

Why was the first gulf war fought politics essay



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This paper will discuss why George H. W. Bush fought the Gulf War in 1991.

The Gulf War (2 August 1990 – 28 February 1991) was a military conflict between the Iraqi forces and coalition force from 34 nations. The purpose of the war was to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. This paper will discuss the following: What are the reasons behind the Gulf War? Why did the president George H. W Bush involve in the war? To answer these questions the paper will discuss first: the first gulf war which accrued between Iraq and Iran and how the first Gulf war lead to the second war. Second: the invasion of the Iraqi forces to Kuwait. Third: the United States involvement in the war. Fourth: the results of the Gulf war.

The first Gulf War which accrued in 1980 -1988[2]between the Iranian and the Iraqi forces lead to the second Gulf war which accrued between Iraq and Kuwait. The first Gulf War officially began on Sep. 22, 1980, with an Iraqi land and air invasion of western Iran. The main reasons behind the war followed by a long history of border disputes and fears of Shia insurgency among Iraq's long suppressed Shia majority influenced by Iran's Islamic revolution. For the previous reasons Iran and Iraq were fighting for 8 years, and involving other countries to the bloody war. The war caused an economic damage and caused a lot of dead bodies among the two countries, a half a million Iraqi and Iranian soldiers as well as civilians are believed to have died in the war, with many more injured and wounded people. At the same time did not bring any reparation nor change in borders, it has been compared to World War[3]. Iraq been supported by the rich gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the previous countries were supporting Iraq with a lot of money to help Iraq to stop the Persian invasion. Saddam

Hussein claimed victory in the Iran – Iraq war, creating heightened expectations within the military and among the populace for some sort of victory dividend. Saddam Hussein viewed Kuwait as rich source of oil, which will give Iraq an addition to its own substantial oil reserves. Saddam Hussein realized that he will be controlling 21 percent of the world's proven oil reserves. A significant portion of the Iraqi national debt was owed to Kuwait, which supported Iraq against Iran. The Iraqis felt that the Kuwaitis should just ignore the debt, since Iraqis fought for the Kuwaitis and they protected them from the Persian invasion. Kuwait declined the Iraqi's offer, and did not forgive the debt.

Kuwait had been part of the Ottoman Empire, and although it's ruling dynasty, the al-Sabah family, had concluded a protectorate agreement in 1899 that assigned responsibility for its foreign affairs to Britain, it did not make any attempt to secede from the Ottoman Empire. For this reason, Iraqi governments had always refused to accept Kuwait's separation, and its borders were never clearly defined or mutually agreed. The British High Commissioner drew lines that deliberately constricted Iraq's access to the ocean so that any future Iraqi government would be in no position to threaten Britain's domination of the Persian Gulf. In late July 1990, as negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait stalled, Iraq massed troops on its border with the emirate and summoned U. S. ambassador April Glaspie to a meeting with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Two transcripts of that meeting have been produced, both of them controversial. In them, Saddam Hussein outlined his grievances against Kuwait, while promising that he would not invade Kuwait before one more round of negotiations. Perhaps the

main reason behind the invasion of Kuwait by the Iraqis is that Saddam Hussein thought he could get a way with it. The strong relationship which had been built between Saddam Hussein and the United States during the first Gulf War, gave Saddam Hussein the green light to think that he will be able to get a way from invading Kuwait. Saddam Hussein also thought that the United States was still affected by the Vietnam War, and it had as little problem to involve in another conflict. Even though Iraq was considered a Soviet client state, there was no rationale, and there would be a little public or congressional support, for the U. S to send half million troops halfway across the globe as it had done in Korea (1950-1953) and Vietnam (ending 1975) during the height of the Cold War[4].

In August 2, 1990 the infantry, armor, and tank units of the Iraqi Republican Guard invaded Kuwait and seized control of that country. The invasion triggered the United States response, Operation Desert Shield, to deter any invasion of Kuwait's oil rich neighbor, Saudi Arabia. On August 7 deployment of the United States forces began. United Nations Security Council Resolutions 660 and 662 condemned Iraq's invasion and annexation and called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces. On August 20 President Bush signed National Security Directive 45," U. S policy in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait," outlining the U. S. objectives – which included the “ immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait,” and the “ restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government to replace the puppet regime installed by Iraq.” A U. N. ultimatum, Security Council Resolution 678, followed on November 29, 1990. It stipulated that if Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein did not remove his troops

from Kuwait by January 15, 1991 a U. S – led coalition was authorized to drive them out. Early in the morning of January 17, Baghdad time, the U. S. – led coalition launched air attacks against Iraqi targets. On February 24, coalition ground forces begin their attack. On February 27, Kuwait city was declared liberated, and with allied forces having driven well into Iraq, President Bush and his advisers decided to halt the war. King Hussein devised a possible Arab solution to the crisis. Even though this way was very generous to Saddam, allowing him to take enormous wealth from Kuwait and retain the Radiating oilfield as well as Warba and Bubiyan, the King's proposal failed to gain the support of either President Mubarak of King Fahd[5].

The United States wanted Saddam Hussein to invade Kuwait to be involved in the Middle East. Saddam Hussein was really comfortable when he invaded Kuwait because he did not think that the United States will involve. The United States response ambassador responded in the Middle East, that the United States has no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflict[6]. Saddam Hussein believed that the United States not going to involve in his war, since the United States supported him in his war against Iran. The story was really different in the Second Gulf War, since Iraq start to create a threat to Israel which one of the allies to the United States.

The condemnations of Iraq's aggression came from national leaders around the globe; the invasion forces occupied Kuwait so quickly that it was a fait accompli.[7]After announcing that Iraq's aggression to Saudi Arabia to convince its leaders that Iraq " will not stand" and after drawing, as he put, " a line in the sand ," Bush sent emissaries to Saudi Arabia to convince its

leaders that Iraq might attack their country as well. The Saudis were reluctant to have foreign troops stationed on their oil, and in launching his invasion, Hussein probably counted on this reluctance, anticipating that it would prevent foreign military response to his aggression. However, the Saudis allowed themselves to be persuaded, and the United States and several other nations were permitted to move troops to their country to deter and Iraqi incursion, they and other-oil producing states also agreed to increase their output to compensate for the shortfall in international oil supplies caused by the boycott of Iraq and occupied Kuwait. Meanwhile, Iraq annexed Kuwait as its nineteenth province and proclaimed that “there is not a single chance for retreat ... this battle is going to become the mother of all battles” (Woodward 1991a, 297).

The Iraqis took some western people as hostages, which was still the American concern. In October of the same year, American public attention was shifted from the War on Iraq to some certain issues which revolved around the budget. This was eventually resolved in a compromise in which Bush broke his repeated election pledge, “Read my lips: no new taxes.” Although this battle fostered considerable hostility towards Washington, almost all incumbents were returned in the Congressional election on November 6 (Alford and Hibbing).^[8] The basic and the general idea behind the United States involvement in the first Gulf War is the oil resources in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.^[9]

President George H. W. Bush fought the Gulf War mainly to protect the oil resources in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Also to have a foothold in the region to support Israel from Iran. Iran was creating a threat towards Israel, since Iran

was a big supporter to certain organizations such as Hamas, which it was an organization against the Israeli government. At the same time Iran was a supporter to Hizb – Allah which is a Shia organization in Lebanon, also fought the Israeli government. The Middle East oil production is essential to the modern industrialized countries of the world, so anything that threatened its availability became a concern for the United States[10]. Therefore the United States wanted Saddam Hussein to invade Kuwait to have an excuse to control the oil in the oil in the Middle East.

It is no surprise that the United States decision makers were concerned about Iraqi control over Kuwait oil. As Quandt noted, "If Saddam controlled Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil supplies directly, and if he kept troops on the Saudi border, he would in fact dominate the Gulf's vast reserves of oil and would become a one man OPEC, able to manipulate the supply of oil and to achieve whatever price he wanted." In fact, President Bush noted the "vital economic interests" of oil in his 11 September 1990 address to the joint of Congress[11]. Saudi Arabia not only had been a longtime friend of the United States, but the oil reserves under the Saudi sands could not be allowed to fall under Saddam Hussein control[12].

On September 11th 1990 President George H. W. Bush went before a joint session of Congress and explained his reason for pursuing war in the Middle East: Our objectives in there Persian Gulf are clear, our goals defined and familiar: Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait completely. Most countries share our concern for the principle. And many have a stake in the stability of the Persian Gulf. This is not, as Saddam Hussein would have it, the United States against Iraq. It is Iraq against the world.[13]

This paper discussed why did George H. W Bush fought the Gulf War in 1991. The topic posted several questions which the paper sought to address. The paper focused on the fact that the war against Iraq, was mainly to protect the United Sates not Kuwait. This war introduces the Unites Sates as the most powerful country.