

**GULF CRISIS AND THE EUROPEAN MEDIA:  
A Study of Radio Coverage and Its Impact**

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "**GULF CRISIS AND THE EUROPEAN MEDIA: A STUDY OF RADIO COVERAGE AND ITS IMPACT**" submitted by **P. ANBARASAN** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of this University has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other university. This is his original work.

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

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## **PREFACE**

Gulf War presents one of the most striking example of an international event in which media and especially electronic media, played a prominent role in unfolding a war. The Gulf Crisis received extensive media coverage, starting with the invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and continuing even after the ceasefire on 27 February the following year. Newspapers, radios and televisions dedicated a prime slot to every political or military move during this period. The coverage almost reached saturation point in the Western media. But whether the public was truly kept well informed or manipulated is a debatable point. And present study aims to examine this aspect.

The Western media, especially radio broadcast by its partisan coverage of the crisis, during the months preceding the Gulf war, was attempting to prepare their population for a military confrontation in the volatile West Asia. Because of the Western domination of international electronic media this had profound implications for the rest of the world.

The pattern of European radio reporting clearly indicated that there was definite preparation for war, both on the ground and in the media. Substantial airtime had been given for discussing military aspects of the crisis at the expense of several other dimensions of the problems in the Gulf. Media experts, area specialists and commentators had seemed to have conveniently ignored the historical problems about the status of

Kuwait. They seemed to have underplayed the issue of homeland for the millions of Palestinians who lived in many West Asian countries as second class citizens. There had hardly been any debate in the media about the possible long-term implications of the war in the Gulf, nor had there been any concern about the environmental aspects of the crisis. Moreover, there had been very little discussion of why the democratic west was supporting such undemocratic Gulf Sheikhdoms.

The Gulf war was a culmination of a series of development following Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait on August 1990. The international community under UN condemned the act of aggression without any delay and passed a resolution asking Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait immediately. An all comprehensive sanctions was imposed on Iraq to comply with the UN resolution which did begin to take effect soon. But since Iraq did not withdraw within the UN stipulated time, the US led allies overruled reliance on sanctions and promoted the option of use of force to be the right course. And therefore a massive military operation began presumably to liberate Kuwait.

Though the legitimacy for the military action was apparently to defend the UN Charter, and upholding international law for bringing justice and harmony, the real motives went beyond these seemingly pronounced credible reasons. The West had a large stake in the region for its oil dependent economy and life style. The U.S conceived *Security Structure* did not allow emergence of new regional powers. And analysts

speak of the United States urge to reassert its superpower role at the beginning of the Post-Cold War world order. The Western media convinced of the threats to such concept of world order, effectively orchestrated a world opinion that use of force was the only viable alternative.

The media discourse portrayed Iraq and its President Saddam Hussein a mad-man, bent on destroying the world peace and security. Media was effectively used to impress the point that military option was better than the option of strict enforcement of UN sanctions against Iraq to resolve the crisis. Secondly, the media also presented the dominant impression that only US had the where-with-all for effective and successful pursuit of war against Iraq and resolve the crisis. Thereby the media played a effective role in projecting the need for military operation pursued beyond the liberation of Kuwait into Iraqi territory to destroy Iraqi war machine and overthrow Saddam Hussein. The coverage of the actual war was more of a dramatic representation rather than the ground realities of death, destruction and what is ultimately a war that was unnecessary.

The Western response to the crisis, to the Iraqi aggression beginning with the role of UN and a favourable world opinion created by media in support of 'use of force' raises a number of question on the issue of the type of 'new world order' that is being propagated. In this context Chapter One deals with the interrelations of media in the evolving world politics today. The *centre-periphery* structure of relations between the

developed and developing world continued even after the process of decolonisation began. Media was said to be an effective link in perpetuating this dependent relationship. With ever increasing role of the media in an age of information technology this premises needs examination.

In the broad perspective of media's role in the world politics present study attempts to examine the media's part in the Gulf Crisis, by analyzing two of the prominent European Radio catering to international audience, namely British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) from London and Radio Deutsche Welle or The Voice of Germany (VOG) from Cologne, Germany.

Media coverage of the Gulf Crisis had two distinct phase: one during the escalation of the crisis culminating into war, and second during the military operation. The early phase portrayed the crisis as a threat to the world peace, pointing the finger at Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as engineer of all the crisis and they said it was essential to reject him. The Second and Third chapters examines the discourses of the media during this period by applying the principles of qualitative analysis to find out how did they influence the escalation of the crisis.

The Fourth chapter examines the radio reports during the later phase: the military operation against Iraq and how it had contributed to a war which went beyond its mandate, of liberating Kuwait and transforming, Iraq economy and military into a pre-industrial state.



*Chapter One*

*The Role of Media in the Evolving World  
Politics Today: Contextualising the Gulf Crisis*

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Today the world is witnessing an explosion of communication activities. The channels of information and media are multiplying day by day. Indeed it is communication, acting as a catalyst brought about dramatic changes around the world. Today the inflow and outflow of information is prompt and efficient. As a result people are able to read, hear and see what is happening in different part of the globe in real time. The sophisticated and rapid means of communication the world possess makes it possible to transmit information almost instantaneously between different regions of the globe. In turn people are able to formulate opinions on international issues mainly based on the inputs that are constantly projected by the mass media. Thus there develops a bond among people by these strings of communication and when there is disturbance of defective communication it adversely affects relations leading to tensions and conflict situations.

### **MEDIA FLOW ACROSS BORDERS**

Information plays a paramount role in international relations, both as means of communication between peoples and as instrument of understanding and knowledge between nations. The role played by information is all the more important and crucial to present-day International relation.

Aware of this once Louis Joinet of France's Ministry of Justice said in a speech to the organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): "Information is power and economic information is economic power, information has an economic value, and the ability to store and process certain type of data may well give one country political and technological advantage over other countries."<sup>1</sup>

## **INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION**

International communication became an important factor in the world politics specially after the second World War. Ideological differences between East-West became the centre of media debate. By 1960's however many newly independent countries in Asia and Africa began to see Western dominance of the international economic and communication system. These Third World countries charged that such dominance posed threats to their political independence cultural identity and socio-economic development. Debates over freedom of information in international contexts are focussed largely on the flow of news and broadcast materials within and across national frontiers. While Western governments and media representatives demanded the enforcement of unrestrained flow of 'information' socialist and communist nations called

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<sup>1</sup> Cees J. Hamelink, "Informatics :Third World Call for New Order (Transborder Data Flow: New Frontiers or None?)", *Journal of Communication* (New York), vol.29, no.2, 1979, p.147.

for formulating national and international policies to regulate the flow of news, films and television programmes into their societies. While the Third World countries spoke in terms of imbalance in the flow of information, which was viewed as adversely affecting indigenous culture and political integration. These charges were based largely on empirical data which indicated that the global flow of information relating to the Third World was imbalanced, distorted and focussed on 'negative' rather than 'developmental news'.<sup>2</sup>

These countries began to question the very idea of 'free flow of information'. C.C. Lee, noted that this concept emerged from the traditional American notion of 'free market place of ideas'. The principle of free flow of information was occupied important position of American foreign policies in the late 1940's and throughout the 1950's. And because of the American dominance in the international scene immediately after the Second World War they managed to etch this concept into the UN Charter, the universal Declaration of Human Rights and other related UNESCO documents.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Mohammad I. Ayish, "International Communication in 1990s: Implication for the Third World," *International Affairs* (London), vol.68, no.3, 1992, p.487.

<sup>3</sup> C.C.Lee, "The Politics of International Communication: Changing the Rules of Game", *Gazette*, vol.44, 1989, p.75.

While Mustapha Masmoudi of Tunisia, a staunch supporter of the idea of a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) commented that : "Freedom of information is presented as a corollary of freedom of opinion and freedom of expression, but was in fact conceived as 'freedom of the information agents'. As a result it has become an 'instrument of dominance in the hands of those who control the media.'"<sup>4</sup>

### **WESTERN DOMINANCE OF INTERNATIONAL MEDIA SCENE**

The phenomena of Western dominance in the field of media is not a new concept. In the 19th century itself Britain, France and Germany, the three major powers of that time used the press as an instrument to advance their political interests Reuter, Havas and Wolfe, the three news agencies controlled by these powers respectively were used to indulge in all sorts of propoganda to further their interests. <sup>5</sup>

This trend continued with advances in communication technologies contributing to the growth and expansion of transnational corporations. Indeed. as these technologies became more powerful and efficient, it became easier to manage larger and more dispersed segments

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Ayish, n.2, p.490.

<sup>5</sup> Govind Narain Srivastava, *NAM and the New Internatioal Information and Communication Order* (New Delhi, 1989), P.34.

of transnational enterprises.

Terms such as 'media moguls', 'global media barons', and 'lords of the global village' have become commonplace to describe individual such as Rupert Murdoch, Sylvio Berlusconi, Henry Luce, and the Warner Brothers, who have created transnational corporate structures that combine holdings in broadcast, print, and film production and also control distribution facilities such as satellites and cable networks. Ted Turner's Cable News Network (CNN) is now transmitted to 127 countries and the network claims, it has a world-wide audience of 75 million.<sup>6</sup>

The second largest media conglomerate in terms of assets is the German firm Bertelsmann AG with properties in 15 countries on four continents. Rubert Murdoch's news corporation based in Australia is the largest newspaper group in the world, running newspaper offices in Australia, New Zealand, U.K. and US. Its Sky Television satellite system is the largest in the Europe. His media pervasion came to Asia through STAR TV network. And aptly he is called the 'Megallan of the Information Age.'<sup>7</sup>

The international flow of news too is dominated by a few global news agencies. In fact it is difficult for news institutions to maintain

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<sup>6</sup> Elizebeth C. Hanson, "The Global Media System and International Relations", in Kanti P. Bajpai, and Harish C. Shukul, eds., *Interpreting World Politics* (New Delhi, 1995), p.275.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.276.

enough infrastructure stationed around the world to obtain effective global coverage except for the really powerful institutions. We can identify four main international agencies, namely *Reuters* (U.K.), *Associated Press* (U.S), *Agence France Presses* (France) and *United Press International* (U.S).

In the 19th century, imperial Britain was the super power that laid down the law for the rest of the world. The doctrine of 'free trade' was imposed upon other countries for its own prosperity. But post-Second World War era had been characterised as American monopoly of international communication and a shift from imperial British power. The end of the World War II found the USA emerging as the world's unchallenged superpower, economically dominating and politically stable. Therefore American motive was to hold the string and thereby command and dominate the international communication system. It helped the USA in checkmating the growing power of the Soviet Union, a potential rival, during the period of the Cold War from 1950's.

The post-second World War shift of media hegemony from Europe to US in the 1950's onwards is now gradually reversing back to Europe as the leading news producer. A writer Jeremy Tunstall who claimed "The Media are American" in 1970's in a book by the same name now has now concedes that he saw Europe as already the world leader in news, with Reuters - visnews- BBC alliance as the premier single

grouping.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless some observers believe it is doubtful that any single country, or even Europe can be regarded as the global media hegemony in the last decade of the 20th century. Of late there is more evidence of trend towards 'global pluralism' on the rise of new production centres, with more developing countries producing and exporting media materials.

However by virtue of modern communication technology and network the developed countries still hold the key to international communication system. Within the complex framework of the transnational communication system, the news agencies of developed world penetrate deeply in the Third World countries and come to play an important role.

The imbalances in news flows and global communication pattern have many negative effects. The argument is that being a vast majority Third World countries have been reduced to a state of passive receivers of information without having any right to reciprocate. It is often said information disseminated was tailored to cater to the western way of life.

Dereck Ingram a communication expert stating on the international flow of news that the news was not only one-sided but often irrelevant.<sup>9</sup> The irony of the situation is that while developed countries

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Srivastava, n.5, P.29.



are more concerned with content, quality and relevance of the news they receive, the Western media were generally destructive of the quality and content of the news disseminated regarding the developing countries in the process of modifying the news to Western specifications and tastes.

Another drawback found by the Third World countries about Western dominated media is the neo-colonialist attitude of the West. The relationship which prevailed during the colonial period and said to prevail in different forms between the Third World vis-a-vis industrialised world has been historically characterised as 'centre and periphery' relationship.

At the time of colonial rule the imperial powers in order to satisfy the colonies established industries as part of economic development but they were only an illusion of development as most the industries and infrastructure were consumer goods oriented, dependent on inputs for capital goods. This created dependent structured relations. This led to a structural gap, because colonialism perpetuated a socio-economic system in which there was little link between the structure of need of the population and the structure of production within the colony. The resulting relationship between the colonizer and the colonized nations was called 'centre-periphery'.<sup>10</sup> In which the centre were physically occupied by the centre of the ruling power. The theory of centre and periphery which had

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<sup>10</sup> P.Jalee, *The Pilage of the Third World*, Mary Kloper, trans. (New York, 1968), p.78.

been developed by scholars like P.Jalee to describe politico-economic relations, applies also to existing international information order, as communication has been part and parcel of international dynamics and transnational relations.

To describe this dependency factor on communication, Stevenson gives the example of television programme like 'Dallas' and 'Disney Cartoons'. They are popular in Third World countries as in U.S. The reason is not because of their universal appeal but because the transnational corporations first created the demand for it, and then sold the programme to satisfy the demand.<sup>11</sup>

The attitude of viewing the Third World issues from an Western angle are evident from many of the media portrayal of socio-political problems even today. In a speech to the UN press corps, the former UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghalli criticized the current coverage of world news, he said,"all too often it features only the most dramatic or the most horrible".<sup>12</sup> These presentation without sustained coverage lack context. There is no space for discussing history, all of which would only complicate what is otherwise a tidy picture of post-colonial recidivism.

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<sup>11</sup> Robert L. Stevenson, *Communication, Development and the Third World: The Global Politics of Information* (New York, 1983), P.125.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Siddarth Varadarajan, "Media and Empire: World News Through the Colonial Gaze", *Times of India* (Delhi), 10 October 1996.

Siddarth Varadarajan states analytical oversimplification is the easiest way to make strange places and stranger conflicts intelligible to reader. It is because of this phrases like 'warlords', 'Muslim extremists', 'cycle of violence' and tribal war' are freely made use of. <sup>13</sup>

## **NEW WORLD INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ORDER**

Keeping in mind the negative impact of Western style of media presentation and Western control over world information, efforts had been taken by some section of the Third World to rectify this order. Efforts and discussions in this field began in the seventies with the entry of the UNESCO which resulted in a series of declarations from 1970. There were series of debates held under the aegis of the UNESCO to gather opinions and views with regard to the New International Information Order, the Western world presented stiff opposition to any control on information flow.

In the year 1978, a high power commission headed by Sean McBride was established to study the World communication problems in totality. Consequently a Mass Media declaration on New Information Order was brought forth. It aimed at a universal, equitable, free, fair and balanced flow of information updated and attuned to the new social

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

conditions generated by the electronic era.<sup>14</sup> The new order implied a redefinition of news as a social good and a cultural product, and not as consumer commodity. Though final form of the declaration was much diluted from the original one it provoked anger and resentment in the West. The *New York Time* wrote: "The foolish deed is done".<sup>15</sup> Analysts stated the concern of the West was not exactly free flow of information but their interests. "They took the position of defenders of freedom. But in fact what they were advocating was political and economic and ideological interests."<sup>16</sup>

Mustapha Masmoudi, Tunisia's ambassador to UNESCO and a highly articulate crusader in the cause of new global order tried to harness communication to political development. He argued that a flagrant quantitative imbalance between north and south created by the disparity between the volume of news and information emanating from the developed world and intended for the developing countries, and the volume of flow in the opposite direction.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> D.R. Mankekar, *Whose Freedom? Whose Order?* (Delhi, 1981), p.206.

<sup>15</sup> *New York Times*, 27 November 1978.

<sup>16</sup> Elena Androunas and Yassen Zassocrsk, "Protecting the Sovereignty of Information", *Journal of Communication*, vol.29, no.2, 1979, p.187.

<sup>17</sup> Mustapha Masmoudi, "The New World Information Order", *Journal of Communication*, vol.29, no.2, 1979, p.172.

He continued to say that there was a 'defacto hegemony' and a will to dominate evident in the marked indifference in the media in the developed countries, particularly in the west, to the problems, concerns and aspirations of the developing countries.<sup>18</sup>

Masmoudi stated, "there is obvious misleading through highlighting events whose significance is often limited; in collecting isolated facts and presenting them as a whole; or in setting out facts in such a way that the conclusion to be drawn from them is necessarily favourable to the interests of the transnational system".<sup>19</sup>

## **THE GULF CRISIS AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER**

The phrase "New World Order" has recently been used a lot by statesmen and thinkers, referring to the new constellation of international relationships witnessed in the late eighties. There had been a surge in liberal democracies, starting with political revolution which swept through Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The world was emerging from the 45-year long Cold War and the bi-polar global order was giving way to a non-polar world order auguring fewer tensions and more

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.173.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.175.

cooperation and accommodation. As a result the hierarchy of international power equations changed, sustained by economic and technological capabilities than military power. In this circumstance no wonder the United States had been "clutching at every straw to maintain its pre-eminent status in the emerging world order."<sup>20</sup> And at such time Iraqi invasion upset the historical watershed in the world politics, and the United States seized on this opportunity to recast its superpower role. The international community was robbed of its own agenda of the new world order.

Caution and prudence might be thought to be the required influences over action to resolve the Gulf Crisis in such circumstance, but this was not the case. Indeed the responses to the Gulf crisis took place against an immediate background of escalating passions, related foreboding, and outright contradictions.<sup>21</sup>

The US Secretary of State, James Baker speech to the World Affairs Council in Los Angeles confirm the kind of passion let loose by the US. He said :

So let me tell you what is at stake. Iraq's aggression challenges world peace. We live in one of those rare transforming moments of history. The Cold War is over, an era of full promise has begun.. after decades of conflict, the

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<sup>20</sup> Seyed Sadrocin Moosavi, "US Policy in the Persian Gulf and the Emerging World Order", *International Studies* (New Delhi), vol.31, no.3, 1994, p.321.

<sup>21</sup> Michal McKintey, *The Gulf War: Critical Perspectives* (Canberra, 1994), P.2.

United States and the Soviet Union are writing new rules of cooperation. After a long period of stagnation, the ideals of UN Charter are becoming realities. Saddam Hussein's aggression shatters the vision of a better world.<sup>22</sup>

The United States promising an era full of promise and new rules of cooperation resorted to the means of political violence to usher in the new world order, it was propagating. It is ridiculous to talk of new world order after a short war in which a large coalition including the military forces of a number of powers defeated a mid-level developing nation. This does not represent much of an advantage toward a desirable world.

An international coalition largely defined by the US but including the United Nations, functioning like a committee to approve US strategies demonstrated the dependence of that body on the power and consent of the United States. The United Nations has never been permitted to intervene against the US interests.<sup>23</sup>

The actual phase of the present crisis in the Gulf commenced only in February 1990, when Iraq showed anti-Israeli postures. At that time Iraq was apparently engaged in domestic reconstruction after a long

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<sup>22</sup> James Baker address, *US Department of State Dispatch*, 5 November 1990, p.235.

<sup>23</sup> Pam Solo, "Talking Law, Waging War"( Reflections on the New World Order), *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (Chicago), vol.47, no.5, 1991, p.25.

and devastating war with Iran. The visit of Kuwait's Foreign Minister in February showed Iraqi relations with Kuwait was cordial. The Baghdad Radio described the visit as "manifestation of brotherly relations between the two countries".<sup>24</sup> But its relations with the West entered into a confrontation course during the same period. Iraq demanded American naval withdrawal from the Gulf at February 1990 Baghdad summit of the Arab Cooperation Council. From that point the confrontation with the US and Europe rapidly escalated pushed along by Bazoft affair ( The British journalist executed in Iraq on charges of espionage in March the same year). And Iraq continued to voice its radical views opposed to Western hegemony in the region. And tension began to mount between Iraq on the one hand and Israel and the West on the other. In July 1990 the tension took another turn when Saddam Hussein blamed the Gulf rulers plotting with the US to keep oil prices low through over production. He observed threateningly that "if words fail to protect Iraqis something effective must be done."<sup>25</sup> This was followed by a letter by the Foreign Minister, Tariq Aziz charging Kuwait and UAE of driving down the oil prices. It accused Kuwait of having stolen 2.4 billion dollars worth of oil from Rumeilah field.

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<sup>24</sup> *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* (Virginia), on East and South Asia region, 20 February 1990.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in John Bulloch, and Harvey Morries, *Saddam's War: The Origins of the Kuwait Conflict and the International Response* (London, 1991), p.18.



This triggered a chain of reaction among the Gulf countries. Kuwait launched a diplomatic offensive and put its 20,000 men armed forces on alert. Some Arab leaders commenced mediation efforts in the wake of Aziz's letter and arranged meeting between Iraq and Kuwait in order to resolve the key territorial and economic issues. But late on 1 August 1990 the talks broke down. Before dawn the next day Iraq invaded Kuwait.

The international community promptly reacted to the Iraqi invasion and demanded immediate withdrawal. The act certainly called for international reprehension and also needed a permanent solution by addressing the underlying causes in the dispute. But for the United States and its European and Far East allies, it was a cluster of economic and political interests which were at stake: oil, arms market and petrodollars. It was unanimously accepted by the US policy makers that denial of access to Persian Gulf would be a blow of catastrophic proportion to the security and economy of the West and the industrialised Far East. Oil is not only lifeblood of modern industrial societies but also a vital ingredient in military power. The prospect of Saddam Hussein controlling about 25 per cent of world's oil was frightening for American interests.

The prompt US decision to wage a high-tech war against Iraq may be explained in terms combination of all these factors, and so it pursued a military solution rather than diplomatic. From the outset it was clear that the coalition was capable of defeating Saddam Hussein's Iraq,

but the objective went for wider. And the question remains, at the end of the so called successful military and media campaign that Bush administration's new world order looks very much like the old world order. Thus the order that presented itself in the Middle East has serious flaws. The new world order implied that the international community acts collectively, but most countries allowed the United States to do the job.

Secondly a new world order cannot be confined to preventing outright aggression but has to deal with the underlying causes, the economic inequality, ideological, cultural and ethnic rivalries as well as blatant human rights violations.<sup>26</sup> The underlying causes perhaps must have been crushed and certainly not solved. So certainly that the war would leave unresolved the underlying question which gave rise to it. They are in a sense buried in their undead state, threatening to rise in future, with an appeal to the another generation of international leaders' sense of reasonableness and justice. So in a world which knew that something other and better was required in the relations between adversarial states than promises of annihilation, was there not something absurd about the rush to war which took place in the last quarter of 1990?

The Gulf War seems less likely to go into military history as a great feat of arms. Instead it may be recorded as a series of brutal acts

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<sup>26</sup> Thomas Risse Kappan, "From a Ray of Hope"(Reflections on the New World Order)", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol.47, no.5, 1991, p.26.

perpetrated against citizens of a Third World state with a dictator as leader.<sup>27</sup> So the historian Draper noted: "If the world is going to be new, the change is not likely to be orderly, and if ( President Bush) is going to restore order, the world is not going to be new".<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Leonard V. Johnson, "Time for Common Security (Reflections on the New World Order)", Ibid, p.28.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Mckintey, n.21, p.187.

*Chapter Two*

*European Radio and  
Escalation of Gulf Crisis*

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The Western media power includes its vast electronic media network besides its formidable press news agency network. Unlike the print media the electronic media has no boundaries. It is not bound by the laws of the respective states it reaches. This transborder characteristic of the radio broadcasting is significant in international politics, as the radio service is the biggest mass media next only to press. Many of the Third World countries operate their own broadcasting stations only in close ranges, while the powerful West like the Voice of America, British Broadcasting Corporation and Deutsche Welle, reach almost all over the world in different languages through short wave frequencies.

The Voice of America almost functions as the US administrations official instrument of external propaganda. This station operates 800 hours per week in 38 languages.<sup>1</sup> Their programmes had for long been concentrating on spreading anti-communist ideologies on the one hand and encouraging the western ways of thought and behaviour.

The BBC operates external services in English and other foreign languages. These programmes are on the air for 710 hours a week. The programmes include its weekly broadcasts scheduled for Africa had been for 19 hours, for the Middle East for 63 hours; for the Far East 49

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<sup>1</sup> G.N. Srivastava, *NAM and the New International Information and Communication Order* (New Delhi, 1989), P.39.

hours and for Latin America it devoted 44 hours.<sup>2</sup> The BBC plays a significant role in disseminating Western propaganda in the developing countries.

Radio Deutsche Welle had been the main instrument of the Federal Republic of Germany's external propaganda. It operates 588 hours a week in German and other 33 foreign languages. It broadcasts 91 hours for Africa, 65 hours for Asia and 50 hours for the Middle East and North Africa and 42 hours for Latin America.<sup>3</sup>

The Western media since 1950's been engaged in ideological warfare with its counterpart Soviet Union. With the end of Cold War, policy makers and scholars suggested that with apparent demise of Communism as a plausible worldview, there existed no important ideological differences between nations of the world. Inherent in the idea as "New World Order" is that there would be consensus on major international issues.

The Gulf crisis in 1991 seemed to provide the first test to such a world order. As the United Nations military forces began to build up its presence in the Persian Gulf, journalists and politicians often asserted that there was a consensus of 'world opinion' supporting military intervention

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.41.

to expel Iraq from Kuwait. While some questioned the very idea of 'world opinion', some argued to the contrary that there could be 'American opinion' or 'French opinion' but there cannot be world opinion as such. However research conducted to examine the existence of such 'world opinion' claimed that it did exist. A study conducted by Ronald Hinckly through a survey administered in large cities of 11 countries in October 1990 revealed that in spite of internal differences there existed a world opinion.<sup>4</sup>

Hinckly Study claimed that public opinion had a distinctive north south split; European opinion was strongly supportive of UN actions, while Japan gradually moved toward supporting. In the Middle East and Latin America the support for U.S. action was low. And the citizens of many developing nations remained skeptical of the U.S. motivation.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless there did develop a overall consensus of opinion on Gulf Crisis.

If there existed a consensus or a world opinion what are the likely sources? Page and Shaprio<sup>6</sup> said that the public forms rational opinions on the basis of exposure to available or given the information. They said that particular sources of news and commentary reach the public

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<sup>4</sup> Clyde Wilcox, and others, "World Opinion in the Gulf Crisis", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (London), vol.37, no.1, 1993, p.72.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.71.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Wilcox, Ibid.

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through the media, providing much of the factual and interpretative material that mediates the effects of objective events on public opinion. They suggest that experts and other news sources provide the information and analysis on which the public bases its opinions. This therefore suggests that one major possible source of world opinion lies in the way of framing of issues by political and media elites.

### **FRAME WORK FOR ANALYSIS IN THE STUDY**

The present study analyses the European media specifically, news reports of BBC and Radio Deutsche Welle (Voice of Germany) during the Gulf Crisis by applying principles of qualitative analysis. A considerable literature on the media's role during the Gulf War representing different theoretical and political perspectives has emerged. However there has been little work on the European media as such and more so the medium of radio has been less studied.

Critical analysis of 'communication' and media products can be broadly approached from two perspectives- quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative analysis or content analysis statistically measures the amount of space allotted or duration given or occurrence of such terms which connote specific attitude. While qualitative analysis method is based on a frame work consisting of language, style, construction and presentation. This can be further divided into critique, analysis and



polemics. Though there is a danger of subjectivity in this type of study as Jalbert points out, "Analysis should explicate possible meanings which is there in texts, not instruct us as to which meaning should be taken up."<sup>7</sup> caution has been taken to analyse the reports objectively.

This study is an analysis of radio reports which are available in the form of monitored reports. They are verbatim reproduction of the said broadcasts however they are edited, modified and selected according to relative importance attached. There is no record of details like the proportion of retained materials from that of original broadcasts, how many times they were repeated in a day and specific slot given in a particular bulletin.

Taking into account the existing limitations and the increasing emphasis laid on qualitative analysis as research method the present researcher is adopting the qualitative - text analysis method, taking the radio reports as discourses which contribute to building up social networks and attitude formation. And make a sincere effort to overcome subjective bias in interpreting these texts.

News coverage is organised largely by implicit 'frames' - persistent pattern of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which a symbolic unity is built into

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<sup>7</sup> Paul L. Jalbert, "Critique and Analysis in Media Studies: Media Criticism as Practical Action", *Discourse and Society* (London), vol.6, no.1, 1995, p.7.

the discourse while the events themselves may not have them. According to Gitlin, "Media are mobile spotlights, not passive mirrors of the society; selectivity is the instrument of their action. As news story adopts a certain frame and rejects or downplays material that is discrepant. A story is a choice, a way of seeing an event that also amounts to a way of screening from sight." <sup>8</sup>

A discourse or report in our context during the time of conflict constructs the subject object relationship by which a virtual division is established categorising two parties opposed to each other in the conflict. These groups are gradually viewed as 'us' and 'them'. The other is progressively marginalised creating a negative image leading to rejecting the 'opponent' once an opponent image is strongly built.<sup>9</sup> A listener or reader identifies oneself with a group and the person is in consonance with oneself and the media over a period of time if he or she feels a part of the 'us' group. In the process of construction of the enemy, the other is attributed all the qualities which are anti-values

The exclusion procedures permit the cognitive categorisation of individuals into groups, which is a way of ordering perception and

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<sup>8</sup> T. Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley, 1980), p.49.

<sup>9</sup> Luisa Martin Rojo, "Division and Rejection of the Gulf Conflict: From Personification of the Gulf Conflict to the Demonization of Saddam Hussein", *Discourse and Society*, vol.6, no.1, 1995, p.51.

judgment, in making sense of social processes. Michal Foucault speaks of three different exclusion procedures which can also be seen in the way information on Gulf Crisis was presented. They are prohibition, division and rejection.<sup>10</sup>

We can see in the reports on Gulf Crisis, there was an apparent form of prohibition by not giving enough duration to present the Iraq's point of view. Moreover on military front the military was the sole information supplier who omitted, filtered and selected the story on their activities.

Division as said earlier essentially establishes an inclusive 'us' and exclusive 'them'. This division appears in reports dealing with the Gulf Crisis accompanied by terms like 'ours' vs 'their', 'order' vs 'brutality' and 'good' vs 'evil'.

Rejection principle allows the listener not only to identify the enemy but to give him an answer as well. That is when the categorisation of two camps are established the field of conflict and consensus is evoked to culminate into rejection. Rejection of Saddam Hussein is provoked by constructing an image in which he plays the stranger, the irrational being, the madman, the beast, and in this way he is ultimately personified as evil. This type of image justifies the war, the madman is dangerous, he

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Rojo, *Ibid.*, p.52.

must be eliminated, if not he may impose his irrationality on the world.<sup>11</sup>

These process of division and rejection is applied through various communication and language systems.

## 1. DIVISION

The division process is carried out principally by three different aspects, namely a) Intertextuality, b) Cognitive model and c) contrast.

### a) **Intertextuality**

The reporting strategy of intertextuality is to reproduce the ideology of one group by means of using texts of individuals involved. The persuasive content of news requires organising in order to be understood, represented, memorised and finally believed and integrated.<sup>12</sup> Van Dijk who points out that one way of adding the appearance of truth in news is to resort to evidence from other reliable sources such as authorities, respectable people and professionals.<sup>13</sup>

We find the radio reports under study resorting to extensive quoting of authorities in the period before the war. These quotations were

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.63.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.53.

<sup>13</sup> T.A. Van Dijk, *News As Discourse* ( New Jersey, 1988), p.84.

often presented as the main story of the news appearing in the headlines and leads.(leads are categories which summarise the content of the report and express the semantic macrostructure). In this way the speaker may give the floor momentarily to one of the characters. In our case the reports show preference for George Bush, James Baker, or some European leaders. And in accordance with the exclusion process, Saddam Hussein is very rarely quoted and if they are it is often discredited.

Another aspect of this technique is personification of the conflict. From the beginning of the crisis we see media resorting to blaming Saddam Hussein for the entire situation.

**b) Cognitive**

George Lakoff,<sup>14</sup> says that there exists a series of relatively fixed and extended conceptual metaphors and metonymies which organise our thoughts. If a concept is created by a metaphor or a metonym some aspects of it are emphasised and others inconsistent with them concealed.

i) Metaphor

Metaphor is an analogy of highly structured and concrete

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<sup>14</sup> George Lakoff, "Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf", in Marin Putz, ed., *Thirty Years of Linguistic Evolution*, (Philadelphia, 1992), p.463.

example to explain something which is highly unstructured and abstract. In news and comments on the Gulf War the same metaphor is used for the two contenders, but used in different ways for both. Use of metaphor helped sustain unanimous judgments on the state as a whole. The metaphor discovered the enemy, projected him, and pointed to the expected response, confrontation on the field -that is war.

ii) Metonym

Metonym (use of part for the whole) is a frequently used technique in the media reports especially when Saddam Hussein was involved. In case of Iraq, the reports do not talk about any abstract entity, but explicitly isolate Saddam Hussein as the agent responsible for the whole conflict as well, such as "If Saddam Hussein does not leave Kuwait unconditionally, he will expose his country to devastating consequences." This way it justified the response on Iraq because of some particular features of his personality. And to achieve that what is called a process of demonising his personality began.

**c) Contrast**

As the news reports were generally focused on Saddam Hussein, George Bush, Iraq, the US, the West or the international community, a separation between rationality and irrationality was created by juxtaposing one another.<sup>15</sup> One has to choose between the two sides. You have to be within the group or remain out of it. In this sense, emphasising only some features, attributing some particular actions or behaviour to the 'other' implied the absence of same features and forms of behaviour to one's own group, leading to a clear categorisation of two opposing groups.

**2. REJECTION**

Rejection is reinforced through the insertion of details which are associated with strong individual and cultural imagery that goes above all the differences of ideology of consensus and on ethnic prejudices. Thus we obtain a symbolic picture leading towards particular judgments, even though the news reports were not expressing them explicitly. Thus implicitness and inferencing are two important characteristics in the text, meanings are conveyed without being explicitly stated.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Rojo, n.9, p.65.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.67.

## BRACING UP FOR WAR

On 2 August 1990, a new term was added to the existing numerous lexicon used to describe events in the Middle East. The *Gulf Crisis* became the term that captured everyone's interest, particularly in the West. Terms such as the Iran-Iraq war, the *Arab-Israel conflict*, the *Intifeda*, *Muslim fundamentalism*, *terrorism* and *occupation* were familiar terms in the western media and to sizable number of people in the West. The 'Gulf Crisis' theme quickly came to occupy Western thoughts and dominated news headlines to a degree rarely seen before.

Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait at 4.00 am on 2 August 1990, and within twenty-four hours Kuwait was occupied. A wrong had been committed. The people of Kuwait lost their personal freedom, there was lawlessness and reports of atrocities committed by Iraqi troops during military occupation which lasted for 210 days. This however does not justify committing another wrong to undo the former. That's what exactly happened: the world witnessed a high-tech electronic war unleashed on Iraq in the name of rule of law by the 'international community'. The world either stood silent or their voices were not amplified by the media. The European media especially those dealt here who claim to function as independent media began to tow the line of Western governments.

The United Nations Security Council met in an emergency session and asked for immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces. But perhaps



the international community's role stopped at that point as far as crucial decision on Gulf crisis was concerned. The agenda was taken over by the United States. President Bush took the centre stage. He set the tone for the future course of action by calling for " immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces", a rhetoric the US struck to the end.

President Bush on the first day itself added that he was not contemplating any military option. We don't know if that is a way of conveying the opposite, a kind of technique adopted by people in power to what we call testing the water.

Media seem to thrive on dramatic events and crisis situations by building up imagery and prefer to use such catchy words to sustain the interest of their audience.

Mr Baker told a news conference.. to accept such a settlement would be to allow the Iraqi leader to benefit from his rape of Kuwait.<sup>17</sup>

Presidents Bush and Gorbachev have said their resolve to show that Iraqis aggression against Kuwait will not pay off..<sup>18</sup>

Due to continuing Gulf Crisis about a thousand Pakistanis along with Indians .. are streaming across Iraq's northern border. They are tired,

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<sup>17</sup> BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation): 0730 Hrs., 17 October 1990, *Today's Radio Report*, Monitoring Services, All India Radio (New Delhi), vol. 16-17 September 1990, p.C.VII.

<sup>18</sup> VOG (Voice of Germany): 0730 Hrs., 11 September 1990, *Ibid.*, vol. 10-11 September 1990, p.F-1.

hungry and full stories of illtreatment.<sup>19</sup>

Mr Bush said, denying President Saddam Hussein the fruits of his aggression is called for.<sup>20</sup>

Mrs Thatcher told the special envoy (Mr Primakov) that it was not the international community's task to save the face of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.<sup>21</sup>

As these examples show amply the type of imagery freely and extensively used by the Western alliance and frequently quoted in the radio reports: "rape of Kuwait", "Iraqi aggression", "fruits of his aggression", are some of the expressions employed by Western leaders. We also find BBC correspondent for his part painting a vivid picture for the radio listeners by phrases like, "streaming across", "tired, hungry and full of stories". A point to be noted here would be that the number of persons who actually crossed the border are a thousand and the description used, match as that of tens of thousands.

On 3rd August President Bush raised a new issue: the possibility of attack on Saudi Arabia by Iraq. He said "the integrity and freedom of Saudi Arabia are very, very important to the United States",

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<sup>19</sup> BBC: 0715 Hrs., 1 September 1990, Ibid., vol.31 August-1 September 1990, p.C-VI.

<sup>20</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 1 September 1990, Ibid., vol. 1-2 September 1990, p.C-VII.

<sup>21</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 21 October 1990, Ibid., vol.20-21 October 1990, p.F-1.

and assured United States' support to Saudi Arabia.<sup>22</sup> But the President gave no clue as to why he feared an attack and why he offered help when no one asked him to do so. Such step obviously had been to prepare the public for the deployment of the multinational force under the cover of protection. It was stated later that shortly after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait the Iraqis notified the American embassy in Baghdad that they had no intention of entering Saudi territory.<sup>23</sup>

On 5 August 1990 Secretary of Defense Cheney flew to Saudi Arabia with a specific aim: "Get Saudi King Fahd to invite US troops to defend it, persuade him."<sup>24</sup> As a result the United States had put together a coalition against Iraq consisting of European powers, the Arabs states and others. But the presence of multinational forces led by the United States in the region brought threat of war nearer to Iraq.

President Mubarak has confirmed that Egypt is to send more troops to defend Saudi Arabia against a possible attack by Iraq.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> B.K. Srivastava, "The Great Powers and the Gulf Crisis: The Course of an Uneasy Alliance", in A.H.H. Abidi, and K.R. Singh, eds., *The Gulf Crisis* (New Delhi, 1991), p.47.

<sup>23</sup> Adel Safty, "Dateline Iraq: Confrontation, War and the Great Game of Balance of Power", *International Studies* (New Delhi), vol.29, no.4, 1992, p.415.

<sup>24</sup> Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York, 1991), p.58.

<sup>25</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 9 September 1990, n.17, vol.8-9 September 1990, p.C-III.

The US Defence Secretary Mr Cheney spoke of the need for more heavy armor be deployed .. to deal with any contingency. He said the American build up was in part a response to events inside Kuwait. He said the Iraqis now have well over 400,000 troops in Kuwait.. and continuing to fortify their positions.<sup>26</sup>

Reports like these repeatedly broadcasted to justify continued troop deployment. Meanwhile, the opinion such as opposing or adverse reaction to deployment were hardly broadcast.

After the UN Security Council on the basis of Iraqi aggression imposed mandatory sanctions against Iraq, the anti-Iraq alliance made preparations for war. As early as 3 August 1990, top officials of the Bush administration were frankly admitting that American military intervention "was rising rapidly to the top of their list of options."<sup>27</sup> American officials were instructed to forestall any negotiated Arab resolution of the crisis. At their meeting at Camp David on 4 August Bush and his advisors agreed that the American military intervention in the area must be presented within the context of defending Saudi Arabia because "Kuwait is not popular among the Arabs".<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile the Arab leaders who had been planning a conference at Jeddah to arrive at a negotiated settlement had to cancel it

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<sup>26</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 26 October 1990, Ibid., vol. 25-26 October 1990, p.C-IV.

<sup>27</sup> *New York Times*, 4 August 1990.

<sup>28</sup> Woodward, n.24, p.64.

as deployment of troops had already began and also because President Bush declared that attempt by the Arab countries to find an Arab solution was a failure. Everybody understood on the 5 August that American President excluding all possibility of negotiations was opting for a strategy of confrontation: war was implied in his decision.

### **THE METAPHOR OF THE JUST WAR**

Media especially the electronic media tries to simplify the complex situations in its presentations. In the process of simplification certain fixed terms and concepts are used to help listener understand a new situation with preexisting concepts he has been accustomed to. One way of achieving this is the use of metaphors. The use of metaphors and other figures of speech facilitates better comprehension. But a set pattern of definitions lends its in-built ethnic prejudices, cultural biases either intentionally or unintentionally to a new set of meanings. This can cause great social damages when it hides realities in a harmful way.

Pain, dismemberment, starvation, and the death or injury of loved ones are not metaphorical. They are real whether the victim is a Iraqi, Kuwaiti or an American. Manipulation of use of metaphor can thus become a tool in the hands of propagandists especially in the times of conflicts. Let us examine how the European radios employed these propaganda methods.

The debates on Gulf crisis was flooded with metaphorical references. US Secretary of State James Baker did not want to allow "the Iraqi leader benefit from his rape of Kuwait". For Senator Stephen Solarz: "evil was on the march in the Persian Gulf". Margaret Thatcher advocated necessary action against "ruthless, barbaric dictator Saddam Hussein". And for BBC correspondent the speech of Saddam Hussein was a "bloodthirsty rhetoric". (Phrases from the radio texts quoted below).

George Lakoff, in his essay on 'Metaphor of war' compares the propaganda technique used by the West in the Gulf crisis to that of a fairy tale.<sup>29</sup> Normally a fairy tale consist of a villain, a victim and a hero. Moreover, a typical fairy tale's plot consists of a crime committed by the villain against an innocent victim. The villain is inherently evil, hence it is not possible to reason with him. The hero after passing through many hardships defeats the villain to rescue the victim. The moral balance is restored and victory won. Contrast and asymmetry between the hero and villain are essential components of the tale. The hero is moral and courageous, while the villain is immoral and vicious. The hero is rational, but the villain is irrational yet he may be cunning, he cannot be reasoned with. Heroes thus cannot negotiate with villains; they must defeat them.

Stephen Solarz said 'the great lesson of our times is that evil still exists and when evil is on the march, it must be confronted in the Persian Gulf.'<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Lakoff, n.14, p.463.

<sup>30</sup> Voice of America: 1700 Hrs.,12 January 1991, n.17, vol.12-13 January 1991, p. C-X.

The Archbishop of Canterbury said that the war was for justice but he would pray that Kuwait be liberated with application of lesser force.<sup>31</sup>

The media quickly absorbed these constructions by either quoting them from sources or by momentary lending of platform or directly employing it themselves as seen frequently.

### **DEMONISING SADDAM HUSSEIN**

The villain in the fairly tale of the Just War may be cunning but he cannot be rational. The logic of the metaphor demands that Saddam Hussein be irrational. The question whether he is rational or irrational is secondary. But the West led by US constructed him to be irrational, a symbol of evil.

Saddam Hussein appealed for Holy war against U.S troops and asked for toppling the Saudi...<sup>32</sup>

Mrs Thatcher has said that the situation of hostages ... must not stand in the way of any necessary action against what she called the ruthless, barbaric dictator Saddam Hussein.<sup>33</sup>

Prime Minister John Major said, 'you don't negotiate with someone who has broken into your house as to whether he should leave.'<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> BBC: 0815 Hrs., 17 January 1991, Ibid., vol.16-17 January 1991, p.C-X.

<sup>32</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 7 September 1990, Ibid.,vol.6-7 September 1990, p.f-2.

<sup>33</sup> BBC: 0830 Hrs., 16 September 1990, Ibid., vol. 16-17 September 1990, p.C-VIII.

<sup>34</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 6 January 1991, Ibid., vol. 6-7 January 1991, p.C-II.

BBC Correspondent in Baghdad says... a bloodthirsty rhetoric has emerged as Iraqi foreign policy.<sup>35</sup>

This is the part of the process of what is called demonisation of Saddam Hussein. The comparisons went on to Hitler and to Iraq to Nazi Germany. As Daya Kishan Thussu said " a systematic denigration of the President Saddam Hussein got underway in the media. Initial western reports called him a mad man hell bent on destroying the world peace and security."<sup>36</sup>

As the media takes up this social imagery the listener is asked to understand the Gulf war recalling and updating an old model, which as Lakoff claims is a fairly tale.

The reports of Gulf war constitute a perfect example of how mass media had projected 'us' into the farthest corners of the earth and how the 'other' who personifies all our fears aggression, cruelty, inhumanity, madness, appears as direct menace.

A contrast is created between the two contenders - George Bush and Saddam Hussein by the type of titles ascribed. One of the basic rules in the journalistic book is that when addressing a head of state one

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<sup>35</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 10 January 1991, *Ibid.*, vol.9- 10 January 1991, p.C-X.

<sup>36</sup> Daya Kishan Thussu, "Telling Only Half the Story: Gulf in the Media", *Economic and Political Weekly* (Bombay), vol.29, no.3, 1991, p.93.



always mentions his post or title before his name. Whatever may be his record in office he still occupied the presidency of Iraq. Yet a tendency was manifested in the coverage as to address the Iraqi president as just Saddam Hussein or even merely Saddam.

Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein is reported by BBC.. BBC reported yesterday that Saddam had made a statement to this effect..<sup>37</sup>

A 'President' represents his country; he has we suppose been elected, and should commend respect of the public . We don't see the media using similar phrases as 'George said' or 'Margaret called on ' to address them. Because an individual who is being addressed by his first name only (Saddam) represents himself alone. One may also notice the implication of expression 'Saddam ordered the parliament'. It connotes that Iraqi parliament may blindly execute. The term 'ordered' being inferred from the act is left to the observer to describe and VOG chooses to describe it as ordered to suit the previous expression 'dictator'.

Thus the participants are categorised through the use of language in the reports and comments. By closer scrutiny and analysis we come to know what is considered negative, both socially and by certain

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<sup>37</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 12 October 1990, n.17, vol.11-12 October 1990, p.F-II.

groups in power.

## THE STATE AS A PERSON

The state is conceptualized as person engaging in social relations within a world community. States are seen as having inherent disposition; they can be peaceful or aggressive, responsible, or irresponsible, industrious or lazy.<sup>38</sup>

Mr Bush has said that much had changed in the international climate .. and renegade regimes could no longer resort to force..<sup>39</sup>

Kuwait was joined by delegates from Saudi Arabia and the United States accusing Iraq of barbarism..<sup>40</sup>

This metaphor helps sustain unanimous judgments on the state as a whole in spite of its national differences. In news and views on the Gulf war the same metaphor is used for two contenders but the application is different.

President Bush has said 'Baghdad had to face the fact that rest of the world was against it'..<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Lakoff, n.14, p.465.

<sup>39</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 9 September 1990, n.17, vol.8-9 September 1990, p.C-II.

<sup>40</sup> BBC: 0730Hrs., 6 October 1990, Ibid., vol.5-6 October 1990, p.C-XIII.

<sup>41</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 2 October 1990, Ibid., vol.1-2 October 1990, p.C-IX.

Given the metaphor 'world', the US and other anti-Iraq coalition are pictured as unified block in which concerns and ideology are shared. In the case of 'Baghdad' this metaphor constructs the multiple groups into a figure of single person, so that they can be made responsible and easily condemned. Iraq is seen as a person who, from the start is also an enemy who may attack the world, hurt the world, may be destroy the West. So we the 'international community' have to face him, set up targets, ask for support against him. The metaphor discovers the enemy, creates and points to the expected response; confrontation on the field - that is war.

### **THE RULER STANDS FOR THE STATE**

This metonym is used by the European radio when Iraq is involved, but much less frequently if George Bush is mentioned. While attributing actions, decisions, the reporters do not talk about any abstract entity, but explicitly isolate Saddam Hussein as the agent responsible for the whole conflict: "If Saddam Hussein does not leave Kuwait unconditionally".

A direct consequence of this metonymy is to justify action undertaken against him (against Iraq), which is viewed as an unavoidable response because of some particular feature of his personality. Those

features carefully chosen to attribute to him are thus attributed to the state. The metonymy comes then to 'Saddam Hussein is Iraq' so under these circumstances demonisation becomes much easier.

Saddam Hussein has now set himself on the path of a war of self destruction that, it will be an unparallel act of mass suicide.<sup>42</sup>

In contrast when the same metonymy is applied to George Bush we find collective system. They are 'the international community' the UN, or the 'civilised world' and they are personified as such.

#### **EXTRA MILE FOR PEACE OR WAR?**

"Now the 28 countries with forces in the Gulf area have exhausted all reasonable efforts to reach a peaceful resolution and have no choice but to drive Saddam Hussein from Kuwait by force",<sup>43</sup> President Bush announced shortly after the war began. But still the vital question remained: did President Bush really exhaust all the means for a peaceful resolution? Analysts differed and some of them stated that he was in fact going the extra mile for war. The Editor of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientist*, pointed out, The Bush administration clearly "did not exhaust all reason-

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<sup>42</sup> *Daily Mirror* (London), Quoted in BBC: 0740 Hrs., 10 January 1991, *Ibid.*, vol. 9-10 January 1991, p.C-X.

<sup>43</sup> Len Ackland, "An Unnecessary War", *The Bulletin of The Atomic Scientists* (Chicago), vol.47, no.4, May 1991, p.2.

able efforts to reach a peaceful resolution." <sup>44</sup> And Pierre Salinger and Eric Laurent said although the Bush administration kept protesting - as it prepared for war - that it was going "the extra mile for peace" the evidence clearly suggest otherwise. It was in fact going the extra mile for war.<sup>45</sup>

The meeting at Geneva is their first since the invasion of Kuwait on August the Second and comes less than a week before the United Nations deadline for an Iraqi withdrawal. Mr Baker described it as the last best chance for peace. For his part Mr Aziz said he had come with an open mind in good faith and was ready for positive, constructive talks with Mr Baker.  
<sup>46</sup>

President Bush has urged all countries in the international alliance to resist pressure for a compromise in the Gulf.<sup>47</sup>

Here we see reports from BBC on the same day by two different contenders, aiming for a peaceful solution. While the one that stated that he had gone the extra mile for peace pleads for resistance from change the other and one that termed as inflexible, announces that he was open, positive and trusting. It appears whether the international

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Pierre Salinger, and Eric Laurent, *Secret Dossier: The Hidden Agenda behind the Gulf War* (New York, 1991), p.79.

<sup>46</sup> BBC: 0830 Hrs., 9 January 1991, n.17, vol. 8-9 January 1991, p.C-VII.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

community failed to exploit the situation for peace or peace meant different in their lexicons.

As early as 12 August 1990. Saddam Hussein seemed to have realised the predicament he was in and started showing olive branches which the 'international community' refused to recognise.

On the day of invasion itself when King Hussein of Jordan spoke with Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi leader seemed to have told the Jordanian leader that he wanted to teach Kuwait a lesson and planned to withdraw his troops over the weekend. However, he warned that the condemnations from the Arab world would complicate his plans to withdraw his troops.<sup>48</sup> Obviously he did not want to show he was caving in under pressure.

There were a number of occasions when a peaceful resolution seemed at hand. Iraq offered to negotiate, they claimed down from one position to another. But George Bush and his supporters would not budge an inch and they wanted nothing short of 'unconditional and total withdrawal.'

In effect the US was undermining the reliance on sanctions and preventing exploration or the diplomatic track, on the ground that "

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<sup>48</sup> Safty, n.23, p.413.

aggression will not be appeased."<sup>49</sup> Therefore Bush presented the posture that violence as the only policy option - Iraq must succumb to the threat, or pay the price.

In the course of preparation for war the European media also chose to play the American tune. The media played the American tune in a number of way, one such was to focus on the one side of the story and blocking the opponent's views.

As Mark Brain reports from Helsinki, both sides want to convey an unmistakable impression to the President of Iraq...Today after 3-hours of talks the Soviet and American leaders have already delivered a robust response..<sup>50</sup>

The Iranian religious leader Ali Khameni has said Iran vehemently opposed to the American military build up in the Gulf.. A BBC correspondent in the region says the Iranian statement is unusually strong.<sup>51</sup>

The use of modifiers, adding correspondent views are some of the BBC style of looking at the events from perhaps historical point of view. Terms such as 'unmistakable impression' or 'robust response' sound as if they are words of spokesperson of the Western alliance. They turn the

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<sup>49</sup> James Baker, US Department of State Dispatch, 5 November 1990, p.235.

<sup>50</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 9 September 1990, n.17, vol.8-9 September 1990, p.C-V.

<sup>51</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 12 September 1990, Ibid, vol.12-13 September 1990, p.C-III.

story in favour of a group what could otherwise have been a independent view. In the second instance, an altogether different view to the advantage of the group in question, the damage control had to be undertaken with the help of the correspondent on the spot who modifies the statement to the congruence of the listener. The use of phrase "unusual strong statement" takes away the sting in the otherwise a strong statement. So this is the instances where we can find the media leaning towards one side of the two parties involved. This particular kind of practice are seen frequently especially in BBC reports.

The first Iraqi offer of negotiated settlement was made through the Iraqi-born American citizens. These Arab-American businessmen, Michael Saba and Samir Vincent, carried a proposal from Baghdad which offered a realistic chance of a peaceful settlement of the crisis. The plan provided for Iraqi withdrawal in exchange for guarantees that Iraq would be given access to the Persian Gulf, retain control of the al-Rumeilah oil field, and negotiate with the United States a reasonable price for oil. The plan was presented to the White House on 10 August 1990. To make the plan more attractive, Iraq decided on 23 August 1990, to release all foreigners held in Iraq. An administrative official who was specialised in Middle East affairs described the proposal as 'serious and negotiable'. However the US response was "There was nothing about this (peace initiative) that interested the U.S. government. The U.S government



did not want to make a deal".<sup>52</sup> And the military build up continued in the gulf region.

Iraq openly made diplomatic overtures realising the nature of forces arrayed against it. On 12 August, Iraq proposed a settlement linking its withdrawal from Kuwait to withdrawal from other occupied Arab lands: Syria and Israel from Lebanon; and Israel from the territories it conquered in 1967.

On 16 August 1990 Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi Foreign Secretary announced to an American television network that Iraq was ready for "unconditional negotiations with the United States". The unconditional offer was obviously designed to soften the relentless drive towards a war Iraq was certain to lose and give Iraq what it really wanted to accomplish by the invasion - negotiations with the United States from a position of relative strength. The United States rejected this offer too and continued its insistence on 'unconditional withdrawal'.<sup>53</sup>

There were many number of proposals for peaceful resolution of the crisis, the former British prime minister Mr Edward Heath indicated after his visit to Baghdad of Iraq's willingness for a diplomatic solution. And the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister at a meeting in Tripoli stated his

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<sup>52</sup> Noam Chomsky, "The US in the Gulf Crisis", in Haim Bresheeth and Niva Yuval -Davis, eds., *The Gulf War and the New World Order* (London, 1991), p.15.

<sup>53</sup> Safty, n.23, p.438.

country was eager to find a peaceful solution to the crisis over Kuwait.<sup>54</sup>

People in high offices were ready to turn down the proposals calling it as 'deal' or 'compromise'. As the word deal connotes a kind of dishonest behaviour, the word 'deal' was succinctly injected to replace 'talks', 'diplomacy', or 'negotiations'. People in high offices also didn't shy away from using harsh and severe language to turn down the offer for negotiations. As the example one below by British Foreign Secretary would indicate:

Mr Hurd (speaking in Cairo) has said if President Saddam Hussein does not decide to voluntarily pull out of Kuwait, he would do so at the point of gun..

In the continuation of the report, "Our correspondent says that Mr Hurd has said much of this before but not in such strident terms.. But the Foreign Secretary also fixed Israel, "I repeat our condemnation of the actions of the Israeli police in Jerusalem" he said "nothing could excuse the excessive use of force."<sup>55</sup>

The choice of words to condemn Israeli action shows a contrast of attitude by the West. They always stated 'aggression' for Iraqi action, when it came to Israeli action it was 'excessive use of force'. In addition the blame on the action of gunning down 20 Palestinians is narrowed down to the 'Israeli police'. The correspondent for his part first

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<sup>54</sup> BBC: 14 October 1990, n.17, vol. 14-15 October 1990, p.C-III.

<sup>55</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 14 October 1990, *Ibid.*, vol. 14-15 October 1990, p.C-III.

does a damage control by saying, 'but not in such strident terms'. Later the correspondent chooses to report 'fixed Israel' as if to describe a naughty child.

## **LINKAGE**

On Iraqi attempt to link its invasion of Kuwait with Israel occupation of Palestine and other occupation in the Arab countries, the United States reacted strongly by rejecting and denouncing the Iraq proposals, while many in the Arab world and in the international community welcomed the initiative as they regarded it as the first step towards a possible peaceful solution of the crisis. Even France and the Soviet Union recognised the tenability of such linkage.<sup>56</sup>

Rejection of diplomacy was explicit from the outset. The *New York Times* chief diplomatic correspondent Thomas Friedman attributed the administrations' rejection of a diplomatic track to its concern that negotiation might defuse the crisis at the cost of few token gains in Kuwait for the Iraq's dictator" Anything short of capitulation to US was unacceptable whatever may be the consequences.

But the US Secretary of State James Baker again ruled out any form of linkage saying Iraq's

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<sup>56</sup> Safty, n.23, p.441.

aggression in Kuwait cannot be rewarded.<sup>57</sup>

But at the same time he has (President Bush) again made it clear the talks (between James Baker and Tariq Aziz) will not be a negotiating session, there will be no compromises, nor any linkages.<sup>58</sup>

Avoidance of linkage whatever may be the merits of such stand, it was another invention devised for the present crisis. Obviously it reflected no high principle. In fact no argument whatsoever was presented for this complete departure from the normal procedure of negotiation in international disputes. The United States instead termed these attempts by Iraq as 'cheap propaganda.'<sup>59</sup>

Moreover the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat disclosed, based on his talks with Saddam Hussein that neither of them insisted the Palestine problem should be solved before Iraqi withdrawal. According to a report in the *New York Times*, Arafat said that Mr Hussein had claimed down from his previous position on this linkage and he signaled that an assurance by the Security Council that this linkage will be recognised in solving the problems in the Middle East could be sufficient."<sup>60</sup> Such a

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<sup>57</sup> VOA: 0630 Hrs., 13 January 1991, n.17, vol.12-13 January 1991, p.C-XVII.

<sup>58</sup> BBC: 1430 Hrs., 5 January 1991, Ibid., vol. 5-6 January 1991, p.C-I.

<sup>59</sup> Srivastava, n.22, p.50.

<sup>60</sup> *New York Times*, 3 January 1991.

major Iraqi concession passed without any mention in the European media under study.

## **SANCTIONS**

On Monday 6 August 1990, the United Nations Security Council imposed all encompassing mandatory sanctions against Iraq with a worldwide arms and oil embargo. This was for the first time in 23 years that the Security Council had acted so quickly imposing such sweeping sanctions. ~~The~~ It, the second Security Council resolution within a period of five days. Yet the sanctions were not given a chance to have an effect which could have led to peaceful resolution without violence. Instead, the multi-national was force rushed through for military action. There were quite a few who said that sanctions began to work and should have been given more time to work. (And sanctions would only have an impact over an extended period of time.)

Mr Dick Cheney (speaking at a conference in London)said sanctions against Iraq were proving effective.. and he said the United States was prepared for what he called a long haul.<sup>61</sup>

The United States CIA director, William Webster reported in December that 90 percent of Iraqi imports and 97 percent of its exports

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<sup>61</sup> BBC:0730 Hrs., 15 October 1990, n.17, vol. 15-16 October 1990, p.C-II.

had been cut off. Senate Armed Services Chairman Sam Nunn forcefully argued that sanctions should be given more time.<sup>62</sup> But quickly the international community's patience ran out.

The American Secretary of State Mr James Baker has again warned Iraq that international patience over its occupation of Kuwait is limited and said the United States would not rule out force to resolve the crisis.<sup>63</sup>

A major reason given by analysts for not giving longer time due to fear that the alliance in the Gulf would not stand united for long. While the advocates of force observed somberly that there was no guarantee that sanctions would work. But seeing from the same logic, there was neither the guarantee that force would work. The official argument given for not waiting longer for sanctions to work was that, " it offends our sensibilities to stand by while the aggressor remains unpunished."<sup>64</sup>

The British Foreign Secretary Sir Douglas Hurd has repeated that the international community cannot wait forever for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait..he said no other result was acceptable otherwise aggression would have triumphed and other dictators would take comfort from it.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ackland, n.42, p.2.

<sup>63</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 30 October 1990, n.17, vol.29-30 October 1990, p.C-XI.

<sup>64</sup> Chomsky, n.51, p.18.

<sup>65</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 31 October 1990, n.17, vol 30-31 October 1990, p.C-XIV.

That was not very convincing argument looking at previous US track record of all standing by while aggressor went on. Edward Herman, an US journalist, points out that for two decades South Africa defied the UN and the world on Namibia looting and terrorising the occupied country. The loss of human lives was estimated to be 1.5 million by the UN Economic Commission on Africa. No one proposed bombing South Africa or withholding food. The US pursued a 'quite diplomacy.' The same was true when George Schultz attempted to broker Israel's partial withdrawal from Lebanon as it battered the defenceless country in the course of unprovoked aggression.<sup>66</sup>

## **THE DRIVE FOR WAR**

The war on Iraq is perhaps the best example of a war that did not have to happen. The US administration's behaviour on the diplomatic and military levels shows that from the beginning Washington considered a military confrontation with Iraq to be the desirable outcome of the crisis sparked by the Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. It dismissed all suggestion that a political settlement was possible or preferable and it ignored all initiatives - Iraq, Arab and European to seek a peaceful way out of the conflict. The Bush administration not only frowned on the

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<sup>66</sup> Chomsky, n.51, p18.

diplomatic efforts of others, but also disabled its own diplomatic channels as mechanisms for conflict resolution, and the only use it made of them was to serve the war effort.

Throughout several months of escalating crisis and relentless preparation the US government made no serious attempt to engage the Iraqis in diplomacy. On 30 November 1990, the day after the U.S secured from the Security Council a resolution authorizing the use of "all necessary means" if its earlier resolution had not been completed by 15 January 1991. President Bush made a half-hearted gesture toward allies who supported the resolution with the understanding that diplomatic means be exhausted. He proposed simultaneous visits by Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to Washington and Secretary of State James Baker to Baghdad. But when Baghdad accepted such an exchange, proposing that it takes place on 12 January, President Bush refused that Iraq offer on the grounds that 12 January would be too late, even though his offer gave the Iraqis until Security Council's deadline of 15 January. The only attempt at diplomacy was a belated six-hour meeting between Secretary Baker and Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz in Geneva on 9 January 1991. President Bush said that the meeting "would not include negotiated compromise, or rewards for aggression." This can hardly be described as 'going the extra mile for peace'. But when the talk was dubbed as failure George Bush turned a lover of peace:



President Bush expressed disappointment and frustration over the failure of the Geneva talks.. he said he had no plans for further direct diplomacy..<sup>67</sup>

And in a next two days he became a pacifist;

President Bush said peace is everyone's goal, peace is everyone's prayer. But it is for Iraq to decide..<sup>68</sup>

President Bush who said the meeting would not include negotiations and compromises now cries of his disappointment and frustration. Frustration is normally a effect of repeated failure, but in this case Tariq Aziz and James Baker had the first direct talk. And the man who expressed disappointment, strangely in the next sentence rules out any further talks.

Meanwhile Secretary James Baker blames the failure on the inflexibility of Tariq Aziz. But he does not tell how many alternatives he presented him with:

Secretary of State James Baker blamed the failure of talks on Iraqi inflexibility and their trying to couple the Kuwait invasion with Palestinian question. For his part the Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz said that it was up to the American to start a war or not. He said Iraq would not fire first shot..<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 10 January 1991, n.17, vol.9-10 January 1991, p.C-VI.

<sup>68</sup> VOA: 1700 Hrs., 12 January 1991, Ibid., vol.12-13 January 1991, p.C-XVI.

<sup>69</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 10 January 1991, Ibid., vol 9-10 January 1991, p.F-3.

As Bob Woodward reveals, National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft had told Saudi Ambassador Prince Bander, in December 1990 that "the President has made his mind. And as to diplomatic efforts these are all exercises".<sup>70</sup>

The Soviet Union continued to be interested in promoting a diplomatic solution to the crisis, although it was issuing harsh condemnation from time to time. All that media projected was more of Soviet's condemnation than its efforts for peaceful settlement of the crisis.

The Helsinki summit on 9 September 1990 is a good example of media's slant. The differences were played down. While Bush refused to rule out the use of force and continued to demand unconditional capitulation from Iraq, Gorbachev counseled patience with a view to hammering out a political solution. They also disagreed on whether or not there was any link between the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and the Israel occupation of Arab territories. While President Bush refused to see any link between the two, President Gorbachev believed that there was a link.

In its continued effort towards promoting a diplomatic solution to the crisis, the President's special envoy, Yevgeny Primokov went on a mission to Baghdad and met Saddam Hussein. He spoke of

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<sup>70</sup> Woodward, n.24, p.156.

optimistic signs about peaceful solution after the meeting.

Mr Gorbachev said there were signs of new thinking by the Iraqi leadership and called for greater Arab involvement in the search for a negotiated settlement.<sup>71</sup>

But the previous day itself BBC dubbed the talks between the Soviet envoy and Saddam Hussein as a failure:

President Gorbachev's special envoy has arrived in Saudi Arabia after his apparent failure of his mission to Baghdad.<sup>72</sup>

Meanwhile Baghdad still seemed open for talks;

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mr Tariq Aziz said he remained optimistic that diplomatic solution would still be found and Mr Primokov was welcome to return at anytime.<sup>73</sup>

As far US was concerned Secretary Baker ruled out the possibility of partial settlement which would benefit Iraq. He reiterated the American demand that Iraq should withdraw from Kuwait immediately, unconditionally and completely. President Bush struck a moral posture, "If we do not stand up against aggression around the world, when it is naked and brutal, who will?"<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 30 October 1990, n.17, vol.29-30 October 1990, p.C-VI.

<sup>72</sup> BBC:1830 Hrs.,29 October 1990, Ibid, vol.29-30 October 1990,p.C-V.

<sup>73</sup> BBC:1830 Hrs., 29 October 1990, Ibid., vol. 29-30 October 1990, p.C-VI.

<sup>74</sup> Srivastava, n.22, P.51.

France made a last-minute effort to avoid war on 14 January proposing that the Security Council's call for a rapid and massive withdrawal from Kuwait along with a statement that Council members would bring their "active contributions to a settlement of other problems of the region." The French proposal was supported by Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and several Non Aligned nations.<sup>75</sup> The US and Britain rejected it. In rejectionism, George Bush was joined by Saddam Hussein, who gave no public indication of any interest in the French proposal, though doing so might possibly have averted war.

And when the clock was ticking towards war the options were still closed it was just one way traffic;

He said (Mr Bush) he did not want war, if it was thrust upon him he was ready and determined.<sup>76</sup>

And the other close ally of the US sounded similar:

For moment he (Mr Douglas Hurd) said Iraq had taken leave of their senses.<sup>77</sup>

Finally the answer remained still the same: use of force as the deadline neared. And less than 18 hours after the midnight 15 January deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait the US launched massive air

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<sup>75</sup> Chomsky, n.51, P.17.

<sup>76</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 13 January 1991, n.17, vol.12- 13 January 1991, p.C-XVI.

<sup>77</sup> BBC: 1730 Hrs., 16 January 1991, Ibid., vol. 16-17 January 1991, p.C-III.

attack against Iraqi forces. President George Bush announced shortly after the war began:

All diplomatic efforts had been rebuffed and sanctions showed no signs of working", He said "there was no choice but to drive Saddam Hussein from Kuwait by force."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 17 January 1991, Ibid., vol.16-17 January 1991, p.C-IV.

*Chapter Three*

*Radio Broadcasting on  
European Participation*

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Europe was engaged in its efforts at European integration process at the time of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and the war was the last thing it expected. The European Community despite serious efforts to act as a single front and take a unified stance could not do so. Britain from the beginning of the crisis decided to cooperate with the United States. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher took the chance to rejuvenate a special relationship she enjoyed with the Americans. France tried to use its closer relationship with Baghdad to act as a mediator but could not make any headway. Germany had its own constitutional problems and preoccupation with its unification process. Finally, West Europeans had no choice but to follow the U.S leadership. All of them followed the sanctions imposed by the U.N Security Council. The West and East Europeans supported the international military alliance. Most of them provided transit rights and some assisted logistical support.

However there were differences within the European countries. Although Spain and Germany played substantial role in supporting the allied forces. The divided public opinion in each state on their role, made the governments to be sensitive and they underplayed what exact position and part they were taking. The Gulf crisis highlighted deficiencies in the European Community in the areas of cooperation in foreign policy.

The news coverage given by the European media especially BBC looked as if it was a world war. Almost all its bulletins gave a prime slot to the Gulf Crisis. Extensive quoting was resorted to in its repertoire in addition the correspondent views which in fact acted as guiding the listeners forming anti-Iraqi attitude. European countries followed the American lead on all the major decisions. However various factors contributed to difference of opinion among the European Community members, but the external impression given was that of unity and single mindedness, for which the credit should be given to the European media. Perhaps economic compulsion, dependency on oil import for energy as well as not to be seen opposing United States motivated the European countries not to show any overt dissent over the decisions. Thus in spite of differences of opinion the member countries of European Community participated in the anti-Iraqi coalition either by sending troops, or contributing money or both.

The European media, electronic media in particular played a consistent role in projecting the Gulf Crisis as the biggest threat to the world peace and order and went along with American policies in its approach to the crisis. An apparent kind of unity was presented in its reports. We can see frequent emphasis on solidarity and unified actions. This facilitated in moulding of public opinion especially the European opinion into making them feel part of the 'we' group which was leading the



front to set right the Iraqi aggression and therefore had all the more reasons to support the actions of the American led coalition. Consequently the anti-war demonstrations drew little coverage from the radios under study.

### **EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IN THE PROCESS OF OPINION FORMATION**

At the time of Iraqi invasion Italy was serving as the European Community President, and it took the leadership in drawing up an agenda on reinvigorating the Community's institutions and for enlarging Community's powers in the field of common foreign policy and security. On the question of Iraqi aggression The reaction of the twelve initially was swift and unanimous as never before. On 4 August, the Community decided on a comprehensive embargo aimed at halting the aggressor. The 12 member countries of European Community (EC) froze Iraqi assets and in addition they also suspended bilateral trade, technical, scientific and military cooperation agreements with Baghdad and banned arms sale.<sup>1</sup>

But as the crisis unfolded the Community faced a number of difficulties ranging from dispatch of armed forces, EC humanitarian aid,

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<sup>1</sup> Ilan Greilsammer, "European Reactions to the Gulf Challenge", in Aharon Klieman and Gil Shidlo, *The Gulf Crisis and Its Global Aftermath* (London, 1993), p.210.

the hostage crisis, use of force and peace negotiations. Therefore it could be observed that the "show of European unity was rather minimal and primarily rhetorical. Most Europeans were concerned that Saddam Hussein's ambitions would end with Kuwait which was after all, a non-democratic country."<sup>2</sup>

One reason why the Europeans were unable to formulate a coherent and unified position was their reliance on the United States directed leadership. Washington assumed that it was its prerogative to take all critical decisions on all matters relating to the initial despatch of military forces to the Gulf, the use of naval forces to enforce the blockade, the mounting of an offensive military force, the setting of deadline for Iraq's compliance with UN resolutions, the US administration decided first and only then consulted with allies. But media reports state the contrary:

Asked whether the President would initiate hostilities on his own the spokesman said, decisions would be made in concert with American allies.<sup>3</sup>

Ambivalent feelings about the mounting crisis, both among the public and within political circles had allowed the early buildup of US forces in the Gulf to take place without a clear specifications of ends of war

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.216.

<sup>3</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC):17.30 Hrs., 16 January 1991, *Today's Radio Report*, Central Monitoring Services (CMS), All India Radio (AIR), 16-17 January 1991, p. C.III.

and with only a muted debate over the means and ultimate purposes. A clear shift to an offensive position was evident only in mid-November. It was after evidence of such a posture this active opposition to war became widespread.<sup>4</sup>

Domestic politics within individual states played an important part in determining reactions to the Gulf. Despite Italy as President of EC, it could not take a decisive stand whether to support the ally's response totally. Indeed Italy was caught between its desire to please the USA and its policy of friendship towards the Arab world. It decided to send some warships to the eastern Mediterranean in place of US ships. However the Italian Prime Minister who held the EC presidency also voiced difference of opinion during its Rome summit; as *International Herald Tribune* reported:

Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti cautioned that anyone with his head set properly on his shoulders agrees that military means should be only the final recourse.<sup>5</sup>

There were immediate efforts to tone down the feelings. It was reported that President Bush had telephoned Mr Andreotti to urging for 'strong cohesion' among the Europeans.

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Brenner, "The Alliance: The Gulf Post-mortem", *International Affairs* (London), vol.68, no.2, 1992, p.667.

<sup>5</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, 29 October 1990.

The BBC did not report about such differences instead its lead news said:

European Community leaders are expected to issue a strong statement against Iraq when their meeting ends in a few hours time. The BBC says it will warn President Saddam Hussein that attempts to divide the alliance against Iraq will fail.<sup>6</sup>

Voice of Germany did not reflect the differences and debates that was generating among its public in Federal Republic of Germany. The German government had problems and constraints on making up its mind on the level of participation. It was essentially preoccupied with its post unification problems and its costs. Surprisingly there were conflicting statements from offices of Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher. However, all German ministers stressed the legal restrictions on the use of German forces outside German soil. But as Washington pressure on Europe intensified, Bonn later reluctantly agreed to send five minesweepers and two supply ships to the eastern Mediterranean. Moreover, reports indicated that considerable financial donations were extracted from Bonn rather than offered on its own accord.<sup>7</sup>

Britain showed less hesitancy. As a former dominant power and as American's closest European ally, London had been the first

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<sup>6</sup> BBC: 1430 Hrs., 28 October 1990 , n.3, 28-29 October 1990, p.C-1.

<sup>7</sup> Brenner, n.4, p.670.

European capital to accept the principle of direct military involvement. The British public too favoured a harsh military measure against Iraq as opinion polls indicated.<sup>8</sup>

France viewing itself to be the Arab world's main European ally, was reluctant to follow the US lead in the crisis. On the other hand, it did not wish to appear as unreliable ally to the West by holding back. Moreover, Mitterrand found most leaders of his ruling Socialist party extremely reluctant to act impulsively, especially Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement sought to distance himself from combative French position. A further problem was how to maintain and assert traditional French independence in a collaborative endeavour clearly led by U.S.<sup>9</sup>

France took a stern view of Iraqi incursion into its embassy in Kuwait and made a considerable change in its military options thereafter. Iraqi apologised later but that did not soften its stand. Moreover Iraq apologies were dubbed by BBC as extremely unusual;

BBC correspondent in Baghdad says, it is highly unusual for Iraq to apologise for anything it has done.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Greilsammer, n.1, p.215.

<sup>9</sup> Trevor C. Salmon, "Testing Times for European Political Cooperation: The Gulf and Yugoslavia, 1990-1992", *International Affairs*, vol.68, no.2, 1992, p.239.

<sup>10</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 24 September 1990, n.3, 23-24 September 1990, p. C.VII.

Nonetheless the French continued to insist that French forces would remain under French control and changed its stance only when the military operation began. The French style of functioning was always a point of suspicion for other European Community members. These fears surfaced especially after Mitterrand's speech to the UN General Assembly. He said if Iraq withdrew its troops and freed its hostages, military operation could be postponed and could result in opening the door for an international conference. French final deviation from the EC consensus came just days before the deadline for Iraq to withdraw, when its unofficial envoy Michel Vauzelle's visited Baghdad and France presented a six point peace proposal. The proposal once again raised the possibility of an international conference. France drew criticism of 'freelance diplomacy',<sup>11</sup> though some members supported the French initiative.

This however was at once rejected by the American, Soviet and British governments..There was a positive response to the French plan from German government.<sup>12</sup>

Among the other major European countries the Dutch and Denmark firmly agreed to military response. The Dutch decided to despatch two war frigates and also Patriot missiles. Those countries which

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<sup>11</sup> Salmon, n.9, p.240.

<sup>12</sup> Voice of Germany (VOG): 1430 Hrs.,15 January 1991,n.3, 15-16 January 1991, p.F-1.

were reluctant and adopting a cautious attitude were Belgium, Spain and Greece besides those mentioned earlier. They generally adopted a low-profile policy.

Gulf Crisis revealed the fragile European Unity and embarrassing demonstration of EC's ineffectiveness. This was evident from their decision to cancel meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister.

The 12 EC foreign ministers meeting in Brussels canceled a session with Tariq Aziz that had been planned for later this week, stipulating that he must first go to Washington.<sup>13</sup>

By this type of announcements EC attempted to create an impression of unity and single mindedness.

Because the ministers said they wanted to send a clear signal that there was no division between Europe and United States on the issue of Iraq's unconditional withdrawal.<sup>14</sup>

But there was disagreement among the EC members on the decision to cancel the meeting. "Several countries, including Italy and Spain reportedly expressed in private to hold a separate sitting with Mr Aziz."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, 19 December 1990.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

BBC chose to highlight Mr Hans Van den Broek interview to clear the cloud on any differences:

Ministers had chosen to eliminate any possibility of political wedge dividing between the United States and Europe by Iraq, by making it clear that no talks would occur until after Mr Aziz went to Washington.<sup>16</sup>

And this announcement was appreciated in Washington:

President Bush welcomed the decision of European Community to refuse to have talks with the Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz until and unless he had met the United States officials in Washington.<sup>17</sup>

After the failure of talks between the Iraqi and the American leader there was another attempt by some EC members who did not wish to let any opportunity to resolve the crisis peacefully slip away. But it was a case of too little and too late.

## **HOSTAGE CRISIS**

The Western nationals who were residing in Iraq and Kuwait were prevented from leaving the country after the invasion. In the hostage crisis ironically the West gained more than Iraq. Indeed it was used by the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Voice of America (VOA): 0730 Hrs., 19 December 1990, *Weekly Report*, n.3, vol. 17-23 December 1990, P.6.



West to further their campaign of passion against Iraq. The West called it, gross violation of human rights, uncivilised and barbaric act.

President Bush declared that one of the reasons for sending his troops to the Gulf was to protect American nationals stranded there.<sup>18</sup> Prime Minister Thatcher ridiculed Saddam Hussein of hiding behind Western women and children.

Saddam Hussein is trying to hide behind the western women and children... their fundamental rights have been flouted to the repugnance of the whole of the civilised world.<sup>19</sup>

Whatever may be the truth of the statement, it worked well as propaganda material for the Western countries. Another report by VOG quoted EC officials having condemned Iraq for attempting to divide the international community:

Reports on the summit say they condemn Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein for making unscrupulous use of hostages and divide the international community and for disregarding the most elementary rules of humanitarian conduct.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> B.K. Srivastava, "The Great Powers and the Gulf Crisis: The Course of an Uneasy Alliance", in A.H.H. Abidi and K.R. Singh, eds., *The Gulf Crisis* (New Delhi, 1991), p.48.

<sup>19</sup> *Times* (London), 22 August 1990.

<sup>20</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 29 October 1990, n.3, vol. 28-29 October 1990, p.F-2.

The hostage crisis played an essential role in Europe for emotional appeal and sought to portray it as a problem that directly crept into their very homes. The issue was used by leaders and media to sing unity themes once again:

At the Rome summit leaders of the EC states have pledged not to negotiate separately with Iraq on release of the nationals held in the Gulf Crisis.<sup>21</sup>

While the BBC reported that:

EC leaders have called on the UN Secretary General to send an envoy to Iraq to use his influence to secure the release of hostages.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from these radio reports we know well that former leaders of different countries visited Iraq to secure the release of their respective nationals. The hostage whether held or released it was all the same used for anti-Iraqi rhetoric. When Saddam Hussein released some French nationals there was a big hue and cry of deal and planting a wedge among the alliance.

BBC Paris correspondent says the French government insists that there was no deal and believes President Saddam Hussein acted out of compassion, in freeing the hostages, hoping to divide the international Community.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> VOG: 0730, 29 October 1990, n.3, vol. 28-29 October 1990, p. F-2.

<sup>22</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 28 October 1990, n.3, vol. 28-29 October 1990, p.C-II.

<sup>23</sup> BBC: 1630 Hrs., 30 October 1990, n.3, vol. 30-31 October 1990, p.C-VII.

And United States for its part which seemed 'particularly concerned about hostages' but criticised the move when it came, "as a lame efforts to drive a wedge between unified international stand against Baghdad."<sup>24</sup>

In an earlier episode of hostage release too, all that BBC could find through the incidence was filth ridden Kuwait city:

the latest Westerners to arrive in London from Kuwait have told of shortages of food and medicine and piles of rat infested rubbish in the streets.<sup>25</sup>

#### **THE UNITY ASPECT - A MEDIA MAKE UP**

One of the important cause pointed out in the media for unity of action was that the Gulf Crisis was threatening the world peace and order and called on the international community to unify their action to ward off this danger. In such attempt many complex issues were overlooked and serious causes of the crisis were not addressed. A former UN diplomat pointed out that the crisis was basically a regional crisis in the Third World, and as expressed by Arab leaders the cause lay in the basic economic and political imbalances in the Arab world. Another cause being its historical background. In today's global world of well over 160 countries

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<sup>24</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 25 October 1990, n.3, vol. 24-25 October 1990, p.F-3.

<sup>25</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 20 September 1990, n.3, vol. 20-21 September 1990, P.C-II.

world peace has been threatened so far by the confrontations of the nuclear superpowers, for instance in the Cuban Missiles crisis. To claim international order and world peace is threatened by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was like saying that world peace is threatened by Soviet annexation of the three Baltic states or Tibet by China or the occupation of West Jordan by Israel.<sup>26</sup>

The Gulf Crisis threatened the structure of the world economy rather than world peace and the majority of the mankind. A vital economic interest especially to industrialised nations like USA and its allies was the oil supply. Another factor was the fluid situation the world politics was in at the end of the Cold War. According to some analysts the US administration did not wish to let pass this opportunity to assert its role in the world politics and European countries falling under US political umbrella were naturally left with less option. Having made the decision to take the lead "if we do not act who will", the US had to convince its population of the need for the action.

The task ahead for the US was to create various layers of sphere which would be part of the 'international community' in the context of the Gulf Crisis. European and some Arab countries formed the core group. The task of keeping together this alliance group was not all that easy. The

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<sup>26</sup> Hans Arnold, "The Gulf Crisis and the United Nations", *Aussenpolitik*, (Hamburg, 1991), p.74.

US had problem at home to which it had deal especially in the light of Vietnam syndrome. Therefore the propaganda strategy was two fold: one to clearly identify the culprit of the crisis and second creation of a group who would uphold the principles of justice and peace as advocated by the alliance. The second part of the task was to create a consensus and unity among the alliance partners who presumably will stand for a moral value.

Helsinki summit between Presidents Bush and Gorbachev provided an opportunity to harp on the theme of unity and consensus. It was a crucial event for western alliance, firstly to ensure the support of the Soviet Union, secondly to demonstrate to the world that the two former superpowers are united in their stand and thirdly it was a media event to build up public opinion in favour of western alliance.

After the first session ..giving the American view a White House spokesman said Mr Bush and Mr Gorbachev had been united in their approach.<sup>27</sup>

As Mark Brain (correspondent) reports from Helsinki, both sides want to convey an unmistakable impression to the President of Iraq that the United States and Soviet union will remain united against him."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 9 September 1990, n.3, vol. 9- 10 September 1990, p.C-I.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

In White House spokesman Mr Fitzwater words, both men were firm and together in seeking the enforcement of UN sanctions.<sup>29</sup>

In this report we can see that the word 'unity' used repeatedly, 'united in their approach, remain united against him' 'firm and together'. All these words were obviously used to demonstrate to the world that the former opponents see the issue similarly. That is what the summit holders in Geneva wanted to portray and media for its part in both quoting these words and in their own interpretations reveal the leaning of the European radio. The BBC correspondent feels that it is 'unmistakable impression' that both sides will remain united.

On closer examination of this overemphasis of 'unity' factor one can see the deep divide that lie between the two sides. The Soviet showed much reluctance in passing on the information on the extent and type of arms sales to Iraq and on the presence of military advisers in Iraq even at Helsinki Summit. The Soviets repeatedly rejected the USA request to withdraw military advisers from Iraq by maintaining that this would constitute violation of 'Treaty of Friendship with Iraq. But the media conveniently left those issues unfocussed.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Olga Alexandrava, "Soviet Policy in Gulf Conflict", *Aussenpolitik*, Vol.42, No.1, 1991, p.225.

In the VOG story we can see how differences were underplayed:

Following their Helsinki talks President Bush and Gorbachev have said their resolve to show that Iraqi aggression will not pay off. After seven hours of talks they were agreed to adopt additional measures...

At the news conference, Gorbachev opinioned this by saying that the Soviet Union, and United States still had stock of political weapons for resolving the conflict peacefully.<sup>31</sup>

This report give the lead that the two leaders would seek an end to Iraq's aggression. And finally it quotes Gorbachev stating that political weapons should have been used rather than military weapons. Perhaps this should have been the focus of news reporting. As the act of condemnation and resolve to put an end to aggression were the initial responses of the crisis, there was nothing new as far as newsvalue was concerned. And what emerged or what did not emerge as new development were relegated to the last sentence.

BBC in its characteristic style created a picturesque scene of the Helsinki summit again unmindful of the fundamental issues and differences such as use of force and link of Iraqi invasion with that of other Arab problems.

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<sup>31</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 10 September 1990, n.3, Vol.9-10 September 1990, p.F-2.

That's the message then for Saddam Hussein to be elaborated shortly at a joint news conference. The Soviet Union spokesman saying about Russian paint of a Finnish hunter with Russian gun hanging on the wall of the conference room..

The Helsinki Summit has already demonstrated the striking new trend of relaxed maturity of the Soviet American relationship now that the cold war has been assigned to history. While gravity of the Gulf Crisis was spoken together the two leaders were in a jovial mood as they began meeting with much smiling and laughing .. as Mr Gorbachev presented the American president with an unusual gift..<sup>32</sup>

The report is self explanatory on the kind of view BBC took of the summit in the context of the Gulf Crisis. The Helsinki summit is used as the event to convey to the world that now there is one ideology - that is Western capitalist democracy is at work and the greatest opponent to this order is happily shaking hand with proponents of this ideology. Such unity theme were deliberately reflected in the reports of the radios under study.

Helsinki summit in its attempt to bridge the gap between two major world-divides having succeeded to a great extent, the next step was obviously to enlarge the western alliance as much as possible, with a main task was to influence European opinion and European unity. It did not matter whether the support mattered in real terms as long as there was

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<sup>32</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs.,9 September 1990, Ibid.,vol. 9-10 September 1990, p.C-V.



scope for saying it is 'international community versus Iraq' and any kind of support even just symbolic was enough.

Mr James Baker who was briefing the European foreign Ministers in the superpowers summit held in Helsinki went on to say that he had asked partners in the alliance to send ground troops. The USA welcome the additional forces even if it was only symbolic.<sup>33</sup>

Britain the reluctant partner in the European Community now stood in the frontline calling for a European common stand and united action. Ilan Greilammer observes that, "for the duration of the crisis Britain consistently sought to have the Community participate in everyway possible manner to help sustain the US commitment."<sup>34</sup>

Britain not only preached united step as far Gulf Crisis was concerned it acted immediately too, as is evident from its foreign ministers interview with BBC.

Mr Hurd, speaking in a BBC interview said Britain was taking the action (expelling Iraq diplomats) as a gesture of solidarity with its European partners.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 11 September 1990, Ibid., vol. 10-11 September 1990, p. F-3.

<sup>34</sup> Greilsammer, n.1, p.215.

<sup>35</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 17 September 1990, n.3, vol. 17-18 Septemeber 1990. p.C-IV.

As the crisis escalated this 'unity-theme' was repeated frequently whenever an opportunity arose the media never failed to report it emphatically:

The foreign ministers and defence ministers of the member nations of the West European Community intend to take a united step against Iraq <sup>36</sup>

This report by VOG stresses the unity aspect in addition it also pinpoints the consensus factor presumably existing in various fora of European Union.

## **INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION TECHNIQUE IN OPINION BUILDING**

In the process of drawing the line between two groups in the conflict the usual practice had been identification of one group fighting for good, opposing evil and the 'other' posing threat to the 'good'. This process implies firstly an 'inclusion' process which ensures that the European opinion does not simply respond to United States demands but because of the common cause, an ideological option which links all European countries. This is the same cause which linked countries from Arab, South Asia, Africa and the Pacific. The media during the Gulf crisis and

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<sup>36</sup> VOG: 1530 Hrs., 18 September 1990, Ibid., vol. 18-19 September 1990, p.F-1.

especially the radio broadcasts frequently emphasised the following theme:

A new era of justice and harmony would fail  
unless Saddam Hussein withdraws.<sup>37</sup>

In order to make this inclusion club as cohesive as possible the two groups categorised had to be concretely identified. Thus what makes the inclusion process possible is an exclusion procedure which establishes an ideological group as 'us', opposed to Saddam Hussein. Both this task is realised simultaneously through the kind of discourse (radio reports) employing different linguistic and argumentative strategies.

US Defence Secretary Mr Cheney spoke of the need for more heavy armour be deployed to make certain that we have the forces to deal with any..<sup>38</sup>

Here the use of the term 'we' may simply look suitable and harmless in the context. But it communicates much more than that - a sensitive issue of deploying forces involve, 'we' are prepared to face the situation, 'we' are alert and 'we' are responsible. Ultimately it is 'us' and 'them'. The media reproduction of 'we' of political speeches with co-referential terms like, the UN, the West, the civilised world, show it widened its references as the crisis escalated to a transnational group.

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<sup>37</sup> BBC: 0815 Hrs., 16 January 1991, Ibid., vol. 15-16 January 1991, p.C-XI.

<sup>38</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 26 October 1990, Ibid., vol. 25-26 October 1990, p.C-VI.

Iraq President Saddam Hussein has defied the international pressures to return to legality in Kuwait.<sup>39</sup>

A tone of exclusion is constructed by identifying the enemy with his negative image. 'Saddam Hussein has defied' - the negative image; the affected group 'international pressure'; and questions involved, 'legality'. Here a clear cut categorisation of two groups are identified and the values which are threatened are also mentioned. The values are synonymous they are 'legality' or those mentioned earlier, 'justice and harmony'. When one group is described as possessing the good qualities, it is implied that it absent in the other group and vice-versa.

The action now again implicitly called for is to support the values of good if the listener considers himself/herself valuing the principles of justice and harmony. The result is construction of 'we' group which shares a set of common values. The inclusion group is given the extended meaning that it is 'we' who will fight the common enemy.

South Korea is contributing 2.20 million dollars to the international efforts to force Iraq to withdraw from occupied Kuwait.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 21 September 1990, Ibid., vol.20-21 September 1990, p.F-2.

<sup>40</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 25 September 1990, Ibid., vol. 24-25 September 1990, p. F-3.

The message conveyed here is that the action intended by the West is not selfish but it is supported by countries across the globe. Secondly the action had no vested interest but was an 'international effort'. Now it was left to the listener whether he takes that as he was joined by other countries with a common cause or he was joining with other countries, whatever it might be the group was engaged in an 'international effort'.

Another report conveying a similar message is as follows:

Following Iraq invasion ..one of the South Asian countries that announced that they would send troops to defend Saudi Arabia was Pakistan.<sup>41</sup>

Here to present a particular fact, the choice of sentence formation reveal the message the source is trying to convey. BBC felt that instead of reporting 'Pakistan announced that it will send troops', it was better to report as "one of the South Asian countries" - implying that 'we' group come also from South Asia and besides, it had an important tag of being a Muslim country. Once again Pakistan is not anyway in alliance with the West but it is the common cause, the fight for justice that united a distant land together.

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<sup>41</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 1 September 1990, Ibid., vol. 1-2 September 1990, p.C-VI.

In continuation of this process the group which upholds 'justice and rule of law' is in fact is not cluster of a few countries but the world.

President Bush said Baghdad had to face the fact that the rest of the world was against it.<sup>42</sup>

Mr Bush said Iraq stands at the brink of war with the entire world."<sup>43</sup>

These reports quotes George Bush's statements and one may think that BBC's role is neutral here. But it is in fact a technique the media seem to frequently adopts to retain its objectivity at the same time includes voices to explicitly state radical views, thus it "allows the listener to evolve and share a particular conception, without apparently stating it explicitly."

They are not quoted with the purpose of interpreting it but rather the words of these politicians seem to constitute in themselves the information, and there are no signals to show that the media reporting does not share the vision of the events transmitted by these discourses.

The statements of George Bush creates a homogeneous whole of the 'world' suppressing the fact that opinions were divided within each country besides countries themselves. This is a simplified form of

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<sup>42</sup> BBC:0730 Hrs., 2.10.1990, Ibid., vol. 1-2 October 1990, p.C-IX.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

representing or rather misrepresenting the facts. A complex situation at hand and requiring a solution which too is complex. By simplifying the situation the danger of each problem not given sufficient attention and only result in a haphazard solution. "This process of simplification was done in order to make Saddam Hussein the only person responsible for the conflict and the agent in it."<sup>44</sup>

George Bush presents the Gulf Crisis as an act of rebellion against established order. But the road which takes to finding a resolution based on economics, politics and ideology is longer and complex and the world opinion may not ultimately endorse the 'use of force' to reach a solution. So the quicker way is to categorise concretely the two camps and describe it in as many images as possible.

Mr Baker said the international patience over the occupation of Kuwait is limited.<sup>45</sup>

He (George Bush) said Iraq's full compliance with the U.N resolution on Kuwait would allow its return to the international community.<sup>46</sup>

The expression 'return to international community' means that Iraq has deviated, and nothing more it is as simple as that and if

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<sup>44</sup> Luisa Martin Rojo, "Division and Rejection: From the personification of the Gulf Conflict to the Demonization of Saddam Hussein", *Discourse and Society* (1995). p.55.

<sup>45</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 30.10.1990, n.3, 29-30 October 1990. p.C-XI.

<sup>46</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 13.1.1991, *Ibid.*, 12-13 January 1991. p.C-VII.

they want acceptance the only possible way is to follow the UN resolution or face rejection. It is a simple message even a child can understand and in our day-today life parents warn the children that there is no way out either comply or face the action.

## **PUBLIC OPINION AND MEDIA**

The radios under study give very little information about anti-war feelings and demonstrations. 'Boston Globe', on 13 January observed that a 'surprising number of European believe that the US is in the Gulf not to free Kuwait or punish Saddam Hussein but to bolster its own influence and power". The same paper reported on the same day that a surprising number of Americans believed that the control over oil was the key reason' for the US troop presence.<sup>17</sup>

Here we cannot examine the facts about these statements but the issue of oil forming significant part of the Gulf Crisis was not dealt in the reports of the radios studied here. The significant part oil played in the western alliance prompted the anti-war demonstrations saying: "Don't exchange oil with blood."

BBC gave the impression of being an objective radio which sticks to 'truth'. Hence when reports are not considered to be an

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<sup>17</sup> Noam Chomsky, 'The US in the Gulf Crisis', in Haim Bresheeth and Niva Yuval- Davidson (eds), *The Gulr War and the New World Order* (London, 1991). p.15.



interpretation, they are taken as fact.

The persuasive dimension in news lies in the formation of meanings in such a way that they are not merely understood but also accepted as the truth or at least as a possible truth. Van Dijk<sup>48</sup> points out that one means of increasing the appearance of truth in news is to resorting to evidence from other reliable sources (authorities, respectable people, professionals.) Some of these technique adopted by the media are deliberate attempt at an opinion making.

The anti-war demonstrations held in many European countries did not prevent any West European governments to either give full or symbolic support to the coalition war effort. Though VOA reported about massive demonstrations in Europe days before the military actions was to begin, very negligible coverage was given by the European radios.

Fear of war in the Gulf has triggered a massive wave of protests in several European countries. In German city of Frankfurt more than 5,000 people marched to the streets carrying banners with slogans 'no blood for oil'.<sup>49</sup>

Lakhs of people in Europe, Asia and North America have staged protest demonstrations against war in the Persian Gulf.

In German cities about, 200,000 people demonstrated. Most of demonstrations were in

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<sup>48</sup> Rojo, n.45, p.53.

<sup>49</sup>VOG: 0730 Hrs., 16.1.1991, n.3, 15-16 January 1991. p.F-4.

Stuttgard, Berlin and Hamburg and shouted slogans 'Don't exchange oil with Blood'.<sup>50</sup>

This reports seem objective as far as the presentation is concerned. Sometimes these kind of reports helps in terms of reinforcing the objectivity of the respective press or radio. As continued slant and suppression during a long period of time could run the danger of loosing its credibility. In this sense we see well established media quite often report the opponents point of view too. Their partiality in covering crisis situation involving crisis over personal interest very often is difficult to make out.

Here we shall examine how the media portrays a same event but occurring at the different sides of the camps. We can see here a clear bias against one side in the reporting on troop reinforcement:

Iraq has amassed 60 divisions ground forces in the region and he (Saddam Hussein ) spoke in scathing terms of the deployment of troops confronting them.<sup>51</sup>

This was the BBC report on Iraqi increasing their troops and Saddam Hussein addressing his troops. Looking it without context it may just look quite harmless and straight forward until we come across the following:

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<sup>50</sup> VOA, 1700 Hrs., 13.1.1991, Ibid., 13-14 January 1991. p. C- XIV.

<sup>51</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 2 January 1991, Ibid., vol. 1-2 January 1991, p.C-VII.

US Defence Secretary Mr Cheney spoke of the need for more heavy armour to be deployed to make certain we have the forces.. to deal with any contingency..<sup>52</sup>

In the first report, words such as 'amassed', scathing terms', 'confronting them', create an image of fear and terror, a situation which seem highly volatile. In contrast the second report is a flow of soft syllables, 'spoke of the need', 'be deployed', 'deal with any contingency' - the phrases describe a situation arising out of caution, prudence and responsibility.

When we directly juxtapose these words we can see the difference clearly; 'amassed vs deployed', spoke in scathing terms vs spoke of the need, and 'confronting vs contingency'. In continuation of these reports on the leaders addressing the troops the same approach is adopted.

Vice-President Dan Quayle was loudly cheered when he said indefinite patience could only lead to a policy of appeasement.<sup>53</sup>

In contrast when Saddam Hussein meets the forces, the following report is given;

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<sup>52</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 26 October 1990, Ibid., vol. 25-26 October 1990, p. C-VI.

<sup>53</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 2 January 1991, Ibid, vol. 1-2 January 1991, P. C-VII.

There is no mention of peaceful outcome in the Gulf Crisis in his speech, rather it was belligerent.. looking tired and grim he said this is a special time...<sup>54</sup>

The mood settings vastly differ on both the occasions, a task prerogative of the respective correspondent. In the former report there is cheer and happiness. the leader and forces are in harmony with each other, His approach is cool but alert. In contrast the mood in the later report of course is gloom. The relation is rather disharmonious as there is belligerent attitude. The qualities of the 'tired and grim' connoting to the leader is subconsciously applied by the listener to the forces he is addressing.

There are many such reporting through out the crisis period. The terms used again to convey the meaning of war are so important to note here. In the case of Iraq the radio broadcast had been referring such terms such as 'mother of all battles', 'holy war', At the same time the radio broadcasts on Western military action had been mildly portrayed in terms of duration of war envisaged . The terms used here 'swift operation', 'surgical strikes', 'use of force'.

The Iraq side said that if war breakout it would be long, involving heavy loss of life and property on both sides. And the Iraq experience indicated that they would withstand longer war more than the allies.

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<sup>54</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 6 January 1991, Ibid., vol. 6-7 January 1991, P.C-I.

Moreover the US and its Western allies were sure that the public opinion would not support allies engaged in a long battle and continued disruption of normalcy. Therefore it was important for the US-led alliance to project the brewing war as 'swift operation', or 'surgical attack', - which is called by Lakoff as metaphor of war as medicine.<sup>55</sup> The concept produced is thus like removing the tumour from the affected part or like treating a cancer patient, where only the unwanted and growth is surgically removed causing no actual harm.

The battle you are waging today, is the battle of battle.<sup>56</sup>

Mr Bush said he hoped any fighting will be over in a few days.<sup>57</sup>

Mr Bush said that war in the Gulf, if it broke out would be 'a swift operation', and would not last long.<sup>58</sup>

Military commanders said the operations were proceeding according to plan.<sup>59</sup>

It is noteworthy that Saddam Hussein was more interested in conveying through various media that Gulf war would be long drawn war

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<sup>55</sup> George Lakoff, "Metaphor of War: The Metaphor System used to Justify War in Gulf", in Martin Putz, ed., *Thirty Years of Linguistic Evolution* (Philadelphia, 1992), P.472.

<sup>56</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 6 January 1991, n.3, vol. 6-7 January 1991, p.C-I.

<sup>57</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 2 January 1991, Ibid., vol. 2-3 January 1991, p.C-IV.

<sup>58</sup> Radio Dubai: 1030 Hrs., 2 January 1991, Ibid., vol. 31 December to 6 January 1991, p.3.

<sup>59</sup> BBC: 1830 Hrs., 17 January 1991, Ibid., vol. 16-17 January 1991, p.C-I.

and loss of men and property would be heavy. He had also conveyed that Iraqis were experienced in long-drawn war. However, the Western media while referring these matters did not give prominence or associated with illogical reasoning such as "mother of all battles". The primary concern was that West was not interested that its citizens be sensitized with these aspect which would work against the American led coalition.

Media had very succinct role in the formation of public opinion and underlying effort generally seen in most reports are with skillful use of language, omission and commission what the listener finally got was highly concise and culled out information from a vast load of information. The Gulf Crisis coverage lacked indepth analysis. In effect without knowledge of its history, geography and population, many in the West began to view Kuwait as a small, helpless country, invaded and obliterated by its more powerful and arrogant neighbour. Image replaced reality and became the operative factor in people's perception of events. The inability to understand the reasons behind a problem guarantees an inability to provide solutions. Hence the U.S led war against Iraq, initiated on 16 January 1991.

*Chapter Four*

*Radio Reporting on  
Operation Beyond Kuwait*

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The Persian Gulf War has been one of the most lopsided war fought in the recent history. It was lopsided in terms of loss of life and property; in terms of possession of sophisticated weaponry; in terms of strategic position and in terms of communication system and information control. In all 88,500 tons of bombs were dropped on Iraq and Kuwait with about 1,00,000 casualties and 9,000 homes destroyed.<sup>1</sup> The damages went beyond the military facilities to civilian telephone and other communication centres, public utilities, power grids, bridges, highways and other unaccounted losses. But the impression created of the war was a 'clean little war' which 'liberated Kuwait' with laser guided precision bombs achieving the target quickly with minimum of casualties. Thanks largely to successful censorship on media.

The media coverage of the 43-day war was characterised as a 'desert mirage'. The media boasted about a new milestone in war-coverage, with the introduction of live telecasts and spot reports about the hazards of war was made 'real' to the audience. In fact the Gulf War is a startling example of a war made less 'real'. Trivial events and speeches filled the air waves leaving the important ground realities to oblivion.

The information sources ironically were the two sides engaged in the conflict who said everything but the truth. Ultimately the cries of

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<sup>1</sup> Paul F. Walkar and Eric Stambler, "...And The Dirty Little Weapons", *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (Chicago), vol. 47, no.4, May 1991, p.22.



pain never reached the audience. In the process media itself became a casualty.

A 'pool system' of media coverage was arranged for the media personnel covering the war. They were accompanied by military escorts, who determined where they should go, and their copy, photographs were screened by military officials. Military officials also subjected stories to layers and layers of clearance. Journalists who attempted to cover the war unmediated by military escorts risked losing their credentials and even being arrested.

The overall perception, therefore one would obtain from the media was hazy. Marie Gottschalk, referring to ABC anchor person Peter Jennings' opening newscast on the first day of U.S attack on Iraq who mistakenly announced as 'operation Desert Cloud' instead of 'operation Desert Storm' stated that it was a Freudian slip which proved to be true. What the media presented was a 'cloudy picture' of the military operation.<sup>2</sup> The military control over the information was not entirely to be blamed but the news organisations which consumed without question whatever the Pentagon dished out.

Voice of Germany sometimes expressed its inability to get at the facts due to the severe restrictions imposed by the allied forces.

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<sup>2</sup> Marie Gottschalk, "Operation Desert Cloud: The Media and the Gulf War", *World Policy Journal* (New York), vol. 9 no.3 summer 1992, p.451.

The US led multinational forces intensified their bombardment.. no details and accurate information about the operation against the Iraq troops has been received due to the imposition of strict censor.<sup>3</sup>

The same radio reported German Television and Radio journalists who protested against strict censorship on reporting imposed by the Allied forces. They stressed that particularly in a time of war it was essential for correspondents working in the crisis area to have free access to information.<sup>4</sup> But these protests could achieve precious little to portray the course of the war to any resemblance of truth. The real facts started emerging only after the war was over. By the time the truth began to emerge of the war, it was too late to erase the dominant image of an inevitable, clean, bloodless and high-tech war.

The war seemed to the common man as a spectacle with live telecasts, missiles and counter missiles making a spectacular scene over the dark and wintry skies. As the actual damages and destruction were blacked out.

A considerable number of US supplied Patriot missiles were fired at the incoming Scuds

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<sup>3</sup> VOG(Voice of Germany): 1430 Hrs.,7 February 1991, *Today's Radio Report*, Central Monitoring Services, All India Raido (New Delhi), vol.2-3 February 1991, p.F-2.

<sup>4</sup> VOG: 1430 Hrs., 7 February 1991, *Ibid.*, vol.7-8 February 1991, p.F-2.

creating one of the most dramatic fireworks display yet seen over the Tel Aviv area.<sup>5</sup>

Eyewitnesses said fires lit up the sky on Saturday night and column of smoke have been all over the city.<sup>6</sup>

The 43-day war was war of the unequals, the great powers fighting a Third World country. The war could have ended in a short period, but the dominant allies did not end the war when the primary objective, i.e, 'liberation of Kuwait' was achieved. Indeed the war was pursued to destroy Iraq's military potential to levels uncalled for. In this context, media's role was crucial too.

## **THEORIES OF HIDDEN AGENDA**

In United States some members of the American Congress were strongly of the view one the objectives of the US should be elimination of Saddam Hussein and his capacity to dominate the region. The Chairman of the US Armed Services Committee, Les Aspin wrote in an article that "any outcome that leaves Iraq in control of Saddam Hussein is not acceptable, nor is it acceptable for Iraqi troops to remain positioned to intimidate the Saudis into accepting whatever oil policies Saddam

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<sup>5</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC): 0630 Hrs., 21 January 1991, Ibid., vol.25-26 January 1991, p.C-X.

<sup>6</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs.,26 January 1991, Ibid.,vol.20-21 January 1991, p.F-7.

dictates. We can tolerate Saddam Hussein without a million men army or the army without Saddam Hussein but we could not live with them together."<sup>7</sup>

There were more of such opinions expressed by influential members of the American Congress. Senator Richard Lugar, former Republican Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, said that, "the Gulf Crisis could not be resolved so long as Saddam Hussein remained in power. And we do not expect him to step down voluntarily." He argued, " Even if Iraq were to withdraw from Kuwait today, its chemical weapons and potential nuclear capability will continue to pose a threat."<sup>8</sup>

Many strong supporters of Israel in the media like A.M. Rosenthal and William Sabre of *New York Times* wanted the United States to go it alone and eliminate Iraqi threat to Israel once and for all. The Bush administration would have been happier to see him go, but it was not overtly in favour of making the removal of Saddam Hussein one of its objectives, as the UN Security Council had no provision for it.<sup>9</sup>

The US administration was speaking in terms of "new security structure" for the Middle East after the crisis was over.

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<sup>7</sup> *International Herald Tribune* (Hong Kong), 13 August 1990.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in B.K. Srivastava, "The Great Powers and the Gulf Crisis: The Course of an Uneasy Alliance", in A.H.H. Abidi and K.R. Singh, eds., *The Gulf Crisis* (New Delhi, 1991), p.50.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.51.

Appearing before the most important committee of American Congress, Senate foreign relations committee Secretary of State James Baker stated that new security structure should be strong enough not only to stop Saddam Hussein from committing further aggression but deal with future crisis. He said that it was worthwhile to begin considering regional security structures that would guarantee an equilibrium in the region that would produce peace and create a more durable order.

The Secretary of State said there must be no vengeful action against Iraq after the war. The secure and prosperous future that everyone wishes to see in the Gulf region must include Iraq.<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Baker speaking to a congressional committee said that the post-war era should not be an occasion for vengeful action against, what he called a nation forced into war as a result of a dictator's ambitions.<sup>11</sup>

President Bush speaking in the same vein amidst the war proceedings said that it was an historic opportunity to bring about a new civilisation and new security structure vital to global prosperity.

The road to peace will be difficult, long and tough. I would say but we will prevail and when we do, we will have before us, an historic opportunity. From the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates where civilisation began, civilised

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<sup>10</sup> VOG:1430 Hrs.,8 February 1991,n.3,vol.7-8 February 1991,p.F-1.

<sup>11</sup> BBC:0730 Hrs., 7 February 1991,Ibid., vol.6-7 February 1991, p.C-VIII.

behaviour can begin anew, and we can build a better world and a better world order. The President Bush said by standing up to aggression in the Gulf, the US and its allies were guaranteeing the future security of an area vital to global economic prosperity.<sup>12</sup>

Probably this new security structure and concept of peace was foreseen to have the capacity to denuclearize the region and remove the threat of chemical and biological weapons. This phenomenon of danger of nuclear weapons was also used as an issue to quicken the start of military action against Iraq.

Each day that passes means Saddam Hussein advancing further along the path of developing biological and nuclear weapons and missiles to deliver them.<sup>13</sup>

The debates on nuclear issues prompted discussion on limits which the US forces should go to in the Gulf War. In a New York Times feature, "Political costs of victory questioned?" a Middle East specialist Judith Miller wrote, that there were few who doubted that if there was a war in the Persian Gulf the United States and its allies could 'turn Baghdad into a parking lot'. And she continued, that however analysts were increasingly concerned about the probable effect of such a victory on

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> BBC:0730 Hrs., 6 January 1991, *Weekly Report*, Ibid., vol.31 December - 6 January 1991, p.3.

long-term American interests in the region.<sup>14</sup>

This approach was reflected again in an interview to *New York Times* by General Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander of US forces in the Gulf. The Commander said that his forces could obliterate Iraq but cautioned that total destruction of that country might not be in the interest of the long-term balance of power in the region. It meant in short that the allied forces could wipe a country out of the face of the earth, but mass extermination might be tactically unwise, harmful to the interests of victor.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps since the U.S agenda was different from what was spoken to the world it consistently opposed to any international conference on Middle East. The excuse offered was that "aggressor must not be paid", but it was not the real reason, what exactly the US feared was that in an international conference the US could be isolated. These issues were not the media highlights instead it reported about the danger of biological and nuclear weapons and stable regional security.

President Bush in a television address to the nation said the allies were determined to eliminate nuclear weapons potential and its chemical weapons facility... America had no

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<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Noam Chomsky, "The US in The Gulf Crisis", in Haim Bresheeth and Niva Yuval-Davis, *The Gulf War and The New World Order* (London, 1991), p.19.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

quarrel with the Iraqi people themselves ..the aim of the operation was the liberation of Kuwait, not the conquest of Iraq.<sup>16</sup>

Another factor which forced the US to gain a total victory could be the urge to get rid of what may be called the 'Vietnam syndrome'. At the time of invasion of Kuwait, Western democracy was on the verge of triumph with the collapse of Soviet satellite regimes in Eastern Europe, the destruction of Berlin Wall and many other developments. This developments raised questions in Washington whether the United States had a superpower role in the new political climate. This crisis therefore was an opportunity for the US to reassert that role more forcefully than at any time since the Vietnam war.

The economic compulsion of the allies are all well known. The present world economy is absolutely dependent on oil. And out of world's known oil reserves over 50 percent lie under the Gulf countries. Oil is not just another commodity, it underpins the present industrial way of life.<sup>17</sup> As President Bush speech above testified the importance of the region in "global economic prosperity". As such a control of strategic source is to vital Western security. Iraq itself used its country's own oil wealth to build up

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<sup>16</sup> BBC: 1600 Hrs.,17 January 1991,n.3,vol.17-18 January 1991,p.C-V.

<sup>17</sup> Jack Stauder, "Oil Internationalism: The Crisis in The Gulf in Broad Perspective", *Review on International Affairs* (Belgrade), vol. 41, no.975, 1990, p.27.



and maintain a huge standing army of million and also to develop chemical and alleged nuclear potential. It was feared that Saddam Hussein's control over Kuwait's oil reserves would further his ambition of becoming a dominant regional power. The United States was determined not to allow a regional power like Iraq to gain control over all of oil of the Gulf. Therefore to ensure that Iraq would not entertain thoughts of regional power for long time to come it apparently became the policy and objective of the US and its allies to cripple his industrial and military infrastructure.

#### **WAR OF THE UNEQUALS**

Beginning in the early hours of 16 January 1991, the United States primarily with assistance from its chief ally Britain and with symbolic support from France, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and some others initiated massive strategic bombing of Iraq and Kuwait. The priorities of the American targets lends credence to the charge made in some quarters that the real goal was destruction of Iraqi war machine and the infrastructure and its potential rather than the 'liberation of Kuwait'. Thus when the American air attacks began the first to be attacked were the chemical weapons plant at Samarra, the military R & D facility at Saad, the missile research site at el-Hilla, various nuclear development locations, the biological warfare centres at Salmaan-Pak, and the space centres at

el-Anbar.<sup>18</sup> Secondary targets included power stations and oil facilities, air fields and air crafts.

The air assault was characterised by highly sophisticated military technology and was an instant success. It was air superiority turning soon into air supremacy. However Iraqis did show some ingenuity even after the coalition forces had destroyed the airfields, When their aircraft stored in underground revetments used highways instead of airport runways. Its military engineers made significant adaptation in moving the mobile missile launchers and continue to cause considerable complication to the allied forces to an otherwise altogether successive military operations.

But what the actual war was like came to be known only well after the military operation was over. Neither the extent of destruction caused by allied air attacks nor Iraqi resistance were freely reported by media. It is fairly clear now that the world was not informed of the war's major occurrences in a timely fashion. The Pentagon consciously misled the media and public and media failed to cover a number of critical issues both before, during and after the war.

BBC and VOG like all other Western media relied on military arranged 'pool system' for information on war front. Therefore their source

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<sup>18</sup> Sanford R. Silverburg, "The Siege Qua War: From Ultimatum to Ultimatum", *International Studies* (New Delhi),vol.31, no.1, January -March 1994, p.71.

of information was just same as other western media. The allies information on the one side and Baghdad Radio on the other side the parties involved in the war became the source of information which obviously was highly biased and propagandist. The allies gave statistical details on air raids, high-tech capability and trouble taken to avoid civilian casualties. But nothing about whether the targets were really hit or missed subsequent destruction caused and such details were never heard of. On the other hand relying on Baghdad Radio too naturally could not ensure getting facts. It did mention about destruction caused, deaths of civilian but little about the enormous damage caused acceptance of which would have led to acceptance of loss or led to demoralizing the troops engaged in the fields. Ultimately Gulf war turned out to be in the words of Katherine Graham of *Washington Post*, "the most undercovered major conflict in modern history."<sup>19</sup>

On the first day of war BBC spoke about successful air raids and succinctly added life was normal:

Reports from the allies suggest that the first raids have devastated the Iraqi Air force and met with little resistance.. American officials say there were 400 raids in the first three hours on 60 separate targets. A senior Saudi official said all those involved in the initial attacks returned safely.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Gottschalk, n.2, p.478.

<sup>20</sup> BBC: 1600 Hrs., 17 January 1991,n.3,vol.17-18 January,p.C-III.

Iraq's first statement about initial air-borne onslaught said, enemy planes had attacked residential areas in Baghdad and a number of air bases. But our correspondent says there are reports that an oil refinery and a power station are being damaged, In the streets people are still going about their business.<sup>21</sup>

The coverage of Gulf War by media and BBC and Voice of Germany in particular has been an hazy picture. Here we see the allies version of air raids which is characterised as intensive, successful and effective and safe. While we hear little about ground realities except the correspondent ensuring business as usual on the streets of Baghdad. The final picture emerged after tons of bombs dropped was that the war was different. There was no mention of pain, suffering, deaths and destruction, it was a kind of 'safe war'. Frequent reports from different sides contradicted each other the listener never having to form a clear perception of the proceeding which might disturb his\her mind. But is not war is a war ? Can there be a war with no misery, suffering, cries, bloodshed? Can it be clean?

Coalition forces undertook thousands of aircraft sorties and missile strikes in the first days of the war, and only a select number of successful laser-guided bomb strikes were portrayed on the news. Allied information sources in daily briefings stressed that coalition warplanes

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.,p.C-V.

were taking great pains to match weapon target in order to minimise 'collateral damages' i.e., harm to civilians in Iraq and Kuwait.

John Major said immense trouble has been taken during the attack to ensure that it hit military targets and that civilian casualties were kept to a minimum.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile the side which was hit didn't divulge with the facts either. Iraq reported only 41 deaths in the first five days of 'Operation Desert Storm' in which the coalition forces dropped some 15,000 tons of explosives on Iraq.<sup>23</sup> On type of weapons deployed by the coalition forces, the BBC quoted a source to state that "While civilian deaths cannot be avoided, they can be minimised because of the precision of the weapons being used."<sup>24</sup> But actually weapons like the cluster bombs, fuel-air explosives and 'Daisy cutters', which were conventional and very destructive dominated the Gulf war. Even BBC quoted King Hussein of Jordan testifying this fact, who said : "The allies had assembled against Iraq some of the most lethal concentration of military men and equipment in modern times."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> BBC: 1430 Hrs., 17 January 1991, Ibid., vol.17-18 January 1991, p.C-I.

<sup>23</sup> Walker,n.1,p.21.

<sup>24</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 8 February 1991,n.3, vol.7-8 February 1991,p.C-XII.

<sup>25</sup> BBC: 2130 Hrs., 19 January 1991, Ibid., vol.19-20 January 1991, p.C-X.

King Hussein seemed the only leader who was given reasonable airtime in the Western media who openly voiced concern about the allies real intentions. But BBC stopped with that, it did not elaborate on dangers and destructive capabilities of those weapons. On the contrary BBC in one of its report gave a very detailed account of chemical and biological weapons in possession of Iraq. The report also described in detail how the said weapons would inflict pain on human beings. The report said:

Iraq had the most deadly chemical weapons 'the nerve gas, one milligram of which can kill a healthy man within seconds... if the gas could not enter the body through respiratory process it enters the body through body pores and death becomes slow and painful. The second deadly biological weapon Iraq had was 'mustard gas' and it causes blisters on the body which later changes into fissures.<sup>26</sup>

Surprisingly a number of dangerous weapons which was actually being put into use by the allies never even got mentioned in the reports. But the fears about Iraqi possible use of chemical weapons was endlessly discussed. It was scarcely noted that U.S forces were making widespread use of flesh-searing napalm, cluster bombs and fuel-air explosives. The fuel-air explosive can suck the oxygen from the lungs of all nearby troops and create an explosion that can obliterate an area of two football fields.

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<sup>26</sup> BBC: 0715 Hrs., 4 February 1991, Ibid., vol.3-4 February 1991, p.C-VI.

The cluster bomb unit (CBU) is described as 'work-horse' weapon, it is used to deliver explosive lethal to personnel and equipment over expanded areas. Instead of a single large explosion these bombs contain dozens, hundreds sometimes thousands of bomblets designed to spread devastations over wide areas.<sup>27</sup>

Fears over Iraq's possible use of chemical and biological weapons was used by allies to justify the enormous destruction wrought upon the country. Leaders and spokespersons were repeatedly focusing this aspect. We come across frequent warnings sent out to the Israelis to wear gas masks, The same fear was used to justify deploying nuclear weapons in the region. Vice President Dan Quayle declined to rule out the possible use of nuclear weapons in an interview to BBC when asked how the US might respond to chemical attack by Iraqi forces.<sup>28</sup>

Overestimating Iraqis chemical weapons threat Soviet military sources said that American had around 1000 low yield heeled nuclear warheads in the region.<sup>29</sup> This kind of reasoning covered up military operation which went beyond the officially stated aim of the operation.

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<sup>27</sup> Walker,n.1,p.22.

<sup>28</sup> BBC: 1930 Hrs., 1 January 1991,n.3, vol. 1-2 January 1991, p.C-II.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

Many of the critical targets in Baghdad and other cities were civilian although military sources denied this fact. Telephone and other communication centres, public utilities and power grids, bridges and highways between Basra and Baghdad were damaged or rendered inoperable by air bombardment. Highways and surrounding areas were bombed in the air force search and destroy missions against Iraqi mobile missile launchers. A UN report issued after the war disclosed a 'near apocalyptic' damage to Iraq's infrastructure which had relegated the country to a 'pre-industrial age'. Some senior allied military officials on condition of anonymity acknowledged that some infrastructure formed the basic military targets. "They said bridges were traditionally accepted as military targets, destroying them was a good way of cutting lines of communication and supply."<sup>30</sup>

But all the while the allies were misrepresenting these facts and diverted the focus by projecting Iraqi army as still formidable force.

The U.S says that despite the intensive aerial bombardment only a few Iraq aircraft had been destroyed so far only 12 out of 700 planes in the Iraqi air forces had been disabled.<sup>31</sup>

Conflicting reports were norm of the day. One report on the same day quoting Chief of Staff of French armed forces estimated half of

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<sup>30</sup> 3 : 1630 Hrs., 7 February 1991, Ibid., vol.7-8 February 1991, p.C-IV.

<sup>31</sup> Radio Netherlands: 1700 Hrs., 19 January 1991, Ibid., vol. 19-20 January 1991, p.F-7.



Iraq's air force had been eliminated.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, the allies misled the public on actual strength of the Iraqi army, and media in turn faithfully followed them. In the weeks prior to the land assault, U.S and allied military officials created a myth of Iraq as superbly equipped and trained enemy force, many of them in heavily fortified trenches and bunkers.

The General Norman Schwarzkopf speaking in an American television interview said the allies were dealing with a very tough regime.<sup>33</sup>

The *New York Times* cited sources as saying three weeks of heavy bombardment had not substantially weakened the military capability of Iraq.<sup>34</sup>

Lieutenant General Tom Kelly said at a Pentagon news briefing that more than half a million US troops are now in the Gulf skilled, tough, and ready to go. But he emphasised that the Iraqi army was still a capable force and was not showing any signs of giving up, despite allied bombardment.<sup>35</sup>

This kind of misrepresentation was perhaps in preparation of ground offensive. The U.S Defence Secretary Dick Cheney on a fact-finding mission to the war zone agreed that "allied air offensive has

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<sup>32</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 19 January 1991, Ibid., vol.19-20 January 1991, p.C-V.

<sup>33</sup> BBC: 1430 Hrs., 6 February 1991, Ibid., vol. 6-7 February 1991, p.C-I.

<sup>34</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 7 February 1991, Ibid., vol.6-7 February 1991, p.F-6.

<sup>35</sup> VOG: 1430 6 February 1991, Ibid., vol.6-7 February 1991, p.F-3.

caused serious damage to Iraq's military capability."<sup>36</sup> But in a bid to approve the ground offensive he did a volte-face, which we find in the evening report on the same day saying, "Mr. Cheney expressed surprise over the defence capability of Iraq and said 'even after weeks of bombings Iraqi positions the Iraqi military power which is the fourth biggest power in the world is still intact'."<sup>37</sup>

Contrary to all these claims when the ground assault began much of the so called mighty Iraqi military machine could not be found. What the United States faced instead was a ragtag, malnourished army with third-rate equipment, depleted by thousands of desertions and generally eager to surrender or retreat.<sup>38</sup> Yet the allied bombers inflicted an unbelievable carnage on Iraqi soldiers retreating along the main highway out of Kuwait. The actual massacre came to be known only after the war. Bombing was carried out on 26 February 1991 on a six-lane traffic jam of Iraqi tanks, cars and ambulances trying to get out of Kuwait. And the American Army division that broke through the Iraqi frontline in Kuwait had used earthmovers and ploughs mounted on tanks to bury

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<sup>36</sup> BBC: 0630 Hrs., 10 February 1991, *Ibid.*, vol.10-11 February 1991, p.C-VIII.

<sup>37</sup> VOG: 1530 Hrs., 10 February 1991, *Ibid.*, vol.10-11 February, p.F-1.

<sup>38</sup> Gottschalk, n.2, p.452.

approximately 6000 Iraqi soldiers in more than seventy miles of trenches.<sup>39</sup>

General McPeak explained the attack in his briefing on retreating Iraqi forces justified it as "when enemy army is defeated, they retreat often in disorder, it is during this phase that the true fruits of victory are achieved from combat. It is tough business it often causes us to do very brutal things .. that's the nature of war."<sup>40</sup>

The myths media portrayed the Gulf War as relatively clean and painless were proved otherwise only after the war. Nevertheless the radios at times momentarily let its platform for free expressions who voiced against the allied attacks.

The Algerian Foreign Minister has claimed that 1000's of civilian have died in the air raids on Iraq and occupied Kuwait. He said in a radio interview that he learnt this from Iraqi politicians.<sup>41</sup>

King Hussein said that the allied forces were waging savage war aimed against Iraq's very existence.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Adel Safty, "Dateline Iraq: Confrontation, War and the Great Game of Balance of Power", *International Studies*, vol.29, no.4, 1992, p.458.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Walker, n.1, p.22.

<sup>41</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 3 February 1991, n.3, vol.3-4 February 1991, p.F-3.

<sup>42</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 7 February 1991, *ibid.*, vol.6-7 February 1991, p.C-IX.

## **PATRIOTS FOIL SCUDS**

The coalition force who only divulged with the scant details regarding military operations against Iraq were different when it came to Iraqi operation - the Scud missile attack. Almost each attack was given vivid descriptions although not based on realistic occurrence. They said the Patriot missiles performed flawlessly and successfully destroyed the incoming Scud missiles.

At least eight missiles carrying warheads have landed around the country, with two exploding in Tel Aviv. Details said seven people were slightly injured.<sup>43</sup>

Iraq has launched a number of Scud missiles at cities in Saudi Arabia, American military sources say, they believe all were intercepted and destroyed in the air by Patriot anti-missile rockets.<sup>44</sup>

Most of the Scud missiles were intercepted and shot down by the US Patriot missiles, one landed in the waters of the Gulf.<sup>45</sup>

Debris was seen falling to earth by Saudi officials said it landed harmlessly in an unpopulated area.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 19 January 1991, Ibid., vol.18-19 January 1991, p.C-IV.

<sup>44</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 21 January 1991, Ibid., vol.20-21 January 1991, p.C-XII.

<sup>45</sup> VOG: 1430 Hrs., 21 January 1991, Ibid., vol 22-23 January 1991, p.F-3.

<sup>46</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 8 February 1991, Ibid., vol.7-8 February 1991, p.C-XI.

We can see a method in these reports, giving an impression that though Scud missiles kept coming they were made ineffective and consequently causing no damage if at all negligible. Thus the Scuds were either intercepted, or they fell on waters, or on unpopulated areas at the most case caused minor injuries. As almost all the reports on Scud missiles describe like this: 'slightly injured', all were 'intercepted and destroyed', 'debris landed harmlessly in an unpopulated area'. They tell of the way cover up efforts undertaken through the media. It was an image of Patriot missiles whizzing through a darkened sky and destroying the scud creating a magical effect among the audience.

It came to be known later that Patriot missiles had destroyed only one of the 90 Iraqi Scud missiles fired at Saudi Arabia and Israel. Marie Gottschalk says there was substantial evidence that the Patriots not only failed to destroy a significant number of attacking Scuds instead they increased the damage as they crashed into the Israeli streets.<sup>47</sup>

### **BOMBING OF THE NIGHT SHELTER**

The first time media coverage came closer to reality was the bunker attack in which hundreds of civilians died at one go. On 13 February 1991 American Stealth fighter bombers bombed and destroyed

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<sup>47</sup> Gottschalk, n.2, p.451.

a concrete building in a residential area near Baghdad killing hundreds of sheltering civilians.

An Associated Press reporter who spoke to witnesses on the scene wrote that the first bomb struck the entrance of the building about 4.00 A.M., jamming the only escape route. Ten seconds later, a second bomb smashed through 10 feet reinforced concrete and exploded in the windowless bunker below.<sup>48</sup> Peter Arnet of CNN (Cable News Network) reported that according to Iraqi officials 200 bodies had been removed and there were 300 more inside.<sup>49</sup>

Iraq had let in many Foreign journalist were taken to the site to see for themselves the real destruction. BBC's Alan Little visited the spot and reported. Some excerpts from report as follows:

When we arrived, black smoke was still billowing from the shelter. There was chaos. Charred and mutilated remains of those inside were being carried out.. crowds of near hysterical men pushed and jostled their way through to try to find news about their wives and families... I saw one man uncontrollable with grief fall to the ground and bury his face in the Earth, eleven members of his family had been in the shelter.... No one knows how many have been killed, civilian defence officials fear they are up to a thousand...<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Saftey, n.39, p.455.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> BBC: 1730 Hrs., 13 February 1991, n.3, vol.13-14 February 1991, p. C-IV.

This is one of the first descriptive presentation of real destruction and pain brought about in the Gulf war. These images were powerful and bound to evoke anti-war feelings. But these reports were soon buried down by U.S claims and sermonizing. BBC said: "According to American Defence office the building was military command centre which had been communicating instructions to the Iraqi forces but Iraq says that it was a shelter for evading air attack and it was full of civilians."<sup>51</sup> The report quoted a White House spokesperson who said : "It was difficult to understand why civilians were put into this centre. Saddam Hussein had been showing his readiness for sacrificing human lives and using them as shield."<sup>52</sup>

The *Voice of Germany* too quoted Marilyn Fitzwater, the spokesman who said, "it was not the United States interest to attack the civilians and that the bombed bunker had been a military communication centre and a legitimate target."<sup>53</sup>

Debates of this kind ultimately drowned the real problem and the allies went on to ground offensive even after serious signs of acceptance for withdrawal by Iraq.

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<sup>51</sup> BBC: 0705 Hrs., 14 February 1991, Ibid., vol.13-14 February 1991, p.C-XVI.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 15 February 1991, Ibid., vol.14-15 February 1991, p.F-3.

## PEACE EFFORTS IGNORED FOR PURSUING COMPLETE VICTORY

*Information control made it impossible to determine when military necessity ended and murder began.<sup>54</sup>*

Efforts towards cease fire and peaceful solution began within a week since the military operation began. Countries like, the Soviet Union, Iran, and some Non Aligned countries, had been engaged in a diplomatic initiative to bring forth a cease fire to the intense 'Operation Desert Storm'. Media which mastered in projecting an hazy picture of war scenario, also did not highlight peace efforts seriously. Subsequently it was easy for the allied forces to brush aside these efforts on clumsy grounds. Instead the U.S led allies spoke about "stable and secure prosperity to the region after the operation", "reconstruction of the region after the conflict would include Iraq", and such rhetorics were frequent preventing any diplomacy to end the war.

In the milieu a few who sensed the serious and intense destruction wrought upon a country tried to voice their opinion. The Soviet President Gorbachev accepted the U.N Security Council resolution be fulfilled, but he felt that extending the bombardment to Iraq would exceed

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<sup>54</sup> George A. Lopez, "The Gulf War: Not So Clean", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol.47, no.7, September 1991, p.35.



the UN mandate.<sup>55</sup>

But the United States had its own course to follow. President Bush stated that "campaign to liberate Kuwait was on schedule and going well, he said there will be no concessions and no pulling back."<sup>56</sup>

The Iraqi President following Soviet initiative openly announced his intention to end the war. It was announced in Baghdad Radio that "he told Soviet envoy Mr. Primokov that he was ready to cooperate with the Soviet Union and other countries in seeking a peaceful solution."<sup>57</sup>

The announcement was scoffed by the allies. George Bush "dismissed the statement as cruel hoax offering no genuine prospect for peace."<sup>58</sup> He was joined by his coalition partners, "Mr. John Major has described the Iraqi statement as a sham. President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl described the Iraq proposal as unacceptable."<sup>59</sup>

So the war continued unabated. Delay in bringing a ceasefire due to diplomatic entangles amounted to hundreds and thousands of death

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<sup>55</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 18 February 1991,n.3, vol.17-18 February 1991, p.F-4.

<sup>56</sup> BBC: 0630 Hrs.,18 February 1991,Ibid., vol.17-18 February 1991, p.C-XII.

<sup>57</sup> BBC: 1430 Hrs., 13 February 1991, Ibid., vol.13-14 February 1991, p.C-I.

<sup>58</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs., 16 February 1991, Ibid., vol.15-16 February 1991, p.C-IX.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

as every single day passed. The reason given for not letting up in the fighting was that , "any pause in the fighting would only allow Iraq to strengthen its military position and inflict higher casualties on the coalition forces."<sup>60</sup>

The ground offensive in which tens of thousands fleeing Iraqi soldiers annihilation on 25 and 26 February was proceeded by Baghdad Radio announcing its withdrawal.

Radio Baghdad says Iraq has ordered its troops out of Kuwait to its position held before the August 2 invasion of Kuwait in compliance with UN resolution 616.<sup>61</sup>

But the radio announcement did not convince the coalition forces. The White House said "Iraq had not informed the United States about its withdrawal and war would continue."<sup>62</sup> Similarly the British Foreign Ministry said that "Policy is not made on the basis of Radio announcement alone".<sup>63</sup> And so the offensive continued.

According to Congressional report released in April, only 183,000 Iraqi troops were in place when the 700,000 strong allied forces began the ground assault. The American forces in the area were

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<sup>60</sup> BBC: 0730 Hrs.,18 February 1991, Ibid., vol.17-18 February 1991, p.C-XII.

<sup>61</sup> VOG: 0730 Hrs., 26 February 1991,Ibid., vol.25-26 February 1991, p.F-1.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

grotesquely excessive.<sup>64</sup> It was during those two days, 25 and 26 February one of the most horrifying images of the war ' the parking lot image' was fulfilled when aircraft, helicopters, and ground forces attacked Iraqi troops fleeing on highways out of Kuwait city. Over 1,500 Iraqi tanks, armoured vehicles, trucks, jeeps, ambulances and automobiles were destroyed along several miles of highway running between Kuwaiti city and Umm Qasr in Iraq.<sup>65</sup>

Following another categorical statement from Iraq of unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait in compliance with UN resolutions, on the evening of Tuesday, 26 February 1991, President Bush announced in an address that , "the US military objectives had been met, Kuwait has been liberated and the American flag was flying over the American Embassy in Kuwait city once again." (The flag had never really come down).<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Gottschalk, n.2, p.452.

<sup>65</sup> Walker, n.1, p.22.

<sup>66</sup> Silverburg, n.18, p.79.

*Conclusion*

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The media coverage during the Gulf Crisis can be divided into two distinct phases, one during the escalation of the crisis culminating into war and the second during the military operation. The news reports of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and Voice of Germany (VOG) during these periods clearly shows that there had been a systematic suppression of inconvenient facts bypassing some of the vital issues related to the crisis. The media reports during the first phase focused the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, devoid of its historical context. During the second phase again the media evaded focusing the hard realities of death and destructions on the ground and violence and the aggression unleashed by the US led allies, which was beyond the mandate given by the UN resolution.

The media coverage of the 43-day war was characterised as a 'desert mirage'. The media boasted about a new milestone in war-coverage, claiming that with the introduction of live telecasts and spot reports, the hazards of war were made 'real' to the audience. In fact the Gulf War was a startling example of a war made less 'real'. Trivial events and speeches filled the air waves leaving the important ground realities to oblivion.

The information sources ironically were the two sides engaged in the conflict who said everything but the truth. Ultimately the cries of

pain never reached the audience. In the process media itself became a casualty.

BBC and VOG like all other Western media relied on military arranged 'pool system' for information on war front. Therefore their source of information was just same as other Western media. The allies information on the one side and Baghdad Radio on the other side the parties involved in the war became the source of information which obviously was highly biased and propagandist. The allies gave statistical details on air raids, high-tech capability and trouble taken to avoid civilian casualties. But nothing about whether the targets were really hit or missed subsequent destruction caused and such details were never heard of. On the other hand relying on Baghdad Radio as a source news could not ensure knowing the facts either. It did mention about destruction caused, deaths of civilians but little about the enormous damage caused to its populace and infrastructure. Perhaps Baghdad Radio's frank acceptance of which would have led to acceptance of loss or led to demoralising the troops engaged in the fields. Ultimately Gulf war turned out to be in the words of Katherine Graham of *Washington Post*, "the most undercovered major conflict in modern history."

The 43-day war was war of the unequals, the great powers fighting a Third World country. The war could have ended in a short period, but the dominant allies did not end the war when the primary

objective, i.e, 'liberation of Kuwait' was achieved. Indeed the war was pursued to destroy Iraq's military potential to levels uncalled for. In this context, media's role was crucial too.

Surprisingly a number of dangerous weapons which was actually being put into use by the allies never even got mentioned in the reports. But the fears about Iraqi possible use of chemical weapons was endlessly discussed. It was scarcely noted that U.S forces were making widespread use of flesh-searing napalm, cluster bombs and fuel-air explosives. The fuel-air explosive can suck the oxygen from the lungs of all nearby troops and create an explosion that can obliterate an area of two football fields.

Conflicting reports by BBC and VOG were norm of the day. One report on the same day quoting Chief of Staff of French armed forces estimated half of Iraq's air force had been eliminated. On the other hand, the allies misled the public on actual strength of the Iraqi army, and media in turn faithfully followed them. In the weeks prior to the land assault, U.S and allied military officials created a myth of Iraq as superbly equipped and trained enemy force, many of them in heavily fortified trenches and bunkers. This kind of misrepresentation was perhaps in preparation for ground offensive.

Contrary to all BBC and VOG reports and claims when the ground assault began much of the so called mighty Iraqi military machine could not be found. What the United States faced instead was a ragtag,

malnourished army with third-rate equipment, depleted by thousands of desertions and generally eager to surrender or retreat. Yet the allied bombers inflicted an unbelievable carnage on Iraqi soldiers retreating along the main highway out of Kuwait. The actual massacre came to be known only after the war.

As mentioned earlier the media coverage during the first phase, that is beginning with the Iraqi invasion to the commencement of military action, contributed to the escalation of the crisis into a global conflict by blowing the events out of proportion.

The European media, electronic media in particular played a consistent role in projecting the Gulf Crisis as the biggest threat to the world peace and order and went along with American policies in its approach to the crisis. An apparent kind of unity was presented in its reports. We can see frequent emphasis on solidarity and unified actions. This facilitated in moulding of public opinion especially the European opinion into making them feel part of the 'we' group which was leading the front to set right the Iraqi aggression and therefore had all the more reasons to support the actions of the American led coalition. Consequently the anti-war demonstrations drew little coverage from the radios under study.

The news coverage given by the European media especially BBC looked as if it was a world war. Almost all its bulletins gave a prime



slot to the Gulf Crisis. Extensive quoting was resorted to in its repertoire in addition the correspondent views which in fact acted as guiding the listeners forming anti-Iraqi attitude. European countries followed the American lead on all the major decisions. However various factors contributed to difference of opinion among the European Community members, but the external impression given was that of unity and single mindedness, for which the credit should be given to the European media. Perhaps economic compulsion, dependency on oil import for energy as well as not to be seen opposing United States motivated the European countries not to show any overt dissent over the decisions. Thus in spite of differences of opinion the member countries of European Community participated in the anti-Iraqi coalition either by sending troops, or contributing money or both.

The Western nationals who were residing in Iraq and Kuwait were prevented from leaving the country after the invasion, that ensued the hostage crisis. Ironically the West gained more than what Iraq had achieved with them as a bargaining chip. Indeed it was used by the West to further their campaign of passion against Iraq. The West called it, gross violation of human rights, uncivilised and barbaric act.

The BBC and VOG reporting hostage crisis effectively appealed to European emotions and sought to portray it as a problem that directly crept into their very homes. The issue was used by leaders and

media to sing unity themes. The media including BBC and VOG worked on an environment where populace mood in general seemed endorsing the US-led Allies decision for military action enthusiastically.

We have seen how the advocates of military action spoke the evens of August 1990, who choose phrases like, 'flagrant act', 'clear and unambiguous', the 'brazenness' 'utter disregard' to describe the Iraqi invasion. And sadly the advocates of independent media never questioned this attitude instead picked them up faithfully and amplified it for all to hear.

Neither the media nor the Western leaders acknowledged the complexity of the problem especially in West Asia region. For the West it was clear that international peace and harmony was under threat and Saddam Hussein was to be blamed for it. President Bush declared that "there was no room for doubt about the brutal aggression of Saddam Hussein. It's black and white... the facts are clear. The choice unambiguous, right vs wrong. And therefore Saddam Hussein was absolute evil and he had to be challenged. This personification of the conflict was carried on through the media and it proved to be a successful campaign.

The public debates which BBC and VOG reported were centred around moral certitude through which the US and its allies located Iraq in unambiguously ethical terms, as repository of all evils on the crisis.

While the alliance were represented as producers of peace. And history tells otherwise, they have been an instrument of war-proneness and war preparations in the past.

Ironically it was the West and the great powers who armed Iraq to the teeth. In the years from 1985 to 1990 Iraq was the world's largest importer of weapons. The Soviet Union supplied aircraft, missiles, and tanks. France equipped Iraq with Exocet missiles, nuclear hardware and technology and West Germany and other Europeans with associated facilities. So Saddam Hussein had been nurturing ambitions of regional military power with active cooperation from the West for quite some time. But when the invasion took place, the West reacted to it as if it was a bolt from the blue.

One of the post-war accounts on the Gulf stated that Kuwait might have been emboldened by Britain and US to take a hardline stand with Iraq and refuse any concessions promising support if any need arise. A number of evidence were produced in support of this. One such included April Glaspie, US Ambassador to Iraq's meeting with Saddam Hussein just days before the invasion. She seemed to have indicated that US had no intention to interfere in their disputes and it was for them to settle. This must have sent a green signal to Saddam Hussein either intentionally or unintentionally that US would not respond to his aggression

It cannot be said with certainty that Kuwait was motivated to take a hardline. Yet later events following the Iraqi invasion especially the speed with which a decision for military action was arrived still leaves many questions unanswered. There was little if any public or media discussions about the possibility for a negotiated settlement of the crisis. On the contrary various speeches of the allies reported by BBC and VOG continued to emphasis that nothing should be done which would be taken to be a reward for aggression. Thereby leaving little room for a non-military solution. Indeed when Secretary Baker finally met Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz in Geneva on 9 January 1991, he declared that his purpose had been "not to negotiate but to communicate". Few media outlets sought to challenge this as an appropriate strategy. Efforts for a negotiated settlement by different countries like Soviet Union, France and Jordan were summarily rejected saying that only "unconditional withdrawal was on offer".

The media coverage in the second phase during the war created the war an illusion of ubiquity. Some media analysts said high-tech warfare were combined with advanced media-technology to create a new image of aesthetised view of combat. Audiences worldwide believed they were getting all the updates on war, but much of what went on never reached media, leave alone the audience. Moreover, what was reported in those days was simply not true. The massive air attacks was presented as

bloodless operation of surgical precision. Such filtering of information by military showed war in a new light. Violence were no longer represented by horrors of mangled flesh, blood and sweat of combatants. The Gulf war for most people a distant impersonal military objects being hit.

The portrayal of oil drenched dying sea-birds and burning oil which were even flashed on the front pages of newspapers and magazines during those days conveyed the subliminal message that Saddam Hussein was not just an enemy, but demonic threat to the world as such.

Both BBC and VOG effectively reported the coalition claim that this war was a great victory. Yes, victory it was but certainly it was not a great victory. Great victories are achieved against great adversaries not against an isolated, demoralised, starving, badly led, shell-shocked, strategically bankrupt side. If the victory was achieved on the basis of annihilation it will not lead to peace worthy of a name let alone solution to Iraq-Kuwait conflict.

By drawing these conclusions the present researcher does not intent to shift the blame for the cause and subsequent handling of the crisis from Saddam Hussein to U.S led allies. It is to point out that one dimensional narration of the official story may lead to obscurity instead of clarity. High-tech warfare and advanced media technology may win war, but 'truth' may be a victim.

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