Persian Gulf War Crisis in 1990. Notwithstanding the criticisms each of these models have attracted, this chapter details some of the events that illustrate the argument that the media has become too dependent on government for information to be independent actors shaping foreign policy.

THE GULF CRISIS AND THE MEDIA:

The Persian Gulf war of 1990-91 entwined the foreign policy and the media activities which has furthered the argument of media and the government being mutually exploitative. Several accounts already pointed out that the crisis

² Bernard Cohen, The Press and the Foreign Policy (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), p.27.

reduced great efforts to control and shape the information from that area including the outlines provided by the Pentagon officials on detailed "ground rules" for reporting from the region.³ Indeed several "should nots" were observed, including non-publication of the sizes of American or coalition units and their military components, future operational plans and exact location of forces in Saudi Arabia, were all part of the government's efforts to shape a story.

The "mutual exploitation" theme also emerged as large percentages of policy officials recorded their reliance on media as the fastest source of information. Conversely, "policymakers saw nothing unusual about using the media as a communications instrument to address other national leaders and populations."⁴ In fact, as one media analyst put it: growth organisations promote their version of reality around the world; the foreign apparatus does so to serve its own interests; the media do so because that is what they do. Both are adept at supporting, manipulating, or attacking the other. The relationship is sometimes competitive and sometimes co-operative, but that is only incidental to its central driving force: self interest.⁵

The success of the media versus the government policy makers in this relationship varies by issue. On issues of so called "low politics", such as

³ Pete Williams, "Ground Rules and Guidelines for Desert Shield" in Hedrick Smith, ed., The Media and the Gulf War (Washington, DC: Seven Locks, 1992), pp.4-12.

⁴ O Heffernan, see f.n.3.

⁵ Ibid. 232-33.

environment, human rights, human interests strives, the media are observed to be more effective in impacting policy practices. On the abuse of human rights, the media can and do use compelling visual images (e.g., Tiananmen Square demonstrations) bring it to the top of the agenda. However, on issues of "arms control", "proliferation", sometimes called the "high politics", the policy makers have the advantage. For instance, the media's difficulty in conveying the debate and the pros and cons of arms control without official arguments will be much more. Take the instance of the media trying to convey the accuracy of "smart bombs" or information on troop movements without military assistance. As many have noted, the high technology does not pertain merely to bombs, but also to the media. But it still remains more powerful in the hands of political figures than Journalists.⁶

The News media have acquired a central place in political conflicts, and play a vast role in not only providing the information and analysis of events but also shape public opinion for or against such conflicts. The Gulf War in case, is an event which epitomizes the crucial role media plays in conflicts. The media, in fact, constitute part and parcel of war strategy as a means to project to the international community the ground reality of a combat. Over the years the media have come to acquire immense influence on the national policy makers and on events of international importance. They influence political process and

⁶ James M. McCormick, American Foreign Policy and Process (Itasca, Illinois: F. E. Peacock Publishers, 1998), pp. 533-540.

outcome of events through massive public opinion build up which in effect puts pressure on the political leadership to follow a particular line of approach to the crisis. It is in fact, a two way process. The political process is likely to have an influence on the news media and the vice-versa. But it is most often the political power that has more influence on the news media, especially when it comes to coverage of political conflicts, such as the Gulf War. The political process has a major impact on the press because political power can usually be translated into power over the news media, because the political culture of a society has a major influence on how the news media cover conflicts, because the news media are much more likely to react to political events than to initiate them, because political realities often determine how antagonists use the news media to achieve political goals, and because political decisions have a major influence on who owns the media and how they operate. On the other hand, the news media help set the political agenda, accelerate and magnify political success and failure, serve as independent advocates for victims of oppression, mobilize third parties into a conflict to be part of it or for its resolution. The press serves as a powerful catalyst for political processes. The role of the news media can be determined by the level of control authorities command over the political environment. Political conflicts are distinguished by moves and counter moves for the control of political events to ensure a positive outcome of the conflict. The press plays a supportive role to help decision makers dominate political discourse for mobilizing support for their decisions. When authorities dominate political environment, the news media find it difficult to play an independent role.

On the contrary, if the authorities have no solid control over political environment, the news media is free to choose from a larger array of sources and perspectives for a free and fair coverage.

The role of the news media in conflicts varies depending upon political nature of the conflict, the resources, skills and political power of the parties involved, the relationship between the press and the parties in conflict, the state of public opinion, the ability of the journalists to gain access to the conflict events, and the situation on the ground, that is, the real action taking place in the battlefield. Powerful governments can exploit the dependence of the news media to drown out alternative frames and agendas. Authorities have routine access to the news media and the staff, skills, and resources to take full advantage of that access. However, there are occasions when there is a competition between the authorities and the media persons who go to the extent of breaking rules set by the authorities to access the news at first hand. Sometimes political mistakes are perceived by such media persons as opportunities enabling them to get what they want. For example, in the Gulf those media persons who broke free from media 'pool' to report independently on their own risk.

The United States and its allies had overwhelming control over the Gulf War and the media personnel reporting on the events. The ability to control the battlefield offered the US an important advantage in planning information campaign because all of the press releases and briefings were prepared much in advance.

Prior to the formal breakout of the war there was a major public opinion campaign for and against the war, expressed in media, both print and electronic. Armed with the UN resolution, congressional approval and Bush's own strong conviction that Iraq's aggression should be reversed with US led strong allied military strike. Apprehension of this fact generated an avalanche of public opinion. Much of the nation's opinion was clustered in the cautious middle ground. Americans were not yet sounding especially jingoistic or bellicose. The expressions and phrases used by many Americans were not extreme which suggested a cautious approach.

In a telephone poll of 1000 adult Americans by Time/CNN on January 10,1991 highlighted a nation divided over the question of war. The questions asked in the poll were as follows:⁷

Has Bush done enough to secure a peaceful settlement with Iraq or has he been too ready to go to war?

Done enough - - - - -51%

Too ready for war - - - - -40%

Should we continue the economic sanctions against Iraq or take military action?

Continue sanctions - - - - -45%

Take military action - - - - -41%

⁷ Time, 1991, pp.23.

If there is to be a war, should it be soon after the January 15, deadline or should we wait a while?

Soon after ----- 54%

Wait a while ----- 40%

Iraq says it will consider withdrawing troops from Kuwait only if the US agreed to an international conference on Palestinian and Middle East issues. Should we agree to this precondition or reject it?

Agree to ----- 39%

Reject ----- 51%

Two Iraqi goals in Kuwait are to control the oil fields stretching across the Iraq-Kuwait border and to gain a sea outlet on the Gulf. If Iraq were to withdraw its troops from all of Kuwait except these areas, should we accept this or go to war?

Accept situation ----- 34%

Go to war ----- 49%

The polls showed clearly that Bush could not get a decisive mandate from the public for going to war with Iraq.

However, the critics of the Bush's policy denounced the American efforts of crisis resolution, and instead emphasized that he could strive to reduce unemployment apartheid, homelessness etc.. He has been hell-bound for months on war. "I have never heard a President talk so much war talk in my life time."⁸ The Gulf War can be set aside from earlier wars, especially the Vietnam war which was

⁸ Ibid. pp.4, 23.

supported by American labour unions and blue collar workers who tended to support the war, but for the Gulf War, the Presidents of nine major unions opposed the war and pressed for a peaceful solution.

One important reason why the nation was divided over the issue of war was that the people still had not forgotten the tragedies of the Vietnam war. Vietnam was very much vivid in people's memory. And as the deadline was approaching the nation stood divided into those who believed that the use of force was necessary evil and those who thought it to be an out right evil. Those who had suffered the extremes of the war in Vietnam however, seemed to believe that the Americans had forgotten what war meant in the real sense of the term. Because they knew best what the consequences of war could be on the present and future generations, and the devastation it brings to the nations involved in the war. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that the Americans drew different lessons from Vietnam. For some war veterans, war was never to be fought again, and still, for some others war, if ever to be fought, it should be fought quickly and decisively. However, the popular opinion was supportive of military course of action while some were persistently demanding economic sanctions against Baghdad as an effective approach for the reversal of Iraqi's aggression against Kuwait.

It is around this time when the question of whether the United States strike Iraq that Professor Paul Kennedy's book - 'The Rise and Fall of Great Powers stirred

the American policy makes, academia and media for an assessment of American power. The debate within the United States on the Gulf Crisis took place in the backdrop of an atmosphere created by Kennedy's book.

Those who were opposed to the US playing a policeman's role in the post-Cold War era argued that higher oil prices were hitting the US economy when it was already undergoing a period of recession. War would lead to a further rise in oil prices which would cripple the American economy. Their reference point was a study by the World Bank, which envisaged a spurt in oil prices to \$50 bl if war continued for long.⁹

One persistent fear that loomed large on the minds of the Americans was a heavy death toll, which the US would never tolerate. Though President George Bush assured the nation that not a single "kid" would be killed in the war, the Americans believed that war definitely would lead to casualties of American soldiers in the battlefield. The Brookings Institution which had estimated the human cost at 15,000 Americans killed and wounded in a war of one to three months.¹⁰

In spite of the President's declaration that the war would be quick and decisive and not much casualties on the American side, the public kept on pressurizing

⁹ Business Newsweek, 8 October, 1990, p.17.

¹⁰ US News and World Report, 12 November, 1990, p.32.

for economic sanctions to operate longer, instead of an attack. The allied powers also were not so much in favour of a strike unless the UN Security Council passed a resolution for war. For instance, the French Defense Minister ruled out participation of his country in a war against Iraq unless it was approved by the United Nations,¹¹ while the Soviets were in favour of a political solution of the problem through an "Arab mechanism".¹²

On the domestic front, anti-war movements picked up momentum and opposed war on humanitarian grounds. They were led by the Catholic Churches. The religious groups were preaching peace and love and their main goal was to "shield their Children's generation from the traumas of war."¹³ The debates within the United States for and against waging a war in the Persian Gulf intensified. Henry Kissinger, a former Secretary of State in the Nixon Administration advised "surgical and progressive" attacks against Iraq for the liberation of Kuwait in his article published in the Washington post. Kissinger's approach was supported by William Safire and A. M. Rosenthal in their article published in New York Times".¹⁴ Those who were familiar with the style of American leadership understood it as an act of US and allied military forces in the Persian Gulf for American leadership dominance which it had not enjoyed since the WorldWarII.¹⁵ Where as the US oil traders opined: "the soldiers will see combat,

¹¹ Congressional Quarterly, Editorial Research Report, Vol. 1, no.34, 14 September, 1990, p.39.

¹² International Herald Tribune, 30 October, 1990.

¹³ US News and World Report, 12 November, 1990.

¹⁴ The Nation, 8 September, 1990.

¹⁵ Ibid. f.n.11.

not on behalf of one oil company but for control over the world's richest oil fields.¹⁶

The news media played a crucial role in the American attempt to camouflage the war that the US was all along preparing for. The media gave the impression to the outside world that the war was most unlikely. The diplomacy by its efforts concealed that America would attack Iraq for sure. April C. Glaspie, US Ambassador to Iraq in her conversation with President Saddam Hussein said, "We understand that , and our opinion is that you should have the opportunity to rebuild your country, but we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait".¹⁷

However, the ambassador denied having made such a statement to the Iraqi President and described it as "malicious" and inaccurate. Such statements, true or not had an immense impact on the public mind, researches and even on Iraq that war would be averted. Even the Iraqis seemed to have been influenced by the American propaganda. It is argued that if it had not been so, Saddam Hussein might not have allowed the Americans and other Westerns to leave Iraq and use them as potential human shields against the allied attack. But he did not do so. Those nationals might have been the most powerful human deterrence so far as George Bush's intentions were concerned. George Bush

¹⁶ Ibid.f.n. 9, p.19.

¹⁷ Ambassador Glaspie on pre-war meeting with Saddam Hussein, Historical Documents of 1991, Congressional Quarterly, Washington, DC, 1992, p.159.

wanted least possible loss of American lives in the war. The Iraqis were victimized by the US psychological warfare which is reflected by Director General of Information of Iraq Naji Al-Hadithi's statement : "Do you know that during the war with Iran we lost 53,000 men just to regain one small city that was part of Iraq, a place Americans have never heard of, where as 53,000 men is what you lost during the entire Vietnam war. So you think Mr. Bush can afford to lose 53,000 men to defend some hole in the Saudi desert?"¹⁸

George Bush had set the entire administrative machinery in the country to prepare the minds of the people for a war and get maximum support possible from abroad. Where as the Americans were discussing the political cost of human lives and the Iraqis seemed to have bought the idea and acted accordingly.

There were two main propaganda themes masterminded by the US and its allies. First, was that it was valiantly waged war against the world's fourth largest army with highly trained elite Republican Guards. Second, was that it was first time in the history of military warfare that such a high-tech electronic war with 'smart bombs' was being carried out with utmost precision.¹⁹ The so called 'smart bombs' were precision bombs and were supported to be hitting chosen targets. But on the contrary, only a minuscule percentage of such bombs were hitting the

¹⁸ Marc Cooper, "Baghdad Bizzare: Waiting for War", New Statesman, 11 January, 1991, p.25.

¹⁹ Andre Gunder Frank, "Third World War: A Political Economy of the Gulf War and the New World Order", Third World Quarterly, Vol. 13, no.2, 1992, p.272.

right targets. But the war experts told the world that the accuracy of the high-tech war was only a media blitz, otherwise why was there any need for the US and UK military command to video tape briefings in advance for CNN and other television networks around the world. These two features of the war were contradictory in principle. Not many newspapers carried these contradictory practices by the US led military force. International Herald Tribune in its heading 'desert mirages' carried the news that the US overestimated size and ability of Iraq's armed forces. It did so deliberately, to help justify the carpet and terror bombing of both the military and civilian assets of this third world country with a population of only 17 million. The Pentagon presented images of a new kind of high-tech war between machines, not men. CNN showed outgoing Patriot American missiles impacting on incoming Iraq's Scud missiles. It was revealed only after the war was over that majority of the Patriots hit only the Scud propulsions and did not destroy their warheads, which still hit the buildings and civilian population. The media also didn't show that both missiles, i.e., Patriot and Scud, fell back to the ground causing damage. The American "Patriots may have caused as much damage as it prevented."²⁰

The military commands released many video tapes to the media for public viewing which showed precision guided 'smart bombs' hitting targets in Iraq. Those tapes never showed that these 'smart bombs' missed 10% of their targets. Other important fact media withheld from the public was that those 'smart bombs'

²⁰ International Herald Tribune, 18 April, 1991.

accounted for only 7% of the total tonnage dropped. The other 93 % were not precision guided and hence their percentage of missing the targets was much higher than 'smart bombs'. The media never showed how inaccurate was the rest of the bombing, i.e., 93% of the total. Three percent of the total bombs dropped by the new Stealth bombers accounted for 40% of the target hits, which included roads, bridges, power plants, irrigation works.

The New York Times (NYT) in its editorial on March 25, 1991 mentioned the following which was quite an eye-opener as to what was the main motive of such a heavy bombing of Iraq carried out by allied air force. Air attack lasted for 40 days instead of 15 days as planned. The NYT reported: "The bulk of the damage found by the UN team was not accidental or 'collateral', but the intended consequences of the successful air campaign to destroy Iraq's war machine by attacking its industrial base and urban infrastructure."²¹ The findings raised questions about how much of that bombing was needed.

When the American targets hit the only powdered milk and infant formula factory in the country, and civilian bunkers and shelters, the Pentagon claimed that they hit correctly the military targets and the infant formula factory, (as claimed by Iraq) in fact, was military weapons site the US military insisted. Peter Arnett, a correspondent with the CNN expressed doubt over Pentagon's insistence that they had hit an Iraqi military weapons site and not an infant formula factory.

²¹ New York Times, 25 March, 1991.

Both the CNN and Peter Arnett were hounded traitors to the cause of Kuwaiti liberation, in the US. He was also severely criticised for having interviewed President Saddam Hussein and showing it to the world community on the television. This in fact, supported Saddam's propaganda against the Western World's alleged military intervention in the Gulf Crisis. "Arnett became a lightning rod for critics of the media and foreign policy for seemingly taking at face value the Iraqi explanations of events during the war."²²

After three days of combat, the American public had experienced the emotional ups and downs. The public mood swung from elation over the overwhelming success of the opening air and missile assault to anxiety after Iraqi missile attack on Israel. And when they heard that Israel did not retaliate, the American public mood began to oscillate back towards relief. But there was always a high suspense, which went on increasing, over whether Israel would continue to heed US and allied pleas not to strike back, or was it being goaded beyond endurance? If Israel took a step to retaliate the Iraqi missile attack, could the US hold the anti-Iraqi coalition together, or might some of its Arab members leave? How much longer would Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, despite relentless aerial battering for days, remain capable of unleashing his long - dreaded chemical and bacteriological weapons? How bloody would the eventual land war, when started, prove to be?²³ There were some of the doubts and opinions aired by

²² McCormick, f.n.6, p.527.

²³ George J. Church, "So Far so Good", Time, 28 January, 1991, p.13.

American public in the very first few days of the air attack by the allied forces. Initial Iraqi resistance was so weak that US air force officials felt that it was as if there was no adversary. Americans were so overwhelmed by the first few days' air strikes that the President George Bush felt compelled to issue a warning against public euphoria. The President made it clear that there would be losses and obstacles along the way as the war proceeded.

Among those Americans who supported the President's actions - a solid majority, according to most polls - there was little gloating or shiny jingoism. However, there were exceptions, and people really acted in a jingoistic fashion. Meanwhile, "opponents took to the streets by the thousands, bearing signs splashed with anger: No bodies for barrels and kinder, gentler war and there is no boot camp for widows. But by and large, even word of the first night's victories was greeted by a graceful restraint and deep sensitivity to the suspense felt by families of soldiers. Until it was over, there would be no celebrations."²⁴ A week after the war began there was a suspense that Iraq would unleash terrorism on a large scale in Europe and the United States, could the reservoirs be poisoned? Disney world, the Alaska pipeline and the New York Stock Exchange - all those places were suspected to be potential targets of Iraqi terrorism.

²⁴ Nancy Gibbs, "A First Thick Shock of War", Time, 28 January, 1991, p.24.

Each succeeding day threw new light on behaviour of Americans during extraordinary events. Many Americans sought refuge and peace of mind in religion. "last week produced a surprising portrait of the nation's faith, a tableau of people praying hard, slipping into chapels for special services during lunch breaks, joining candlelight vigils, seeking moral certainty. On Monday night in Washington, 6000 people gathered inside the cavernous National Cathedral, sitting on the floor and packing the aisles under the vaulting stone buttresses. After service many worshipers lighted candles and marched silently through the streets of the capital. The vigil..., and ended in front of the White House."²⁵ Jewish congregation around the country began a day long fast. Demonstrations in Boston poured red paint on the snow, chanting , "No blood for oil." George Bush effigies were burnt. While, thousands chanted through the streets of San Francisco's supervisors declared the city a sanctuary for those who chose not to participate in the war.²⁶

Polls showed that 4 out of 5 Americans approved of Bush's handling of the crisis. Many who had opposed the war found their attitude shifting once it had begun, particularly after Israel was attacked by Iraqi Scuds. "Images of the past encounters in the Middle East - of helicopters flaming in the Iranian desert in 1980, of a smoldering marine barracks in 1983 - left many wondering if any involvement in that explosive corner of the world always meant disaster."²⁷ Soon

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid. p.25.

the mood of those who opposed the war changed as the news media projected the combat as victory all the way for allied forces. For all the ambivalence, anger and fear, the first week of the combat assured that the American military might was still unchallenged and worthy of praise.

Though, a few broadcasters from various countries managed to air telephone reports from Baghdad during the bombing, only CNN was able to keep its lines open and report live throughout the first military attack, underlining its credibility and worldwide clout with new forces. From Baghdad, correspondent Peter Arnett and reporter John Holliman provided universal eyewitness accounts of the start of war as listeners around the world hung on their every word. Arnett, a veteran of Vietnam and Lebanon combat coverage, provided a consistently cool assessment. This extraordinary coverage of oil attack was possible only because CNN was able to use phone access that the Iraqis had denied other news organizations. It was only CNN which got preferential treatment from Baghdad. The three other major US news networks were denied such accesses. But then, if CNN was successful in its bid to have access to Baghdad's facilities it was simply because of its months of advance planning and shrewd lobbying. CNN became the only news organization to win the Iraqi government's permission to use a "four-wire", a highly reliable two way overseas telephone connection that required no operators or switching connections and could work even when local power lines were cut.²⁸ During the Gulf Crisis, CNN was relied

²⁸ Susan Tifft, "Far Ahead of the Pack", *Time*, 28 January, 1991, p.35.

upon by Middle East leaders, as well as officials in Washington and other capitals, as a sort of instant 24- hour information service. CNN's audience was by far the highest in its history : 10.8 million US households were hooked to this channel, where as its worldwide viewership was an estimated 60 million households.²⁹

The Pentagon and the Bush Administration had come close to achieving their goal of forcing journalists and the public to rely solely on the information supplied by briefer or gathered in 'pool' interviews in the field. Doing away with independent reporting has been the Pentagon's goal ever since Vietnam. The military had set up a system of media 'pools' to cover the initial stages of the operation, controlling reporters', movements and their access to sources. The system worked well from the Pentagon's point of view, but for news media it was a major blow to its independence and coverage of events without third party interference. The news items of honest truth have died of manipulation and censorship. The volume of real information about the conduct of the war was small. The public did not know how effective the allied strikes against Iraq had been, for example, or how heavy the civilian casualties were.

The public knowledge of the war was based on a few films of a missile striking a building where it was completely precise, and they said, 'its going so well, why isn't the war over? But it was evident from people's reaction to the war that their

²⁹ Ibid.

mood swung between unrealistic expectations of victory in a matter of days and an anxious skepticism about whether the US was going to win the war at all. This video-game war seemed so successful that people really believed it. But there were people who knew that war extended beyond media projection of precision strikes by American missiles.

As the war progressed public opinion turned harsh on Iraq and its leadership. In a poll published in *Time*, February 4, 1991 the following trend of public opinion was revealed.³⁰

Q.1. Which if any of these should be major goals in the war against Iraq?

	YES	NO
- Forcing Iraq to leave Kuwait	93%	5%
- Destroying Iraq's nuclear and chemical weapons capabilities	90%	7%
- The unconditional surrender of Iraq	72%	22%
- Removing Saddam from power	92%	6%
- Killing Saddam	41%	49%

Q.2. How much longer do you think the war against Iraq will last?

- Less than 2 Weeks	1%
- 2 to 4 weeks	4%
- 1 to 3 months	24%
- 4 to 6 months	25%

³⁰ George J. Church, "A Long siege Ahead", *Time*, 4 February, 1991, pp.19-20.

- 6 months to a year 22%
- More than a year 12%

Source: From a telephone poll of 1000 American adults taken for Time/CNN on January 24, 1994 by Yankelovich Clancy Shulman.

CRITICS AND THEIR ROLE:

The United States being home to almost every race in the world, the public opinion was bound to reflect the backgrounds and the origins of the diverse American population. For Americans of Arab descent who are diverse and often denied, the out break of war had brought despair, anger, threats of attack, charges of disloyalty and fears for families still living in the line of fire. The Arab - American community, not surprisingly, mirrors the Middle East, with opinion about the war breaking along the battle lines: those with roots in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia largely supported the effort, while those with ties to Iraq, Jordan and Syria were most adamantly opposed to the war. There were many Arab-Americans who levelled the charge against the United States for employing a double standard, enforcing the UN sanctions against Iraq, while failing to press Israel to address the Palestinian problem.³¹ The problem of which country to side with was faced by some 250000 Iraqi-Americans living in the US, along with 2.2 million other Americans of Arab descent. They also faced charges of bigotry and similar other charges. In the months after Iraq attacked Kuwait, stores and

³¹ Nancy Gibbs, "Walking a Tightrope", Time, 4 February, 1991, p.38.

restaurants owned by Arab-Americans in Los Angeles and Detroit were set afire. Many Arab-American leaders received death threats.

While it came to African Americans supporting the war, things were rather dismal. They had a special stake in operation 'desert storm': they make up 12% of the US population, but represented 25% of the American fighting forces in the Persian Gulf. And when ground confrontation started disproportionate amount of African Americans were to be killed, some feared. That led to uneasiness among those blacks who felt their friends and loved ones (those who were black) were asked to do more than their fair share of dying for a nation that denies them less than there due share of economic and social opportunities.

In a poll conducted by Time/CNN the stark realities of African American genuine grievances about war came to light. The poll results are as follows.³²

Q.1. Do you think the US was right to have involved in this conflict with Iraq?

	Right	Wrong
- Whites	77%	16%
- Blacks	49%	39%

Q.2. Do you have a family member who is in the military forces stationed in the Middle East:

³² Julie Johnson, "Blacks: Too Much of the Burden ?", Time, 4 February, p.39.

	Blacks	Whites
Yes	43%	18%

This poll revealed that compared to the Whites less percentage of Blacks supported American involvement in Iraq and also compared to the White Blacks had their family members two and a half times more than the Whites stationed in the Middle East. The Pentagon officials denied that the military was exploiting the blacks and insisted that the disproportionate number of blacks sent to the Middle East were a result of random selection. The officials also pointed out that the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powel whose rise to the top position in the military hierarchy stood as a striking illustration of the career prospects blacks have in the army with no discrimination of any sort.

Powel's rise to the top position was no doubt, a matter of pride for all blacks in America, but that did not deter them from opposing the Dessert Storm. Rep. Maxine Waters of California warned black soldiers that they may return to a country where the President is unwilling to "take some affirmative steps to make sure you have a job or an education."³³ Maxine Waters was one of the majority of black Democrats in Congress in voting against the January 12 resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq. Black leaders leading the antiwar campaign argued that young African Americans were compelled to join military for there existed no good jobs for blacks in the civilian sector. The blacks also saw an irony in President Bush's effort to defend Kuwait from Iraq because the

³³ Ibid.

same President had vetoed civil rights bill in 1990. The African American nurtured ambivalent notion about military service ever since their enthusiastic participation in the revolutionary war fought for their independence thinking their patriotic fervour would prove them worthy of freedom and citizenship. In this country the blacks were supportive of both the world wars. Their discontent was publicly displayed during the Vietnam war, when Martin Luther king Jr. and his supporters rejected an unfair draft that conscripted the disadvantaged while allowing many youths of middle class to escape military service. Those divided loyalties continue till date.

One common complaint of both the whites and blacks who opposed war was that Washington did not explore other options, and sanctions were not given more time. Stories of incubators stolen from Kuwait, leaving babies to die, solidified support for initial US military build up. Stories of mass rape and degradation in Kuwait only justified the launching of the air war. Stories of mass execution were seen to compel the onset of ground war. These atrocities did occur, but sometimes exaggerated. Some may not have occurred.³⁴

The war time execution of Iraqi soldiers accused of rape or theft jarred with accusations that Saddam Hussein was personally responsible. The Gulf oil spill caused in part by coalition attack, in part by Iraqi intent to deter assault, proved

³⁴ Carl Gustav Jacobson, "The Gulf: Washington's War, Moscow's War", Bulletin of Peace Proposals, Vol. 22, no.3, 1991, pp.250-251.

one-tenth as large as originally claimed. Subsequently the Western TV reports showed that the incubators had not been taken.³⁵

If media gave false reports, the media in turn received false account of war by the military personnel. Daniel Hallin in an article published in 'The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists' described fine interconnected images which dominated television coverage of the Gulf War³⁶. technology, experts, the fighting men and women, the enemy and the flag. The most powerful images of the Gulf War were of triumphant technology smart bomb videos, tanks rolling across the desert, cruise missiles flaming into the sky in a graceful arc. Those pictures were really compelling. Many of the pictures were taken aboard air force bombers. Network coverage of the Gulf War glorified "clean" high-tech weapons, brave fighting men and women and the flag. Network policies limited the use of the most graphic footage, particularly of American casualties.

MILITARY PERFORMING MEDIA'S ROLE:

The military control of the media in the Gulf, until the last days of the war when the 'pool' arrangement broke down, small numbers of reporters were shepherded around under carefully controlled conditions. The military managed the media much as a modern presidential campaign does, releasing carefully controlled doses of information, setting up carefully planned photo opportunities, and

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Daniel Hallin, "TV's Clean Little War", The Bulletin of American Scientists, vol. 117, no.4, May 1991, p.17.

minimizing reporter's access to any other source of information.³⁷ There was an important connection between the images of the fighting men and women and technology. The troops took pride in their mastery of technology, and their skill was important theme in news coverage. Mastering technology generally means accepting its logic, and the soldiers were perfect at that in media coverage.

For television, the flag is as sacred as the fighting men and women during a war, because around the flag people's nationalistic sentiments are attached, it is close to everyone's heart. The patriotism stories were often found at the end of the news and treated with a heavy dose of symbolic visuals. The flag provided an upbeat closing to the war news.

Coalition forces undertook thousands of aircraft sorties and missile strikes in the first few days of the war, and a select number of successful laser-guided bomb strikes were portrayed daily back home on the news. American technical prowess was graphically displayed. These images created the impression that the war was a bloodless, push-button battle in which only military targets were destroyed. Pentagon officials stressed in daily briefings that coalition war planners were taking extreme pains to minimize "collateral damage", that is, harm to civilians in Iraq and Kuwait, particularly in cities.³⁸

³⁷ Ibid. p.18.

³⁸ Paul F. Walker & Eric Stambler, "And the Dirty Little War", The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, vol. 47, no.4, May 1991, p.21.

Many sites hit by coalition forces had civilian functions and were located in the civilian populated areas - electrical power plants and grids, communication facilities, air defense and missile sites, airports and runways, military and political command centres - making it difficult, if not impossible, to preclude non-combatant casualties. Those were the areas where the US had resorted to "surgical" bombing. The US never provided target lists and casualty suffered.³⁹

Yet, it is clear from the post-war damage assessments the destruction went far beyond military facilities and personnel. But the news media heavily downplayed this aspect. A UN damage assessment team in its report issued in March, 1991, described damage to Iraq's infrastructure as "near apocalyptic" which had relegated the country to a "pre-industrial age". The team gave a figure of 9,000 homes destroyed and 72,000 Iraqis rendered homeless.⁴⁰

The Gulf War was a war of carefully constructed words, as much as it was a war of high-tech weapons. The press briefings gave the impression that the allied forces were trying hard to maintain a high moral ground. The military command made it appear that they were reasonably scrupulous in selecting and attacking targets to minimize harm of civilians.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p.22.

CONCLUSION

Developments occurring anywhere in the Middle East that have a bearing on the demand or supply of oil, whether political or economic in nature, affect the overall balance of the relationship between the US and the countries of the Middle East. When a serious disequilibrium occurs, the effects are felt globally, and even more so in the case of the US which imports 50% of its total oil supplies. The most obvious economic reason for the "Gulf War" has been oil. America was also fearful of a possibility of Iraq attacking Saudi Arabia which is an important partner of the US in trade and strategic relationship. Therefore, the US was all prepared to protect Saudi Arabia by sending a strong military force there. At the time of Gulf War dollar was facing pressure in the international market and the real price of oil had declined especially with the renewed decline of the dollar on which oil is priced. But one of the immediate reasons for going to war was economic in nature, or at least its political consequences at home. The timing, however, of the American response abroad also was immediately related to economic needs and political dissension at home.

The geopolitical reasoning of the US energy policy in the context of Gulf region after the Gulf war is not different from what it was before. America's continuing

support to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait whose oil policies are dedicated to perpetuating moderate prices over the long term has been the centre-piece of the US strategy .

Analysts claim that it is a policy that seeks to protect Western supplies of Gulf oil by committing the United States to the defense of the region from external and internal threats. Possible external threats are Russia, Iran and Iraq. Any development in the region would have a crucial impact on the issues ranging from most vital issue of oil to Arab-Israel relations.

The American dependence and that of its allies on oil grew rapidly following World War II mainly because oil was cheap, relatively abundant, easily accessible, and reliable. Their (the US and its allies) economies were geared to it.

In August 1990, when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's troops captured Kuwait, Washington considered it yet another case of strategic and economic loss to the United States . The outraged reaction by American policy makers was based on the concerns that the US could not afford to let Saddam Hussein control the Kuwait oil wells and oil resources that constitute 10% of the world total. President George Bush was not prepared to tolerate Saddam threatening the existing political order of a region that holds 65% of the world proven oil

reserves. Under such circumstances the US had to move in to enhance its presence in the region for protection and promotion of American vital interests.

The Bush administration argued that the crisis was a “defining moment”, and that it was a political test of the embryonic post-Cold War world order. In the administration’s views, Saudi Arabia could well be the next target of Saddam, a fear incidentally shared by the Saudi rulers themselves. Hence, “aggression” by Iraq had to be resisted and reversed. Accordingly, the US made a major commitment of its power and secured strong international support for its demand that Iraq withdraw unconditionally and immediately. The Iraqi invasion and the subsequent American intervention demonstrated that features of the Cold War persisted, even in the absence of Soviet-American rivalry. It opened up the possibilities, other “dangerous people abroad”, who had the power to jeopardize the US interests. The “Gulf Crisis”, also illustrated the task of constructing a new post-Cold War world order. Thus, the US vision made it possible to assemble an international coalition to oppose Saddam, and provide the UN a prominent role in the crisis. Most importantly, the new found friendship of convenience between Washington and Moscow, allowed the US to undertake large scale military operations in the Middle East, without the fear of any escalation of the conflict, which in turn gave the US enormous military advantage.

However, it may be noteworthy that the American response to the “Gulf Crisis” may not be the same to conflicts in other regions. As experts pointed out,

America was less likely to dispatch forces abroad in the post-Cold War era since deterrence of the Soviet Union has ceased to be the "all consuming international concern of the United State." The difference was less sharply defined" but perpetuating American commitment in the new world order was the best way to counter balance any new threats. Hence, the Gulf War, was an exceptional event in the analysis of US security concerns and threat perceptions.

While there are diverse opinions in the US regarding the nature of American response to the crisis, there is virtual unanimity on the goal of ensuring safe and uninterrupted flow of oil to the US. Influential opinion in the US strongly argued that "the liberation of Kuwait is the international community's responsibility". The truly vital American interest in the Kuwait crisis is to ensure that the Gulf is the secure and stable source for the industrialised West of reasonably priced oil.

With the oil output of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries showing a downward trend, the Gulf became more and more important for the West. Therefore, the stability and survival of annexation of Kuwait, Iraq would have controlled about 40% of the known oil resources of the Middle East. It amounted to increasing Western dependency and vulnerability to oil under Saddam's control. The American intelligence gave the estimate of the crisis very precisely that Saddam if allowed to seize the Kuwaiti oil resources, it would become powerful, intimidating force inside the

OPEC which will lead to hike in oil prices, inflation, and possibly throwing the United States into recession and unmanageable fiscal difficulty.

With such powerful sentiments being expressed within the US, it was perhaps inevitable that the American policy makers heightened their responses in challenging rhetoric and action. The American response to the crisis raised some fundamental questions about the objectives, interest and control of the US over the region.

The collapse of the Soviet Union as a power had also a profound impact on the US role in the international system as a whole and Middle East in particular. In 1990-91 the Middle East became the site of the first significant manifestation of Washington's bid for unchallenged world hegemony when President Bush assembled a formidable international coalition, joined by the erstwhile Soviet Union to punish Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait. Bush's policy to intervene in the Gulf for liberating Kuwait was pursued with all efforts. However, the President faced problems with the Congress opposing his moves to commit the US troops to Saudi Arabia in the name of its protection, but in reality to use them for offensive purposes against Iraq.

On the question of war the Congress remained divided. The Democrats were opposed to the war, but as the deadline drew near their support to the President's commitment to the protection to Saudi Arabia and reinstallation of

the legitimate government in Kuwait became evident. In fact, the hesitation of the Congress to a large extent, echoed the ambivalence of the American public. Most polls showed that a majority of Americans supported the US goal of expelling Iraq from Kuwait.

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