

Forum: Historical Security Council

Issue: The Gulf War (1991)

Student Officer: Angelica Vogiatzoglou

Position: Deputy President

INTRODUCTION

The Gulf War, also called Persian Gulf War, was an international conflict which took place from August 2, 1990 to February 28, 1991 in the Persian Gulf region.

The conflict was triggered by the order of the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to invade and occupy the neighboring country of Kuwait. With the occupation of Kuwait, Iraq aimed at taking over Kuwait's large oil reserves, increasing Iraqi influence in the region and wiping out the large debt Iraq to Kuwait. Iraq also condemned Kuwait that it was stealing Iraqi petroleum.



Figure 1: Map of the gulf war in 1991, source: “#182 The Persian Gulf War, 1991.” *The Map Shop*, www.mapshop.com/182-the-persian-gulf-war-1991-on-roller-w-backboard/

On August 2, 1990 Iraqi military forces invaded Kuwait. On August 3, 1990 the United Nations (UN) Security Council called upon Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait by January 1991. Iraq defied the demands of the UNSC. On August 6 the UNSC implemented global ban on trade with Iraq. The military offensive of Iraq made other countries of the SC impose economic sanctions on Iraq as well. As a response, Iraq annexed Kuwait on August 8. After all these events, and after strong anti-Iraq coalitions had been formed, the UNSC on November 29, 1990 authorized the use of power if Iraq did not withdraw from Kuwait by January 15, 1991. On January 17, 1991 the military offensive against Iraq began. USA, NATO countries, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations joined the conflict. A coalition of 34 countries was formed, instructed by the

UN and led by the USA against Iraq. It is evident that the conflict escalated quickly and that the casualties were multiple.

The Gulf War was a major international conflict with deadly consequences. It ended on February 28, 1991 with Iraqi failure and withdrawal from Kuwait. Solutions which would eliminate the detrimental consequences and prevent such conflicts from happening again are of vital importance.

DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

Coalition

According to Cambridge dictionary, coalition can be defined as: “the joining together of different political parties or groups for a particular purpose, usually for a limited time, or a government that is formed in this way”¹

In the case of Gulf War, an anti-Iraq coalition of 39 countries was formed, after Iraq’s invasion. USA led the coalition, which was authorized by the UN and had as members NATO allies and other Arab countries.

Annexation

Cambridge dictionary defines annex as: “to take possession of an area of land or a country, usually by force or without permission”².

Annexation is the action of annexing. Annexation is illegal under International Law and is strongly condemned by the UN Charter. In the Gulf War case, the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein invaded and tried to annex Kuwait. This action was condemned by the UN, which mandated the use of force against Iraq.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

Weapons of Mass Destruction are weaponry, which can cause massive death, injuries and environmental destruction in only a few seconds. WMD are considered the nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

WMD are a huge threat to international security. It is reported that in Gulf War WMD were used. Iraq is considered one of the main possessors of WMD. After the Gulf War, the UN destroyed large quantities of Iraqi WMD.

¹ “COALITION | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/coalition.

² “ANNEX | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/annex.

Economic sanctions

Cambridge dictionary defines economic sanctions as: “actions taken by a country or organization against the economy of another country, such as refusing to trade with it, in order to force it to obey a law or a set of rules”³

After the unlawful actions undertaken by Iraq, the UN and other member States deployed economic sanctions against Iraq. Sanctions, embargoes and peacekeeping troops are forms of punishment and peacekeeping of a State that only the UNSC can deploy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background of the Gulf War

After the end of Iran-Iraq War in 1980-1988, Iraq wanted to strengthen the national self-esteem. However, Iraq was weighed with huge debts and owed approximately \$37 billion⁴ to United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait and other Arab countries. Iraq urged UAE, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to erase the debts with the argument that the loans are considered payment of the Gulf States to Iraq for keeping the Gulf secure and protecting it from an Iranian intervention. The Gulf creditors' unwillingness to cancel the Iraqi debts worked as a motive for the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein to carry out armed offensives against the rich but militarily weak bordering country, Kuwait. Iraq accused UAE and Kuwait of violating the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) rules due to the fact that they over-produced crude oil and thus, pushed down prices and influenced the Iraqi economy. Saddam Hussein also supported that Kuwait was stealing Iraqi petroleum from the Ar-Rumaylah oil fields, which were located next to the two countries' border. After these claims, Hussein started placing Iraqi troops next to the border with Kuwait. Alarmed by this event, Hosni Mubarak, the leader of Egypt organized negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait. However, on August 2, 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait, an action which was strongly condemned by the UN and other member States.

Member States response

During the Cold War, Iraq had been an ally of the Soviet Union. However, Iraqi relations with the USA worsened significantly after Hussein's threats and claims. Hussein miscalculated that Arab and Gulf States would become Iraqi Allies. USA, UK and the Soviet Union condemned Iraq's actions. Two thirds of the Arab League, 21

³ “ECONOMIC SANCTIONS | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/economic-sanctions.

⁴ “The Gulf War, 1991 .” *Office of the Historian* , U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/gulf-war.

countries condemned Iraq's actions as well and Saudi Arabia King Fahd and Kuwait's government called upon the USA and other NATO member States to assist them against Iraq. Thus, the USA, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, NATO allies and other Arab countries formed an anti-Iraq coalition. On August 8, 1990 when Iraq allegedly formally annexed Kuwait, USA air force started arriving in Saudi Arabia as part of the Operation Desert Shield. The Gulf War was codenamed as Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. The Operation Desert Shield referred to the buildup of the troops of the anti-Iraq coalition and lasted from August 2, 1990 to January 17, 1991. The Operation Desert Storm was the armed response against Iraq by the coalition, which lasted from January 17, 1991 to February 28, 1991. Meanwhile with the Operation Desert Shield, Iraq developed its army to 300,000 troops. On November 29, 1990 the UN mandated the force against Iraq in the case that Iraqi troops don't withdraw from Kuwait by January 15, 1991. Hussein refused to withdraw the troops and on January 17, 1991 the Operation Desert Storm began. By that time, the anti- Iraq coalition had gathered a number of 700,000 troops.

The escalation of the Gulf War

On January 17, 1991 the first anti-Iraq coalition strike was reported. On this day the massive US led air force smashed Iraqi air forces, communication network, oil reserves and weapons of mass destruction plants and more. After this hit the Iraqi air force was either destroyed or wished to withdraw. On February 24, 1991 the coalition hit Iraq with a massive ground offensive. The troops headed from Saudi Arabia to Kuwait and to Southern Iraq. During the next four days, the coalition forces beat the Iraqi ones. Meanwhile, US forces drove 120 miles into Iraq and carried out attacks against Iraq's reserves.

By February 28, 1991, when the US President H.W. George Bush declared cease-fire, Iraqi forces had nearly collapsed. The terms of the cease-fire obliged Iraq to recognize Kuwait as an independent country and destroy all Iraqi WMD. Regarding the casualties of the Gulf War, it is estimated that Iraqi militant's deaths ranged from 8,000 to 10,000 and by contrast, the coalition's casualties were only 300. The Gulf War was undoubtedly considered a victory of the coalition. However, Kuwait and Iraq experienced enormous collapse.

The aftermath of the Gulf War

In the aftermath of Gulf War, Kurdish and Shi'ites carried out uprisings in Iraq, which were suppressed by Iraqi troops. Following this event, the US and British air force undertook some patrolling over Iraq to ensure that Iraqi aircraft doesn't operate. The UN inspectors, who examined the destruction of Iraq's WMD were not always respected by Iraq, since many were the times that military forces did not let UN inspectors enter the

Iraqi territory. In addition, Iraqi forces often exchanged fire with the US and UK air forces.

In 2002, USA sponsored a UNSC resolution (1441), which ordered the continuation of the weapons' inspections and destruction. On November 2002 the resolution achieved its purpose. On March 2003, the USA and UK issued an ultimatum which ordered the resignation of Saddam Hussein from Presidency in the next 48 hours with the threat of war. If Hussein refused, the US forces would continue patrolling and would also inspect the Iraqi WMD. When Hussein refused, the conflict escalated again and the Second Gulf War, also known as Iraq War was triggered.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Iraq

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990 was the cause of the Gulf War. Saddam Hussein was the president of Iraq during that period. Apart from expansionism, Hussein wanted to wipe out his debt to Kuwait by annexing it. He accused Kuwait of stealing Iraqi petroleum. Iraq defied the UNSC, which ordered Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait. Thus, the UN authorized the use of force against Iraq. Unlikely Hussein's estimations, an anti-Iraq coalition of 39 countries was formed, led by the USA. Iraq lost the Gulf war and was subject to multiple casualties. Air and ground as well as resistance forces were destroyed. In the aftermath of the gulf war, Iraqi military forces suppressed Kurdish and Shi'ites uprisings. Iraq also refused to abide by following UN orders, which were to let inspectors evaluate the WMD destruction. Iraq's relations with the US worsened after the US ordered the step down of Saddam Hussein.

Kuwait

Kuwait is a rich country due to its oil reserves, but small and militarily weak. After the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq owed a significant debt to Kuwait. Iraq tried to annex Kuwait and failed to recognize it as an independent nation, although the UN has recognized it as an independent State. In the Gulf War, Kuwait was subject to multiple threats coming from Iraq but also acquired many allies due to the fact that most countries were wishing to condemn Iraq's unlawful actions.

United States of America (USA)

Despite the fact that the USA was not located in the Gulf region, had a major involvement in the issue and in the War. The USA, although it tried to remain neutral at the beginning of the war, continued being the major ally of Kuwait which led main attacks against Iraq. It was a very important member of the coalition and contributed in the condemnation of the unlawful actions of Iraq. However, the USA adopted an

offensive stance, since it demanded that Hussein stepped down from the Iraqi presidency and –along with other coalition members- was reason of many Iraqi casualties. The US President at that time was George H.W. Bush. His speech addressing the congress regarding the Gulf War can be found in the following link:

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia, director. *Bush, George H.W.: Address Concerning Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait*. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 7 Mar. 2019, www.britannica.com/event/Persian-Gulf-War/media/1/452778/209497.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
August 20, 1988	The Iran-Iraq war ended after 8 years of constant fighting between the two parties and its allies. After this war, the Iraqi debt was significantly huge.
August 2, 1990	Iraq's military forces invaded Kuwait. Operation Desert Shield began, in other words the buildup of the anti-Iraq coalition began.
August 3, 1990	The UNSC ordered the Iraqi forces to withdraw from Kuwait
August 6, 1990	The UNSC imposed economic sanctions to Iraq and banned international trade with Iraq
August 8, 1990	Iraq formally annexed Kuwait, as a response to the sanctions
November 29, 1990	The UNSC ordered the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait by mid-January 1991. In case Iraq did not withdraw, the UN would mandate the use of force against Iraq.
January 17, 1991	The anti-Iraq coalition had its first offensive against Iraq, with a US led air strike, authorized by the UN. In other words, the Operation Desert

	Strom began.
February 24, 1991	The coalition undertook a huge ground attack against Iraq
February 28, 1991	USA declared cease-fire with Iraq, right before Iraq resistance forces collapse. Iraq had to recognize Kuwait as an independent State and destroy its WMD. The Gulf War officially ended.
November 2002	UNSC resolution was voted upon which ordered the continuation of the Iraqi weapons inspections.
March 2003	USA and UK issued an ultimatum urging the resignation of Saddam Hussein, underlining consequences if he did not abide.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The UN Security Council (SC) resolutions below are the most important resolutions which aimed at solving the Gulf War, its causes and consequences.

UNSC resolution 660

Date: August 2, 1990

This is the SC resolution which condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and asked for its withdrawal. SC resolutions are legally binding and Iraq condemned a flagrant offense under it.

UNSC resolution 661

Date: August 6, 1990

With this SC resolution, the member States impose economic sanctions and ban the trade with Iraq, since Iraq failed to follow the demands of UNSC resolution 660

UNSC resolution 678

Date: November 28, 1990

After constant Iraqi offences under SC resolutions, the UN decides that the use of force against Iraq will be mandated, if the Iraqi forces do not withdraw from Kuwait in the next 45 dates.

UNSC resolution 686

Date: March 2, 1991

This SC resolution sets forth the conditions of the cease fire, which include Iraq paying for the reparation of the war damages and the return of Kuwait's stolen property.

UNSC resolution 687

Date: April 3, 1991

This SC resolution establishes the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) to inspect Iraq's chemical and biological weapons destruction and capabilities. Through this resolution, member states wanted to ensure that Iraq destroyed its chemical weapons and halted all nuclear and biological weapons programs research.

Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

Member States: 190

Entered into force: March 5, 1970

This treaty aims at achieving complete nuclear weapons disarmament and ensuring that nuclear energy is only used for peaceful purposes.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (CWC)

Member States: 193

Entered into force: April 29, 1997

This convention prohibits the use, advancement and transfer of chemical weapons.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BWC)

Member States: 182

Entered into force: March 26, 1975

This convention prohibits the use and development of biological weapons and demands their destruction.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The Gulf War was a serious threat to international Security. From the Iraqi invasion in Kuwait it escalated to an international armed conflict. A decisive ceasefire and multiple Security Council resolutions lead to the ending of the Gulf War. However, the fierce nature of the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, lead to the escalation of a new conflict, the Iran- Iraq War. In order to prevent such wars from happening again and to ensure the undoubted adherence to international Law and UN SC resolutions, which are legally binding, realistic solutions to the issues need to be voted upon.

Firstly, the initiation of economic sanctions and embargoes against countries which have committed offences under International Law and UNSC resolutions could be a solution to the topic. However, the terms of the resolutions should be stricter, since, as proven, some nations may opt for violating them.

Additionally, all countries must be enforced to sign all conventions banning the use of WMD. The countries that have not signed yet the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) must be strongly urged to do so. These conventions are legally binding. Thus, all countries that have signed it but fail to abide by it should be subjects to sanctions and other types of punishments. In these ways, the imminent threat of WMD would be eliminated.

Furthermore, countries which are alleged or reported to possess WMD should be closely inspected and monitored. Delegates should propose inspections by UN officials, who would evaluate the destruction of WMD and the investigation for their existence and capabilities. The borders of suspected countries should be also closely monitored by UN officials in order to avoid the possession and delivery of WMD between bordering countries and individuals. The work of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) should also be deployed and further developed. Iraqi WMD threat should be fully encountered. The program of the UNSCOM could be developed and deployed to other countries that are alleged to possess WMD and were both involved and not intervened in the Gulf War.

The issues of Gulf War should be firmly examined and discussed by the Historical Security Council delegates in order for it to be effectively encountered.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

“#182 The Persian Gulf War, 1991.” *The Map Shop*, www.mapshop.com/182-the-persian-gulf-war-1991-on-roller-w-backboard/ .

“ANNEX | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/annex.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia, director. *Bush, George H.W.: Address Concerning Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait*. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 7 Mar. 2019, www.britannica.com/event/Persian-Gulf-War/media/1/452778/209497 .

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. “Annexation.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 20 July 1998, www.britannica.com/topic/annexation.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. “Persian Gulf War.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 7 Mar. 2019, www.britannica.com/event/Persian-Gulf-War.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. “Weapon of Mass Destruction.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 27 Nov. 2017, www.britannica.com/technology/weapon-of-mass-destruction.

“COALITION | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/coalition.

“ECONOMIC SANCTIONS | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/economic-sanctions.

Editors, History.com. “Persian Gulf War.” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 9 Nov. 2009, www.history.com/topics/middle-east/persian-gulf-war.

“Gulf War.” *Vocabulary.com*, www.vocabulary.com/lists/29539.

“Gulf War.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 8 June 2019,

www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War .

“Security Council Resolutions - 1990.” *United Nations*, United Nations,

www.un.org/Docs/scres/1990/scres90.htm.

“The Gulf War, 1991 .” *Office of the Historian* , U.S. Department of State,

www.history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/gulf-war

UN, Security Council. “The Situation between Iraq and Kuwait.” *Security Council*

Resolutions 660, 661, United Nations, [www.documents-dds-](http://www.documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/575/10/IMG/NR057510.pdf?OpenElement)

ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/575/10/IMG/NR057510.pdf?OpenElement

nt.