

India and Iraq - Kuwait Crisis

Dr. Md. Aminuzzaman

Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Bahir Dar University, Bahir Dar, Ministry of Education, Ethiopia

Abstract: *The present study is an attempt to study the India and Iraq- Kuwait crisis. From the earlier age Iraq and India had good relationship in terms of politically, economically and culturally. After the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, India and Iraq relation gradually stopped. India tendency to regard the Iraq- Kuwait crisis (Gulf crisis) as “just another” regional conflict and the consequent need to keep extra regional powers at bay apparently shaped its response. India was piqued over the speed with which the United States responded to the situation. India on the other hand, was indeed, not very supportive of external involvement in regional conflict. On the other it allowed the US and allied forces fighter plane for refueling from India’s airport. And which is the major consequences for India- Iraq relation destroyed and subsequently India responsible for the Iraq-Kuwait crisis.*

Keywords: India-Iraq Relations, Occupation of Kuwait, Liberation of Kuwait, India’s Response to Iraq- Kuwait Crisis

1. Introduction

From the earlier era India and Iraq have enjoyed good relation in terms of politically, economically and culturally. Both countries have roots in millennia old civilizations and both share an ethos of tolerance. Though levels vary, both are multi-ethnic, multilingual and multi-religious countries. The Iraqi philosophers and Sufi saints like Hasan al Basri, Junaid al Baghdadi and Sheikh Behlul had such an impact on the spiritual movements in India that Guru Nanak Devji came personally along with his disciple Mardana to meet with Sheikh Behlul who hosted him for nearly four months in Baghdad. On the other hand, Indians have been among the foremost to patronize the shrines and *sarais* of the heritage of Islam’s primeval martyrdom at Karbala. Thousands of Indians visit the shrines of Imam Hussein and Imam Abbas in Karbala every year. Following the outbreak of war in Iraq, India supported a free, democratic, pluralistic, federal and united Iraq. For the stability of the region, India has always been for peace and stability of Iraq. India offered its support towards strengthening of Iraq’s democratic institutions.¹

The bilateral relation between the Republic of Iraq and India has been traditionally friendly and collaborative. Cultural interaction and economic trade between ancient India and Mesopotamia dates back to 1800 B.C². Iraq was one of the country in the West Asia with which India established diplomatic relations at the embassy level immediately after its independence in 1947³. Both the Nations signed the “Treaty of Perpetual peace and friendship” in 1952 and an agreement of cooperation on the cultural affairs in 1954. In the year 1958 there was a change of government in Iraq, followed by military coup, India was among the few countries, which recognized the new Iraqi government. Indian Prime Minister Nehru welcomed the change and expressed his satisfaction saying that, “the present system in Iraq is well- established stable and popular⁴. The during 1960’s India- Iraq relation progressed further, During the Indo- Pakistan war of 1965, Iraq remained neutral. Iraqi Foreign Minister, Dr. Andal-al- pachali, during his visit to India in March 1967, welcomed the signing of the Tashkent declaration, however he also stressed on the need for the solution of outstanding differences between India and Pakistan in accordance with the United Nations (UN) Charter and not the UN resolutions⁵. India and Iraq signed an agreement to regulate trade between these two countries.

However, during East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) crisis, the Gulf states, including Iraq blamed India as an aggressor⁶. The visit of the Vice-President of Saddam Hussein to India in 1974 and the return visit of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi the following year in January 1975, are considered landmark visit in the history of bilateral relations between India and Iraq . These visits set the tone and content for the relations in the years that followed⁷. The eight year long Iran-Iraq war caused a steep decline in trade and commerce between India and Iraq. Indian exports that values Rs. 84.96 crores in 1981-82 declined to Rs.43 crores in 1984-85. Indian civil construction projects, which were worth Rs. 1043 crores in 1980, declined sharply to Rs. 43 crores in 1983. Because of the crisis, the Indian work force in Iraq was also reduced to 20,000 while around 1.3 million Indians continued to work in other Gulf countries⁸.

India has always supported pursuit of a diplomatic approach to ensure Baghdad’s full compliance with UN resolutions with respect to inspection of its suspected chemical and biological weapons facilities. India has demanded the lifting of sanctions against arguing that this has hurt Iraqi people immensely. At that time New Delhi has also opposed the creation of No-fly zones, as the UN does not sanction this⁹.

During the 1991 Gulf War, the Indian government under Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar took a pro-US stand. Initially, India did not support the allied attack on Iraq. However, subsequently under severe pressure from US, it did about turn and even permitted American warplanes to refuel in Mumbai, not only hurt Iraq but also those million supporters of Saddam Hussein in India¹⁰. This was opposed by the opposition parties and finally the Chandra Shekhar government had to suspend the facility. The first gulf war also resulted in economic problems of India. During that period India import crude oil from Iraq about 22 million tones, and from Kuwait 1.5 million tones was suspended. As a result India had to approach Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Venezuela for making up the short fall. Also the sharp increases in the price of crude oil from US \$ 14 to \$ 30 per barrel resulted in a decline in India’s foreign exchange position and increased its oil import bill up to US \$ 100 million . Also Indian exports to Iraq and Kuwait declined¹¹.

Despite the ups and downs in the economic relations, as a results of various international developments, India has

maintained traditionally goods and medicines to that country. For example August 1990, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted resolution 661 for imposing comprehensive trade financial sanctions against Iraq, however medical and food supply on humanitarian ground to Iraq was maintained¹². In March 1991 UNSC adopted resolution 686, outlining the requirements for Iraq's compliance with ceasefire, India abstained¹³. In this connection an Indian Analyst Ramananda Sengupta quoting the Indian Ministry of External Affairs wrote, while India has been scrupulously adhering to UN economic sanctions and has prohibited trade and banking transactions with Iraq unless approved by the UN sanctions. We have been sensitive to the human suffering in Iraq and denoted medicines and food items such as wheat, tea, sugar, rice, baby food and textbooks as humanitarian relief¹⁴. Iraq is among the few countries of the world and in West Asia which supports India's proclaimed stand on Kashmir, that it is an integral part of India.

1999 onwards, Iraq and India began to work towards stronger relationship. Iraq had supported India's right to conduct nuclear weapons on May 11 and May 13, 1988¹⁵. In 2000, the Vice President Tahe Rahmadhan's visit to India and on August 6, 2002 President Saddam Hussein conveyed Iraq's "unwavering support" to India over the Kashmir dispute with Pakistan. The three day meeting of Indo- Iraqi joint commission during Vice-president Rahmadhan's visit is a good but relations to normalcy. India is parallel joining efforts being made by important member countries of the UN, to first liberalize and then remove sanctions against Iraq. Iraq also has to undertake some initiatives to overcome the handicap of the UN sanctions. The most important results of Vice- President Rahmadhan's visit into two countries having taken a substantive Step in restoring normalcy and substantive relations which are mutually beneficial¹⁶.

2. Why Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait

There are several reasons why Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. *First* Iraq had long considered Kuwait to be part of Iraq. Iraq was expected to emphasize a claim to the strategic islands of Bubiyan and Warbah, situated at the mouth of Shatt-al-Arab¹⁷ and continued hostility. Also it can be argued that with Saddam Hussein attempted invasion of Iran defeated, he sought easier conquests against his weak southern neighbors. *Second*, oil had made the Kuwait one of the richest and most progressive countries in the world. This desert land is one of the world leading producers having one tenth of the world petroleum reserves¹⁸. And Kuwait is one of the world's wealthiest country in terms of National income per person. It was free primary and secondary education, free health and social services and no income tax. There was much to protect, all of these was attractive and irritating to Saddam Hussein. *Third*, historically Iraq had claimed that it had a right over Kuwait. "They were jealous that Kuwait was in control of the two Islands needed for a deep water shipping the port the Bubiyan and Warbah Islands"¹⁹. These islands along with some parts of Kuwait were a part of Mesopotamia which the Ottoman Turk conquered. "The Ottoman Empire was defeated during world war first and the British made their "own lines in the sand", diving up the land according to their own needs and

in the process recklessly diving up ancient communities and boundaries that had been recognized for decades²⁰. Most of the Mesopotamia becomes Iraq and some other parts to Kuwait. In 1961, Kuwait becomes independent and the Iraqis threatened to invade except that British troops kept the pace. This was to the first of many border skirmishes which include Iraqi missiles fired at Kuwait oil installations and the re-flagging of Kuwait oil tankers during the Iran- Iraq war in which US ship patrolled the Persian Gulf and Kuwait Tankers were re-flagged with US flags. *Fourth*, the Iraqi government had also accused the Kuwaitis of Stealing 2.5 billion barrels of oil from its Rumalia oil fields by sliding drills into Iraqi oil pipelines. They had also accused Kuwait of exceeding OPEC oil production which had dropped the price of oil from US \$20 a barrel to US \$13 a barrel in the first six months of 1990. This meant 1 billion dollars less for Iraq every times that price of an oil barrels went down by a dollar. Saddam Hussein said he would stop them from continuing aggressive action: "The oil quota violates have stabbed Iraq with poison dagger". Iraq will not forget the saying that cutting necks is better than cutting means of living. *Fifth*, the United Nations states depends on West Asian oil for about 25% of its energy needs and other western nations even more on West Asia²¹. Many of these nations have very few oil resources and if they did it would cost too much developed them like the estimated 300 billion barrels of oil in the Alberta Saskatchewan tar sands. However, going to war or even the possibility of it would give a big short terms boost to the economies of these nations by increasing the price for a barrel which would allow oil companies to makes bigger projects and these would be more exploration in North America to discover new sources of oil. This would help to boost the stock markets by increasing positive activity in the trading of shares. *Sixth*, collation was formed to protect the "vital interest", in the often unstable West Asia". The West Asia had been the source of many the world's wars after world war second, sometimes almost to point of nuclear²². The Arab partners in the coalition joined the union to prevent what had happened to Kuwait may occurs with them. The United States and Western partner wanted to ensure a steady supply of cheap oil and the invasion of Kuwait had risen the price of oil along with creating instability in the West Asia. The best way to restore order to the region and create some stability was to force Iraq out of Kuwait and severely waken his government and military which the allies were successful in doing. *Seventh* reason that region has been suggested is that Iraq was permitted to invade Kuwait just to give the US an excuse to attack the Iraqis so that they would also make Arab Nations dependent on the Americans for their defense so that they would not try to attempt hostile actions in terms of increasing the cost of the oil to them or limiting the production of petroleum as had been demonstrated by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) nations in 1970's.

Finally the Gulf war involving Iraq was unavoidable and in this war Iraq was defeated. The Iraqis were becoming a major military power in the West Asia and therefore a threat to the stability of the whole region. The US and other industrialized western nations could not afford the loss of oil from the region and therefore they were very willing to ensure that they continued to receive the oil. The UN and US both wanted Iraq to leave but realized that Iraq did not wish

to leave and had no intention of doing so unless they forced to out Iraq. Neither side wished to back down diplomatically or militarily and with no other useful options available, war was the only option left to the US and her allies. In this war, Iraq would lose because it has inferior weapons, a poorly trained army and the Americans were well prepared for the Iraqi tactics.

3. Occupation of Kuwait

The invasion of Kuwait also known as the Iraq-Kuwait crisis was major conflict between the Republic of Iraq and the State of Kuwait. The invasion of Kuwait began at 2 a.m. local time on 2nd August 1990 as many as, 300 tanks and 100,000, troops moved rapidly into the Kuwait and the Iraqis were inside the Kuwait city by 7 a.m. local time. By mid-afternoon most of the city was under Iraqi control. The 20,000 strong Kuwaiti forces did not even offer token resistance while elements of the air force fled southwards. The ruler of Kuwait and most members of his government had fled before the invading Iraqi troops and with "Saudi acquiescence, had established a government-in exile" in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia. The Kuwaiti Chief of Staff, General Mizyid Al- Sani, signed the emergency orders at 2.30 a.m. But first Kuwaiti unit became ready for fighting by 5.00 a.m. In the meantime, the Amir and the Crown prince left to Saudi Arabia. The rest of the Kuwaiti government followed them at 4.30 a.m. The invading army occupied Al- Ahmedi air base, south of Kuwait at 10.30 p.m. on 3rd August. The isolated Kuwaiti military resistance continued until 4th August, when the last Kuwaiti military unit-the 15th Armoured-surrendered.²³ The government of Iraq, in order to consolidated its position, increased its forces to about 150,000 in Kuwait. The occupation of Kuwait was completed within twenty –four hours to end the Kuwaiti formal resistance. Thus, the Kuwaiti forces did not demonstrate formal resistance in spite of billions of dollars spent on the Kuwaiti military establishment.²⁴ On the 8 August, after six days of "belligerent rhetoric", the Iraqi government announced the formal "annexation of Kuwait", and at the end of the month Kuwait was officially declared as the 19th Governorate (*Liwa*) of Iraq.

In fact, Iraq had no definite plans with regard to Kuwait. First, Iraq claimed that its troops had entered Kuwait in response to appeals from a pro-Iraqi provisional Free Kuwait Government which had risen against the as-Sabah authorities.²⁵ A new government dominated by Iraqis was installed in Kuwait and on 7th August Kuwait was declared a republic. The next day i.e. on 8th August, government of Iraq formally annexed Kuwait. Finally on 18th August Kuwait was officially declared as the 19th province of Iraq and was renamed Saddamiyat al-Mitlaa, after portions of its territory along the former border with Iraq were integrated into the province of Basra.²⁶

After the invasion the United States and Britain were quick in their response. And in just few hours they led the United Nations Security Council in adaptation Resolution 660²⁷ which condemned the invasion and called for the Iraqi withdrawal. They also led European and Asian countries in freezing all Iraqi and Kuwait assets.

The response of the Arabs to the invasion was different. The Arab League held an emergency meeting on August 2nd

without the adaptation of any resolutions, waiting for results King Hussain's peace initiative. The Iraqi President called the King earlier in the day suggesting a mini- Summit to solve the problem. King Hussain flew to Cairo to get President Mubarak's approval and the two of them called President Bush asking for 48 hours to end the crisis. President Bush did not waste any time, particularly after he had been "admonished" by Margaret Thatcher. The British Prime Minister, who had a pre- scheduled meeting with President Bush, told him that this was no time to go "Wobbly". He called King Fahad and offered US aid if Iraqi troops did not stop at the border. On August 3rd, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, John Kelly, sent a message to the Egyptian Foreign Minister threatening that the United States may stop the annual military assistance if Egypt did not take a firm stance on the Kuwaiti issue. As a result, President Mubarak issued a statement condemning the invasion.

On August 3rd, King Husain announced that Iraq agreed to start withdrawing troops from Kuwait on August 5. However, later the same day, in another emergency meeting of the Arab League, 14 Arab states followed Mubarak's lead in condemning Iraq and calling for an immediate Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. The seven votes against that resolution were from Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Palestine Liberation organization (PLO), Sudan and Yemen. On August 4th, President Bush called King Fahad to warn him that Iraqi troops were massed along the Saudi border. He offered Sending Secretary of Defence, Dick Cheney, to Riyadh for talk about defending Saudi Arabia. On August 6, King Fahad agreed to receive American troops in his country, which became known as Operational Desert Shield. In the same day, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 661²⁸ imposing economic Sanctions on Iraq.²⁹

In the response to the arrival of the American troops in Saudi Arabia and to the UN economic sanctions, Iraq declared a union of Iraq and Kuwait on 9th August (which was altered to a formal annexation on August 28). On the same day, August 9, the Arab summit conference was held with 14 heads of states, chairman of the PLO, and five government representatives. President Mubarak forced a vote on a resolution that called for an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of the Amir. The resolution also rejected annexation of Kuwait, supported the United Nations Economic sanctions, and called for the formation of an Arab "expeditionary force" to aid Saudi Arabia. The vote on the resolution divided the Arab states into three camps, one supporting Iraq, another supporting Kuwait, and a third was neutral. The twelve votes in favour of the resolution were those of Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria and the United Arab Emirates. The three votes against were those of Iraq, Libya and the PLO. The remaining six states were neither for nor against. Algeria, Jordan and Yemen abstained; Sudan and Mauritania expressed reservation; while Tunisia was absent from the meeting.³⁰

4. Liberation of Kuwait

On 2nd August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait in order to establish regional hegemony and to tide over a growing internal economic crisis. As the crisis unfolded several divisions of troops near its border with Kuwait deployed and demanded

defacto control of Bubiyan and Warbah Islands near Iraq's port of Umm-Qasr. Eventually, Kuwait was completely unprepared when Saddam Hussein order his troops to invade the country. Iraqi forces took control of the entire country in just less than two days. Further within a week of occupying Kuwait, Iraq announced that it would annex Kuwait as its nineteenth province. The liberation of Kuwait by US took place just six days after Saddam Hussein's Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait, August 2nd 1990, American forces began deploying to the Saudi Arabian desert. In the meantime, US diplomats, led by then Secretary of the State James Baker, were urging other nations to join a UN coalition and condemned Hussein's invasion of its peaceful neighbors. On November 29, 1990, the UN Passed Resolution 678, which gave Iraq a withdrawal deadline of January 15, 1991. The resolution authorized "all necessary means to uphold and implement resolution 660."

Finally, the US led Coalition forces, to join it in opposing Iraq's aggression, consisting of forces from 34 countries (Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Morocco, Netherland, New-Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Syria, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States of America)³¹ under the joint command of General Norman Schwarzkopf and Prince Sultan Ibn Abdul Aziz, Defense Minister of Saudi Arabia were directed to undertake the military action necessary to achieve the objective of liberation of Kuwait. On 17th January 1991, "Operation Desert Storm" began just before the midnight and straight away involved air and missile strike against Iraqi forces in Kuwait and Iraq and at command and communication centers and other military targets in Iraq. The decision to use force was taken by the United States after extensive consultations with members of coalition.³² The Secretary General was informed that it was being taken under Resolution 678, passed on 29th November 1990, which authorized "all necessary means" to implement the Councils Resolution about Kuwait if, by 15 January 1990, Iraq had not complied with them.³³ There was no decision of the Security Council after 29th November either assessing the effect of the economic sanctions or authorizing the use of Military force. It means that sanction were being given the chance to take effect while necessary force to mount a successful action to free Kuwait was put in place. After the air offensive, diplomatic contacts with Baghdad continued but none of them resulted in obtaining from government of Iraq an undertaking which was satisfactory to the coalition.³⁴

On 16th January 1991 the US led an international coalition from US bases in Saudi Arabia to invade occupied Kuwait and Iraq. The US established a broad based international coalition to confront Iraq militarily and diplomatically and to defend the international principle of non-aggression. The coalition consisted of 34 countries (Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Morocco, Netherlands, New-Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Syria, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States of America). The war was financed by countries which were unable to sent troops. Japan and Germany made financial

contributions totaling \$ 10 billion and \$ 6.6 billion respectively. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were the main donors. More than \$53 billion was pledged and received.³⁵ US troops represented 73% of the coalition's 956,600 troops in Iraq. Many of the coalition forces were reluctant to join. Some felt that the war was an internal Arab Affair, or did not want to increase US influences in West Asia. In the end, however, many nations were persuaded by Iraq's belligerence towards other Arab States, offers of economic aid or debt forgiveness, and threats with hold aid. John Pilger reported in the Guardian that UN war Resolution number 678 was achieved through campaign of bribery, blackmail and threats. Secretary of States James Baker bribed President Hosni Mubarak with 14 billion dollar in debt forgiveness in exchange for Egypt withholding opposition to the pending war on Iraq. Washington gave President Hafiz Al-Assad the green light to wipe out all opposition to Syrian rule in Lebanon, plus a billion dollars worth of arms. Iran was bribed with a US promise to draw its opposition to World Banks loans. Soviet Union was offered a billion dollars through Saudi Government before the Russian winter set in to compensate for Soviet investment in Iraq. Another 3 billion dollars from other Gulf oil states was wired to Soviet government to secure outstanding Iraqi debts to U.S.S.R. Zaire non permanent member of the Security Council was offered undisclosed debts forgiveness and military equipment. Yemen was punished by suspending 70 million dollars US aid programme. It suddenly had problems with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), and 8 lakhs Yemeni workers were abruptly expelled from Saudi Arabia.³⁶

Saddam Hussein in an attempt to open the coalition apart fired Scud missiles at both Saudi Arabia and Israel, which especially disrupted Israeli civilian life. Saddam's strategy failed to split the coalition, because the Israeli government did not retaliate. By this tactic, Iraq tried to convince Arab countries that the coalition forces are fighting on Israel's side. However, the coalition remained steadfast and united in its demand for an unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. Iraqi ground forces also initiated a limited amount of ground fighting, occupying the Saudi border town of Khafji on January 30th before being driven back. One month into the air war, the Iraqi began negotiating with the Soviet Union over plan to withdraw from Kuwait. United States did not accept Iraqi proposal and said Iraq withdraw his forces from Kuwait unconditioned. On 24th February 1991, the coalition launched its long anticipated land offensive. The bulk of the attack was in south western Iraq, where coalition forces first moved north, then turned east toward the Iraqi port of Al-Basra. This operation surrounded Kuwait, enclosing the Iraqi forces in southern Iraq, and allowed coalition forces to move up the coast and take Kuwait city. Some Iraqi unit resisted, but the coalition offensive advanced more quickly than expected, thousands of Iraqi troops surrendered. Many oil wells were set on fire, creating huge oil lakes, thick black smoke and other environmental damage. Two days after the ground war began; Iraq announced its intension of leaving Kuwait. America and International coalition forces accepted Saddam's withdraw from Kuwait. Finally on March 3rd 1991 a cease-fire was reached between US led coalition forces and Iraq.³⁷ The Gulf War was an unmatched success for coalition forces and verified the technological superiority both on land and sea of the American forces. It is well known fact the US decision to

go to war against Iraq in 1991 was in fact a deliberate choice aimed at crippling Iraq's military and economic infrastructure. The US had grown apprehensive over the emergence of Iraqi military power coupled with Iraqi efforts at modernization, including the creation of an impressive infrastructure and industrial and technological base. Iraq achieve all these due to the oil revenues which increased since its nationalization of oil companies in 1972. In fact, the destruction of Iraq's military capability and its advanced infrastructure and served US- Israeli interest. Iraq's military capability had posed a strategic threat to Israel domination in the area. During war the US allied forces destroyed most of the military infrastructure together with much of the civilian infrastructure through exhausted remote controlled precision bombings. This strategy was to enable Israel to become the strongest and dominant power in the region.

On 15th February 1991, Iraq announced that it was ready to accept UN Security Council Resolution and withdraw its forces from Kuwait. This raised hopes that the war in the Gulf could be ended without any further bloodshed. The text was announced by the *Ruling Revolutionary Command (RCC)*. It described this as a "necessary first step" which was "linked" to a number of other developments, including:

- A total cease-fire and the cancellation of all Security Council resolutions since the invasion of Kuwait.
- A withdrawal of all the coalition forces and material within one month of the cease-fire.
- Comprehensive UN guarantees of "Iraq's historic rights on land and at sea".
- Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, the Golan Heights and South Lebanon and the application of UN resolutions similar to these adopted against Iraq if Israel refuses to do so.
- Political agreements in Kuwait "based upon the will of the people and their right to practice democracy and not on the basis of the rights acquired by the Al-Sabah family."
- The cancellation of all debts owed by Iraq and other countries in the region which have suffered from the war to countries which have participated in the aggression.³⁸

In the West, the initial reaction was deeply skeptical and within six hours after the announcement, US President George Bush had concluded "regrettably, the Iraqi statement now appears to be cruel a hoax". The White house Spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was "clearly trying to manipulate somebody here but it is not clear what his purpose is?"³⁹

The dramatic announcement in Moscow on 22nd February 1991, that Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz had given a "positive" response to peace proposals by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev climaxed a week of "last-ditch" manoeuvring to avoid a full-scale ground offensive by the US-led coalition forces to liberate Kuwait. According to Soviet Spokesman, Vitaly Ignatenko, after "through discussion and exchange of views" the two sides came to the conclusion that it was possible "to find a way out of the military conflict in the Persian Gulf" along the following lines.⁴⁰

- Iraq announces a full, unconditional withdrawal of its forces from Kuwait.
- The withdrawal of forces will take place during a fixed

period.

- Immediately after the cease-fire, all prisoners of war will be released.
- After the withdrawal of two-thirds of all the Iraqi forces, the economic sanctions envisaged by the UN will cease to apply.
- The withdrawal of the forces would be monitored by countries not taking part in the conflict, mandated to do so by the UN Security Council.
- After the withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kuwait has ended the reasons for the corresponding Security Council resolutions will cease to exist, and therefore these resolutions will cease to be effective.

US President George Bush said that after examining the "Moscow Statement" and discussing it with my "Senior advisors" and after "extensive consultations" with our coalition partners, I have decided that the "time has come to make public with specificity just exactly what is required of Iraq if a ground war is to be avoided". Most important, the coalition will give Saddam Hussein "until noon Saturday to do what he must do began his immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait". We must hear publicly and authoritatively his acceptance of these terms.⁴¹

On 24th February 1991, after all the destruction which had taken place in Kuwait, and after the coalition ground offensive had begun to liberate Kuwait. The Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mr. Churpin read a statement. Indicating that the Soviet Foreign Government regretted that "a real chance to solve the conflict peacefully and achieve the goals set by UN Security Council resolutions has been missed". On the evening of 25th February 1991, the "Iraqi Army began pulling out of Kuwait in a state of mounting panic". The next day, the *de facto* withdrawal was made official by a "broadcast given by Saddam Hussein and the Kuwait Resistance movement" was in full control of the city. On February 27th, Iraq announced that it would unconditionally accept the UN Security Council's 12 resolutions regarding the Gulf crisis.

On 27th February 1991, the US president, Mr. George Bush declared victory over Iraq and said: "Kuwait is liberated; Iraq's army is defeated; our Military objectives are met".⁴² This is not a time for excited happiness, certainly not a time to triumph, but it is a time of pride... this is a victory for all mankind and for the rule of law.

5. India's Response to Iraq- Kuwait Crisis

India was caught by between the proverbial rock and a hard over the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2nd 1990. On the other hand, India was dependent on Iraq and Kuwait for 40% of its annual oil imports and in additions to a substantial trade relationship, an estimated 185,000 Indian workers were stranded in the area of hostilities. On the other hand, Iraq a secular state in a region dominated by Muslim fundamentalists and feudal monarchies, had been a traditional friend of India and had supported India's position on the Kashmir dispute.

There was apparently an external dimension to India's less than forth right condemnation of the Iraqi invasion. One day after Iraq occupied Kuwait came news of the US development of naval force in the Gulf. Given India anti-Pithy to the involvement of extra regional powers in regional

conflict such a development was seen as “ominous” by Indian foreign policy makers.

India tendency to regard the Iraq- Kuwait crisis (Gulf crisis) as “just another” regional conflict and the consequent need to keep extra regional powers at bay apparently shaped its response. New Delhi was piqued over the speed with which the United States responded to the situation⁴³.

India on the other hand, was indeed, not very supportive of external involvement in regional conflict. On the other it allowed the US and allied forces fighter plane for refueling from India’s airport. India’s primary at this stage, was the safety and repatriation of its more than a million workers stranded in the gulf region. To this end, India secured the UN sanctions committees permission at the end of August 1990 to sail a cargo vessel carrying 10,000 tons of grains to the Iraqi port of Basra for Indian nationals. In addition the government dispatched two passengers to ships and sent Indian air force planes to evacuate Indians from the area. However, its decision to send food shipments to the Iraqi port of Basra was seen in some western capitals as a backdoor attempt to undermine the sanctions imposed against Iraq⁴⁴. During the first two months of crisis India repeatedly called for the “soonest possible withdrawals of Iraqi force from Kuwait” and expressed its opposition to any “unilateral action outside the framework of buildup by the united states and Britain⁴⁵”.

India response to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait was ambiguous. The V.P Singh, Government, reluctantly to condemn Iraq because of this country traditional friendship with it, concentrated on the repatriation of around 180,000 Indian’s trapped in Kuwait and Iraq. His government later denounced the Iraqi action and demanded its withdrawals from Kuwait but did not take any worth while diplomatic initiative to restore the gulf conflict.

India interests with Iraqi action in Kuwait for its oil. We know most of the our oil comes from the gulf regions, “Gulf money” in the form of remittance from India’s working in Iraq and the Gulf states has become a significant source of upward mobility in recent years. Then there was he major problem of evacuation of Indian’s from Kuwait and Iraq, which the government of V.P Singh managed fairly efficiently⁴⁶.

India foreign minister I.K Gujral expressed India’s displeasure at “the great issues of the day” being decided in the capitals of a few major powers⁴⁷. Thus it can be surmised that India was at first opposed to the development of western forces in its vicinity as this violated the principle of keeping the region free of external power involvement. India’s initial reaction of the half –hearted in support of the International consensus largely because of New Delhi’s to extrapolate from India- Pakistan relations and its failure to take cognizance of the New realities of the post-cold war era.

However, this did not mean that India’s apparent “softness” toward Iraq and its anti-western stance during the initial stage of the crisis had the broad support of its foreign policy community. Indian air commodore Jasjit Singh and K. Subrahmanyam of the Government run institute for Defense studies and analyses argued that in spite of India’s friendly

relations with Iraq, New Delhi must recognized that the “Iraq invasion of Kuwait challenged the basis of United Nations itself and the energy security and financial stability of the world”. They questioned the prevalent view that Arab problems were best solved by the Arab themselves. Given the threat to international order and stability posed by the Iraqi occupation, they argued that “it was unrealistic to think of dealing with it in regional intro- Arab context”⁴⁸

Moreover, it was becoming increasingly clear that India’s perceived softness toward Iraq and ambiguous response to the allied actions had the potential to harm its trade and diplomatic relations, not only with gulf region but also with the western countries in the anti- Iraq coalition.

6. War and India’s Attitude

Between the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the allied powers combined attack on Iraq to liberate Kuwait, there was a shift in power in India from the Janata Dal government headed by V.P Singh to that of the Janata’s led by Chandra Sekhar. The Chandra Sheker government assumed power, there were serious dangers to India’s Unity and integrity, and its economy, passing a serious challenges to the government. Moreover, the government was confronted with a dilemma with regard to its foreign policy : whether to throw in its lot with the allied powers who appear to be sure winners or to stand by a good friend like Iraq which was sure to safer defeat. An effort has been made here to analyze the response of the strategies adopted by it in order to cope with the critical situation.

However, after the commencement of operation Desert Storm on 17 January ,1991 Prime Mister Chandra Shekar appealed to president Saddam Hussein to announce the commencement of immediate withdrawal of troops from Kuwait unconditionally in compliance with a dozen resolutions of the UN Security Council⁴⁹. Shekhar’s appeals and the statements by foreign Minister V.C Shukla in Which he had spoken against any link between Iraq’s unconditional withdrawal from the Kuwait and the Palestine issues were noted with appreciation by the US State Department.

Interestingly, in late January 1991 it was revealed the since January 9th India had allowed US military aircraft to use refueling facilities at three airports in India and route from the Philippines to the Gulf. The government defened granting the use of transit and refueling facilities to US. Air force transport planes carrying “non-lethal supplies” on the grounds that this was “in keeping with our friendly bilateral relations” with the United States⁵⁰. According to some analysts, the American decision to refuel planes in India was dictated by political, not military needs. As Jasjit Singh pointed out : “the USAF could not have possibly needed to use Bombay as staging post for military reasons alone, given the short flight time, about 45 minutes , from Bombay (now Mumbai) to gulf and relatively small magnitude of the refueling operation⁵¹”.

On the question of the refueling of the American planes, the first salvo against the government was fired by the Congress Party which charged the government with having deviated from the path of nonalignment. It also accused the government of having betrayed a close friend like Iraq, and

neglecting the cause of Palestinians. The government's policy of allowing the American planes to be refueled, the congress party charged⁵² had made India an ally as well as a "tool" of the US V.N Gadgil, its spokesman, said on 28th January 1991 that "this minority government" had no right to make the refueling decision⁵³.

The reliable defense news on January 21 reported that "India supplied the allied forces some intelligence on the interdiction tactics practiced by [Soviet] MIG-23 Floggers, MIG- Fox bats, Mig-29 Fulcrums, SU-22 Fitters and SU-24 Fencers of the Iraqi air force". There could be an elements of truth in this report because India, who along with the Soviets had trained Iraqi pilots, gunners and armored officers, possessed the same weapons systems as Iraq. As regards motivation on India's part, it can be argued that India had a vested interest in sharing the data about the actual combat performance of Iraqi MIG-29's vis-à-vis the America F-16s which Pakistan has. The effectiveness of US Electronics Counter Warfare (ECW) capabilities against Soviet made weapons systems in the inventory of the both Iraq and India could have been and additional motive for Indo- US military cooperation as Pakistan also possess US supplied ECW equipment.

The "realist" argued that , economically, India had as much interest as the west in the availability of reasonably priced oil imports from the gulf region. Since an overwhelming majority of poor countries were oil importers, they stood to lose more by the cartelization of oil. So India would gain enormously from the end of regime most likely to cartelize oil in the years ahead, the arguments went, and besides, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iran had been bigger donors to India than Iraq since the early 1980's. India's total trade with Kuwait the UAE, and the Saudi Arabia was seven times more than with Iraq. It was also pointed out that Iraq had failed to pay. India more than US \$ 4 billion it owed on construction contracts dating back to the early 1980's. Now a repayment formula through Iraqi oil deliveries had been agreed upon , only to be wrecked by the UN trade embargo. As for remittances from the gulf, there were usually only 20,000 Indian workers in Iraq against 1.3 million in other gulf countries⁵⁴. In short India had a direct and parallel interest with the major western powers in seeing to it that continued to get reasonably priced oil imports from the Gulf region.

Finally it may be conclude that the throughout the Iraqi-Kuwaiti crisis, India failed to play a constructive role, and signals coming from New Delhi were confusing and contradictory. What is particularly striking is that India did virtually nothing substantive during the August 1990 - March 1991 period either to activate the non-aligned movement (NAM) or to use New Delhi's traditional access to Baghdad to engage Saddam Hussein in meaningful dialogue. India belated efforts to please both sides in the conflict appeared in the end to have pleased no one. The Iraqi and pro- Saddam Arabs accused India of being and pro- Saddam Arabs accused India of being and American lackey for following the refueling facilities. The Kuwait and anti-Iraqi forces labeled India a Saddam storage for initially failing to condemn unequivocally the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and then for stopping the refueling⁵⁵. Unwilling to fight against Iraq alongside the US and its coalition allies but

unable also to broker peace, India in the aftermath of the crisis, found its self sidelined on the international scene.

References

- [1] Khala, Ranjit Singh, "the ultimate prize oil and Saddam Iraq", allied publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 2008, pp.268.
- [2] McEvelley, Thomas, the shape of ancient thought comparative studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies, Allworth communication, Inc.2002.
- [3] Madiam, Pritivi Ram, "India and the Middle East", Academic Press, 1994.
- [4] R.K. Khilnani, "Reconstructing India's Foreign policy, Commonwealth publishers, 2000, p.191.
- [5] Ibid.
- [6] Ibid. p.192.
- [7] Khala, Ranjit Singh, op cit, p.271.
- [8] R.K. Khilnani, op.cit. p193
- [9] http://www.atimes.com/atimies/south_asia/DH140f05.html.
- [10] R.K. Khilnani, op.cit. p.194.
- [11] Ibid. p.194-195.
- [12] Washington Post, September 7, 1990, financial times, September 7, 1990.
- [13] UNSC, 686.
- [14] Ramananda, Sengupta, "why India Must oppose war with Iraq", December 26, 2002.No.09.
- [15] <http://www.news.indiamast.com/news-analysis/iraq.html>.
- [16] Europa, Middle East and North Africa, "Iraq", pp.478.
- [17] "Kuwait", World Book, New York, 1990, Vol.11, pp.354.
- [18] AP Press Toronto Star, January 20, 1991, p.A18.
- [19] CNN, "The Gulf War", Atlanta, CNN News, 1991.
- [20] AP Press Toronto Star, January 16, 1991, p.A15.
- [21] AP Press Toronto Star, February 14, 1991, p.A13.
- [22] Kuwait National Assembly, 1995.
- [23] Al-Yahya, Muhammed, "Kuwait: Fall and Rebirth", Kegan Paul International, London, 1993, p.85.
- [24] *Middle East and North Africa 1992*, London 1992, p.07.
- [25] Ibid.
- [26] UNSCR, 660, August, 2, 1990.
- [27] UNSCR, 661, 6 August, 1990.
- [28] *Asian Recorder*, New Delhi, October, 1-7, 1990, p.21372.
- [29] Bin Sultan, No.4, p.183-184; Pimlott, No.4, P. 41-46; Salinger and Laurent, No.2, P.90-113.
- [30] <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/gulf.war/facts/gulfwar>.
- [31] House of Commons debate Vol. No. 183, Col. 979.
- [32] Kessings Contemporary Archives 1991, p.37942.
- [33] Foreign Affairs Committee 25th February 1991.
- [34] Henry C.K Liu, "Iraq Geopolitics: The burden of being a superpower", Part- IV.
- [35] "Security Council Seat tied to aid" in Washingtonpost.com.
- [36] House of Commons debate Vol. No. 186, Col. 1117.
- [37] *Middle East Economic Survey* (MESS), 18th February, 1991.
- [38] MEES, 18th February 1991 and see also the text of the statements issued on 15th February 1991, by the *Iraqi*

Revolutionary Command Carried by the Iraqi News Agency (MEES translated it from the Arabic).

- [39] MEES, 25th February, 1991.
- [40] MEES 25th February, 1991 and see also, the text of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council statement of 15th February, 1991, (MEES translated it from Arabic).
- [41] *Asian Recorder*, New Delhi, April 1-7, 1991, p.21653.
- [42] *Far eastern Economic Review* (FEER), 4th October, 1990.
- [43] *Ibid.* 8th November, 1990.
- [44] *Ibid.* 6th September, 1990
- [45] *Middle East Report*, No. 170, May-June, 1991, p.41.
- [46] *Indian Express*, 29th September, 1990.
- [47] *Strategic Analysis*, New Delhi, October 1990.
- [48] "Shekhar urges pullout", *times of India*, 18th January, 1991.
- [49] *Times of India*, 29th January 1991.
- [50] Praful Bidwani, "Refueling a political Message", *times of India*, 29th January, 1991.
- [51] *Sunday Times*, 10-16 February, 1991.
- [52] *Times of India*, New Delhi, 29 January 1991.
- [53] These figures are from S.S.A. Aiyar, "Gains of Stopping Saddam: India needs non-cartelized oil", *times of India*, 22 January, 1991.
- [54] "India losing out", *India today*, 15th April, 1991, p.35.

Author Profile

Dr. Md. Aminuzzaman is presently working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography, Bahir Dar University, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia. He obtained his Master and PhD degree from Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India and was awarded post Graduate Diploma in (Remote Sensing and GIS) from University of Twente, Netherlands. He has to his credit several research papers. He also author of the Book "*Flood Risk Mapping in part of Mahanadi Delta using Remote Sensing and GIS*". His field of specialization is Remote Sensing and GIS, Political geography, urban geography and Population geography.