
UNIT 13 THE GULF WAR

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13.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit deals with the first major crisis in West Asia after the end of the Cold War. The Gulf War caused by Iraq's annexation of Kuwait eventually resulted in the defeat of Iraq. After going through this unit, you should be able to :

- trace the events since the end of First World War till the Iraqi action against Kuwait;
- analyse the Iraqi decision to take military action and annex Kuwait;
- explain the reaction of the USA, U.S.S.R. and West Asian countries;
- recall briefly the events of the Gulf War, and
- discuss the outcome of US-led action against Iraq.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

The Cold War lasted for about 45 years. It had begun almost simultaneously with the end of Second World War in 1945. Nobody knows the exact date when the Cold War commenced. But it ended in 1989 when US President George Bush and Soviet President Gorbachev met and vowed to lead the world on the path of peace and progress. The first major international crisis after the Cold war occurred in West Asia during 1990-91. The attack by Iraq on neighbouring oil-rich Kuwait, and its subsequent conquest and annexation as Iraq's nineteenth province marked the first phase of the crisis. When all efforts to persuade Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait failed and peaceful solution appeared to be impossible, 28 nation coalition, led by the United States and authorised by the U.N. Security Council waged a war on Iraq and liberated Kuwait. This was the second Gulf War. The Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88 may be described as 'Gulf War One'. That prolonged war had been generally indecisive, though Iraq claimed eventual advantage. As Iran had already come under the fundamentalist regime of Ayottolah Khoemeine, Americans had generally supported Iraq in that war, without being actually involved in it. This unit is not concerned with Iran-Iraq war. It is the Gulf War of 1990-91 which threatened international peace, with injected Arab-Israel conflict

input and an attempt to give it an ideological colour. Despite provocation by Iraq, Israel was restrained from retaliation. The Gulf War period witnessed unexpected cooperation between West and East, though the U.S.S.R. did not send its troops to fight against Iraq.

13.2 GENESIS OF THE GULF WAR

The Persian Gulf region in West Asia (Middle East) includes several oil-rich states. These include several Arab countries such as Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. There are non-Arab states also. These include Iran and the Jewish state of Israel. Most of these countries (except Iran) were part of the Ottoman Empire which collapsed after the defeat of Turkey in the First World War. Many of the non-Turkish territories in West Asia were separated from Turkey but were not given independence. They were placed under Britain or France as the mandated territories in the League of Nations Mandate System. Iraq was one such territory that was seized from the Ottoman Empire and made a British mandate.

13.2.1 The Roots of the Conflict

The roots of the conflict are embedded in the creation of Iraq in 1920 (as a British mandate, to begin with), and establishment of British Protectorate of Kuwait. It was in 1961 that Kuwait was granted the freedom and power transferred to the Al-Sabah family. Iraq had questioned the legitimacy of Kuwait as a state in 1961 itself and had been wanting to include Kuwait in the territory of Iraq. After the Iran-Iraq war, Saddam Hussein's Iraq had formidable military arsenal, including a million-man army, advanced Soviet tanks and planes, and a stockpile of chemical and biological weapons. At the same time, Iraq had incurred large debts of Arab states to finance the Iran-Iraq war. Its economy was in bad shape. If Kuwait, could be annexed, Iraq's economy was likely to get a boost. There was a long standing territorial dispute between Iraq and Kuwait, particularly over the strategic islands of Bubiyan and Warba and the invaluable Rumaila oil field.

President Saddam Hussain chose Kuwait to be his country's principal victim. On July 17, 1990 President Hussain denounced Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for producing more oil than the quota fixed for them by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). This had resulted in fall in oil prices, and consequent oil revenues for Iraq. The alleged loss to Iraq was to the tune of \$ 14 billion. Iraq, therefore, asked Kuwait and UAE to curb their excess oil output, failing which use of force was threatened. Iraq said : "if words fail to afford us protection, then we will have no choice but to resort to effective action to put things right and ensure the restitution of our rights." This threat was issued in the pre-crisis period, and it resulted in "one of the most dramatic and intense military - security crisis in the twentieth century." Kuwait was a helpless weak neighbour. Its immense oil reserves could become Iraqi wealth if the state of Al-Sabah was brought into the Arab State headed by President Saddam Hussain.

13.2.2 International Situation on the Eve of Gulf War

International situation appeared to favour Iraq. The Soviet Union which had been supplying most of the military requirements of Iraq was facing the crisis which eventually led to its disintegration. The United States had been sympathetic to Iraq during its war with Iran. Therefore, President Bush was perceived by Saddam to be friendly with him. He was unlikely to intervene in case Iraq decided to

annex Kuwait. In May 1990 Saddam Hussein, however, had expressed a fear that after collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe, America might try to establish hegemony in the Middle East. He had also accused Kuwait and the UAE of overproduction of oil leading to fall in its international prices. He termed it a kind of war against Iraq"

At the end of the long war between Iran and Iraq, the latter was perceived to be a victor, although apparently the war had resulted in a stalemate. Iraq had failed to establish its hegemony in the entire Gulf region, yet it was clearly one of the two major regional powers. Iraq possessed a million-man army, advanced Soviet tanks and planes and stockpile of chemical and biological weapons. It had a formidable military arsenal. However, Iraq had to repay large sums of money that it had borrowed from neighbouring Arab countries during Gulf War-I (Iran-Iraq War, 1980-88). Iraq's economy needed a "massive infusion of funds for reconstruction". Besides, opined Brecher, "it had an insatiable desire for more advanced weapons, including a nuclear capability".

The Cold War had just ended. Iraq's principal "patron and arms supplier", the U.S.S.R. was passing through several internal conflicts and crisis and was on the verge of collapse. President Saddam did not expect any anti-Iraq action from the United States. The situation in second half of 1990 was, thus, "ripe for extracting economic and territorial concessions from Kuwait and, if necessary, using force to annex Kuwait as Iraq's long coveted 19th province". Analysing the events leading to Gulf War, Michael Brecher suggests that there was abundant evidence to show that the crisis was initiated by Iraq and directed against Kuwait. The prelude began several months before the Iraqi military action against Kuwait. The first anniversary meeting of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) was held on February 24, 1990. It was attended by Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Yemen. In this meeting held at Amman, President Saddam Hussain warned that in view of impending collapse of Soviet Bloc, the Arabs had to be careful to resist US attempts to establish hegemony in the West Asian region. He also expressed displeasure at the behaviour of lesser oil producing states of the Gulf. As mentioned earlier, Saddam blamed Kuwait and the UAE for violation of OPEC production quotas. He said on May 30, 1990 that this was a kind of war against Iraq. Thus, by the end of May 1990, President Hussain appeared determined to acquire Kuwait and achieve increased oil benefits in the bargain.

Check your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answers given at the end of this unit.

1) Why did Iraq opt for military action against Kuwait?

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2) What was the international situation on the eve of Gulf War?

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13.3 IRAQ'S ACTION AGAINST KUWAIT

In the second half of July 1990, Iraq began large scale preparation for the invasion of Kuwait. She deployed 35,000 troops, tanks and rockets from three elite divisions. On July 18, Iraq's Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz charged that Kuwait had stolen \$ 2.4 billion worth of oil from disputed Rumaila oil field. A few days later America announced a joint military exercise with the UAE, and sent two additional warships as if "lay down a mark for Saddam Hussein". The next day Iraq demanded 2.4 billion dollar compensation from Kuwait. Under Iraq's pressure, oil prices were raised by Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) from 18 to 21 dollars a barrel on July 27. The two-day talks between officials of Iraq and Kuwait failed on August 1, 1990. Iraq was now ready for invasion, but Kuwait did not realise the seriousness of the crisis. Kuwait had not moved any of its forces towards the border even on July 27. They were put on full alert and deployed by two of the commanders north of Kuwait city. But the Emir of Kuwait did not expect an invasion and he ordered the troops to go back to their barracks. Even on August 1, Kuwait's envoy to the United States ruled out the possibility of an aggression. So poor was the intelligence of Kuwait's army.

13.3.1 Conquest and Annexation of Kuwait

Iraq began the invasion of Kuwait at 2 A.M. (local time) on 2nd of August 1990. Iraqi tanks reached the capital so fast that Kuwaiti army had no time to offer any resistance. Within six hours the Emirate of Kuwait had been conquered by Iraq.

Saudi Arabia, an ally of the U.S.A., was also taken by surprise. On being told of Iraq's invasion, Saudi King Fahd asked: "Are you sure?" Till a few hours before the attack most of the U.S. officials were regarding as very low the possibility of an attack. There were reasons for this. Firstly, Iraq's challenge to the existence of Kuwait was not new. Her stand consistently had been that from 1875 till the end of the first world war, Kuwait had been a part of the Province of Basra which was now a part of Iraq since 1920. Even after Iraq recognised the independence of Kuwait there were prolonged border disputes between Iraq and Kuwait. But, military action had never been threatened. Several rounds of talks had taken place right upto February, 1989. Secondly, during the Iran-Iraq war Kuwait had openly supported Iraq and had given about 15 billion dollar interest-free loan to her. So how could Kuwait now expect an attack? Thirdly, in any case, accusatory rhetoric is a core element of the political culture of inter-Arab politics.

In less than six hours of the commencement of invasion, America had made its position clear. The White House condemned Iraq's invasion and called for "the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces". But the U.S. had not made up its mind on the nature of action to be taken. The next day (August 3) (though August 2, U.S. time) President Bush said, "We are not ruling any options in but we are not ruling any options out." Bush did not say anything about the use of force for the simple reason that he did not know whether he would have to use force. The US President declared, "Our goal is not the conquest of Iraq. It is the liberation of Kuwait". But, after a month Bush added a personal dimension and said that his aim was ouster of Saddam Hussain. He said, "There is another way for the bloodshed to stop, and that is ... for the Iraqi people to take matters into their hands, to force Saddam Hussain, the dictator, to step aside and to comply with the United Nations resolutions ..."

The personality of President Saddam Hussain must be taken note of at this juncture. According to Michael Brecher, "he ruled through pervasive fear ... his aspiration to dominate the Gulf region, and ultimately, establish his pre-eminence

in the Arab World". Somehow, he was convinced that after his 'success, in Gulf War-I, there was a conspiracy against Iraq spearheaded by the United States and Israel. Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf countries were also involved in the conspiracy. The Soviet leader Gorbachev's special envoy was told of this fear, and he opined "something in all this may have corresponded to the truth".

The U.N. Security Council debated the issue of Iraqi invasion, and subsequent annexation of Kuwait. Meanwhile, as mentioned above, Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) decreed on August 8, 1990 the annexation of Kuwait "in a comprehensive, eternal and inseparable merger". Kuwait was made the nineteenth province of Iraq.

For Iraq, annexation of Kuwait was going to be a major economic gain. These included Kuwait's world-wide assets, and its valuable oil reserves. These gains were designed to overcome serious economic difficulties created by the prolonged Iraq-Iran War. Besides, Kuwait's 310 - mile coastline would improve Iraq's access to sea, so that Iraq could fulfil its ambition to be the **hegemonial power in the Gulf region**; and it could achieve the goal of pre-eminence in the Arab World. US condemnation of Iraq came as a surprise to Saddam Hussain because since 1982 Americans had clearly tilted towards Iraq as against "fundamental Iran".

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answer given at the end of this unit.

- 1) Sum up the outcome of Iraq's military action against Kuwait in Phase I of Gulf War II.

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13.4 LIBERATION OF KUWAIT

From the time Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, hectic diplomatic and other activities were initiated to pressure Iraq to vacate Kuwait. Saudi Arabia was among the main critics of Iraq. Therefore, Iraq sent 60,000 troops on Saudi border on August 3, 1990. Two days later it ordered formation of 11 additional divisions of the army. This was followed by deployment of 6000 to 15,000 U.S. troops and four fighter squadrons in Saudi Arabia; by August 11 the strength of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia was proposed to be raised to 200,000. On August 16, Iraq took thousands of foreigners – British, French, American and Japanese as hostages; on September 21, 1990 the Iraqi RCC called upon the people to be prepared for "the mother of all battles". By that time Iraq had about 130,000 troops in the south and in Kuwait. As U.N. decided to impose economic sanctions (which were in force even till 1997) Iraq threatened to attack Saudi oil fields, unfriendly Arab countries and Israel. The inevitability of U.N. authorised war against Iraq was evident by mid November, 1990. Meanwhile, Saddam Hussain offered to release the hostages on condition that U.N. guaranteed U.S. withdrawal of all allied forces from the region or if Bush gave in writing a "clear unequivocal commitment" to withdraw all allied forces from the region "along with a lifting of the U.N. blockade of

Iraq." Immediately, the United States rejected this demand until Iraq met the conditions of the Security Council resolutions of restoration of Emir's regime, and the release of all the hostages. Earlier Iraq had tried to link the Kuwait crisis with the Arab-Israel conflict. Iraq demanded the end of Israel's occupation of West Bank and Gaza, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. President Bush told the General Assembly that if Iraq withdrew unconditionally from Kuwait, there may soon be enough opportunities to settle issues that divided the Arabs from Israel.

13.4.1 The 28-Nations Coalition led by the United States

As there were no signs of Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolution, the United States went about building coalition of countries who were opposed to Iraq's annexation of Kuwait. It was not an easy task, yet a 28-nation coalition led by the United States was put in place. Some of them were NATO powers; others were from the West Asian region itself. While most of the 28 countries contributed to the military build up against Iraq in support of UN resolutions and to use force, if necessary, yet only six were actively involved in the war when it came. These were the United States, Saudi Arabia, Britain, France, Egypt and Syria. Besides, there were non-combatants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco, Niger and Emirates. The war that took place from 17th January to 28th February, 1991 was generally a trial of strength between Iraq and the United States. On the other side, Iraq was supported by Jordan, Yemen and the PLO diplomatically, politically and economically, but none fought on the side of Iraq. Thus, it was an unequal fight between 28-nation coalition led by the US and Iraq.

The coalition led by the United States comprised more than 700,000 troops. The largest contingent was of course that of the United States. It consisted of 527,000 Americans backed by approximately 1500 aircraft and mighty naval flotilla of 91 warships.

The Soviet Union, faced with growing troubles at home, had joined the coalition and fully supported the U.N. resolutions and the U.S. determination to expel Iraq from Kuwait; but she refused to participate in a military build up in the Gulf or join in war against Iraq; and she made a high-profile attempt to mediate between the two conflicting sides. The Soviet Union was aware of likely repercussions among the muslim republics of USSR, in case she actively engaged herself in the hostilities. Besides, she had been giving massive aid to Iraq for two decades and the Gulf is too closely situated to the then Soviet territory.

For most Arab countries Iraq's action had created a dilemma – how to respond to the destruction of sovereignty of one of the Arab League members by another. If they condemned Iraq, that would mean giving the impression of aligning with the United States, generally described as an imperialist power. To support Iraq would mean undermining the core principle of territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Therefore, most of them either remained neutral or expressed rhetoric sympathy either with Iraq or the coalition.

Meanwhile, Soviet Union agreed to support Security Council resolution number 678 which called upon Iraq to vacate Kuwait by November 30, 1990 failing which use of force could be resorted to compel Iraq to vacate the aggression. The United States wanted military action to commence on January 1, 1991. But, Soviet Union brought about a compromise fixing January 15 incorporating Gorbachev's "pause of goodwill". The Security Council Resolution No. 678 was adopted by 12 votes to 2 (Cuba and Yemen voted against) and China abstained (which was not a veto). It authorised all UN members "to use all necessary means ... to restore international peace and security in the area".

The U.S. led 28-nation coalition commenced military action against Iraq for the liberation of Kuwait on January 17, 1991 at 2.4 A.M. (Gulf time). The Gulf War II was fought in two phases. From January 17 to February 23 it was limited to aerial bombardment of strategic targets in Iraq and occupied Kuwait. The aerial action was supported by naval action by the coalition forces. The ground action began on February 24 and by February 28, 1991 Iraq was defeated and Kuwait was liberated.

The air war, with naval support in the Gulf and Red sea, was a relentless daily assault on multiple Iraqi targets – roads, railways, airports, power system ammunition dumps and oil installations, etc. This was in addition to bombardment aimed at Iraqi troops, main scud missile-launching sites and nuclear reactor plants. 700 Iraqi aeroplanes were no match to nearly double the strength of the coalition. Besides, some of the ace Iraqi pilots landed their planes in Iran and thus avoided taking part in the battle.

13.4.2 Sanctions against Iraq and Restoration of Sovereignty of Kuwait

President Saddam Hussain, in a desperate move, tried to change the Gulf War into an Arab-Israel conflict, but he totally failed. For weeks, scud missile attacks were made on Israel by Iraq. The idea was that when Israel would retaliate, the Arab World would be called upon to fight against the Jewish state. That would make the position of Egypt and Saudi Arabia very difficult. Despite prolonged provocation, Israel did not retaliate. Israel was repeatedly requested by the United States not be dragged in the war.

Meanwhile, Gorbachev's diplomatic efforts unsuccessfully continued. Saddam Hussain had said that once the ground fighting began, Americans would have to swim in their own blood, and that the Vietnam War would be forgotten as picnic. But, within four days of ground action, Kuwait was liberated and Al-Sabah was restored as Emir of the country. Thus Kuwait's sovereignty was restored and Iraq suffered a clear defeat.

Although the war ended in early 1991, U.N. imposed sanction against Iraq were not withdrawn even till 1997. As Iraq had failed to destroy its nuclear capability, the United States is in no mood to oblige Iraq. Meanwhile, in 1995 President Saddam faced a new challenge when two of his daughters and their husbands defected to Jordan. Both the sons-in-law of Saddam Hussain were occupying important strategic position in Iraq. Their defection, with state secrets, was a big blow to Iraq's President. The King of Jordan had been a strong supporter of Iraq. When he allowed Saddam's sons-in-law to defect and stay in Jordan. It was a big blow to the Iraqi President.

After a few months (early 1996) President Saddam's daughters and sons-in-law were allowed to return to Iraq. Saddam's first wife had secured an assurance that their sons-in-law would be pardoned. However, soon afterwards both the sons-in-law were killed. The Gulf War II, which ended in 1991, was a serious crisis. Soviet Union was still in existence, but she could not support Iraq. The United Nations efforts to persuade Iraq to vacate her aggression having failed, military solution had to be sought under American leadership. This may be regarded as an example of collective security action which freed Kuwait from Iraq. Unlike the textbook meaning of collective security (U.N. calling upon all member-nations to help the victims), in this case the U.S. coalition was authorised to vacate the aggression and secure independence and restoration of sovereignty of Kuwait.

Check Your Progress 3

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answers given at the end of this unit.

1) Describe the role of 28-nation coalition in the liberation of Kuwait.

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2) Analyse the role of USSR and various Arab countries during the Gulf crisis.

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3) Explain the events Leading to the restoration of sovereignty of Kuwait.

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13.5 IMPACT OF THE GULF WAR

In this section an attempt will be made to analyse the impact of the entire Gulf crisis on the major actors involved. The crisis had begun as a result of Iraqi military action against Kuwait, and the latter country's annexation as Iraq's nineteenth province. Thus, the direct impact was on Kuwait who lost its sovereignty, and regained it after the intervention of US-led coalition. During Seven month long occupation of Kuwait estimated 2,000 to 5,000 people were killed, several thousand were abducted, maimed and rendered homeless. Large number of people fled Kuwait's economy suffered wanton destruction, particularly when Iraq put most of its oil field on fire. About 100 oil wells were burning till much after Kuwait regained its sovereignty. All this traumatised the people of Kuwait, which resulted in near-universal anger, bitterness and fear of powerful Iraq.

After the war, demand for democratisation was renewed. People called for restoration of the Constitution of 1962 which had provided for an elected

legislature with limited powers, a check on authoritarian powers of Al-Sabah ruling family. That Constitution was set aside in 1986. Now, under the pressure of the U.S., the Government announced elections to a 50-member national Assembly. The elections held in 1992 resulted in 31 seats being won by pro-democracy elements.

Saudi Arabia is immediate neighbour of two main actors of the Gulf crisis. Saudi Arabia is a larger Arab Kingdom which was one of the 28-nation coalition that fought against Iraq in the second phase of the crisis and liberated Kuwait. Saudi Government and people lived in fear of Iraqi attack for six weeks (mid-January to end-February 1991). Iraq had amassed its forces on Saudi borders, while it was making repeated Scud missile attacks on Israel to provoke the Jewish State to retaliate. Iraqi forces made a brief incursion into Saudi territory early in February and resulted in the battle of Khafji. Saudis were aware of Iraq's military superiority and Saddam Hussain's ambition of hegemony in the Gulf region, but it did not expect the type of aggressiveness that was adopted by Iraq. The Iraq-Saudi relations were badly damaged.

The Saudi Government fully supported the US policy of maintaining UN sanctions against Iraq till Saddam Hussain was ousted. Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia was aware of her smaller population and a small, though well-equipped, army. During the Gulf crisis Saudi financial resources were reduced by about \$ 16 billion, but her oil fields remained intact.

Israel boldly faced the Scud attacks, but did not get provoked. Despite temptation to retaliate, Israelis listened to US advice and did not attack Iraq.

The task of liberation of Kuwait was performed, as mentioned above, under the leadership of the **United States of America**. However, American casualties in the war, estimated by the generals between 10,000-20,000 were a source of unconcealed relief to the political leadership. President Saddam Hussain hail talked of US soldiers' swim in their blood. But US led a victory. There was no physical damage to US installations and no scud missile attack took place on US cities. There were no trauma like the Kuwaitis had faced, nor long-term vulnerability as experienced by Saudi Arabia. The financial contribution of the allies exceeded the money spent by the US. Americans only witnessed the "Operation Desert Storm" on their TV sets. Besides, this came out to be America's first major victory after Second World War, as Korean War had resulted in a stalemate, and Vietnam War had resulted in America's "ignominious defeat."

The unilateral cease fire was ordered by the United States on February 28, 1991 hoping that the Iraqi people would throw Saddam Hussain out. Here the US proved wrong. The US had operated through the UN Security Council, stringent economic sanctions were imposed on Iraq which were not removed for years, and persistent attempts were made to destroy Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The victory of the coalition was also victory of the United Nations.

The outcome of Gulf War did not eliminate Iraq as a major regional power, as her stockpile of armaments survived 38-day air strikes. However, Iraq lost its primacy in the Gulf region. Iran now acquired that position, and a victorious Saudi Arabia emerged as a growing military power. In the larger Arab world, Egypt and Syria came out more powerful. Israel remained undisturbed and PLO - Israel peace process was speeded up. Iraq became preoccupied with Kurdish and shiite revolts.

Check Your Progress 4

Note : i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answer given at the end of this unit.

1) What was the impact of Gulf crisis on Saudi Arabia?

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13.6 LET US SUM UP

Gulf war was the first major crisis after the end of Cold War. During the prolonged Iran-Iraq war, 1980-88, (Gulf War-I) Iraq had received full support from Kuwait as well as the United States. Thus, Kuwait did not expect that Iraq would attack and annex her. But, Iraq had the ambition of turning the small, but immensely oil-rich, Kuwait into its nineteenth province. In view of US dislike for new Iranian regime, Iraq did not expect that the Americans would oppose its adventure against Kuwait.

Kuwait was totally unprepared when Iraq launched massive attack on her in August 1990, and conquered her in just six hours of unequal war. Kuwait was later proclaimed to be Iraq's nineteenth province. This was phase I of Gulf War II.

On the initiative of the United States, the UN Security Council took up the cause of Kuwait and tried to reason with Iraq to vacate its aggression. Soviet Union was passing through a difficult period which later ended in its disintegration. The cold War had ended. Iraq did not get support from the Soviet Union. In effect USSR supported the US position and UN resolutions. China abstained on various resolutions adopted by the Security Council, but this did not mean Chinese support to Iraq.

When Iraq failed to comply with the Security Council resolutions, the UN permitted the setting up of a 28-nation coalition, led by the United States, to liberate Kuwait. Iraq was confident that it could not be thrown out of Kuwait. But, Iraq was decisively defeated after 38-days of air strikes and four days of ground fighting. Iraq's attempt to turn the crisis into an Arab-Israeli conflict failed, and many Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia joined hands with the US, defeated Iraq and liberated Kuwait. Sovereignty of Kuwait was restored and Al-Sabah returned to power.

The Gulf War turned out to be first major gain of the United States after Second World War, a setback to Iraqi ambitions of hegemony in the Gulf and a victor of the United Nations. However, it had traumatised Kuwait and caused terrific fear in Saudi Arabia.

13.7 KEY WORDS

- Mandate System** : A Commission from the league of Nations to a member state to administer a territory.
- Gulf** : A expanse of a sea comprising a deep in let with a narrow mouth.

13.8 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

James Lee Ray, 1992 : **Global Politics**, New Jersey

Rama S. Melkote & A Narasimha Rao, 1993 : **International Relations**.

L.S. Srivastava, 1983 : **A Global History : The Human Heritage** : New Jersey.

13.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Iraq decided to annex Kuwait (a) because she had always regarded Kuwait as part of Iraq, (b) after Iran-Iraq war, the economy of Iraq had become weak, and (c) Kuwait is an oil-rich small neighbour. Kuwait as part of Iraq would help the latter acquire lot of oil-related wealth and tide over Iraq's financial difficulties.
- 2) The cold war had ended. Soviet Union, the principal arms supplier of armaments to Iraq, was passing through a difficult phase. During Iran-Iraq war both USA and Kuwait had supported Iraq. Thus, Iraq did not expect opposition from any quarter, and she could extend her territory.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Iraqi invasion of Kuwait came as a complete surprise to the latter. Iraq's massive armed might took just six hours to seize the entire Emirate of Al-Sabah. Ignoring U.S. warning, Iraq formally annexed Kuwait as its 19th province.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) The 28-nation coalition was put together by the United States under authorisation by the U.N. Armed forces were mainly provided by the US and Saudi Arabia, Britain, France, Egypt and Syria. 38 days of air strikes could not force Iraq to free Kuwait. But, in subsequent four days of ground action the coalition brought unconditional surrender of Iraq and liberation of Kuwait.
- 2) The Soviet Union fully supported the UN resolutions and tried to persuade Iraq to vacate its aggression. But, when the coalition took action, USSR did not contribute troops or armaments. Several of Arab countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia actively participated in military action against Iraq. Others like Jordan did not take military action against Iraq nor gave it Military support.

- 3) UN authorised use of force by 28-nation coalition to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi aggression. Last minute efforts by USSR to persuade Iraq failed, but this delayed action by the coalition. Iraq tried to turn the crisis into Arab-Israel conflict through repeated scud missile attacks on Israel. The latter was not provoked. Air attacks, followed by 4 days of ground fighting, liberated Kuwait. UN imposed sanctions against Iraq which were not withdrawn for several years.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) Saudi Arabia is a neighbour of Iraq and Kuwait. Saudis were totally against Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. As Saudi Arabia fully supported action against Iraq, the latter amassed its troops on Saudi borders. Saudi people lived in fear of Iraqi aggression for six weeks. Iraqi forces made a brief incursion in Saudi territory and the battle of Khafji took place. Saudi financial resources were addressly affected to the extent of \$ 16 billion.