The Diplomatic Record 1990-1991

Edited by
David D. Newsom

THE DIPLOMATIC RECORD 1990-1991

Published in cooperation with the

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF DIPLOMACY

School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
London and New York

First published 1992 by Westview Press

Published 2019 by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Library of Congress ISSN: 1052-0309

ISBN 13: 978-0-367-29131-0 (hbk)

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DEPARTMENTS

Editor's Note

This second volume of *The Diplomatic Record*, covering events in 1990 and 1991, concentrates on three areas of the world where diplomacy was particularly active: the Middle East, Europe, and Africa. In addition, Chapter 10 addresses a global subject particularly relevant to the Middle East today: the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In Asia and Latin America, diplomats were also active, but potential chroniclers felt the time had not yet come to write meaningfully on such issues as Cambodia in Asia or negotiations on the future of El Salvador in Central America. Other key global issues such as the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations and the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Development and Environment will reach definitive stages next year and are potential subjects for the 1991–1992 volume. *The Diplomatic Record* takes note of these and several other ongoing negotiations in "Looking Ahead."

The events that dominated the diplomatic circuits for most of the year were those related to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait: efforts either to prevent conflict or to create the coalition that would make military force effective. The initial essay addresses the effectiveness of diplomacy in this crisis. Then follow perspectives on the events from the standpoint of the United Nations, the Arab countries, the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Diplomatic activity in Europe was concentrated on the recasting of the security and political arrangements of that continent after the dramatic changes in Eastern Europe in 1989. Both to record recent events and to look at their future implications, we invited contributions from authors from Germany, the United States, and the Soviet Union. The result is a cluster of essays that chronicle the diplomacy surrounding the reunification

of Germany and examine efforts to form new European structures from the perspectives of Washington and Moscow.

In this volume of *The Diplomatic Record* we have chosen to look at two areas in Africa where international efforts have been mounted to resolve disputes. One involves the actions of the Economic Commission of West African States to bring peace to a deeply divided Liberia; the other chronicles the progress of the United Nations toward establishing a referendum on the future of the Western Sahara. These are but two examples of active diplomatic moves to bring peace and stability to the continent; others continue in Angola, Mozambique, and, most recently, Ethiopia.

The year 1990 was also one of active multilateral diplomacy. The essays on the role of the United Nations in the Middle East and in the Sahara recognize this. So, also, does the essay by a knowledgeable participant in the negotiations on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

As in the first volume of *The Diplomatic Record*, the writers represent varied perspectives. They include diplomats, scholars, international civil servants, consultants, and journalists; in most cases, the authors have had direct involvement as participants in or observers of the events about which they write.

In "Recent Developments in Diplomatic Practice," we seek again to present important developments in the rules governing the practice of diplomacy—from the standpoint of the United States, Canada, and Hungary.

The chronology—through May 1991—lists milestones in diplomatic events from every continent as well as in specialized subjects such as trade and investment and the environment. The bibliography lists recent works on diplomacy published in the United States and Canada and benefits this year from a contribution from Brazil.

The appendixes include documents relating to the Gulf crisis—particularly the key resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

As always, *The Diplomatic Record's* contents and the timeliness of its subject matter are limited by space and by the production schedule. Within these limitations, we have once again sought to present for the scholar, the journalist, and the student of international affairs the significant landmarks in the world of diplomacy.

David D. Newsom

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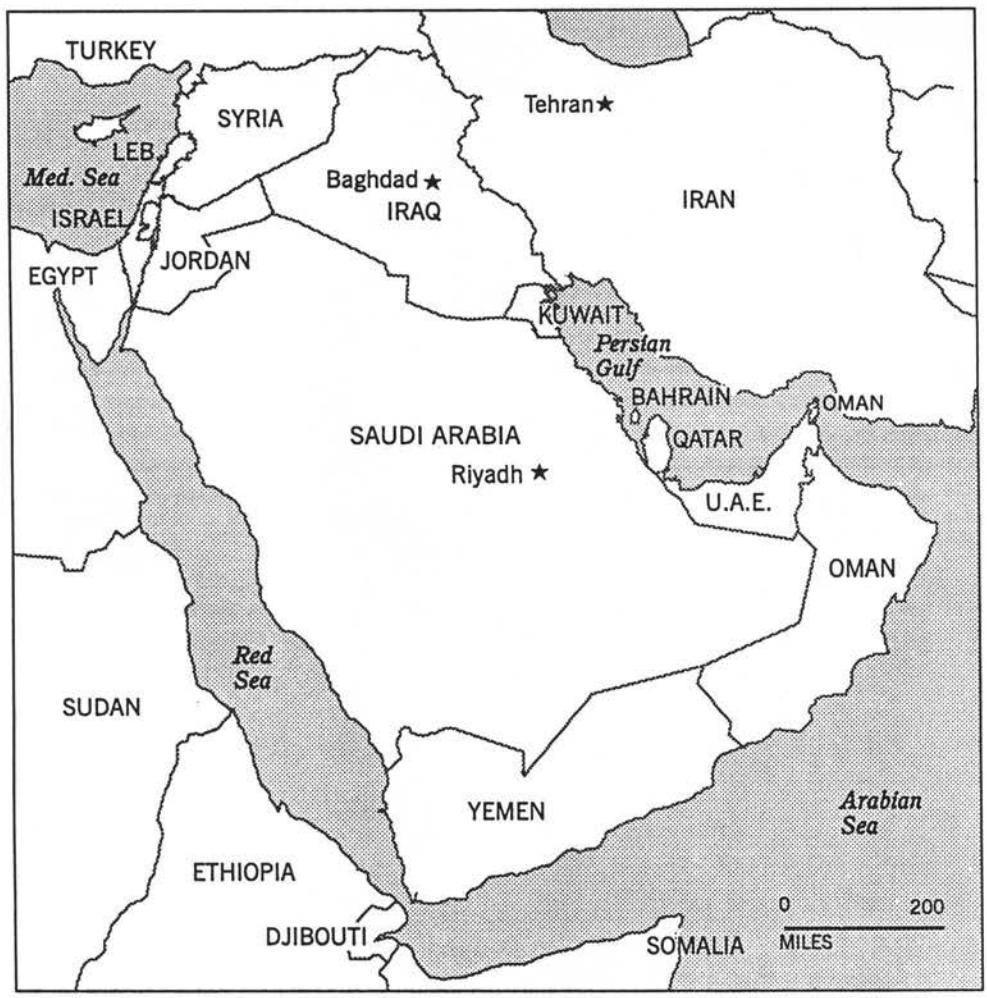
THE DIPLOMATIC RECORD 1990-1991

ESSAYS

Map 1.1 The Middle East



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Diplomacy and the Gulf Crisis

David D. Newsom

Diplomacy is . . . the conduct of business between states by peaceful means.
—Ernest Satow

ON AUGUST 3, 1991, Iraq invaded Kuwait and a few days later declared this previously independent country its nineteenth province. In the days immediately preceding the invasion, Arab governments had sought without success to prevent the aggression. Following Saddam Hussein's military action, diplomatic efforts to force Iraq's withdrawal widened to include non-Arab nations and the United Nations Security Council. Such efforts to find a peaceful resolution continued—even after a coalition of nations acting on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 678 attacked Iraqi forces on January 16, 1991. Rigid positions on both sides precluded any compromise, and the world ultimately depended on military action to reverse the aggression.

Inevitably when war breaks out, the question is raised: Did diplomacy fail? The answer in the case of the Gulf War lies not only in the events immediately preceding the conflict but also in the history of the region and the perception each party had of the issues involved. The answer relates, also, to whether different policies or different signals might have prevented Iraq's invasion and whether, at the final hour, opportunities for conflict resolution existed.

The summary of Gulf War peace plans at the end of the chapter was prepared by Professor Allan E. Goodman of Georgetown University.

Diplomatic efforts were plainly not successful in preventing the war or in bringing about the peaceful withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait. The roots of that failure lay in the nature of the issue, in the complexities of the region, and in the inability of the parties to read each others' intentions. Diplomacy did succeed, however, in the unprecedented creation of an international coalition allied against Iraq—first, in support of economic sanctions and later in the implementation of "all necessary means" including military action.

Creating the Coalition

Many factors made the success of this major collective security effort possible. European nations including the Soviet Union were prepared to follow the US lead, even if they did not totally agree with Washington's approaches. Undoubtedly, both France and Britain were motivated not only by economic and political considerations but also by recollections of their prior imperial responsibilities in the region. Germany, conscious of pressures from the United States, contributed financially and broke precedent by sending military aircraft to Turkey. Japan, after considerable debate in the Diet, contributed financially. The Soviet Union, giving priority to its relations with the United States and Europe, gave important diplomatic support but declined any military involvement outside its borders.

Saudi Arabia and the Gulf sheikhdoms, shaken by Iraq's aggression against a neighbor, after some hesitation requested American and allied help. President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, angered by what he considered Saddam Hussein's betrayal and the challenge of Iraqi power, readily cooperated. In Damascus, Hafiz al-Asad calculated that the coalition's opposition to Iraq would further Syria's interests in the region. Turkey saw its interests in working with the West and at considerable financial sacrifice cut off trade with Iraq and permitted US air operations from bases on its territory.[1]

The effective creation of the coalition in this contest was aided by the success of the United States in obtaining the support of the UN Security Council and in establishing an allied military force in the Gulf region. At times, members of the coalition, including the Soviet Union and France, expressed the view that the United States, with its emphasis on removing Saddam Hussein and destroying Iraq's military potential, was exceeding the UN mandate. These expressions had little influence on US President

George Bush. Bush emphasized in his pursuit of both domestic and foreign cooperation that the UN resolutions demonstrated the strong support for US policies in the international community. To a degree not seen since the 1950s, Washington used the UN Security Council as an instrument of US foreign policy.

Iraq: Avoiding Isolation

Saddam Hussein's diplomatic efforts to prevent the isolation of Iraq before the war began were successful. The Arab world was deeply divided over issues relating to Israel, foreign alliances, and economic inequities, and substantial portions of populations in nations friendly to the coalition did not share the coalition's objective. By exploiting the Palestinian issue, the disparity between the wealth of the Gulf states and other poorer Arab states, and the historic aversion in the region to non-Arab intervention, Saddam Hussein was able to rally the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to his side and gain mass support in Jordan, thus preventing a full consensus against him in the Arab League.[2] Through prior cultivation of ties with Yemen, Saddam was able to gain a voice in the Security Council. His tactics may also have inhibited Arab initiatives that might have been interpreted by Arab populations as efforts to acknowledge and justify Western involvement. In a dramatic diplomatic move toward Iran on August 16, 1990, Saddam acceded to Iran's position on the Shatt-al-Arab—an issue over which the two countries had fought an eight-year war. His move may have gained Iran's neutrality. If he hoped for active support against the Western forces from Tehran he was disappointed; Iran demonstrated its neutrality by impounding Iraqi aircraft that fled across the border during the war.

Differing Perspectives

Whatever Saddam Hussein's true motive in seizing Kuwait—whether to resolve his financial problems or to assert his wider role as an Arab leader—he sought to justify his invasion as a reaction to a vestigial colonial situation. His claim, for example, that Kuwait had been part of Iraq in Ottoman times and had been taken illegally by the British formed the basis for asserting that Kuwait was the nineteenth province of Iraq. In so doing

he struck responsive chords among those who retained a fear of a reimposition of Western domination and among those who sought for a leader who would recover Palestinian rights from Israel. Inherent, also, in his position was an echo of the North-South economic split: the strong, industrial North imposing its will on less-developed nations. His position reflected the widespread view in the Arab world that a "double standard" existed in which the United States insisted on Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait but not on Israel's from the occupied territories. The United States opposed the possession of weapons of mass destruction by Iraq but not by Israel.

For many in the Arab nations outside the Gulf the issue became not the aggression against Kuwait but Iraq's resistance to the perceived efforts of the United States to reimpose imperialism. The withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait became equated with the withdrawal of "foreign forces" from the Arabian peninsula.

President Bush created a different perspective—one based on his conditioning preceding and during World War II. The Iraqi invasion was unprovoked aggression—"Munich" in 1938; he did not want to be Neville Chamberlain. For Bush, the issue began with the invasion of Kuwait; what went before was not pertinent; to Saddam, it was everything. The security of access to oil and the potential threat to Israel gave President Bush further issues of major national and international concern to justify his actions. On these elements he built the concept of a moral war and the possibility of creating a "new world order." Saddam was endeavoring to preserve and extend his power; Bush was seeking to prevent the control of a vital area by a ruthless and unpredictable ruler. He was, also, without doubt motivated by a desire to avoid being labeled weak, as some had characterized President Jimmy Carter in his treatment of Iran, or duplicitous, as critics of President Ronald Reagan had labeled the Iran-contra negotiations. With the changes in Soviet policy, an American president was no longer deterred by the possibility of opposition from Moscow to the pursuit of US national interests in the Persian Gulf; the way was clearly open to a tough policy in defense of what he saw as those interests. The joint US-Soviet communiqué of August 2, 1990, calling for a Security Council meeting on the invasion of Kuwait, signaled this new diplomatic reality.

The US perspective was also shaped by the strong view of the United States' special role in the world, a view strengthened by the perceived victory of democracy over communism. To Americans—if not to Arabs—it seemed thoroughly appropriate that the United States, as the only nation with the power to do so, should respond for the international community

to the Kuwait crisis. Principles of true collective security and the rule of law were at stake.

Presidential Leadership

Bush exhibited impressive skill in demonstrating the power of the presidency. The leadership in this crisis was strictly personal; George Bush made the decisions. By confining policymaking to a small group in the executive, he was able to retain remarkable control of policy. His delay in submitting the issue to Congress until the last few days before the UN deadline on withdrawal meant that many in the two bodies who might otherwise have opposed the use of force were reluctant to oppose the president at that critical moment. Throughout the crisis, the policy action was managed to minimize debate, either within or outside the executive. It seems clear that the president decided on his course of action early in August and did not wish to be deterred by listening seriously to contrary voices—including those with expertise in the region. Little evidence in fact exists that the president and his circle sought advice from any recognized area experts.

The Role of the Expert

The role of the regional expert is difficult in any administration. Tensions traditionally exist between the globalist, working in a worldwide strategic context, and the area specialist. This applies both within government, including the intelligence community, and outside. Among those who have lived, worked, and studied in the Middle East, the problem is further complicated because varying points of view emerge depending on the precise area of knowledge. The specialist who has spent years in the Gulf will have a perspective different from one who has been in Egypt, Algeria, or Israel. The scholar who has worked among peasants will observe a society that is quite different from the one experienced by an expert on urban issues; all will be subject to the pressures and biases of individual states and factions. When a president is personally conducting policy, challenges to his assumptions are seen as evidences of political bias or disloyalty. To suggest possible errors in the premises of policy is to risk being seen as an advocate rather than as an expert. To point out that citizens

may have different views than their rulers and that US interests in the region have previously suffered because scant attention was given to such divisions is to court charges of undermining America's friends. Little room existed for the specialist with an understanding for the affected region, either in analyzing the prewar circumstances or in predicting what the region would require after the war.

So strongly did the president feel the correctness of his policy that other usual US foreign policy considerations became irrelevant; Syria's record on human rights and terrorism is one example. Jordan, a long-time friend of the United States, was at least temporarily cast aside because of what seemed to be King Hussein's equivocal stand on the Iraqi invasion. In the interest of maintaining the support of the Soviet Union, the administration took the domestic political risk of moderating its response to the Soviet actions against independence movements in the Baltic states. In many other areas, US policy seemed determined entirely by whether a country stood with Washington on this one issue. Long-term policy considerations—in the region and elsewhere—appeared to receive less attention.

No Room for Compromise

The two contrasting perspectives of Saddam Hussein and George Bush left virtually no room for diplomatic maneuvering or compromise. Strength on both sides was symbolized in the refusal to compromise. Any expressed Iraqi willingness to negotiate was conditioned on addressing the Palestinian issue and lacked any hint of a readiness to withdraw from Kuwait. For President Bush, any compromise—"rewards for aggression" or "saving face"—would be inconsistent with his firm position that the UN resolutions must be totally fulfilled before any discussion of other issues.

Presidential rhetoric served only to harden positions on each side. Washington's stress on the American role and the concept of a new world order—popular in the United States—undoubtedly confirmed suspicions in the region that Washington and its European allies were seeking to reimpose a form of imperialism in the Middle East. Saddam Hussein's insistence on the Palestine issue—popular in the Arab world—alarmed Israel and its supporters in the United States. To those supporting Bush's view, acknowledgement of Iraq's prewar grievances against Kuwait was unacceptable "mirror-imaging." To many Americans, to the coalition governments, and to most members of the UN Security Council, only one side was correct.

A series of miscalculations on both sides resulted from the mutual inflexibility. Saddam Hussein apparently calculated that the Arab states would not ask for US intercession, and even if they did, the United States would not in the end go to war; if the Americans were foolish enough to do so, they could not withstand the sacrifices of a long conflict. He seemed to believe that he had the power, through support in the Islamic world, to frustrate American designs by arousing Muslim populations and encouraging terrorism against US and other Western targets.

Warning Saddam

If President Bush had a formula for peace, it lay through impressing on the Iraqi leadership the consequences of a war; he appeared to believe that massive US and international deployments would give credibility to the threat to use force and lead to a decision by Saddam Hussein to withdraw. If Bush's frequent efforts to "get the message" to Saddam Hussein were calculated to intimidate the proud and ruthless Iraqi leader, they clearly failed; Bush seemed not to understand Saddam's determination to challenge the power of the coalition rather than suffer the humiliation of retreat.

A credible threat to use force can be effective in diplomacy, but only if conveyed in a manner that still leaves the other side some way out. American pressures on Iraq did not do this. The letter Bush sent to Saddam, which Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz refused to accept,[3] appeared designed solely to inform the Iraqi president of the dire fate awaiting him if he refused to leave Kuwait. The text of the letter can be understood in diplomatic terms only if the US president anticipated—and, possibly, hoped—that it would not be accepted but that its language would be otherwise useful in demonstrating his "toughness" on the issue. It is doubtful that any government—including that of the United States—would accept a letter as threatening in tone. If one of Saddam's objectives in the crisis was to be respected as the leader of an important nation, the attitude of the US administration served only to deepen his resentment and increase his fear of humiliation. Although it can be persuasively argued that Saddam Hussein, because of his character, deserved no such recognition, the fact remains that the American tactics left little opening for a solution short of war. Doubling US troop strength in November and setting the deadline for withdrawal moved the situation inextricably toward armed conflict.

The divergence in perspectives extended also to the inability of each side to comprehend what was important to the other. Saddam Hussein appeared to find it difficult to understand that the United States would make so major an effort on the basis of principle or to secure oil or would be so strongly opposed to an "Arab solution" to an "Arab problem." In his thinking, an ulterior motive must exist—whether to destroy an Arab state that might threaten Israel or to reimpose Western domination in the region.

The United States, Islam, and the Arabs

Similarly, President Bush and his advisers found it difficult to understand that other Arab states would not be strongly affected by the takeover of one independent state by another. They found it hard to comprehend, also, that Palestinians would not strongly oppose the takeover of a state that had contributed so much financially to the Palestinian cause. They reacted negatively to Arab efforts to mediate and suspected that an "Arab solution" would not only delay forceful action but in the end would also permit Saddam Hussein some gain from his aggression. Americans were also disappointed by the lack of recognition in the Muslim world that forces from the Arab world (the Gulf states, Syria, and Egypt) and from other Muslim countries (Pakistan and Bangladesh) were part of the coalition forces.

US policymakers have always had a problem in acknowledging that close ties with the West can be damaging to the fortunes of Arab politicians and can make their regimes vulnerable to extreme elements. It is unacceptable in Washington to acknowledge that the United States is looked upon in the Middle East and in many other parts of the world as imperialist.

The crisis demonstrated again the serious difficulties in relations between the United States and the nations of Islam and, beyond those nations, the wider Third World. Nations such as India—with a Muslim minority—were uneasy about cooperation with the United States; the Indian government's agreement to permit the refueling of US aircraft en route to the Gulf created a governmental crisis in New Delhi. Even in the third generation after independence, myths and suspicions about Western powers persist.

Other Influences

In any confrontation of this sort, the information each side receives shapes perspectives. Saddam Hussein saw communication—primarily television—as a part of his diplomacy. Through it, he believed he could reach the populations of the coalition partners when their governments were not prepared to listen. With this in mind he broadcast pictures of himself with children of Western hostages, and he permitted the Cable News Network (CNN) correspondent, Peter Arnett, to remain in Baghdad. Through television and radio, also, he sought to appeal to Arabs who appeared more willing to hear his message than did many of their leaders. Possibly by watching the debates in Washington, also broadcast by CNN, Saddam seemed confident that public opinion in the United States would not support a sustained war.

The Iraqi president seemed also convinced that the Arab capacity to carry the war to the West through terrorism and to those Arab states in the coalition through "uprisings of the masses" would be further deterrents to attempts to recapture Kuwait or destroy Iraq. With Saddam's limited experience outside Iraq, he was probably susceptible to sycophants who portrayed the outside world in terms he wanted to believe. The proximity of Yasir Arafat added another element to Saddam's thinking. Whether Arafat took Iraq's side in the conflict because of the PLO leader's sense of the attitudes of his Palestinian followers or whether he truly saw this as an opportunity to recover Palestinian rights is not clear; what is clear is that he maintained pressure on Saddam Hussein to keep the Palestinian issue at the forefront of any discussions of a solution. Arab leaders friendly to Saddam such as Jordan's King Hussein apparently were unable to convince him of the dangers of his policy.

President Bush was undoubtedly also heavily influenced by the views of those he chose to consult. Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who saw Bush only two days after the Iraqi invasion, may have recalled her Falkland experience; she certainly impressed upon him the need for a strong and determined response. The voices of the Saudi, Kuwaiti, and Egyptian leadership were, for him, the definitive views on the circumstances and reactions to policies in the Middle East. The Saudis, who felt seriously threatened by Iraq and willing to reverse their longstanding inhibitions against a foreign military presence on their soil, were probably the principal Arab voice shaping the conception of the issue

by the US president. The Kuwaitis, with their dramatic reiteration of Iraqi atrocities, also had a major impact on the American president's thinking and actions. President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, angered by what he considered Saddam Hussein's betrayal just before the invasion, was another strong voice influencing the president. The danger of reliance on like-minded voices, especially in an area as complex as the Middle East, is that many will tell the Americans what they believe they want to hear. Others will insist that they support US policy but cannot say so publicly; the nuances of differences between official and private expressions in the Middle East do not always get through to the outsider.

Search for International Support

Two quite different and inflexible views of the conflict thus confronted parties seeking to mediate. Whether the two sets of perceptions were genuine or contrived is beside the point. As obstacles to compromise, they were real. The Iraqi foreign minister clearly had little leeway in his discussions with foreign officials. US Secretary of State James A. Baker III seemed equally bound by the firm policy laid down and publicly stated by the president.

Conflict resolution in such cases hinges on whether either side wants a solution or whether steps toward negotiation are seen solely as a means of pursuing basic, uncompromising objectives. In Iraq's case, Saddam Hussein feared for his own future if he appeared weak. In the case of the United States, President Bush was concerned not only with continued support around the world but also with his own domestic political image. He clearly believed that any agreement to negotiate or any widening of the agenda of diplomacy beyond the Kuwait issue would be dangerous internationally and unacceptable politically. Pejorative and personalized rhetoric on both sides further increased the bitterness and lack of trust and inhibited genuine communication.

Strangely, diplomatic relations between Iraq and the United States were not suspended until February 6, 1991—even though the United States withdrew its mission before the war started and reduced the Iraqi staff in Washington. Other conventions of diplomacy were largely ignored or set aside in the Gulf crisis. Unofficial emissaries from the United States and many other countries had little success. Washington did not encourage mediation even by coalition partners such as France and the Soviet Union.

While Washington and Baghdad both sought to gain international support, others attempted to bring the crisis and hostilities to an end. Within days of the start of the military action, Operation Desert Storm, diplomats from Algeria, India, Iran, Pakistan, and the Soviet Union were seeking ways to end the war. Yugoslavia, as chair of the Non-Aligned Nations Movement (NAM), also tried, but the peaceful reversal of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait faced more serious and, in the end, insurmountable obstacles. Diplomacy could not bridge the gap between two very different perceptions of the issue.

President Bush and his coalition partners did not share the outlook of the would-be peacemakers. The US, British, French, and Egyptian leadership steadfastly maintained that the future of the international system, and hope for a new order in the Middle East in particular, depended on punishing this instance of aggression and making it impossible for Saddam Hussein to make war on his neighbors again. Indeed, the more the war was prosecuted and the more bellicose Saddam Hussein's rhetoric became, the more US and allied leaders appeared convinced that the region and the world would be safe only if Iraq complied with all UN resolutions, including those calling for Saddam to be held accountable for committing war crimes. At several points during the period, President Bush also appealed to the people of Iraq to overthrow their president so that they and the region could be restored to peace.[4] At no point did the president appear to signal the least bit of interest in arranging a compromise with or for Saddam Hussein, and he focused all his personal diplomacy on maintaining the international coalition against Iraq.

Saddam Hussein wanted to talk only to those in other countries who were in power; his pride demanded it. Although he met unofficial envoys, his purpose seemed mainly to demonstrate that he was not isolated. Efforts of Arab and Muslim countries were equally ineffective. It was not until late in the prewar stage—in early January—that Arab nations such as Tunisia and Algeria, perhaps realizing that the situation had gone beyond the usual rhetoric, tried unsuccessfully to intervene and mediate.

Forms of international pressure short of military force were tried but abandoned. Saddam Hussein gave up his efforts to hold the citizens of coalition countries as "human shields" to prevent attacks; one can only assume that the benefits to him did not outweigh the negative image conveyed abroad. The economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations were tight but were given little chance to work. Although respected voices in the United States and elsewhere called for reliance on sanctions, the

world will never know whether one of the most complete sets of sanctions against a single country in UN history might not ultimately have forced Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

The Return of Peace as an Option

The use of force and the threat to use force were pushed temporarily off the diplomatic stage in 1989 and 1990. Iraq's invasion brought back into play the intricate relationship between the military and the diplomatic arenas. The creation of the coalition by Secretary Baker illustrated the effective use of diplomacy without force. US diplomacy toward Iraq, however, was based almost exclusively on the threat to use force. When that failed, force remained the only option.

At this writing, many aspects of the diplomacy preceding the UN deadline remain unclear. Did Iraq ultimately intend to follow up its invasion of Kuwait with an attack on Saudi Arabia? Did Saudi Arabia reach the decision to request US help on its own, or was there overwhelming pressure from Washington? What concessions were made by Baker to members of the coalition—especially the Soviets and the Syrians? What led President Bush in October 1990 to conclude that economic sanctions would not work and that a further buildup of military force was necessary? Was the fear of a breakup of the coalition, of unrest during the month of fasting—Ramadan—coming in March, or that a prolonged support for sanctions without results would mean the issue would still be alive for the 1992 elections? Would attention to the voices of caution among Middle East experts have meant a partial victory for Saddam Hussein through negotiation or the prevention of a long-term, indeterminate US involvement in this volatile area? If answers are to be found at all, historians will record them.

Gulf War Peace Plans in Summary

1. Baker-Bessmertnykh plan, January 29, 1991

- Terms: The war could end if Iraq "would make an unequivocal commitment" to leave Kuwait and take "immediate concrete steps" to do so.
- Reaction: The plan was disavowed by the White House spokesperson shortly after it was released by the State Department in a commu-

niqué form. It is now considered to be the essence of the proposal made by President Mikhail Gorbachev in his meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz in Moscow on February 18. (See 5 below.)

2. King Fahd plan, January 30-31, 1991

- Description: Iraq would announce its willingness to leave Kuwait coupled with an immediate cease-fire.
- Reaction: The idea arose in discussions between Fahd and President Hosni Mubarak (on January 30) and was followed by a meeting (on January 31) in Tehran of the diplomats from Algeria, France, Iran, Iraq (represented by the deputy prime minister), and Yemen. The meeting produced no announced results and the plan presumably died.

3. Rafsanjani plan, February 4, 1991

- Description: The Revolutionary Command Council proposed that Iraqi forces would withdraw from Kuwait if the allied forces pulled out of the Gulf region and Israel ended its occupation of the West Bank.
- Reaction: The White House immediately rejected this "offer," reiterating the demands that Iraq comply with all UN resolutions and that Iraqi military withdrawal from Kuwait be "complete and unconditional" and indicated by "concrete actions on the ground" (*Washington Post*, February 16, 1991, p. A-21).

Iraq's UN representative said (February 16) that the proposal did not contain "conditions" but "legitimate issues" to be addressed (*New York Times*, February 17, 1991, p. 20).

Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaly Churkin noted (February 16) that the Iraqi proposal "is linked to many conditions which could render it meaningless" (*New York Times*, February 17, 1991, p. 1).

Saddam Hussein, in a radio address on February 18, rejected all demands that Iraqi forces withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally and declared that "our people and armed forces are determined to continue the struggle."

4. Saddam Hussein plan, February 15, 1991

- Description: an unpublished seven-point plan, including a pledge by Iran to "do everything in its power" to get the US and allied forces

out of the region in return for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and their replacement by "Islamic forces" (*New York Times*, February 10, citing Kuwaiti newspaper, *Sawt al-Kuwait*, p. 19).

- Reaction: The Iraqi deputy prime minister, Saddoun Hammadi, returning to Baghdad after a visit to Tehran on February 9-10, ruled out a withdrawal from Kuwait (as suggested by Iran) and indicated in a two-hour press conference that Iraq was determined to continue to fight. "We have told Iran that what is taking place is unrelated to Kuwait. The question now is American aggression." Hammadi advocated forming an Arab-Muslim united front against the allied coalition and severing diplomatic relations with the United States and other countries supporting the war in the gulf.

Rafsanjani, in a meeting with the visiting foreign minister of Burkina Faso, February 18, said that Iraq had in fact responded "positively" to the proposals and noted "the bright prospect visible with respect to the solution to the problem of the Persian Gulf region" (*New York Times*, February 19, 1990, p. A-6).

5. Gorbachev plan, February 4-23, 1991

- Description: Following a cease-fire, Iraq would "withdraw immediately and unconditionally all its forces from Kuwait" within a twenty-one-day period and under UN supervision. Once this withdrawal was complete, all UN resolutions sanctioning Iraq "will cease to operate." All prisoners of war would be repatriated within three days of the start of the cease-fire.
- Reaction: Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) "instruction" (on February 4) resulted in Gorbachev's appeal (February 9) to Saddam Hussein "to analyze again what is at stake for his country, to display realism which would make it possible to take the path of a reliable and just peaceful settlement." Gorbachev also expressed concern that the pace of war would create a "a threat of going beyond the mandate" of the UN resolutions or widen the war to an Arab-Israeli conflict (*New York Times*, February 10, 1991, p. 19).

In a February 12 meeting in Baghdad between Saddam Hussein and Soviet special envoy Yevgeniy Primakov, Saddam "affirmed . . . [that] Iraq has always called for tackling the situation in the region . . . through dialogue and political and peaceful means." Hussein also indicated that he

would continue to resist US, Zionist, and other aggression (*New York Times*, February 13, 1991, p. A-14).

The Iraqi foreign minister met with the Soviet president on February 18 and carried terms of the proposal back to Baghdad.

In response to Soviet efforts, the White House spokesperson indicated on February 18 that the US position remained unchanged: Iraq must unconditionally withdraw from Kuwait. On February 19, President George Bush issued a statement that the Soviet plan "falls well short of what would be required" for the United States to stop the war and declared "there are no negotiations" (*New York Times*, February 20, 1991, p. A-1).

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, at a February 19 press conference in Bonn, said that Tariq Aziz (who stopped in Tehran en route from Moscow) convinced him that Iraq is "ready to withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally" (*New York Times*, February 20, 1991, p. A-12).

On the evening of February 21, a spokesman for President Gorbachev announced that on the basis of meetings with Tariq Aziz, "the two parties came to the conclusion that it is possible to find a way out of the military conflict" (*New York Times*, February 22, 1991, p. A-6).

White House and other US officials, however, consistently maintained that the proposal imposed conditions that were unacceptable to the United States and the coalition partners and that "no negotiation [was] under way." President Bush personally rejected the Soviet plan as a basis for ending the conflict in a press conference on February 22 and gave Saddam Hussein until noon, February 23 to agree to withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait.

The Iraqi information minister responded to Bush later in the day by calling him "an enemy of God" and then rejecting what was termed "Bush's shameful ultimatum" (CNN Television broadcast, February 23, 1991).

President Gorbachev's special envoy and the foreign minister conducted additional negotiations with Tariq Aziz in Moscow aimed at "adjusting" the Soviet proposal to meet Washington's objections. A Gorbachev spokesperson later indicated in a statement issued late on February 22 that the agreement had been "toughened" and that a reply was not awaited from Baghdad. On February 23, Tariq Aziz issued a statement from Moscow saying that "the Iraqi Government fully endorses this plan and fully supports it." Washington did not support the plan.

The February 23 noon deadline passed without a breakthrough. The White House issued a statement of regret, indicating that "military action

continues on schedule and according to plan." In a radio address Saddam Hussein expressed continued defiance and promised to turn Kuwait into a "crater of death."

6. Other initiatives

- China: The deputy foreign minister was dispatched to the Middle East on February 11. But Chinese diplomats found themselves unable to persuade either Baghdad or Washington to end the war by negotiations. The *New York Times* reported (February 20) that Deng Xiaoping regarded the war as an example of "big hegemonists beating up small hegemonists."
- Non-Aligned Nations Movement: Under Yugoslav chairmanship, NAM delegations approached (week of February 18) Iraq, the United States, and other coalition members to explore settlement possibilities. These efforts produced no results.
- Cuba-Yemen (with the support of India and China) proposed to the UN Security Council on February 14, 1991, a bombing halt coupled with the creation of a commission to investigate ways permanently to end the fighting. A US-UK veto was pledged if a resolution was drafted and put to a vote. No further action was taken.

Notes

1. For a more complete account of the US role in forming the coalition, see Chapter 4, "Coalition Diplomacy," by David Hoffman.

2. On August 3, the foreign ministers of the twenty members of the Arab League met in Cairo; fourteen voted to condemn the invasion. At a summit meeting on August 10, however, the majority condemning the invasion had dropped to twelve, with Algeria and Tunisia abstaining.

3. See letter from President George Bush to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in Appendix A.

4. On February 15, 1991, speaking to the employees at the Raytheon Corporation, President Bush said: "And there's another way for the bloodshed to stop, and that is for the Iraqi military and Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands and force Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside and then comply with the United Nations Resolutions and rejoin the family of peace loving nations" (*New York Times*, February 16, 1991, p. L-5).

2

United Nations Diplomacy in 1990

Brian Urquhart

IN JANUARY 1990 THE SWEEPING movement away from communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union created a buoyant international mood and provided the basis for considerable optimism at the United Nations about both the political and economic future. The end of the Cold War had already allowed for striking improvement in the functioning of the United Nations, especially of the Security Council. In the field, a series of new and successful peacekeeping operations—in Namibia, Iran and Iraq, and Central America—reflected this improvement in the practical resolution of several long-standing conflicts. The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, divided for more than forty years by the Cold War, were taking the lead in trying to find a solution to the tragic plight of Cambodia, one of the most deeply afflicted martyr states of the Cold War.

In this promising international climate there was much talk of a renaissance of the United Nations and of a return to its original objectives as outlined in the UN charter. It seemed possible that the world organization, after the forty-year winter of the Cold War, could begin to play the role that had been written for it in 1945, a role shaped by the bitter lessons of World War II and the events that led up to it, including the failure of the League of Nations.

As the year moved on, this positive and forward-looking mood was tempered by disconcerting new developments. The first of these was the deteriorating situation in the Soviet Union and parts of Eastern Europe and the realization that the transition from communism to free-enterprise democracy was going to be turbulent, long, expensive, and confused. The

second was the instability emerging in many parts of the world in the wake of the Cold War and the daunting magnitude of the socioeconomic problems that would have to be tackled if the future was to be assured. It was becoming very clear that as the relationship between East and West improved, the differences of economic status and interest between North and South would be the dominating factor in much of the future work of the United Nations. Finally, Iraq's overnight annexation of Kuwait on August 2 tested the capacity of the world community to deal with a flagrant act of aggression. Although it has recently become fashionable in some Western circles to speak of a "new world order," the future of the United Nations is, at present, anything but clear.

The Main Tasks

The United Nations faces two main tasks—to combine peacemaking, peacekeeping, and collective action into a reliable international security system, and to deal with the great socioeconomic problems of global interdependence. Both tasks are urgent, and neither can be successfully achieved without the other.

Without a reliable system of international peace and security, it will be impossible to devote the necessary attention, energy, resources, and cooperation to the great global problems of our time. This proposition is already foreshadowed in Article 26 of the UN charter, which, in formulating the task of the Security Council in the regulation of armaments, refers to "the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources." That goal is still remote today.

If the United Nations is to meet this dual challenge, its member governments and Secretariat will have to make a wholehearted effort to overhaul it and bring it up to date. Its course needs to be carefully and authoritatively charted. It needs to be properly staffed, financed, and supported. It must become professionally competitive with the best in government and with the best in the private sector. Above all, its member governments will need to consider the changes in commitment and in basic attitudes and policies that alone will enable the world organization to respond effectively to the challenges it faces and that can be equitably dealt with only by a universal international system.