

MEDIATION IN IRAN – IRAQ WAR :
The Role of Select International Organizations.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled "Mediation in Iran-Iraq War : The Role of Select International Organisations" submitted by Syed Alauddin Ashraf in fulfilment of six credits out of the total requirements of twenty-four credits for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) of this University, is his original work and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or of any other university.

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C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
Preface	i - ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Chapter I Introduction	1 - 18
Chapter II The United Nations Mediation in Iran-Iraq War	19 - 39
Chapter III The Non-Aligned Movements Mediation	40 - 53
Chapter IV The Organisation of Islamic Conference's Mediation	54 - 66
Chapter V The Gulf Cooperation Council's Mediation	67 - 80
Chapter VI Conclusion	81 - 88
Bibliography	89 - 97

PREFACE

Mediation in the Iran-Iraq war was a highly sensitive process in peace making. Various mediation efforts by some international organisations need a careful scrutiny. The analysis of facts and various peace proposals is as challenging a task as it is absorbing. Mediation in all cases was very slow and tedious. Most efforts and proposals dashed by the extremely rigid positions and intransigent attitudes adopted by both the belligerents.

The second chapter of the dissertation deals with the mediation efforts made by the United Nations. The various resolutions passed by the security council, their contacts, their non-implementation have been critically examined. The resolution 598 (July 1987) of the Security Council which was eventually accepted by Iran as well as Iraq, has been carefully analysed.

The third chapter discusses the mediation efforts of the Non-Aligned Movement in the Iran-Iraq war. The NAM stand on the war and prospects of peace has been examined.

The fourth chapter, discusses the failure of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in bringing the Iran-Iraq war to a halt. This organisation failed to act in conformity with the Islamic principles. Besides, the organisations had some serious constraints within itself.

The fifth chapter examines the Gulf-Cooperation Council's half-hearted attempts to mediate in the Iran-Iraq war and its failure to achieve the goal. It's 'suspected neutrality' in the war, has also been examined carefully which cast a gloom on its mediation efforts.

The concluding chapter summarizes the major findings of the study and carries a few suggestions for success of mediation efforts in future.

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At various stages of preparation, this work was subjected to intellectual scrutiny of my teacher, Prof. A.H.H. Abidi. Of course, for his affection I have yet to find words to express my gratitude.

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The term mediation is derived from the latin word medius which means middle. It refers to the process of stepping in between disputing parties in order to settle their disputes. It is resorted to when direct communication between the two states break down. The prupose of mediation is to restore and improve communication between the disputing parties. To accomplish the cessation of hostilities that has already begun, the mediation of third state or states or individual is considered the best way.

The Hague convention for Pacific settlement of International Disputes (1899) says that a state which is stranger to a dispute may offer good offices or mediation and that the exercise of this right must notbe regarded as an unfriendly act (Art. 3). It is advisory in character and does not have any binding force.

United Nations Articles 34 and 35 of the Charter also provide for collective mediation on the part of the United Nations wherever there is a conflictual situation which might lead to international friction.¹

Encyclopaedia Britannica defines mediation as the intervention of a third power, on the invitation or with the consent of two conflicting parties for the purpose of

1. M.P. Tandon & R. Tandon, "Settlement of Disputes" Public International Law, Allahabad Law Agency, Allahabad, 1983, pp. 534-535.

settling their differences before an appeal to arms or after war has broken out.¹ It is to be noted that in either case the mediator negotiates, on behalf of the parties who invoke or accept its aid. Unlike an arbitrator, a mediator limits his intervention to suggestion and advice. His action is liable to be arrested at any time at the will of either party. But, after bilateral consent, if one party suspends the process prematurely it would be considered breach of good faith.²

A mediator offers not only his 'good offices' but also specific suggestions for possible forms of settlement of a conflict. In fact, mediation is a function of suggesting assorted solutions and this quality differentiates it from 'good offices' where the third party endeavours to bring the disputants together, leaving it to themselves to find solution to their conflict. Frequently, action undertaken as good offices develops into mediation.³

In bringing the disputant states to agreement on a particular solution, mediators do not have the same legal force that is enjoyed by arbitrators. To be successful, the mediators find eventually acceptable solution to the

1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Mediation, vol. 15, Encyclopaedia Britannica Ltd., London, 1950, p. 173.
2. ibid.
3. Naomi Schwiesow (ed.), 'Mediation', The International Regulations of Frontier Disputes, The Comelot Press, London, 1970, p. 114.

disputing parties. Their intervention remains more lasting than the decisions of the arbitrators.

While mediators have no legal force to compel acceptance of their recommendations they either by dint of their position or through appeals for support or merely by reason of great urgency of prompt settlement muster behind them the force of public opinion. This brings to bear strong pressure for the acceptance of mediator's recommendations. But, essentially, a mediator can not decide a dispute. He can only try to get the parties to agree.

Mediation also differs from conciliation in scope. Conciliation requires a third party to become involved in the substance of the dispute only to a limited degree. A Conciliator's main concern is to help the parties to reach a mutually acceptable settlement of their dispute by themselves. The conciliator, thus, stops short of making substantive proposals. When conciliation proves insufficient mediation is resorted. As compared to a conciliator, the mediator goes beyond formulation of constructive proposals to be put to the contending parties. He may offer a set of proposals around which the disputants can bargain. His effort can persist in spite of set-backs and be renewed if a tentative compromise collapses.

To make mediation effective and successful, the mediator must have full confidence of the disputants without special interest of its own to advance. For instance,

the United Nations succeeded in bringing about peace between Iran and Iraq only when Iran's confidence was restored in the United Nations as the mediator in 1987. That occurred when it assured that the aggressor in the impending war would be identified in consonance with provisions under Article I of the UN Charter.

The role of a mediator is to synthesize the conflicting interest of the warring parties. To achieve this, not only fact is necessary but also a formula. The formula must make use of the common interest of the opposing sides. The common interest might be termination of the war. The success of mediation depends on the willingness of the disputants to relinquish their extreme demands or positions and accept via third party mediation some sort of a compromise formula. In case of the Iran-Iraq war, the belligerents, having failed in crushing each other even after fighting eight years of destructive war, eventually relinquished their extreme positions and accepted third party mediation to solve their dispute peacefully.

The parties to a dispute should agree to put forward their positions to each other and begin to discuss alternatives for resolving the differences. This process often involves a movement leading to compromise through step-by-step concessions. In case of the Iran-Iraq war, the belligerents put forth their extreme conditions - Iraqi claim on the whole of Shatt-al-Arab and Iranian insistence on the recognition of Algiers Treaty of 1975. Such a posture

prolonged the war till they relaxed their extreme positions and allowed one mediator (the United Nations) to offer alternatives to resolve the differences through peaceful means.

A mediator must be strong and influential at least with respect to the disputing parties. It must have sufficient authority so that his work will carry weight. Mediator must be fully impartial in order to be acceptable to both parties. At the same time, he may need some special knowledge of, or involvement in, the questions at issue, in order to be effective.¹

It is interesting that a weak state may seek mediation by a third party in order to strengthen its position in a dispute.² Conversely, a strong state may call for mediation as a means of legitimising its claim or gains against a weak state. But where disparity of power between conflicting states is great, the strong state may believe that it can win its claim by overwhelming pressure on a weaker state, and it may find little reason to agree to mediation. It should be noted that Iraq, even controlling some border towns of Iran, was encouraging mediation only to legitimise its claim over Iranian territory - Iran on its part discouraged mediation by boycotting many conferences in order to save itself from Iraqi diplomatic pressure.

1. Naomi Schwiesow (ed.) 'Mediation, The International Regulation of Frontier Disputes, The Comlot Bress, London, 1970, p. 114.

2. *ibid*

A mediatory body or mediator should have the capacity not only to offer a wider range of options, but also to influence a party's valuation curve before it reaches the point of cut off.¹ It can help to provide him with the object he seeks. It can make available additional resources so that party may postpone his point of cut off, or it can try to deny a party fresh resources so that the point of cut off is brought nearer.

In the performance of his functions, mediator must exercise great patience and perseverance. He must be able to sense possibilities for compromise and exercise rare tact and timing in putting forth suggestions. Hence, a mediator must restrain himself and even his proposals must often be presented in such a way that the parties should think that they have originated them. The United Nations Secretary-General, played a very important role in the Iran-Iraq war. He utilised all the opportunities to propose his suggestions for peace before the belligerents. By assuring Iran for the identification of the aggressor, in conformity with the Art. I of the United Nations Charter, he projected the peace formula as seemingly in line with the Iranian condition.

Mediation needs compatibility of goals.² The parties

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1. Frank, Edmead., Analysis and Prediction in International Mediation, The City University, UNITAR, London, 1971.
 2. Arthur, Lall, "Change Agents and the Process of International Negotiation and Mediation", Mediation, Negotiation and Peacekeeping Workshop, SIS, JNU, New Delhi, 1980.

to the international dispute must arrive at compatible goals. It does not mean a hundred per cent agreement on goals but broad agreement on certain closely parallel directions of policy upto a level. Else it might mean that a common objective has been identified. In the mediation process related to Iran-Iraq war, both the belligerents took a long time to reach at the goal compatibility - the halt to war and recourse to solution by peaceful means.

In fact, external influence creates a new situation between the disputant states. The international bodies in their norm creating generally create fresh situations in which negotiations seemingly unfeasible, move into the realm of practicality. Thus, resolution of conflict is considerably facilitated by contemporary international environment. The general relaxation in tension and a spirit of compromise created an embracing international environment which facilitated ceasefire in the Iran-Iraq war. It was applicable to other conflictual situations as well. The major powers of the world by being 'neutral' in the Iran-Iraq war and by not finally selling arms directly to either of belligerent pressurised them to accept the peace formula through ongoing mediation.

Mediation involves a sequence of phases through which a conflict is resolved in different stages one by

one. The mediators follow this logic even though they are not conscious of doing so.¹ They are propelled forward by an inherent development of mediatory process. In case of the Iran-Iraq war, the United Nations began its mediation efforts through its resolution 479(1980) which did not even use the customary term 'ceasefire'. But in its subsequent resolutions 514, 522 (1982) and 540(1983) it gradually called for ceasefire and troops withdrawal to the internationally recognised boundary in accordance with the provisions of the Algiers Treaty of 1975. In its next phase, in resolution 586 (1986) it condemned the initiation and continuation of the war. In its final phase, the United Nations assured Iran on the identification of the aggressor in consonance with international law.

This phasewise progress in mediation process begins when international community starts expressing concern over the situation created by a conflict. It is a tentative and low-keyed stage but it is of great importance because attention is drawn to the developing crisis. Certain bodies or peace committees are created as it was done to mediate in the Iran-Iraq war in order to try to find out some grounds acceptable to the belligerents.

In the 'second thought' stage, the principles evolved are refined. In the midst of conflicting claims put forward by the disputant parties some new principles are searched

1. *ibid.*

for an acceptable peace formula. When these conditions become acceptable to the warring parties, efforts are made to apply them to the facts of the case. Next, new relationship and new structure are developed for giving a practical shape to ideals. The disputants are expected to respond favourably to the new pattern.

The course of negotiations is constantly assessed. The mediating international bodies ask the disputants to report progress in negotiations and keep them informed of the developments. The mediator should evaluate and communicate the effects of position changes by the parties on the overall package. For this, mediator should have an implicit flow of information which keeps track of the main hierarchies. Mediators communicate with governments or specialised agencies and even sometimes they appoint their representatives to mediate.

Limitations of Mediation

Mediation suffers from certain shortcomings in resolution of international disputes. Generally, there is a tendency on the part of the disputing states to derive more substantial benefit from keeping the dispute under their control rather than delegating any part of this control to a mediator. They offer continuous public justification of their position in a given dispute and believe on their own efforts rather than call for aid from some mediating agent. For instance, Iran and Iraq resorted to

this very strategy. They were not willing to accept the mediator's views on the dispute. They used the mediating organisations to justify their own position on war and sought to build world public opinion in their own favour.

Past decades underline the point that mediation has had limited power in resolving various disputes. It succeeded when it was combined with other agencies and external pressure especially when the basis for a settlement is dictated by adverse military situation. That happened with Iran in the last phase of the Iran-Iraq war. Some factors led to revision of hopes and expectations of the belligerents and, therefore, mediation met with success.

Though mediator may have necessary requisites such as intelligence, practical experience of international affairs, diplomatic skill and tact together with intimate knowledge of disputes but these are not enough.

In the present international scenario when society is highly complex, a mediator should also have some knowledge of the social structures of the disputing states in order to understand better, the kind of internal pressures which lie behind a government's demands and objectives in a dispute in which it is involved. In the Iran-Iraq war, the belligerents represented two different socio-political forces. In Iran it was Islam while in Iraq it was Baathist Socialism. To synthesise the conflicting interests of these distinct forces, it is essential to know the structure upon which they are based.

A mediator should also have understanding of psychological forces which determine the manner in which parties to disputes perceive their mutual relations. That was evident in the Iran-Iraq conflict. Here, religion and emotions played a vital role in hampering the mediation efforts. It particularly happened when Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of Islamic revolution in Iran, referred to the Surah (Chapter) Al-Hujurat of the holy Koran to rationalise and justify his demand for identification and punishment of the aggressor.

The United Nations charter provides that a state which refuses mediation should be punished by some sanctions with the consent of the international community. The United Nations Security Council in 1987 tried to consider this provision against a party to the war for its possible denial to comply with its resolution, but the council was stopped from doing so by the Soviet Union and China. Thus, the provision of sanction was proved to be insufficient. It was not credible and it could not be implemented due to horse trading by the veto wielding powers.

The United Nations as a mediating agency has played a vital role in mediating the peace making in a number of international conflicts or wars. These include the Indo-Pak dispute over Kashmir, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Korean war, the Suez, Libanese and Congo crises. The Cyprus question, Afghanistan imbroglio and Namibian independence.

In the proposed study, the mediation efforts made by some important international organisations such as the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the Gulf Cooperation Council to bring about peace in the protracted Iran-Iraq war are proposed to be analysed.

The boundaries between Iran and Iraq are the legacies of the colonial era where decisions concerning delimitation of frontier were taken by colonial powers without taking into confidence the two concerned states or people. This gave rise to discontentment and dissatisfaction because it ignored or underplayed the ethnic, social and political realities of the region. In fact, the imposed settlement contained germs of mutual distrust, manipulations and interference. This endangered the regional and international peace and tranquility.¹ Because of regime congruity between Iran and Iraq bilateral relations between these states were by and large harmonious.

However the relations between them were disturbed since July 1958. They were again normalised with the conclusion of the Algiers Agreement of 1975. It was a comprehensive agreement for long term peace. The border mutually agreed was as demarcated under the Constantinople Protocol of 1913 and the minutes of the Border Demarcation

1. R.C. Sharma, 'An Overview', Perspective on Iran-Iraq Conflict, Rajesh Pub., New Delhi, 1984, p. 7.

Commissions' session of 1914. The boundary in the Shatt-al-Arab was demarcated in accordance with the Thalweg line. They also pledged to respect territorial integrity, sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of each other.¹

With the overthrow of Shah's regime in Iran, the relations between Iran and Iraq started deteriorating fast. Iraqi leadership viewed Khomeini's achievement of power both as a threat and opportunity. The threat was that it encouraged Iraq's millions of Shiites who constituted a majority in that country's population, to turn against the Baathist regime. Iraqi government was socialist and secular and it felt itself vulnerable as the revolutionary forces of Islam spread from Iran. Iraq feared that Khomeini who had mobilised millions of Iranian Shiites against the Shah would also stir up Iraq's Shiites masses many of whom were deprived of political participation.²

Iraq was also facing the problem of Kurds who since long sought greater autonomy. In 1975, it had succeeded in crushing Kurdish revolt with the cooperation of Iran under the Shah. With Khomeini in power, there were reports of Iranian arms reaching the Kurds. President Saddam Hussein announced in July 1979 that he had foiled an attempted coup

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1. Sreedhar, The Gulf : Scramble for Security, ABC Pub., New Delhi, 1983, pp. 153-154.
 2. Murray Gordon., "War in the Gulf : The Iran-Iraq Conflict", Conflict in the Persian Gulf, The Macmillan Press, London, 1981, p. 152.

and that twenty-one officials, including prominent political and trade union leaders, at least four of whom were Shiites, were executed.¹

The revolutionary government of Iran rejected the former policy of the Shah of depending on the West, especially the United States, sustaining the regimes, the territorial integrity, and political, independence of Iran, identification of the Soviet Union as the main source of threat, and friendship with pro-western and anti-Soviet states.²

Revolutionary Iran pursued the policy of 'Strict neutrality' under the slogan 'Neither East nor west', identification of the United States of America as a Great Satan, struggle against Super Powers, close relations with all oppressed people especially those in muslim countries, liberation of Jerusalem, and opposition to pro-Israeli states, anti-imperialism and support for oppressed people.³ The change in policy had a great impact on its relations with the Gulf countries on the one hand and the Super Powers on the other.

The Islamic revolution in Iran was perceived as a threat to Baathist-ideology and to Saddam Hussein personally. The Gulf countries were also much apprehensive as the Iranian revolution was anti-Status quo threatening their traditional

1. *ibid.*, p. 152.

2. R.K. Ramzani, "Khomeini's Islam in Iran's foreign policy," Islam in Foreign Policy (ed.) Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1983, p. 22.

3. *ibid.*, p. 21.

monarchies. Their suspicion was further aggravated by the statement of Ayotillah Khomeini when he said, "We should try hard to export our revolution to the world. We should set aside the thought that we do not export our revolution because Islam does not regard various Islamic countries differently and is the supporter of all oppressed peoples of the world".¹

While reacting to Iranian revolution, the President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, said that the Iranian revolution and any other revolution should be friendly to Arab revolution, and any revolution called itself Islamic should not contradict the Arab revolution otherwise it would not be Islamic at all.²

The spiritual leader of Iran, Ayotallah Khomeini vehemently rejected the contemporary secular international system. He wanted to replace it by Islamic universalism. He conceived it as his sacred duty to vouchsafe Islam to the entire world.

In fact, the Iranian revolution had widespread effect in the external as well as internal fields. Externally, it posed a threat to the existing regimes in the Gulf countries and, internally, it opened the door for foreign interference under the cover of self-determination of national

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1. FBIS, Daily Report, "Middle East and Africa", vol V, no. 58, March 24, 1980.
 - 2- Baghdad Observer, (Baghdad), October 16, 1979.

minorities. Iraq, the next door neighbour, took advantage of this situation, It tried to check the growing influence of the Islamic revolution. The only way it had for this was to open the old border problem with Iran. The revival of border problem was only symptomatic of a much deeper malaise in which two opposing systems and ideologies were at conflict.¹

The Iran-Iraq conflict was the consequence of the Iranian Islamic revolution and the policies of its revolutionaries that isolated Iran and weakened its army.

Iran had built a formidable military might over the years but it lost the lead in military preparedness following the Islamic revolution. The strict adherence to Non-Alignment and refusal to cater into any military alliance was a radical departure from country's traditional policy of reliance on western military pacts. This policy pursued by the revolutionary government made Iran weak militarily and changed the balance of power to Iran's disadvantage.²

The personal animosity between the two ruling elites, led by Ayotallah Khomeini and President Saddam Hussein, widened the existing differences between the two states. Later, it proved to be a hurdle in the way of mediation.

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1. A.H.H. Abidi, "The Iraq-Iran War: A Balance Sheet", (ed) Perspective on Iran-Iraq Conflict (R.C. Sharma), Rajesh Pub, New Delhi, 1984, p. 70.
 2. John Muttam, "Iran-Iraq Conflict", Arms and Insecurity in the Persian Gulf, Radiant Pub., New Delhi, 1984, p. 145.

The conflict between Iran and Iraq is interpreted by Iraq in historical terms. It is given out as Arab nationalism locked in a struggle with Persian nationalism. It is not a sectarian conflict in which Sunnis are fighting Shiites. The basic motive of the Baath-Socialist party is one Arab nation with an eternal mission. It says that Arabs have always constituted a single nation despite the territorial divisions.

In September 1980, Iraq unilaterally abrogated the Algiers Treaty (1975) which was concluded between Vice-President Saddam Hussein and the Shah of Iran. The Iraqi deputy Prime Minister, Taha Yasin Ramdan, stressed that Iraqi's ultimate aim was to force to recognise sovereignty over the Shatt-al-Arab waterway and redefinition of the border in the Musian area.¹ He also stressed the Iraqi demand that three islands at the mouth of Persian Gulf (Greater Tumb, Lesser Tumb and Abu Musa) seized by the Shah of Iran in 1971 should be returned to their Arab maters.

Iran was not ready for redefinition of its border with Iraq particularly on the Shatt-al-Arab waterway. It wanted an agreement of peace with Iraq on the basis of Algiers Treaty of 1975 which could have ensured its territorial integrity. Starting with isolated border skirmishes in May-June 1979, the tension speedily developed into an

1. Murray Gordan., "War in the Gulf: The Iran-Iraq Conflict", Conflict in the Persian Gulf, The Macmillian Press, London, 1981, p. 157.

all out conflagration in September. Obviously, diplomatic and political means were spurned by the determination to achieve the objective by military force. Although it needs one to trigger off a war, two are incumbent to make peace. It follows that the former act is easy, latter is a tedious and complicated process.

The outbreak of Iran-Iraq war on 22nd September, 1980 posed a threat to regional as well as international peace and stability. On 23 September, the President of the United Nations Security Council, Taieb Salim knowing his duty to establish international peace, appealed to Iran and Iraq to settle their dispute peacefully.¹ The Security Council asked the Secretary-General, Dr. Kurt Waldheim to mediate in the war by using his good office.

To bring a peaceful end to the war and the settlement of the dispute through negotiation between Iran and Iraq, the Security Council adopted a resolution 479 in September 1980 which called Iran and Iraq to refrain from any further use of force and to settle their dispute by peaceful means and in accordance with the principles of justice and international law.

The resolution did not use the customary term 'cease-fire.' It did not call for the withdrawal of the Iraqi troops to the internationally recognised border. It did not distinguish between the aggressor and the victim.

The non-identification of aggressor complicated the problem and made the implementation of the resolution

1. The appeal was adopted without a vote after more than two hours of consultations. But when the Security Council went into urgent consultation on the conflict, it was resisted by Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

difficult. With the presence of troops of one country in another, it was difficult to restore peace. If peace had been restored, it had to be at the cost of the victim country. On this ground Iran rejected the offer. Iran requested the Security Council to identify the aggressor.

The then President of Iran, Abol Hassan Banisadr, informed the Secretary-General Dr. Kurt Waldheim in October that Iran saw no use in any discussions directly or indirectly so long as the Iraqi troops remained on the soil of Iran.

However, the government of Iraq, in response to the Security-Council resolution, announced a unilateral truce lasting between October 5 and October 8, 1980. But this Iraqi offer did not call for unconditional troops withdrawal from Iranian territory before any ceasefire or negotiation took place.

Iran rejected the offer. The then Iranian Prime Minister, Mohammad Ali Rajai, said "Iran will not negotiate unless its territory is vacated and Iraqi troops withdrawn unconditionally". The presence of Iraqi troops in Iran might have brought political and military pressure on the decisions of Iranian leaders and this could have directly influenced the outcome of any negotiation in favour of Iraq.

In a bid to evolve a general formula acceptable to both warring countries on which a concrete proposal was

supposed to be based, the Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim appointed the former Swedish Prime Minister, Olaf Palme as his special envoy to mediate in the Iran-Iraq war. Olaf Palme was expected to facilitate authoritative communication with and between the two warring countries to bring the war to an end.¹

Olaf Palme, as a mediator, started searching a meeting ground for synthesising the two conflicting interests represented by Iran and Iraq. He tried to convince Iran and Iraq about his role by saying that he was not a mediator nor a negotiator.

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He said his mission was to investigate the possibilities of peace. To get some points for compromise, he had talks with the Iranian President, Abol Hassan Bani Sadr, and the Prime Minister, Mohammad Ali Rajai. The Iranian President said, 'Iran will not accept any solution which would damage Iran's independence and dignity'.² The Iranian formula for peace was the withdrawal of Iraqi forces to internationally recognised boundary in conformity with the 1975 accord at Algiers. But Iraq was not ready to lose the gains of the war and wanted recognition of its claim of sovereignty over the whole of shatt-al Arab

1. The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), November 13, 1980.
2. Radio Tehran Daily Report, March 9, 1981.

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waterway. The acceptance of this claim meant loss of territory for Iran. And so both the warring countries took very rigid stand and neither was ready to give some concessions to the mediator for reaching an agreement while realising the hard-line approach of Iran and Iraq on the peace terms, Olaf Palme said that the main impediment in the way of peace was emotion created by war and historical contradictions between the belligerents.¹ He said the situation was not ripe for a settlement and deep-rooted conflict between the two countries and their firm position on the key issues - Shatt-al Arab - made it difficult to find an early end to the conflict.

In May 1982, he proposed a ceasefire followed by the troops withdrawal to the internationally recognised border and settlement of the territorial dispute by arbitration.

The governments of Iran and Iraq demanded clarification from Palme on the manner of the ceasefire, and the 1975 Algiers treaty between Iran and Iraq and the nature and purpose of the arbitration after the ceasefire. Iran insisted on the withdrawal of troops followed by a ceasefire and the settlement of the border dispute on the basis of the Algiers treaty of 1975 with Thalweg line as

1. UN Report: Palme Retains Confidence in Political Solution, UN Chronicle, vol. XVIII, No. 8, August, 1981, p. 34.

the demarcating boundary in the Shatt-al- Arab, and the identification of the party responsible for initiating the war. Iraq on its part, claimed its right over the whole of Shatt-al Arab waterway and rejected the Algiers treaty of 1975.

The problem of the repudiation of Algiers treaty of 1975 by Iraq appeared to be the main stumbling block in way of mediation.

In July 1982, the Security-Council in order to stop the destructive war, unanimously adopted a resolution (514) which called for the withdrawal of forces to the internationally recognised boundaries and decided to send observers to verify, confirm and supervise the ceasefire and troops withdrawal.¹

To bring a durable peace between the belligerents, the Security Council urged the Secretary-General, Javier Perez De Cuellar, to continue mediation in a coordinated manner and to bring a comprehensive, just and honourable settlement based on respect for non-interference in internal affairs of the state.. The Security Council requested Javier Perez De Cuellar to submit a report related to the arrangements required for the United Nations observers.

1. The Times of India (New Delhi), July 14, 1982.

It further requested him to give a report within three months about the implementation of the resolution.¹

To contain the war between the two warring countries and to ensure international peace, the security council requested all the member states to refrain from such action as sale of arms to either party, which could lead to the escalation of war. It requested them to cooperate with the Security Council actively and not to be mere spectators. The Security Council expected the member states to pressurise Iran and Iraq to seek the solution of their disputes only through a peaceful method and by negotiation.

Iran rejected the resolution. It alleged that the resolution failed to condemn the aggressor and such an attitude was against Article I of the Charter of the United Nations which sanctions action against an aggressor.

The Security Council resolution 514 (July 1982) was adopted on the request of Jordan which was allegedly supporting Iraq in war. Iran questioned the impartiality of the resolution. The Iranian permanent representative at the United Nations, Saeed Rajai Khorassani, questioned the validity of the resolution on the basis of Article 27 of the Charter of the United Nations which says that any member must abstain from voting in any decision concerning

1. Iran-Iraq, "Another War Continues", UN Chronicle, vol. XIX, No. 8, September 1982, pp. 21-22.

the settlement of the dispute to which it is a party.¹ He denounced the votes of Jordan and France in favour of the resolution and termed it as a violation of the charter.

To check the escalation of Iran-Iraq war over the Gulf area and the possible involvement of other powers in the war, the Security Council in October 1982, passed another resolution 522 which called a ceasefire followed by the withdrawal of troops to the international border. It called on other states to refrain from any action which may further escalate the war. It asked them for an active cooperation to facilitate the implementation of the resolution by using their good offices.² An observers team was to be sent to verify, confirm and supervise the ceasefire and withdrawal of the forces.

It welcomed Iraq for its readiness to cooperate in the implementation of the previous resolution 514 (1982) and called upon Iran to follow the same. The Secretary General, Javier Perez De Cuellar, was asked by the Security Council to report to it on the implementation of the resolution 522 within 72 hours.³

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1. "Iran's Representative at UN Denounced Security-Council Resolution", Kayhan International, vol. IV, Tehran, November 3, 1983, p. 1.
 2. UN Report, "Presidents Statement", UN Chronicle, Vol. XX, No. 4, April 1983, p. 10.
 3. UN Report, "Call Renewed for End to Iran-Iraq War", UN Chronicle, Vol. XIX, No. 11, December 1982, pp.85-87.

The Iranian government rejected the resolution on the ground that it failed to identify the aggressor. It accused the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, for encouraging mediation by the international community and at the same time stationing his forces on Iran's soil.¹ Iran feared political and military pressure in case of a ceasefire prior to the troops withdrawal to the international border.

Iran wanted a peace formula on the basis of 1975 Algiers Treaty which had defined the Shatt-al-Arab boundary (Thalweg line) and ensured non-interference in each other's affair. But for Iraq, the peace formula was on the basis of new demarcation of the border between Iran and Iraq, thus altering the old balance of power between the two countries. To get their contradictory aims fulfilled, they believed only in military solution.

In April 1983, the Security Council President, Oleg Aleksandrovich Troyanovsky in his personal capacity called on Iran and Iraq to stop all military operations immediately and withdraw their forces to international borders with a view to seek a peaceful settlement of the dispute.² The member states were requested to assist in the restoration of peace and security in the region by not selling arms to

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1. IRNA, Daily Report, February 1, 1983.
 2. UN Report: "President's Statement", UN Chronicle, Vol. XX, No. 4, April 1983, p. 10.

either belligerent. He asked the Secretary-General, Javier Perez De Cuellar, to continue his efforts in consultation with the parties involved to evolve any ground acceptable to both parties for a ceasefire.

The President of the Security Council, Oleg Aleksandrovich Troyanovsky, reaffirmed the necessity of implementing the previous resolutions 479(1980), 514(1982) and 522(1982) on the subjects which were unanimously adopted.¹

In September 1983, Iran's Majlis speaker and the representative of Ayatollah Khomeini, rejecting all these resolutions, proposed some conditions to be fulfilled before a ceasefire comes into effect. The conditions included:

1. Iraqi troops withdrawal from Iranian territory without any condition;
2. Prior to the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Iranian occupied territories, Iraq should accept to pay war reparations. First instalment should be paid so that afterwards they would not claim that negotiation should be carried out to determine damages. The rest of the instalment would be paid as the investigation committee orders;
3. Iraq should pay reparations for the countless people who were killed, demolished cities and industrial centres which were destroyed; and

1. UN Report: "President's Statement", UN Chronicle, Vol. XX, No. 4, April 1983, pp. 9-10.

4. The return of Iraqi deportees and compensation to them.¹

This proposal was firmly rejected by Iraq which was not ready to withdraw its forces from occupied territories unless Iraq's control of Shatt-al Arab was recognized.

As the Iran-Iraq war posed a threat to international navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, the Security Council passed a resolution 540 in December 1983 which affirmed the right of free navigation and commerce in international waters calling on all states to respect this right. The Security Council requested the Secretary-General, Javier Perez De Cuellar to consult with both the parties (Iran and Iraq) concerning ways to sustain and verify the cease-fire including a possible despatch of the United Nations observers team and report to the Security-Council of the result. He was requested to ensure the implementation of the resolution by taking both the warring countries into confidence. The Security Council also called him to send a mission to Iraq and Iran to inspect civilian areas said to have suffered war damage.²

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1. "Iran grows increasingly stronger as enters 4th Year: Rafsangani", Kayhan International, Vol. IV, Tehran, September 27, 1983, p. 2.
 2. UN Report: "Iran and Iraq Urged Again to End the Conflict", UN Chronicle, Vol. XX, No. 11, December 1983, p. 25.

This resolution was rejected by Iran on the ground that the Security-Council failed to condemn Iraq for the aerial bombing of residential areas in Iran.

Iraq, with its superior sophisticated war planes, was able to strike Iranian residential areas in depth. This war tactic brought the Iranian leaders under tremendous pressure at home. By doing so Iraq wanted to dictate its peace terms to Iran whereas Iran wanted to ward it off.

As the prolongation of war was not in the interest of Iraq due to its limited economic resources and manpower, the Iraqi foreign minister in his speech in the 38th session of the United Nations called on the international community to carryout arbitration on Iran-Iraq dispute. He proposed the formation of a neutral arbitration committee to identify the aggressor of war as well as the party which was responsible for the continuation of war.

Iran blamed Iraq as aggressor and wanted the international community to identify and punish the aggressor according to the international law.¹ This step might have restored the national prestige of Iran and checked Iraq from further use of force to solve any dispute with Iran militarily.

1. "Global Perspectives of the Islamic Republic of Iran", Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Iran), Tehran, 1984, p. 9.

The denial of this Iranian demand prolonged the war. The continuation of war was seen beneficial for the Islamic revolution because people of Iran were mobilized on emotional grounds to defend the territorial boundaries and this went a long way to socialise Iranians into the values of Islamic revolution.

The Gulf countries - Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia being concerned about the attacks on their ships by Iraq and Iran, appealed to the Security Council in May 1984, for the protection of the freedom of navigation to and from the ports of these countries. The Security Council in this respect, passed a resolution 552 (1984) urging Iran and Iraq to stop hostility and stop attacking on ships and ports.

The Iranian foreign ministry rejected the directive and said unless the Security Council condemns the Iraqi regime for its attack on Iranian Oil tankers and terminal (Kharg oil terminal) which is a flagrant violation of the International Law, Iran could not accept the resolution.¹

In fact, the tactic of Iran particularly to attack the merchant ships of other gulf-countries was motivated. By its constant attack on the ships, Iran might have tried

1. Ibid

to prevent the Iraqi backers from aligning with Iraq and to pressurise Iraq to succumb to the Iranian pressure.

Iran reiterated the policy of 'secure for all or for none'. It stressed that security in the Persian Gulf should be total and not partial. In this way, Iran thought to pressurize the gulf states to come out with comprehensive peace plan.

In June 1984, the Secretary General, Perez De Cueller, brought Iran and Iraq to an agreement not to attack the civilian and residential areas of each other. He was of the view that this partial ceasefire agreement might bring the comprehensive peace in future. But this agreement was soon violated by the belligerents who blamed each other for the villation. The attacks on residential areas resumed.

In February 1986, the Security Council, on the request of some Arab countries - Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco and Saudi Arabia - passed a resolution 582 (1986) which deplored for the first time the initiator of war and the party responsible for the continuation of the war but it did not name any party.¹ This step was closer to Iranian condition to identify the aggressor but fell short of Iranian expectations.

1. UN Report: "Security Council Deplores Continuation of Iran-Iraq War", UN Newsletter, Vol. 37, No. 7, UNIC Pub., New Delhi, March 1, 1986, pp. 1-4.

The resolution called on the belligerents to submit all aspects of the conflict to mediation or to any other means for peaceful settlement of the dispute. This clause was left vague so as to enable Iran and Iraq to settle their dispute peacefully through international mediation. It further asked both the belligerents not to violate the Geneva Protocol of 1925 which prohibits the use of chemical weapons in war and peace. It called the member states to exercise the utmost restraint and to refrain from any act like sale of arms, direct or indirect support to either party which might escalate the war.¹

The resolution was rejected by Iran on the ground that it failed to condemn Iraq for its violation of Geneva Protocol and did not identify the initiator of war.² The United Nations deliberately did not go to find out the aggressor because it was a vexed issue which might have taken a long time and would have jeopardised the primary task of the United Nations to establish peace in the region and halt the war which was causing heavy loss to human lives and property.

In October 1986, the Secretary General, Javier Perez De Caeallar, in his efforts to bring peace between Iran and Iraq appealed to the Security Council to establish

1. "Iran-Foreign Minister's Statement on UN Resolution on Gulf War", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/8194, Part 4, BBC Pub., Caversham, February 27, 1986, pp. 5-6.

a basis so that they (belligerents) may extend their cooperation to bring the war to an end.

The Security Council after consultation with the Secretary General passed a resolution 598 (July 1987) which called Iran and Iraq to end the war and withdraw forces upto internationally recognized boundaries and exchange the prisoners of war. A neutral mission was to determine the aggressor. Another committee was to estimate and evaluate the damage and loss for reconstruction and compensation.¹ The Security Council asked Javier Perez De Cuellar to appoint and send a mission to the region to supervise the process of ceasefire.

This resolution was accepted by Iraq. Initially, Iran showed hesitation to accept it and did not reject it altogether. There were some reasons for change in Iran's reaction. First, this resolution assured Iranon its old demand for identification of the initiator of the war and promised compensation for the victim. Secondly, Iran as well as Iraq got exhausted of the war weariness and lost their energies to fight further. They realised their limitation of power to decide the fate of war in battlefield. Thirdly,

1. "Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Comments in his talks with the UN Secretary-General", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/Part 4, BBC Pub. Cavessham, December 7, 1987, p. 19.

the Iranian military reversals on the battlefield in which it lost Majnoon Islands and Faw, demoralised the Iranian leaders. Fourthly, the silence maintained by the International community over the use of chemical weapons by Iraq on the civilians in Iran which was a clearcut violation of Geneva Protocol of 1925, put Iran under domestic pressure. Fifthly, the shattered economy of Iran caused by heavy **aerial** bombing of its oil installations resulted in loss of revenues which made it difficult to sustain the war. Sixthly, the isolation of Iran from Eastern and Western blocs due to its policy of neither East nor West kept it isolated and deprived it of diplomatic and material support in war against Iraq. Seventhly, the presence of United States naval force in the Gulf put an external pressure on Iranian leaders to seek a peaceful way to the dispute. And finally, the appointment of Hashemi Ratsangani, a moderate as the acting commander of Iranian armed forces, had a deep impact on Iran's policy on war.

After almost a year, Iran accepted the United Nations Security Council resolution (598). The Iranian decision was conveyed by President, Syed Ali Khamenei on 18 July 1988, in a letter to the Secretary General Javier Perez De Cuellar.

The Secretary General on 20 August 1988, announced

a ceasefire between Iran and Iraq with their prior consent. The talks for comprehensive peace started at Geneva under his auspices. He despatched a technical team led by General Martin Vodset, the Chief of the staff, United Nations Iran and Iraq Military observers Group (UNIIMOG) to work out on urgent basis the modalities with the government of Iran and Iraq to implement ceasefire on land, sea and air.¹

A mission including Wolfran Karl, Tarkelopsahl and Maj. Gen. Rene Bats was sent by him to Iran and Iraq to investigate the situation of the prisoners of war after consulting the international committee of the Red Cross and governments of both countries.

Under the good offices of the Secretary General, Javier Perez De cuellar, Iran and Iraq also agreed to repatriate the prisoners of war as quickly as possible. It was also agreed that no prisoners of war would be repatriated forcibly if he had well founded fear of persecution in the event of his return and in that case he may choose a third country for asylum.

Earlier, on 9 August 1988, a United Nations Iran and Iraq Military Observers Group (UNIIMOG), was **set** up to verify, confirm and supervise the ceasefire and withdrawal

1. UN Report: "Team to Implement Iran-Iraq Ceasefire", UN Newsletter, Vol. 39, No. 32, UNIC Pub, New Delhi, August 1988, p. 1.

of troops to the international border. It was an unarmed military observer group under the United Nations command and was to operate for a period of six months. This group consisted of 350 military observers with group headquarters in both Tehran and Baghdad.

It is to be noted that this group has been successful in effecting the ceasefire between Iran and Iraq.

The resolution 598 has been implemented partly with the ceasefire and troops withdrawal to the internationally recognised border but its full execution for identification of aggressor, assessment of war damages and exchange of pris oners of war depend upon the willingness and cooperation of Iran and Iraq.

The prospect of comprehensive peace between Iran and Iraq on the basis of this resolution (598), is bright as both countries after about eight years of war have realised their incapacity to defeat each other militarily. Secondly, new balance of power exists between the two countries which was disturbed at the time of Islamic revolution in Iran due to its internal turmoil. Finally, the people in Iran and Iraq understood the futility of the war which brought heavy damages and loss of lives. They are likely to choose politico-diplomatic solution of these disputes rather than military.

The United Nations right from the beginning of the conflict (1980) had adopted various resolutions such as 479, 514, 522, 552, 582 and 588 but failed to bring the ceasefire between Iran and Iraq. It was due to its inability to identify the aggressor. When the Security Council realised this mistake in conformity with the Article I of the Charter which calls for the punishment of aggressor in the resolution 598 (July 1987), the resolution was accepted by Iran.

The United Nations, for a long period, did not take drastic decision in regard to the Iran-Iraq war. Several internal and external factors were responsible for it. Internally, the authority of the Secretary General as provided in Article 99 of the United Nations charter is not only weak but also ambiguous.¹ His position is that of a head of secretariat. His position must be of the top of executive of the organisation. Given the post of top executive, he will become the core person in which all the activities of the international body can be concentrated. He will be strong enough to work effectively.

The charter stipulates that the General Assembly is the highest body for decision making but the real power-

1. Young Seek Chou., World Peace Through United Nations, Proposal for Peace - the Last option for Human-kind KyungHee Univ. Press Seoul, 1986, p. 128.

military and political - rests with the Security Council which is dominated by five world powers, the United States, Soviet Union, Britain, France and China which are themselves divided on nearly all the international issues. This makes the security council weak and in-effective to take any effective and impartial decision. The veto power given to the five countries negates the will of over hundred countries of the world.

The United Nations on certain issues has become a warring forum where opposing ideologies are pitched against each other. Various military blocks as well as individual nations pursue their narrow interest even at the cost of international interest or peace. They can-not take any decision above their narrow interest.

The lack of binding force for the implementation of the security council resolutions allowed the belligerents to ignore it.

The so-called neutrality of the member-states in the Iran-Iraq conflict indirectly hampered the efficiency of the Security Council to take any effective measures against the belligerents. When the Security Council was considering an economic and military embargo against a party (Iran) in 1987 for not willing to implement its decisions it was stopped by Soviet Union and China from doing so.

And lastly, the false confidence of ultimate victory and emotions created by war did not allow Iran and Iraq to come for a compromise for a long period till they got exhausted by war themselves.

The Non-Aligned Movement was the second international and inter-regional grouping which exerted itself in the path of peace making in the wake of the Iran-Iraq war. Its involvement in the process began shortly after the outbreak of the war.

The Non-Aligned Movement's Coordination Bureau met in New York on October 20, 1980 to mediate in the Iran-Iraq war. A ministerial level committee was formed for the purpose. It consisted of foreign ministers of Algeria, Cuba, India, Pakistan, Yugoslavia and a representative of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.¹ On the objection of Iraq, the foreign minister of Algeria was replaced by that of Malaysia.

The Peace Committee visited Tehran in April, 1981 and Baghdad in May to evolve a formula for peace acceptable to both the belligerents - Iran and Iraq. The Committee suggested a ceasefire and the settlement of the dispute by peaceful means.

The President of Iraq, Saddam Hussain, agreed for peace on the condition that Shatt-al Arab water way should be recognised as under the sovereignty of Iraq.

1. R.C. Sharma & Urvilla Chhibbar, "International-Growing concern and Diplomatic Efforts on Iran-Iraq Conflict", Perspectives on Iran-Iraq Conflict (ed.), Rajesh Pub. New Delhi, 1984, p. 98.

When the Committee met Iranian President, Abol Hassan Bani Sadr, he put three conditions for peace. He asked for the identification of the aggressor, unconditional troops withdrawal to internationally recognised border according to the Algiers Treaty of 1975; and agreement between Iran and Iraq on the basis of Algiers Treaty of 1975.¹ This treaty recognises the Thalweg line as boundary between Iran and Iraq in the Shatt-al-Arab waterway.

Iranian insistence on the identification of the aggressor was motivated by two factors. First, it was aimed at bringing national pride in the people again who suffered humiliation due to Iraqi aggression, and secondly, Iran saw the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussain and his Baathist regime as a threat to Iran and to its Islamic revolution. By condemning Iraq as an aggressor, Iran wanted to check possible Iraqi military adventure in future in Iran.

Iran also wanted unconditional troops withdrawal prior to a ceasefire. Pressure of Iraqi troops occupying Iranian territory was an open slur on Iranian national pride. It feared political and military pressure on Iranian leaders if the Iraqi troops remained on the soil of Iran. In that case Iraq would have tried to dictate its terms of peace to Iran. Iran wanted peace with Iraq not as something imposed from above rather on the basis of equality between the two sovereign nations.

1. Kayhan International, Tehran, March 31, 1981, p. 1.

Iran was ready to negotiate with Iraq for a peaceful solution of the disputes on the basis of Algiers Treaty of 1975.¹ Making peace on the basis of this treaty meant maintaining the pre-war boundary between Iran and Iraq and recognition of Thalweg line as the boundary in the Shatt-al-Arab waterways. This would have alone guaranteed the territorial integrity of Iran. But Iraqi abrogation of the Algiers Treaty (1975) and invasion was an important shift from its pre-war agreement. Now, Iraq wanted re-definition of the border with Iran.

The foreign ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement who were mediating in the Iran-Iraq war found themselves in tight corner in the midst of the contradictory stands taken by the belligerents.

In February 1981, the Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned countries held a meeting in Delhi. They discussed the ways of ending the destructive war. They requested Iran and Iraq to adhere to the Non-Aligned principles which say that no state should acquire and occupy territories by use of force and whatever, territories have been acquired in this way should be returned; that no act of aggression should be committed by any state; that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states should

1. Kayhan International, Tehran, April, 1981, p. 3.

be respected; that no state should try to interfere or intervene in the internal affairs of other states; and that all differences or claims should be settled by peaceful means.¹

To help Iran and Iraq to seek a peaceful solution of their dispute, the Non-Aligned Conference in Delhi appointed a four member committee to mediate in order to bring the war to an end. The peace Committee consisted of foreign ministers from four Non-Aligned countries - P.V. Narasimha Rao (India), Isidaro Malmierca (Cuba), Prof. Lameck Goma (Zambia) and a representative of Palestine Liberation Organisation (Farouk Kaddouni).²

The Non-Aligned peace committee did not prepare any concrete peace proposal, rather it attempted to study all aspects of the problem such as Shatt-al Arab, Kurds and non-interference. On the basis of the study, it wanted to devise some formula acceptable to both belligerents - Iran and Iraq.

The peace committee visited Tehran on 6 August 1981 to hold discussions with Iranian leaders. It had talks with the Iranian Prime Minister, Mohammad Ali Rajai, who insisted

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1. Keesings Contemporary Archives, Vol. 27, Keesings Pub., London, June 12, 1981, p. 30915.
 2. Ibid.

on the identification of the aggressor and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from occupied territories of Iran before any peace talks.

The peace committee then visited Baghdad on 8 August 1981 to explore some possibilities of peace. The members of the committee met the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussain, who assured his cooperation with the Committee on the ground that Iraqi sovereignty should be recognised over the Shatt-al Arab waterway.¹

The government of Iraq also insisted that three Arab islands - Greater Tumb, Lesser Tumb and Abu Musa - which were occupied in 1971 by the Iranian troops under the famous Shah's orders should be returned to the United Arab Emirates.

This Iraqi condition betrayed Iraq's latent desire to assume the leadership of the Arab countries in the absence of Egypt which was boycotted by them due to its Camp David Accord with Israel. Secondly, Saddam Hussain might have tried to mobilise the opinion of Arab people against Iran, a non-Arab country to his advantage. This was a part of the age-old Arab-Persian conflict.

The uncomprising stands of Iran and Iraq left no scope for the peace mission to propose any formula for peace which would be the basis of fruitful negotiations.

1. Keesings Contemporary Archives, Vol. 27, Keesings Pub., London, June 4, 1982, p. 31524.

The Foreign Ministers' Conference of the Coordination Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement in Havana (Cuba) in June 1982, requested Iran and Iraq to effect a ceasefire followed by the withdrawal of troops to the international border and the settlement of dispute by peaceful means.¹

Iran rejected this proposal because ceasefire prior to troops withdrawal from Iranian territories, would have increased bargaining power of Iraq in peace negotiation in comparison to Iran. In that situation, Iran would have to compromise on its territorial integrity ceding its right over Shatt-al-Arab. The peace in that case would not be an abiding peace between two sovereign states but it would be a settlement imposed by a victor on a vanquished nation.² History shows that such peace settlements are not stable.

The Seventh Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement was scheduled to be held in Baghdad but due to Iran's objection the venue of the summit was changed to New Delhi. Iran objected on the ground that Iraq violated the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement which calls for non-aggression and peaceful coexistence. Iran charged Iraq for its military attachment with the power blocs particularly with the West.³

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1. "Yaqub Urges Speedy End of Iran-Iraq Conflict", Statesman, (New Delhi), June 4, 1982.
 2. "Imam Khomeini's Address to the Muslim Guests from 48 Countries Participating in the Third Anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran", UISIA, Bombay, 1982.
 3. Tehran Times, Tehran, February 4, 1982.

In March 1983, the Seventh Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement was held in New Delhi under the Chairmanship of the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The final political declaration stated that disputes between the member states suded by former colonial powers and they were the manifestations of disequilibrium imposed from outside.¹ It appealed to Iran and Iraq who were also fellow members of the movement to stop the war in accordance with the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement. It also requested all the states to refrain from any action such as arms sale or financial support to either party which might escalate the war.

The appeal was rejected by Iran on familiar and off repeated grounds. Iran insisted on the identification of the aggressor and payment of 350 \$ billion as compensation for war damages .² For Iran, the compensation meant a punitive measure on Iraq for its initiation of war.

The Non-Aligned Movement's mediation efforts in New Delhi (1983) was thrawted in the beginning itself when it was boycotted by the Presidents of Iran and Iraq, Syed Ali Khamenei and Saddam Hussain respectively.³ The clash

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1. Richard L. Jackson, The Non-Aligned, the UN and the Superpowers, Praeger Pub., New York, 1983, pp. 75-93.
 2. "We Hope the Non-Aligned Trends the Path envisioned by its founders : Velayati:" Kayhan International, Tehran, March 7, 1983, p. 1.
 3. Richard L. Jakson. The Non-Aligned, the UN and the Superpowers, Praeger Pub., New York, 1983, pp. 75-93.

between the foreign ministers of Iran and Iraq for expulsion of each other from the movement itself undermined the goodwill essential for mediation efforts.

Iran wanted the expulsion of Iraq from the movement on the ground of its violation of the second principle of the Non-Aligned Movement which prohibits aggression by a member state on other.¹ Iraq sought Iran's expulsion for its interference in internal affairs in other state and for not adhering to the principle of peaceful solution of the dispute.

The demand of expulsion of each other by Iran and Iraq from the movement might have been a political move to strengthen their own conditions for peace.

In April 1984, Egypt and Yugoslavia, both active member states of the Non-Aligned Movement, drafted a five point peace plan. It proposed an inquiry by a Non-Aligned Commission to determine the responsibility as to who started the war; an immediate ceasefire; withdrawal of Iranian and Iraqi troops to the internationally recognised border in accordance with the 1975 Algiers Treaty, establishment of Pan-Islamic fund to finance reconstruction of war damages, and positioning of international forces on the border to

1. "Iran will punish Saddam Hussein if terms are not met", Kayhan International, Tehran, February 9, 1983.

monitor the ceasefire.¹

In this connection, the President of Egypt, Hushi Mubarak visited Yugoslavia in August 1984, to strengthen the proposal. He was trying to find out common grounds for a compromise to end the war.

This peace plan was rejected by Iran for the reason that it failed to identify the aggressor and ensure just rights i.e. punishment of the aggressor. Secondly, Iran was not in favour of international fund for war damages to both countries - Iran and Iraq. It insisted that compensation for war damages should come only from Iraq as it held Iraq as an aggressor and compensation as a punitive measure.

It is important to find out as to why Non-Aligned Movement did not identify the aggressor in the war openly? In fact, the movement took the establishment of peace as its primary task and identification of the aggressor secondary. It might have feared that if it goes to identify the aggressor first then the war which was causing so much destruction both to human lives and property in both countries would continue for a long period. The identification issue might have created extra-tension in the region as well as among the Non-Aligned Countries.

1. Sreedhar., Iraq-Iran War, ABC Pub. New Delhi, 1985, p. 188.

In an attempt to break the deadlock between Iran and Iraq, the Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, as the Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement, in March 1985, sent his ministers of external affairs, Khurshid Alam Khan, to Tehran to convince it for ceasefire. He expressed willingness of the Non-Aligned Movement to end the war and seek peaceful solution of the dispute. This offer was rejected by Iran as it was not ready for a ceasefire prior to the unconditional Iraqi troops withdrawal from Iranian territories.

The Non-Aligned Movement asked for a ceasefire followed by the troops withdrawal because the withdrawal of the fighting troops of the two countries suddenly without any prior ceasefire or negotiation was impracticable.

In June 1985, on the request of the peace committee of the Non-Aligned Movement, the President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, offered to stop shelling selected targets of Iranian cities starting from 08 hours, 15 June to 30 June, 1985. But this plan was violated by Iran as it was not ready to accept any peace proposal from Saddam Hussein whom it considered an aggressor.

The ministerial conference of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Luanda in January 1986 discussed the ways to end the war. It appealed to Iran and Iraq for an immediate

ceasefire, withdrawal of troops to the internationally recognised boundary and peaceful settlement of the disputes in accordance with the principles of the movement.

Iran and Iraq blamed each other for the violation of the principles of the movement and sought each other's expulsion. This attitude on their part scuttled the mediation move.

The Non-Aligned Movement in its Harare Summit from September 1 to 6, 1986 appealed to Iran and Iraq to stop fighting and seek a solution based on peace fair to both.¹ It warned the belligerents that their continuing war would only cause more bloodshed to the innocent peoples and benefit the war mongers. The war between the two member countries was also damaging to the movement.

The Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Taha Yasin Ramadhan, asked the conference to form a special committee to investigate the party responsible for the outbreak of war. He proposed that the committee should be headed by the chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement, Robert Mugabe himself.

Iran refused to comply with the proposal put by Iraq and accused it for initiating the war and asked for its punishment.

1. Mark, O. Orlandic, "Distinctions and Effects of the Eight Non-Aligned Summit in Harare," Review of International Affairs, vol. XXXVIII, No. 382, Belgrade, January 5, 1987, p.

The Iranian President, Sved Ali Khamenei, denounced the Harare Summit for not condemning Iraq for its violation of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 which prohibits the use of chemical weapons in war or peace.¹ He asked the Summit to identify the aggressor in accordance with Article I of the United Nations Charter and the second principle of the Non-Aligned Movement which fall for the punishment of the aggressor.²

The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussain, lashing out at the Non-Aligned Movement, demanded action against Iran for not listening to the Movement. He said this will weaken the solidarity among the members of the movement and pave the way for external intervention which contradicts the movement's aim and principles and undermines its effectiveness.³

This blame and counter blame left little scope for the movement to reconcile the opposite claims of the belligerents. The request of both Iran and Iraq to expel each

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1. "Iran's Criticism of Non-Aligned Movement Declaration", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/8359, BBC Pub., Cavershaw, September 9, 1986, p. 2.
 2. "Khamenei Rebukes Arafat for Encouraging Aggression", Tehran Times, September 4, 1986, p. 2.
 3. "Iraqi President notes NAM Failure to End the War with Iran", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/8292, Part 4, BBC Pub., Caveshaw, June 23, 1986, p. 6.

other from the movement shifted the attention from the primary aim of the peace.¹

After the belligerents accepted the United Nations sponsored peace formula, the foreign ministers of the Non-Aligned countries met in Nicosia (Cyprus) in September 1988, and expressed great satisfaction at the wise decision of the governments of Iran and Iraq for accepting the United Nations Security Council resolution 598 (July 1987) for the termination of war and in particular the cessation of hostilities as from 20 August 1988 and the commencement of direct talks under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General, Javier Perez De Cuellar with a just and honourable and durable solution.

The acceptance of the Security Council resolution 598 (July 1987) by Iran on 18 July 1988 was due to its series of defeats in battle field particularly the loss of Majnoon islands and Faw, the shattered economy due to Iraqi aerial bombing on its oil terminal (Kharg Oil terminal) and isolation of Iran from the world community.

The foreign ministers expressed their appreciation of the Non-Aligned Member states for the ceaseless efforts to achieve peace and to contribution to the United Nations Iran and Iraq Military Observers Group (UNIIMOG), to enforce the ceasefire.

1. Tehran Times, Tehran, September 3, 1986.

The Non-Aligned Movement even with its best intention and efforts could not succeed to bring the Iran-Iraq war to a halt. The weakness does not lie in the Organisation rather in the member states which adopted the so-called 'neutrality' which deprived the movement of their active cooperation to search a way for a peaceful solution of the conflict.

The lack of coercive power to enforce the decisions was another reason for the failure of Non-Aligned Movement. The belligerents being fully aware of this weakness of the movement ignored its resolutions to their advantages.

The absence of a secretariat of the Non-Aligned Movement made it difficult to coordinate the activities and implementation.

The ideological differences among the Non-Aligned countries and their covert allegiance to the different power blocs did not allow them to take any drastic and effective step.

Finally, the policy of Iran and Iraq to win the war by prolonging it for an indefinite period made the mediation efforts of the Non-Aligned Movement futile.

The Organisation of Islamic Conference took serious note of the Iran-Iraq war which broke out on 22 September 1980.¹ To prevent the hostilities and bring a peaceful solution to the disputes between Iran and Iraq, the Organisation of Islamic Conference formed a team of foreign ministers from Islamic countries - Pakistan, Bangladesh, Gambia, Malaysia, Senegal and a representative from Palestine Liberation Organisation under the charge of late Pakistani President, Gen. Mohammad Zia-ul Haq.²

The Islamic Peace Committee visited Tehran and Baghdad in September 1980. After holding talks with the leaders of both the countries, it proposed an immediate ceasefire; troops withdrawal to the international border according to the Algiers Treaty of 1975; and settlement of dispute by peaceful means.

The President of Iran, Abol Hassan Bani Sadr, set his terms of peace - identification of the aggressor; unconditional troops withdrawal to the internationally recognised border according to the Algiers Treaty of 1975 and settlement of the dispute on the basis of Algiers Treaty of 1975.³

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1. Bangladesh Times (Decca), January 27, 1981
 2. Sreedhar, "Faltering Peace Initiative", Iraq-Iran War, ABC Pub., New Delhi, 1985, p. 49.
 3. Radio Tehran, Daily Report, March 9, 1981.

The Islamic committee's suggestion for ceasefire prior to withdrawal of troops to the international border was based on the premise that there could not be sudden withdrawal of fighting troops to the border. There should be an arrangement (ceasefire) so that fighting could be halted and occupied territories were vacated. But Iran feared that a ceasefire in the midst of Iraqi troops on Iranian soil might bring military and diplomatic pressure upon its leaders while negotiating for peace. To save its territorial integrity, Iran wanted to make any peace arrangements under the framework of Algiers Treaty of 1975 which clearly divided the Shatt-al-Arab waterways between Iran and Iraq with Thalweg line as the common boundary.

On the other hand, the President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein claimed the whole of Shatt-al-Arab. He abrogated the Algiers Treaty a few days before the outbreak of large scale hostilities.¹ He wanted the boundary between Iran and Iraq over the Shatt-al Arab to be redefined. He asked Iran to return three Arab islands - the Greater Tumb, the lesser Tumb and Abu Musa to the United Arab Emirates from which Iran had captured these islands in 1971 under the Shah regime.²

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1. "Hussein Addressing the Cabinet", Daily Report, December 9, 1980.
 2. Keesings Contemporary Archives, "Peace Initiative of the Organisation of Islamic Conference", Vol.27, *Keesing Pub.* 1981, p. 31014.

It was a political move of Saddam Hussein to win the support of the Arab countries against a non-Arab Iran. The return of the three islands - Greater Tumb, Lesser Tumb and Abu Musa would have projected Saddam Hussein as a leader of the Arab countries.

The conflicting and even opposite claims of the belligerents did not allow the Islamic peace committee to bring any formula for peace synthesising the conflicting interest of the both countries - Iran and Iraq.¹

On 17 January 1981, the foreign ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Conference met in Taif (Saudi Arabia) to discuss the Iran-Iraq war issue. The Chairperson, Prince Saud Ibin Faisal, appealed to Iran and Iraq to halt the war and seek a peaceful way to settle their dispute.

It was rejected by Iran on the ground that it failed to identify and condemn the aggressor.

On 25 January 1981, the Organisation of Islamic Conference Summit was held in Mecca (Saudi Arabia). Here, the heads of the Islamic states requested Iran and Iraq to bring an immediate ceasefire, and withdrawal of troops to internationally recognised boundary (on the basis of Algiers Treaty of 1975). It also announced a plan to form an Islamic Peace Keeping force to verify the ceasefire and

1. AFP, Daily Report, November 14, 1980.

troops withdrawal. It formed a goodwill mission to fulfil this aim.¹

The reason for including the highest dignitaries of Islamic world was to use their good offices to bring an end to the Iran-Iraq war through mediation.

The Mecca Islamic Summit was boycotted by Iran on the ground that it failed to identify the aggressor and the presence of Saddam Hussein, the President of Iraq, in the Islamic Summit.² Iran branded Saddam Hussein as the aggressor and it was not ready to make peace with him. Iran's insistence on the identification of aggressor and its condemnation by the Organisation of Islamic Conference was aimed at boosting the national pride and respect of the Iranians bruised by Iraqi military action. Secondly, Iran wanted the removal of Saddam-Hussein from power in Iraq because it thought that he and the Iraqi Baathist party constituted a threat to Iran and its Islamic revolution.

The Islamic goodwill mission under high dignitaries including the President Zia ul Haq (Pakistan), President Zia

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1. "Mecca Declaration of third Islamic Summit", Middle-East Contemporary Survey, vol. V, Holmes & Meier Pub., New York, 1980-81, pp. 138-45.
 2. "Islamic Summit in Mecca, and Tai^Az", Middle East Contemporary Survey, Vol. V, Holmes & Meier Pub, New York, 1980-81, p. 240.

ul Rahman (Bangladesh) , Preisent Sir Dawda Jawara (Gambia), President Ahmed-Sekou Toure (Guniea), Prime Minister Bulent Ulusu (Turkey), Yasser Arafat (Palestine Liberation Organisation's chief), Habib Chatti, the Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference and foreign ministers Tengku Datuk (Malaysia) and Mustafa Niasse (Senegal) visited Iran and Iraq in February-March, 1981 to explore the possibility of gaining some ground for a peace formula acceptable to both belligerents. After consultations with the leaders of Iran and Iraq it suggested a peace proposal on March 5, 1981 which called Iran and Iraq to observe a truce beginning from March 5 to 12, 1981 during which period Iraq was to withdraw its forces from Iranian territories, free navigation in Shatt-al-Arab waterway and non interference in internal affairs of any state.¹

This peace plan was rejected by the President of Iran, Abol Hassan Bani Sadr, who gave his own peace formula. He said Iran would not accept any solution outside the 1975 Algiers Treaty. He asked for ceasefire and Iraqi troops withdrawal from Iranian soil simultaneously.²

The Iranian President's insistence on peace negotiations in consonance with the Algiers - agreement was aimed

1. "The Islamic Peace Committee Ceasefire Proposal to Iran and Iraq", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/6666, Part 4, BBC Pub. Caversham, March 6, 1981, pp 5-6.
2. Kayhan International, Tehran, March 31, 1981

at restoring the pre-war boundary settlement existing between Iran and Iraq. This might have saved Iran's territorial integrity in case of Shatt-al-Arab. While Iraq agreed to a ceasefire on the condition that its sovereignty should be recognised over Shatt-al Arab waterways which was one of the reasons of Iraqi's invasion. Iraq rejected negotiation on the basis of Algiers Treaty of 1975 because it would have brought it again in pre-war situation i.e. acceptance of the division of Shatt-al-Arab.

Sensing the firm contradictory attitudes of Iran and Iraq on the war in general and Shatt-al-Arab in particular, the head of the Islamic mission, President Ahmed Sekou Toure announced the suspension of the Summit level mediation in the Iran-Iraq war.¹ However, he authorised the mediation task to the Secretary General, Habib Chatti who was asked to continue his efforts to bring an end to the war.

Habib Chatti in his efforts to mediate in the war visited Tehran in April 1981 and suggested a peace proposal to Iran which called for a ceasefire to be followed by Iraqi troops withdrawal to the international borders (on the basis of Algiers Treaty of 1975), demarcation of the border by a committee whose members were to be taken from Islamic countries and a separate committee to investigate the causes of war.²

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1. Times of India (New Delhi), April 3, 1981.
 2. INA Daily Report, October 27, 1982.

This peace proposal was rejected by Iran as it wanted the settlement of border disputes between Iran and Iraq under the framework of Algiers Treaty of 1975. This proposal also did not say anything about the aggressor.¹

The President of Iran, Abol Hassan Bani Sadr while rejecting the peace proposal reiterated his three demands - identification of the aggressor, unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi troops, and border agreement in consonance with the Algiers Treaty.²

On 16 October 1982, Habib Chatti, the Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference visited Baghdad and had talks with the Iraqi President, Saddam-Hussein who showed his readiness for a ceasefire on the condition that Iraqi right over Shatt-al Arab must be recognised before any agreement.³

In fact, Iran feared that Iraq being in occupation of some border towers of Iran, was in stronger bargaining position. Thus, it wanted a ceasefire with Iran only to dictate in terms of peace in a future negotiation.

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1. IRNA, Daily Report, February 1, 1983.
 2. "Mediation in Iran-Iraq War", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/7165, Part 4, BBC Pub., Caversham, October 25, 1982, p. 7.
 3. Ibid.

The foreign ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Conference held a meeting in Dhaka (Bangladesh) from December 6 to 10, 1983. They asked Iran and Iraq to submit all aspects of disputes to mediation. It called for an immediate ceasefire and troops withdrawal to the International border.

The Iranian delegation led by its foreign minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, walked out from the Conference. It condemned the ministerial conference for not condemning the aggressor.¹

On 18 December 1984, the foreign ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Conference held a conference in Sana (North Yamen) to discuss the issue of Iran-Iraq war and devise some peace formula acceptable to both. Habib Chatti, the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference appealed to Iran and Iraq to accept a ceasefire followed by the troops withdrawal to the internationally recognised border, and establishment of an Islamic peace keeping force to supervise the ceasefire.²

Iraq accepted the resolution while Iran objected to it on the ground that it failed to identify the aggressor.³

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1. "A look at the Dhaka Conference", Kayhan International, Tehran, December 20, 1983, p. 2.
 2. "Islamic Foreign Minister's Conference in North Yamen", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/7831, December 20, 1984 pp 1-4.
 3. "Iranian Comment on ICO Foreign Ministers and Iran-Iraq War", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/7833, Part 4, BBC Pub. Caversham, Dec. 22, 1984, pp 6-7.

It is interesting that Iran for the first time attended the Islamic Conference after the outbreak of war. Here, (Sana Conference) Iran objected to the participation of the Iraqi representative, Tariq Hanna Aziz, a christian for attending an Islamic Conference and sought justification for this.¹

Iran also objected to the participation of Abdul Majid, the Egyptian foreign minister in the Islamic Foreign Minister's Conference on the ground that Egypt deceived the Muslims of the world by having signed the Camp David Accord with Israel.²

Iran's objection to the participation of the representatives of Iraq and Egypt showed its attempt to project Iran as a truly Islamic and nationalist country. This action of Iran was to rationalise its claim in terms of Islam. Iran reinforced its position by its general conditions for peace namely identification of the aggressor, unconditional troops withdrawal and war compensation. It also legitimised its position by citing to the Surah (Chapter) of the holy Koran, Al-Hujurat which calls for punishing

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1. "Iran Attending ICO Meeting a Legitimate Representative of All Muslims", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/7830, Part 4, BBC Pub., Cavesham, December 19, 1984, pp. 2-3.
 2. "Iranian Comment on the ICO and Islamic Unity", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/7831, Part 4, BBC Pub., Cavensham, December 20, 1984, pp. 9-10.

the aggressor by the Muslim community collectively and helping the victim.

On 1 May 1985, the Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Conference met in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia). The Secretary-General, Sharifuddin Pirzada, requested Iran and Iraq to bring about a ceasefire and withdraw their troops to the internationally recognised boundary (on 1975 Algiers Treaty basis). He condemned the use of chemical weapons on the civilians.

The resolution was rejected by Iran on the ground that it failed to name the country responsible for the violation of the Geneva Protocol, 1925 which prohibits the use of chemical weapons in war or peace.

However, it was a bold step taken by the Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference to condemn the use of chemical weapons.

In Jeddah, in November 1986, the Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Conference held a meeting under the Chairmanship of the Gambian President, Dawda-Jawara. He appealed to Iran and Iraq to observe a ceasefire. He authorised the Islamic peace committee to seek all possible ways to bring a halt to the war on the basis of Islamic principle of brotherhood.

It is interesting to note that the Organisation of Islamic Conference did not identify the aggressor because it feared that it would jeopardise their mediation efforts and it would shift the attention of the Islamic community from their main responsibility - establishment of peace. The primary aim was to halt the war which was causing heavy damage to lives and property in Iran and Iraq.

In January 1987, the Organisation of Islamic Conference held its summit in Kuwait. Iran boycotted the Kuwaiti Islamic Summit. It accused Kuwait for not being neutral in the war.¹ Iran accused Kuwait of its handing over three strategic islands - Bubiyan, Warbah and Faylakah (Kuwaiti islands) to Iraq for military purposes.

The Conference called upon Iran and Iraq to agree to end the war by peaceful means. It proposed a peace plan which called for a ceasefire, withdrawal of Iranian and Iraqi troops to the international boundary and exchange of prisoners of war. It proposed the setting up an Islamic court to determine the aggressor.

This resolution was rejected by Iran as it did not name Iraq as the aggressor.²

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1. "Rafsanjani Opposes Holding of Islamic Summit in Kuwait", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/8454, Part 4, BBC Pub., Caversham, January 1, 1987, p. 16.
 2. Tehran Times, Tehran, May 4, 1985.

The ministerial Conference of the Organisation of Islamic Conference which was held in Amman in March 1988, requested Iran and Iraq to submit to the mediation efforts for bringing the war to an end.

This conference was boycotted by Iranian delegation as it did not condemn Iraq for its use of toxic gases in Halabja, a district under the Sulaimaniya province of Iraq which caused hundreds of death.¹

The Organisation of Islamic Conference even with its best efforts and intention failed to bring an end to the Iran-Iraq war.

The member states of the organisation of Islamic Conference were not neutral strictly in the Iran-Iraq war. They were directly or indirectly supporting Iran or Iraq. Iran accused Saudi-Arabia and Kuwait for their alleged financial support to Iraq. While Syria and Libya were accused by Iraq of supporting Iran.² This action on the part of the member states, deprived the Organisation of Islamic Conference from taking any drastic step unitedly to bring a halt to the war.

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1. "Iranian Delegates Walkout OIC Meet", Kayhan International, Tehran, March 26, 1988, p. 1.
 2. Radio Baghdad, Summary of World Broadcasts, July 19, 1982.

The division among Arab states based on ideologies - Islamic Arab nationalistic and Baathist Socialism, their high ambition of assuming gulf-leadership, mistrust and infighting led to the failure of mediation efforts. The Islamic ideology of Iran and the Baathist Socialist ideology of Iraq, left little scope for the mediators to synthesise their conflicting claims. Iran interpreted its conditions for peace-identification of the aggressor in Islamic terms while Iraq taken in materialistic terms.

The Sectarian and ideological differences among the member states of the Organisation of Islamic Conference based on Shiism vs. Sunnism, Pan-Islamism Vs Arab Nationalism, secularism Vs theocracy did not allow them to unite and take a fair decision acceptable to both belligerents - Iran and Iraq.

The lack of coercive power to enforce the decisions taken by the Organisation of Islamic Conference was also a factor responsible for the failure of mediation efforts.

Finally, the policy of Iran to prolong the war indefinitely to ruin the limited economic resources and manpower of Iraq, made all the mediation efforts by the Organisation of Islamic Conference futile.

The fourth international attempt at mediation in the Iran-Iraq war was at the regional level. In terms of time it was delayed and in scope it earned the states of the lower Gulf. It is notable that largely under the impact of the war, these Arab states had constituted a regional grouping for purpose of collective security. Basically, these states are wary of the ideological thrust of the Iraqi and Iranian regimes. The new organisation was christened 'The Gulf Cooperation Council'.

The Gulf Cooperation Council began its mediation efforts in the Iran Iraq war from 1982. It supported the Iraqi peace proposal of June 10, 1982 which called for a ceasefire followed by the troops withdrawal to the internationally recognised boundaries, and direct negotiation between the governments of Iran and Iraq on the outstanding issues concerning Shatt-al Arab waterway. It also suggested Iran to accept the arbitration of the Organisation of Islamic Conference or the Non-Aligned Movement or the United Nations.¹

The Gulf Cooperation Council requested Iran to accept this peace proposal.² This offer was rejected by

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1. Sreedhar, Iraq-Iran War, ABC Pub., New Delhi, 1985.
 2. "Comment on GCC Ministerial Meeting : Ending Iran-Iraq War", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/7043, Part 4, BBC Pub., Caversham, June 4, 1982, p. 1.

Iran. Iran insisted on unconditional troops withdrawal prior to a ceasefire. Iran feared that the presence of Iraqi troops on the Iranian soil would put political and military pressure on Iranian leaders during the negotiation for peace. Secondly, Iran wanted to talk on the basis of equality between two sovereign nations which could have been possible only when Iraqi troops were withdrawn from Iran. Thirdly, Iran wanted to negotiate with Iraq on Shatt-al Arab dispute and Kurdish problem under the framework of the Algiers Treaty of 1975 which accepted the Thalweg line as a boundary, between the two countries.¹

Iraq was not ready to accept the Algiers Treaty of 1975 as a basis of future negotiation with Iran. It wanted the recognition of its sovereign right over the Shatt-al-Arab.

Iran insisted that the Gulf Cooperation Council should identify the aggressor. This request of Iran was motivated by two factors. Firstly, it wanted to restore its national prestige which suffered at the hands of Saddam Hussein. Secondly, by identifying Saddam Hussein as the aggressor, it would have checked his ambition to solve disputes with Iran militarily.

1. "Reactionary Regimes in the Region and the Imposed War", A Glance at Two Years of War, Political Office Pub. of IRKG, 1982, p. 165.

The Gulf Cooperation Council, in its mediation efforts, held a meeting in Abu Dhabi in 1983. It called upon Iran and Iraq for an immediate ceasefire since the war posed a threat to the regional security and stability and increased the possibility of the foreign intervention in the region. It requested the peace loving forces in the world to devise some formula acceptable to both the belligerents.

Seeing the contradictory stands taken by Iran and Iraq over the Shatt-al-Arab issue, the nature of ceasefire and return of troops to international borders, the Gulf Cooperation Council sought to bring atleast partial ceasefire and cessation of attacks on merchant ships in the gulf waters and non-shelling of the residential areas in Iran and Iraq. The foreign ministers of Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Sabah al Ahmad al Jabir al Sabah and Abdullah al Nuaymi visited Tehran and Baghdad. They had talks with the leaders of Iran and Iraq and finally they proposed a peace plan. The plan asked Iran and Iraq not to attack ships of the gulf countries passing through the Strait of Hormuz.¹ It also called not to attack cities in both countries and civil population.

This proposal was rejected by Iran which sought a total halt of the war with the conditions - identification

1. Radio Kuwait, Summary of World Broadcasts, May 20, 1983.

of aggressor, unconditional troops withdrawal and war reparations. It should be noted that by attacking on ships in gulf waters, Iran and Iraq wanted to put economic pressure on each other.

Secondly, they wanted to pressurise the gulf countries to bring upon pressure on their adversary to halt the war in accordance with their terms of peace.

In its meeting in Doha (Qatar) during November 7 to 9, 1983, the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council affirmed its support to the United Nations Security Council resolution 540 (1983) which called on Iran and Iraq to stop all military operations in the Persian gulf and refrain from attacking towns, economic targets and ports.

Iran rejected this resolution and pursued the policy of 'secure for all or none',¹ which meant if any Iranian oil installations including the Kharag oil terminal were attacked, Iran would in retaliation attack the gulf ships.² The Iranian economy heavily depends on the export of oil from Kharg oil terminal. Again, it was the Iranian tactic to pressurise Iraq not to attack its economic targets.

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1. Kayhan International, Tehran, September 29, 1983.
 2. Radio Tehran, "Komeini's Policy: Total Hostility Towards Iraqi", Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Iraq), p. 22.

During the war period Iran and Iraq pursued the policy of attacking each other economic targets-oil-terminal and industries to ruin each other's economy and to bring their adversary to its knees.

In September 1984, the Gulf-Cooperation Council's foreign-ministers held a meeting in Abhabimu (Saudi Arabia) where they promised to continue their efforts to seek a peaceful solution to the Iran-Iraq war and to bring about any dialogue or negotiations which may lead to end of the war. They appealed to Iran to soften her stand so that an agreement could be reached.

Iran rejected the offer on the ground that it failed to identify the aggressor and condemn it.¹ The foreign ministers of the Gulf cooperation Council did not identify the aggressor fearing that it might have created unnecessary tension in the region without achieving the main goal - the halt of the war. This identification issue might have created rift in the gulf countries.

In November 1984, the Gulf Cooperation Council in its Kuwait Summit Conference under the Chairmanship of Khalifa Bin Hamed al Thani, the Sheikh of Qatar, appealed to both belligerents to stop the war in the best interest

1. "Iranian Appeal to GOC Defence and Foreign Ministers", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/7755, Part 4, BBC Pub., Caversham, September 22, 1984, p. 5.

of the muslim peoples of the two countries. He said the countinuation and escalation of conflict would invite the superpower's intervention in the Persian gulf. He requested Iran and Iraq to bring peace in Islamic spirit and with the feeling of Islamic brotherhood.

Khalifa Bin Hameed al Thani proposed a peace plan which called for an immediate ceasefire, troops withdrawal to the international boundary and safety of the ships in the gulf waters.¹

By rejecting the peace proposal, Iran reiterated its demands of identification of the aggressor, war reparations and acceptance of the Algiers treaty of 1975 as the basis of future talks for peace.

Iranian emphasis on compensation for the damages caused by the war, was taken as a punitive measure against Iraq for its aggression on Iran. But Iraq rejected this condition for compensation. Secondly, Iran showed its willingness to negotiate only on the basis of Algiers Treaty because it might have saved Iran's territorial integrity against the claim of the whole of Shatt-al Arab by Iraq. Iran also objected to the participation of Kuwait in the Gulf Cooperation Council's decisions concerning the Iran-Iraq war. It accused Kuwait for handing over its (Kuwaiti) three islands Bubiyan, Warbah and Faylakah -

1. Saudi Gazette (Riyadh), November 23, 1984.

to Iraq for military purposes.¹

The ministerial council of the Gulf Cooperation Council met on 10 March 1985 in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) to devise some way to bring the belligerents to an agreement on peace. In the meeting, they proposed to consult with the warring countries in order to synthesise their conflicting claims. They asked Algier, an Arab country, which has friendly ties with Iran to join the mediation effort.²

Iran said it would not accept any resolution unless its condition of the identification of aggressor was fulfilled. It feared that if it accepted the peace without having Saddam Hussein condemned as aggressor, the latter might attack Iran again after recovering from the war disaster.

The heads of six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council held their Summit meeting in Muscat, between 3 and 6 November 1985, decided to contact both the belligerents for strengthening the position of the council for mediation

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1. "Iran says Kuwait should be candid over islands and Iraq", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/7807, Part 4, BBC Pub., Caversham, November 22, 1984, p. 2.
 2. Keesings Contemporary Archives, Vol. XXX, No. 1. Keesings Pub., London, January 1984, pp. 32648-49.

in the conflict. Abdullah Yaqub Bishara, the Secretary-General, of the Gulf-Cooperation Council, proposed ending the conflict with the joint efforts of other Arab countries and international organisations.¹ He expressed his support for the United Nations Security Council resolution 540 (1983) and 552 (1984) which called for free navigation in the gulf waters and forbade attacks on any merchant ships.²

A high level delegation led by Omani foreign minister, Yusuf-al-Alawi Abdullah, left for Baghdad to explore the possibility of peace between Iran and Iraq by developing common understanding.

Iran expressed its concern to the gulf states for preserving the security of the region and reiterated its demand for identifying Saddam Hussein as the aggressor.³

The foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council in their meeting in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) from May 8 to 9, 1986, expressed deep concern over the attacks on oil tankers and ships and asked Iran and Iraq to ensure the freedom of navigation in the gulf waters.⁴

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1. Saudi Gazette (Riyadh), November 12, 1985.
 2. Muscat TV., "Final Communique of Sixth GCC Summit," Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/8102, Part 4, BBC Pub., Caversham, November 7, 1985, pp 3-4.
 3. "Comment on Gulf Security; GCC Stand on War," Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/8105, Part 4, BBC Pub., Caversham, November 11, 1985, p. 4.
 4. Keesings Record of World Events, Vol. XXXIII, No. 8, Keesings Pub., London, August 1987, pp. 35349-50.

Iran reiterated its old conditions that unless Iraq stops .attack on Iranian economic targets, quit occupation of its territories, it would continue to retaliate in the same manner.¹

The Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council held a meeting from November 2 to 5 in 1986 in Abu Dhabi (UAE). Here, the Secretary-General, Abdullah Yaqub Bishara, expressed his regret over the continuation of war and its escalation in the gulf. He affirmed his commitment to the Security Council resolution 582 and 588 (1986) which called for an immediate ceasefire, withdrawal of troops to the internationally recognised borders and seeking solution of the dispute between the belligerents (Iran and Iraq) by peaceful means.²

To protect the freedom of ~~nav~~ navigation in the gulf waters the Council asked Iran to respond to the United Nations Security Council resolution 540 (1980) which called for free passage to commercial ships in the international waters.

This appeal was again rejected by Iran on the ground

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1. Radio Tehran (August 1, 1986), Khomeini Policy: Total Hostility Towards Iraq, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Iraq), p. 29.
 2. "GCC Secretary-General on International responsibility for the Strait of Hormuz", Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/8254, BBC Pub., Caversham, May 9, 1986, pp 6-7.

that it failed to name the aggressor and condemn Iraq for its use of chemical weapons on civilians in complete disregard of the Geneva Protocol, 1925 which prohibits the use of toxic gases or any such weapons in war or peace.¹

The use of chemical weapons against the civilians in Iran was interpreted as a desperate move of the government of Iraq to exert utmost pressure on Iranian leaders from within and from outside.

The increase in the Iranian and Iraqi attacks on the ships of the gulf countries led to a meeting of the foreign-ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council from June 6 to 8, 1987 in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) to devise a way to prevent the attack on merchant ships. They asked for free navigation in the gulf waters in accordance with the international laws.² The Gulf Cooperation Council foreign ministers denounced Iran for its attacks on Kuwaiti ships. They expressed support for the peaceful solution of the disputes between Iran and Iraq under the auspices of Javier Perez De Cuellar, the Secretary General of the United Nations.

The Iranian attack particularly on Kuwaiti ships was motivated by the fact that Kuwait was allegedly financing Iraq in war. It might have influenced Iran's war

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1. Jafer Subhani, The Imposed Peace and a Tyrant Group, 1986, p. 15.
 2. Keesings Record of World Events, Vol. XXXV, Keesings Pub., London, January 1988, pp. 35675-77.

tactic to ruin the limited economic resources of Iraq by prolonging the war and its possible defeat.

In Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), the foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council held a meeting from September 12 to 13, 1987 to discuss the gulf war. They expressed their support to the United Nations Security Council resolution 598 (July 1987) which called for an immediate ceasefire, troops withdrawal to the internationally recognised boundary, establishment of a committee to determine the aggressor and another committee for assessment of war damages.¹

By supporting the Security Council resolution 598, the gulf countries for the first time brought change in their stand on the issue of identifying the initiator of war, an old demand of Iran.

The commitment of the Gulf Cooperation Council to establish peace between Iran and Iraq on the basis of the Security Council (United Nations) resolution 598 (1987) led to another meeting in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) from December 26-29, 1987.

The Gulf Cooperation Council was fully aware that the Persian gulf cannot be safe and free for navigation unless a comprehensive peace was reached between Iran and Iraq.

1. "GCC ministerial Council Meeting on Gulf Conflict; Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/8672, Part 4, BBC Pub., Caversham, September 14, 1987, p. 8.

The Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council held a meeting on December 19 to 22, 1988 in Bahrain. Here, the heads of the six gulf countries - Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, United Arab Emirates and Baharain expressed satisfaction on the acceptance of the Security Council resolution 598 (1987) by Iran in July 1988. They asked Iran and Iraq to implement the resolution in letter and spirit. They pledged to cooperate in ensuring peace and security in the Gulf.

The Gulf Cooperation Council in spite of its best efforts could not succeed in its mediation efforts to bring an end to the Iran-Iraq war. Many factors were responsible for its failure which need a close scrutiny.

The formation of the Gulf Cooperation Council was itself to counter military and ideological threat coming from Iran and Iraq. The gulf countries saw Iran and Iraq eager to play the big brother role at the cost of small gulf countries.¹ They wanted to see Iran and Iraq balancing each other militarily and keeping them (Iran-Iraq) away from dominating the gulf. This might have been one of the reasons of the exclusion of Iran and Iraq from the memberships of the Gulf Cooperation Council. This created a sense of fear, distrust and suspicion among the member

1. Kenneth Hunt, "Persian Gulf Security: A Regional of Higher Stakes and Great or Dangers", Middle East Contemporary Survey vol. V⁺, 1981-82, pp. 19-25.

states and Iran and Iraq. This resulted in the lack of mutual confidence which is an essential factor for a successful mediation.

The member states were not 'strictly neutral' in the Iran-Iraq war. They were directly or indirectly supporting Iraq in war against Iran. Iran several times blamed Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for multibillion dollar aid to Iraq to fight Iran. Iran accused Kuwait for handing over its (Kuwaiti) three strategic islands - Bubiyan, Warbah and Faylakah to Iraq for military purposes which was certainly not an adherence to the principles of neutrality.

The ideological difference between Iran and Iraq on the one hand and between them and Gulf countries on the other, prevented the Gulf Cooperation Council from developing consensus on any important matter. Iran interpreted war issues from purely Islamic point of view. For instance, citing the Surah (Chapter) Al-Hujarat of the holy Koran, Ayatollah Khomeini told the Muslim mediators to follow the Surah which says to help the victim in case of aggression and reward punishment to the aggressor.¹ On the other hand the Gulf countries interpreted the issues such as identification of the aggressor and terri-

1. FBIS, Daily Report, South Asia, Vol. VIII, No. 51, March 16, 1982.

torial claim (Shatt-al-Arab) in political and materialistic terms keeping an eye on their national security and interest. The Islamic revolution was anti-status quo, which held monarchies in the neighbouring countries as un-Islamic. This difference between them soured Iran's relations with the neighbouring gulf countries.

Iran's strategy to prolong the war to ruin the economy of Iraq and then bringing the defeat of Iraq, was also responsible for the failure of mediation efforts by the Gulf Cooperation Council in the Iran-Iraq war.

Finally, the lack of authoritative power on the part of the Gulf Cooperation Council to implement its decisions made all mediation efforts futile because Iran and Iraq ignored them at their will.

Four international organisations - the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the Gulf Cooperation Council tried their best at their own levels to bring about an end to the Iran-Iraq war and settlement of the disputes between them through peaceful means.

All these Organisations in their mediation efforts, repeatedly appealed to Iran and Iraq to effect a ceasefire and halt the war but there was little compliance by the belligerents.

The United Nations Security Council passed a resolution as early as in September 1980 (479) which was highly ambiguous. It neither called for troops withdrawal nor did it use the term 'ceasefire'. The position was rectified in the next resolution 514 (1982) which called for a ceasefire and troops withdrawal but still it did not identify the party responsible for the initiation of the war. Its next resolutions 522 (1982), 540 (1983) and 552 (1984) made no significant progress either in their content or in the direction of mediation. A significant shift came only in 1986 when the Security Council passed a resolution 586 (1986) which for the first time, deplored the initiation and continuation of the war without naming either party. The Security Council President, Ole

Bierring Denmark in April 1986, deplored Iraq for its use of chemical weapons on the civilians in Iran in violation of the Geneva Protocol, 1925.

It was the Security Council resolution 598 (July 1987) which to a greater extent satisfied both the belligerents - Iran and Iraq. It for the first time set up a Committee to identify the aggressor which is in consonance with Article I of the United Nations Charter. That is why Iran did not reject this resolution outright and maintained an unequivocal position.

As far as other Organisations - the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the Gulf Cooperation Council are concerned they followed more or less the same pattern in their mediatory plans. The Non-Aligned Movement, right from the beginning of its mediation efforts in New Delhi (1981) to Harare (1986) called for a ceasefire, withdrawal of troops to international border but never condemned the party for its use of chemical weapons in war. It never tried to identify the aggressor which was contrary to the second principle of the movement itself which says that no country should attack other to capture territory by force.

Sharifuddin Pirzada, the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference condemned Iraq for the

use of Chemical weapons at his personal level but failed to do so on Organisational level.

In all these Organisations involved in mediation efforts, the Gulf Cooperation Council was the weakest one. Some of its member states, notably Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, were allegedly supporting one party in the war - Iraq. The Gulf Cooperation Council in some of its conferences Abu Dhabi and Doha (1983), Muscat (1985) and again Abu Dhabi (1986) emphasised mainly on the issue of free navigation in the gulf waters and not on the ways how to halt the Iran-Iraq war. It was only in the Jeddah conference of the foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council, in September 1987, that a significant change occurred when it supported the United Nations Security Council resolution 598.

All these Organisations mediating in the Iran-Iraq war ultimately reached the conclusion that aggressor should be identified. But why did they not identify the aggressor in early years of war from 1980 to 1986? They feared that the identification issue might create tension and rift in their own ranks (member states) rendering the mediation efforts in-effective. Secondly, their primary aim was to halt the war which was causing heavy destruction to lives and property. But this motive was defeated when Iran refused to comply with their request to halt the war unless

the aggressor was identified. It would have been better for these Organisations to identify the aggressor in the initial stage of the war. They took seven long and costly years (1980-87) to assure Iran on its demand for the identification of the aggressor.

So far as Iran was concerned, it took a very hard line on negotiations. It based its position on the provisions in Islam. The identification of aggressor and his punishment was a political move of Iran to ward off the future threat arising out of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein to Iran's territorial integrity and Islamic revolution. To rationalise and legitimise its conditions for peace, Iran took the help of Islamic ideology which was powerful enough to sustain this motive. Ayatollah Khomeini repeatedly referred to the Surah (Chapter) of the holy Koran, Al Hujurat which says that the aggressor should be punished collectively by the muslim nation.

The Algiers Treaty of 1975, was the only guarantor of Iran's territorial integrity particularly in the Shatt-al-Arab sector. For its eventual acceptance, Iran prolonged the war till the limited economic resources of Iraq got depleted. To fight a long war, the Iranians were mobilised on their dearest symbol - Islam. The leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini, played this Islamic card well. He branded Saddam Hussein, the President of Iraq,

Yazid, the enemy of Islam. He also termed the United Nations, 'atheistic'. This attitude greatly impeded the mediation process for a long period till Iran became militarily weak to face the Iraqi onslaughts.

The ambition of Saddam Hussein to play the role of an Arab leader like that of Abdel Nasser of Egypt, and his desire to make Iraq a dominant power in the gulf region led him to the military adventure. In the first instance, it was clear when he asked Iran to return the three Arab islands - Greater Tumb, Lesser Tumb and Abu Musa to the United Arab Emirates from whose rulers, Iran had seized these islands in 1971 during the rule of the Shah. Once Saddam Hussein invaded Iran, he found himself in a dilemma. Halted and blocked militarily, he tried to regain the initiative diplomatically by an agreement with Iran with some concessions in order to save his face but he was adamant on his repudiation of the Algiers Treaty of 1975 by which Iran consistently swore. This rigid attitude on either side led to the continuation of the war for a long period and rendered all the mediation efforts futile.

The conflicting interests and opposed ideologies of Iran and Iraq left little scope for compromise between the belligerents. The Baathist Socialist ideology insisted on secularism and Arab nationalism and interpreted the issue in materialistic terms. On the other hand, the

Islamic ideology of Iran aimed at promoting Islam and Islamic system and strict adherence to Islam. It rejected the current international system as atheistic and dominated by imperialist powers. Iran and Iraq were determined to knock the other down. Hence, the mediators found it extremely difficult either to reconcile their conflicting positions or to bring Iran and Iraq to the negotiating table.

The interference and influence of the major world powers directly or indirectly in these organisations and their intention to use them as a forum to promote and protect their narrow national interests even at the cost of local powers hampered the mediation efforts. It is interesting to note that in 1987, when the Security Council of the United Nations was considering military action and economic embargo in accordance with the charter against a party which was likely to violate its resolutions, the move was opposed by two permanent members of the Security Council - the Soviet Union and China. This action on the part of Security Council members made mockery of its efforts.

The attempt by Iran and Iraq to use various mediatory Organisations as a forum to speak of their own terms of peace and stick to their extreme positions obstructed the mediation process and made it ineffective.

The practice to boycott the ministerial and the

heads of the states conferences under the auspices of the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the Gulf-Cooperation Council by the belligerents particularly Iran deprived these organisations of the opportunity to meaningfully consult and exchange views on the disputes with the authoritative and highest representatives of these countries. Iran boycotted almost all the meetings of the Organisation of Islamic Conference except a ministerial meeting which was held in Saha in 1984. The Presidents of Iran and Iraq, Syed Ali Khamenei and Saddam Hussein boycotted the Seventh Non-Aligned Summit Conference in 1983 in New Delhi. The lack of coordination and even rivalry among the mediators committees in the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the Gulf Cooperation Council hampered the smooth mediation process. For instance, in February-March 1981 both the Islamic goodwill mission and the Non-Aligned peace committee were visiting Iran and Iraq without any consultations between them about the possible peace formula acceptable to Iran and Iraq.

The lack of coercive power in all these international Organisations resulted in the non-implementation of the resolutions adopted by these organisations.

However, due to war weariness in the wake of immense losses in human and material terms and inability to achieve

their objective through military means both the regimes in Iran and Iraq ultimately realised the futility of their rigid bravado and they finally accepted the compromise formula for peace contained in the Security Council resolution 598. The fact of the matter is that the Security Council could achieve only ceasefire which does not mean that the era of peace has dawned between Iraq and Iran. It is a state of no war, no peace. Nonetheless, the positive aspect is that after nearly eight long years of intransigence postures, the belligerents agreed to stop the hot war and talk for eventual peace under a prescribed formula. Some very uncomfortable questions which should better be not raised are: What is the cost of which result? Did the parties not miss opportunities for better term? Did either regime succeed in its sanguine objective of knocking the other out of position? Did the belligerents not give ample proof of their political and diplomatic immaturity and under development by being swayed more by emotion rather than cool sagacity?

The prospect of peace depends on the mutual goodwill between Iran and Iraq and their readiness to cooperate with each other for comprehensive peace.

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