

## Chapter 16: The Origins of the Gulf War

### Limited war

- Limited war – the idea of limiting or constraining the way in which war is conducted
- Confining the geographical area in which there is fighting
- Limiting the type of targets attacked
- Limiting the type of weapons used
- Limiting the degree of mobilisation

### Gulf War facts

- Took place from 2 August 1990 to 28 February 1991
- War waged by a United Nations (UN) Coalition Force against Iraq over Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait

### Parties involved

- UN-approved coalition force led by the United States of America (USA)
- Gulf States were involved – included Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- Gulf States refers to the countries around the Persian Gulf
- Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) involved – OPEC stabilises oil prices and controls the amount of oil produced by its members
- The Middle East is important – it controls the Suez Canal, which links Europe to Asia

## Reasons for Iraqi invasion of Kuwait

Reasons	Explanation
Iran-Iraq war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shi'ite Muslims took control of Iran after the Iranian Revolution – the Sunni government in Iraq saw Iran as a threat and the conflict escalated into the Iran-Iraq war (Sunni-Shi'ite ideological conflict)</li> <li>• Iran-Iraq war left Iraq crippled in debt – it owed 80,000,000,000 USD to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and USA</li> <li>• Economic difficulties meant that Saddam Hussein's regime needed a rapid injection of capital to survive</li> <li>• Invading Kuwait would lead to Iraq controlling 20% of the world's oil supply – Iraqi control over Kuwait's oil wealth and oil prices would erase their war debts</li> <li>• End of Iran-Iraq war resulted in the demobilisation of 1,500,000 soldiers – sudden influx of large numbers of unemployed men would severely affect the Iraqi economy</li> <li>• Saddam decided to use his army instead of disbanding it</li> </ul>
Historical claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iraq claimed that Kuwait was historically a part of Iraq – they were governed under the same territory when under Ottoman rule</li> <li>• Iraqi public supported invading Kuwait, viewing it as an Iraqi province</li> </ul>
Underestimation of foreign intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USA had supported Saddam's government against the anti-USA Iranian government</li> <li>• The West turned a blind eye to efforts by Iraq to obtain military technologies</li> <li>• The USA ambassador gave the impression that it was sympathetic to Iraq's situation and was unlikely to go to Kuwait's aid</li> <li>• The USA ambassador did not give a green light to the invasion but also failed to show a red one</li> <li>• Saddam completely miscalculated the likely Western and Arab governmental response to his invasion of Kuwait, believing that no one would reckon Kuwait was worth a fight</li> </ul>

Iraq-Kuwaiti relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relations between Iraq and Kuwait had deteriorated due to economic disagreements</li> <li>• Kuwait loaned Iraq money during the Iran-Iraq war and asked for repayment</li> <li>• Iraq instead responded that it considered the war funding a non-refundable investment in their own peoples' security</li> <li>• Kuwait's continued demand for repayment led Iraq to accuse Kuwait of trying to weaken Iraq and betraying the Arab cause</li> </ul>
Territorial disagreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Borders of Iraq and Kuwait was not well defined</li> <li>• Both sides shared a profitable oilfield – the Rumaila oilfield</li> <li>• Iraq claimed that Kuwait was stealing oil from the part of Rumaila that was within Iraqi borders</li> <li>• Iraq was unhappy with Kuwait's possession of the islands of Bubiyan and Warbah which allowed Kuwait to potentially block off Iraq's access to the Persian Gulf</li> <li>• Oil prices were falling – Iraq accused Kuwait of producing oil beyond quotas set by OPEC and driving the oil prices down</li> <li>• Kuwait's policies of overproducing oil was tantamount to economic warfare against Iraq</li> </ul>

### Timeline

Date	Event
17/07/1990	Iraq threatens military action against Kuwait if it does not agree to comply with the following demands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return money to Iraq for the oil 'stolen' from the Rumaila oilfield</li> <li>• Raise oil prices</li> <li>• Forgive Iraq's wartime debt completely</li> <li>• Fund the reconstruction of Iraq after the Iran-Iraq war</li> </ul>
25/07/1990	Saddam meets the USA Ambassador and agrees not to invade Kuwait
01/08/1990	Kuwait refuses to comply with Iraq's demands
02/08/1990	Iraq invades Kuwait and gains control of the whole country within 12 hours
02/08/1990	UN Security Council demands that Iraq immediately withdraw
06/08/1990	UN Security Council imposes trade and financial sanctions on Iraq

08/08/1990	Operation Desert Shield commences to protect Saudi Arabia from an Iraqi invasion
16/01/1991	Operation Desert Storm commences to invade Iraq with a UN coalition force
27/02/1991	UN coalition troops regain control of Kuwait
28/02/1991	War ends with Iraq surrendering

#### Reasons for UN intervention

Reasons	Explanation
Arab disapproval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other Arab states had hoped for a peaceful solution which never materialised</li> <li>• Saddam agreed not to invade Kuwait – the Arab states were outraged and humiliated at his deception</li> <li>• Saudi Arabia feared an invasion by Iraq</li> <li>• The Arab League condemned the Iraqi invasion</li> </ul>
Middle Eastern oil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iraq's invasion of Kuwait led to their control of 20% of the world's oil supply</li> <li>• If Iraq had invaded Saudi Arabia, it would control 50% of the world's oil supply</li> <li>• UN did not have time to wait for whether economic sanction would work</li> <li>• UN Security Council set a deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait – Iraq did not meet the deadline</li> <li>• Operation Desert Storm began, with the invasion of Iraq</li> </ul>
End of the Cold War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East-West relations were good and USA could act without fear of Soviet opposition</li> <li>• The USSR agreed to condemn the Iraqi invasion and place an economic embargo on Iraq</li> </ul>

#### Peaceful settlement

- Many hoped that negotiations and economic sanctions would be able to convince Iraq to back down

- Saddam suggested Iraq would stand down if the USA withdrew from Saudi Arabia, Syria withdrew from Lebanon and Israel withdrew from Palestine – his attempt to link the wider Palestinian issue with the invasion of Kuwait made it look like he was playing for time
- Saddam's peace plan was rejected

## Historiography

Advocate	Explanation
John Stoessinger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misperception on both sides caused the war</li> <li>• The USA believed that Saddam would withdraw from Kuwait in the face of overwhelming odds</li> <li>• Saddam underestimated the USA's resolve and tried to call their bluff</li> </ul>
James DeFronz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Iran-Iraq war created the conditions contributing to the Iraqi decision to invade Kuwait</li> <li>• Saddam decided to solve Iraq's economic problems by invading Kuwait and gaining control of their oil fields</li> <li>• He had to use his army left over from the Iran-Iraq war to prevent the Iraq economy from deteriorating further</li> </ul>
Lawrence Freedman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility of the war lies with Saddam Hussein</li> <li>• Saddam's chronic political insecurity drove him to starting a war</li> <li>• The West supported Iraq's drive towards the acquisition of more military equipment and tolerated Saddam's maltreatment of people – their lack of an attempt to stop Saddam led to him becoming more belligerent</li> </ul>

## Chapter 17: The Nature and Effects of the Gulf War

### 17.2 A LIMITED WAR

#### Coalition objectives

- Complete and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait
- Restoration of the legitimate Kuwaiti government
- Ensure peace and sovereignty of Saudi Arabia

#### Iraqi objectives

- Coalition forces to withdraw from Saudi Arabia
- Ending of the embargoes placed on Iraq
- Israeli withdrawal from Arab territories

### 17.3 IMPACT OF COALITION WAR

#### Support from the United Nations (UN)

- The United States of America (USA) played a major role in mobilising the UN
- Invoked Article 51 of the UN Charter – the right of collective self-defence
- The UN issued Resolution 660 condemning the invasion and demanding Iraqi withdrawal
- The support of the UN meant that this war was legal

#### Building the coalition

- A coalition of over 30 countries was formed
- This was difficult as it involved different types of countries with different interests e.g. conservative Arab monarchies, Western democracies, Arab dictatorships etc
- The larger the coalition got, the shorter its lifespan – pressure to go to war quickly
- Compared Saddam Hussein to Hitler – playing up the enemy
- Two separate but parallel commands were set up – American General Norman Schwarzkopf led the Western troops while Saudi Prince Khaled bin Sultan led the Arab troops
- Saddam's major weakness was that he had no real understanding of the world, coming from a peasant background
- Saddam tried to project the war as a jihad (holy war) against the western infidels – this failed as many Arab nations were opposing him

## 17.4 THE IRAQI AND COALITION STRATEGIES AND THE COURSE OF THE WAR

### 17.4.1 The Iraqi strategy

#### Composition of the Iraqi military

- Iraq had the 4<sup>th</sup> largest army in the world at that time – it had 1,100,000 men
- It had a strong air defence system with 16,000 missiles over 150 sites

#### Iraqi assumptions of the Coalition strategy

- The Iraqis did not expect the Coalition to operate in the desert interior – they assumed the Coalition would go straight for Kuwait

#### Iraqi strategy

- Preferred to use set piece battles and adopted a strategy of attrition
- Created a 3 line defence:
  1. The Saddam line – extensive use of mines and trenches backed by infantry and artillery
  2. Armoured and mechanised forces inside Kuwait itself
  3. The elite Republican Guards deployed in southern Iraq

#### Weaknesses of the Iraqi Army

- The lack of initiative and independence among the Iraqi soldiers made them overly dependent on top-down command and control – destruction of their communications severely degraded their ability to fight
- The Iraqi Army was vulnerable – it was dependent on food, water and supplies from Iraq
- The Iraqis lacked military intelligence – ignorant of deployment of Coalition forces
- There was large scale desertion by the conscripted men
- There was over-exaggeration of Iraqi capability – due to Saddam's own bluff

#### The threat of nuclear, biological and chemical warfare

- The Coalition threatened to invade Baghdad if Iraq used nuclear, biological or chemical weapons

#### The use of hostages and prisoners of war

- Saddam banned foreign nationals from leaving Iraq
- These hostages were deployed to key installations to dissuade the Coalition from attacking
- Massive public relations disaster when Saddam was featured with a British child hostage

#### The use of eco-terrorism

- Ordered oil to be poured into the Persian Gulf
- The Iraqis blew up the Kuwaiti oil wells – this failed to stop the Coalition advance



#### 17.4.2 The Coalition strategy

##### General Norman Schwarzkopf

- Headed the USA Central Command (CENTCOM)
- Gave the impression he ruled by decree – in reality he gave his commanders much initiative
- Recognised the importance of the media
- Was able to keep the Coalition together
- Was well-versed in the Middle East

##### The Coalition buildup and Operation Desert Shield

- The USA learnt much from the mistakes of the Vietnam War
- Powell Doctrine – American troops would never go into battle without overwhelming superiority
- The military became an all-volunteer force – morale and training levels were high
- The USA had developed a rapid development force for the Middle East since the 1980s
- By February 1991 the Coalition had deployed 610,000 troops
- Economic sanctions and embargoes were imposed on Iraq
- The sanctions were unanimously approved by the UN Security Council

##### The Air-Land Battle Doctrine

- The Coalition's strategy was based on the Air-Land Battle doctrine developed against the Soviets
- Computers were used to coordinate forces
- Based on blitzkrieg methods
- Placed a strong emphasis on jointness of all military services to attack the enemy's rear echelons

##### Operation Desert Storm

- Colonel John Warden supported the use of strategic bombing and believed it could win the war
- Warden wanted massive and sustained strikes to be used against the Iraqis
- The Coalition expected to lose 150 aircraft but in reality lost only 40 aircraft
- The Iraqis expected the Coalition to attack straight into Kuwait
- The Coalition concealed their strategy from the Iraqis through using deception plans such as creating ghost divisions
- The USA Marine forces had moved so fast that they pushed many Iraqis out of Kuwait before Iraqi reinforcements could arrive to cut them off
- 85,000 Iraqi troops surrendered and were captured – the unexpectedly large numbers slowed down the Coalition advance
- The Coalition failed to bottle up the escaping Iraqis – 25% of the Republican Guard forces in Kuwait managed to escape
- This helped sustain Saddam in power
- The USA failed to take advantage of the opportunity to influence events in post-war Iraq

- There was little planning for the termination of the war as its speed was so unexpected
- The Coalition could have easily invaded Iraq and overthrown Saddam
- However USA President George H. W. Bush recognised that the Arab countries would not have supported an invasion of Iraq
- The Coalition established no-fly zones over Iraqi territory
- 51% of all Coalition deaths during the war was due to friendly fire

#### The role of intelligence

- Satellites and spy planes were used to support the Coalition – they provided vital reconnaissance and intelligence information
- Intelligence played a critical role in the war
- However the satellites and spy planes were unable to estimate the strength of the enemy fully – information obtained from them was not 100% accurate

## 17.5 THE IMPACT OF AIR POWER ON THE GULF WAR

- The terrain as suitable for air power – it was flat and there was little cover
- Helicopters played an important role – both transport and anti-tank
- The use of night vision and all-weather navigation equipment allowed for 24-hour operations
- The Iraqi strategy was not to win aerial superiority as their pilots were clearly outclassed – it was to absorb the Coalition attacks
- The Iraqis preferred to hide their aircraft in hardened bunkers and many Iraqi pilots fled to Iran
- Airborne warning and control aircraft (AWACS) such as the E-2C Hawkeye helped detect enemy aircraft and coordinate Coalition aircraft
- Command and control aircraft such as the J-STARS could detect enemy ground forces and coordinate Coalition ground forces
- Unmanned aerial vehicles such as Pioneers and Pointers helped to provide reconnaissance and guided artillery fire
- Electronic warfare and counter-measure aircraft such as the EC-130 Compass Call and the EF-111 Raven were deployed to jam or destroy enemy radars and anti-aircraft missiles
- Strategic airlifts were carried out by transport aircraft such as the C-5 and the C-141 – 482,000 people and 513,000 tons of supplies were transported
- Aerial refuelling by tankers such as the KC-135 Stratotanker and the KC-10 played an important role in enabling aircraft to stay in the air longer and carry greater loads