

Why Did the US Wage War on Iraq in 1991?

Realist vs. Liberalist Perspective

لماذا قامت الولايات المتحدة بشن حرب على العراق عام 1991؟

وجهة نظر واقعية تقابلها وجهة نظر ليبرالية

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Dedication

To Palestine with love

Abstract

There are two major views that explain or try to give an answer to the question ‘why did the US wage war on Iraq in 1991’. Some scholars believe that the US waged its war for

geopolitical reasons that aimed at dominating the Middle East after the US was left alone with the collapse of the USSR. Others believe that in waging this war the US was responding to societal factors. These two views that try to explain the proposed question can be seen to reflect two theories in international relations; realism vs. liberalism.

In the study proposed here, an attempt will be carried out to tackle the question: Why did the US wage war on Iraq in 1991 through presenting a debate between the different authors that represent the two schools of thought, realism and liberalism. More importantly, it will test which of the two theories happens to provide better explanations and predictions in this particular case study. An attempt will also be taken to show the faults (if any) in both theories.

هناك رأيان رئيسان يحاولان إيجاد تفسير أو الإجابة عن السؤال "لماذا شنت الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية الحرب على العراق عام 1991؟" يعتقد بعض العلماء بأن الولايات المتحدة شنت حربها هذه لأسباب جيوسياسية هدفت السيطرة على الشرق الأوسط بعد أن أصبحت الولايات المتحدة القطب الأوحده بعد إنهيار الإتحاد السوفييتي. ويعتقد البعض الأخرين بأن الولايات المتحدة بشنها هذه الحرب كانت تستجيب لضغوطات إجتماعية. هذان الرأيان اللذان حاولا الإجابة عن السؤال المقترح، يمكن أن ينظر إليهما كإعكاس لنظريتين في العلاقات الدولية؛ الواقعية ضد الليبرالية.

هذه الدراسة المقترحة هي عبارة عن محاولة لمعرفة أسباب شن الولايات المتحدة الحرب على العراق عام 1991 وذلك من خلال عرض لمناقشة الموضوع من قبل مؤلفين مختلفين يمثلون المدرستين الفكريتين؛ الواقعية والليبرالية. والأهم من ذلك سوف تختبر هذه الدراسة أياً من النظريتين حدث وأن قدمت تفسيرات وتنبؤات أفضل بالنسبة لدراسة الحال هذه. وكذلك ستجري محاولة لتبيان نقاط الضعف، إن وجدت، في كل من النظريتين.

Table of Contents

Page #

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Chapter One: Theoretical Background	
	II. 1. Realism	6
	II. 2. Liberalism	12
	II. 3. Convergences and Divergences	19
III.	Chapter Two: Short History of the Gulf War	21
IV.	Chapter Three: Presentation of Hypotheses	24
V.	Chapter Four: Realist Reading	
	V. 1. A Realist Reading of the reasons behind a US war on Iraq in 1991	29
	V. 2. General Analysis of the Realist Approach	46
VI.	Chapter Five: Liberalist Reading	
	VI.1. Liberalist Reading of the Reasons behind a US war on Iraq in 1991	53
	VI.2. General Analysis to the Liberal Approach	77
VII.	Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations	80
VIII.	List of References	88

I**Introduction**

In 1990, Saddam started to pose his power in the Gulf. He invaded Kuwait and the US waged its war on Iraq in 1991.

But why did the US respond by waging war instead of adopting a more diplomatic solution? While reviewing some of the literature written on the subject, it was clear that the authors were applying different theories in international relations. The first group of these authors focuses on the changes in the international system and how that affected the decision of the US to go to war. Some believe “that 1989 brought about security conditions different from those of the Cold War and that this had an impact on patterns of conflict and cooperation in the Middle East” (Hansen 1). Thus, “In the case of Operation Desert Storm, the new alignment patterns had distinctly unipolar characteristics as well: the parties flocked around the US, and they carried out the US-defined objectives in a US-led coalition even when it came to war” (Hansen 160).

The second group of authors focuses on the US domestic societal structure and internal problems as part of a transnational societal context as the driving force in the US decision to go to war. For example, some believe that the US economy of “A huge budget deficit, a high trade deficit, a relatively weak dollar, a fairly high unemployment rate, an increasing number of institutions and corporations forced into bankruptcy, and a stagnant productivity and investment...” (Rabie 65) is the underlying motivator for the US to go

into war outside. This view is also shared by others such as Alan Freeman who also believes that the war was fought against an “economic background” (Freeman 158). Others believe in the role played by certain lobby groups towards this end. Whereas, a third liberalist argument which was presented by some authors indicate that this war was a war done by George Bush in an attempt to increase the polls in his reelection campaign.

The first group represents the realist school of thought. Realism focuses on the world system that is “formed and maintained on a principle of self-help that applies to the units” (Waltz 91). First, realism perceives states as being major actors. States are assumed to be both unitary and rational. States are unitary in the sense that despite the fact that states are composed of different institutions still the state speaks in one voice. Furthermore, states are rational in the sense that whatever decisions or actions they take; these actions are based on a deep consideration of all the available alternatives in order to arrive at a certain goal. Second, the state’s primary goal is to achieve national security. In order to achieve that goal or to arrive at any other goal, states work towards increasing their power capabilities whether military or economic (Viotti and Kauppi 35-37). “Power is estimated by comparing the capabilities of a number of units” (Waltz 98). Third, states try to enhance and maximize their capabilities as they function in a world system that is “decentralized and anarchic” (Waltz 88). Fourth, “the structure of a system changes in the distribution of capabilities across the system’s units” (Waltz 97). Finally, realists assume that “Among states, the state of nature is a state of war” (Waltz 102).

On the other hand, the second group represents the liberalist school of thought in international relations. Liberalist focus on individual actors rather than on the international system in trying to explain a certain act. “Liberal IR theory elaborates the insight that state-society relations- the relationship of states to the domestic and transnational social context in which they are embedded- have a fundamental impact on state behavior in world politics”(Moravcsik 513). For Liberalists “state preferences, that is, the fundamental social purposes underlying the strategic calculations of governments...matters most in world politics” (Moravcsik 513).

In this study, an attempt will be carried out to tackle the question: Why did the US wage war on Iraq in 1991 through relying on two famous theories of international relations; Realism and Liberalism and try to see how these theories can be translated into practice basically through applying them to the case study of the US war in Iraq (1991). Furthermore, I want to test how each theory explains the research question proposed here in order to reach at an answer to the research question. More importantly, I would test which of the theories happen to provide us with better explanations and predictions in this particular case study. An attempt will also be taken to show the faults (if any) in both theories.

Research Methodology and General Structure:

This study will adopt the theory based approach. It will mainly rely on two theoreticians; Waltz and Moravcsik that speak out for two major theories of international relations;

Realism and Liberalism respectively. It will show how these theories were applied by different scholars in explaining the present case study. This approach is used in order to answer the research question of why the US waged war on Iraq in 1991.

The First Chapter will present both theories through relying on the protagonist of each, Waltz vs. Moravcsik. This chapter will present the main assumptions of each theory. It will also take a step further and present a comparison between the two theories in order to reach at a better understanding of each.

The Second Chapter will present a general brief history of the Gulf War.

The Third Chapter will make use of the main assumptions of the two theories (in chapter I) to arrive at the main hypotheses to be tested. It will also show what these assumptions expect from the case study. The theory based hypotheses arrived at, in this case, are realist vs. liberalist hypotheses.

The Fourth Chapter will test the realist hypotheses through reading different scholars that adopted the realist theory in explaining the case study.

The Fifth Chapter will test the liberalist hypotheses through reading different scholars that adopted the liberalist theory in explaining the case study.

A conclusion is expected to be reached at based on the outlined five chapters and the results of testing the different hypotheses. This paper should be able to reach at an answer to the research question.

Chapter One

II. Theoretical Background

II.1. Realism

Realism is “a theory of international politics” (Morgenthau 3). It believes that the world is an “imperfect” place and draws this back to the “forces inherent in human nature” (Morgenthau 3). Realism is said to be pessimistic in the sense that it views the human nature in a pessimistic way. “The root of all evil is man”. (Waltz 3)

Realism as a theory is based on assumptions. According to Keohane, political realism is based on three main assumptions “(1) states (or city-states) are the key units of action; (2) they seek power, either as an end in itself or as a means to other ends; and (3) they behave in ways that are, by and large, rational, and therefore comprehensible to outsiders in rational terms” (7). According to Gilpin, these assumptions are ordered in a different way. The first assumes that the nature of international affairs is conflictual. Anarchy is the prevailing state. The second assumes that the essence of social reality is the group that are named “nation-states” and that are always in conflict over the distribution of resources. The third assumes that in political life, power and security are the most important things (Gilpin 304-305).

One of the most important pillars of realism is Waltz *Theory of International Politics* (1979). In this work “Waltz starts with the international system and its structural features in order to explain certain aspects of the behavior of individual states” (Gilpin 302).

Realism focuses on the system. In this case, international politics is always a result of factors in the international system. To Waltz “A system is composed of a structure of interacting units” (Waltz 79). Waltz leaves aside the social and economic forces operating in the state as well as its form of government or who is its leader. In defining the structure, Waltz does not concentrate on “how units relate with one another (how they interact) and concentrates...on how they stand in relation to one another (how they are arranged or positioned)” (80). Reaching at a simple definition of what the realist theory should focus on in its study and interpretation of international relations, Waltz defines the structure “by the arrangement of its parts” (80).

Starting by describing the domestic structure, he then moves to draw his theory on international relations. The Domestic structure is defined “first, according to the principle by which it is ordered; second, by specification of the functions of formally differentiated units; and third, by the distribution of capabilities across those units” (82).

Taking the first definition of the domestic structure, Waltz sees the order in which the parts at the domestic level are ordered to be hierarchal and centralized; some units command while others obey. In contrast, the international system is seen to be “decentralized and anarchic” (88). All units are said to be equal in the absence of a government. “International political systems,..., are formed by the coaction of self regarding units” (91). These units “are defined in terms of the primary political units of an era, be they city states, empires, or nations” (91). The international system is “formed

and maintained on a principle of self-help that applies to the units,” (91). Realists assume that states seek survival in a system where their security is not guaranteed (92). Units interact together and “Out of the interactions...they develop structures that reward or punish behavior that conforms more or less nearly to what is required of one who wishes to succeed in the system” (92). Waltz proceeds to say that “States are the units whose interactions form the structure of international political systems” (95). States decide on ways and strategies to deal with their external and internal problems they sometimes ask for help from other states and in turn indulge themselves in external commitments that limit their freedom and constrain them.

Taking the second definition Waltz sees the domestic system to be composed of units that differ in their function. In contrast in the international system states are said to be alike “in the tasks that they face, though not in their abilities to perform them. The differences are of capability, not of function” (96). All states are involved in economic regulations, health, education ect. but some states are more powerful than others.

In studying the third definition, units in the domestic system differ in their function as well as capabilities. In the international system realists focus on the distribution of capabilities among states. The form of state whether democratic, authoritarian, revolutionary, or what so ever is not of importance to realists what matters is the state’s power. A state’s power is measured by its capabilities and power in this sense is relative between states. The distribution of power or capabilities among the states can alter the structure of the system. A system is said to be bipolar if two states happen to possess the

greatest capabilities. Relationships among states such as alliances do not define the structure of the international system but capabilities do (97-99).

Realists assume that among states, the state of nature is that of war. And in order for a state to survive this system it should work towards enhancing its military capabilities (102). Force prevails in an anarchic international system. In order to discuss the anarchic international system Waltz contradicts it with the 'hierarchic' system that prevails at the unit level. Realists differentiate between anarchy and hierarchy as two terms that show the organization of a system. In an anarchic world system states are alike functionally but differ in their capabilities. They tend to 'coact' rather than cooperate in this system that is characterized to be a 'self help system'. In this 'self help system', "A state worries about a division of possible gains that may favor others more than itself" (106). This system limits cooperation between states as each state continues to fear the other states and continues to care for its survival. Instead, states would rather "seek to control what they depend on or to lessen the extent of their dependency" (106). On the other hand, in a hierarchic system units are different and they tend to 'interact' rather than 'coact' (104-106).

Realists believe in structures; "Structures cause actions to have consequences they were not intended to have" (107). Structures can only be changed through changes in the distribution of capabilities (108). Within this structure states are constrained to take care of themselves in a rational way (109). Nonetheless, rational thinking that is limited to state interests does not always produce a wanted result. When each state cares for its own

being neither thinks for the well being of the system in the absence of a world government (109).

The state's primary goal is to achieve national security. States seek to balance the power of other states in order to survive the self-help system. "The historically most important manifestation of the balance of power, however, is to be found not in the equilibrium of two isolated nations but in the relations between one nation or alliance of nations and another alliance" (Morgenthau 181). States enter into alliances in what Waltz refers to as "Balance-of-power politics". According to Waltz "Balance-of-power politics prevail wherever two, and only two, requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive" (121). While first portraying the international system as an 'anarchic' system that is "horizontal, decentralized, homogeneous, undirected, and mutually adaptive" (113) as opposed to the national system that is "hierarchical, vertical, centralized, heterogeneous, directed, and contrived" (113) and that its states are seeking survival in a self-help system, he sets the concept of 'balance of power' as a theory of international relations (117).

So for realists, the main actors are states that seek to preserve their security in a self-help system characterized by anarchy. States live in a state of war each trying to enhance its power where power refers to the capabilities a state possesses in contrast to other states or as Morgenthau had put it "When we speak of power, we mean man's control over the minds and actions of other men. By political power we refer to the mutual relations of control among the holders of public authority and between the latter and the people at

large” (Morgenthau 28). States wish to limit the capabilities of others in a zero-sum game in order to preserve their survival and security. States also tend to flock together in the form of alliances so as to balance a state or other powerful states. The structure of the international system is what counts according to realists cause it constrains and limits the actions of states. States have no choice but to care for their own existence and interests. So mainly, international politics is the result of factors in the international system basically the distribution of power capabilities among the main units in the international system which are the states.

II. 2. Liberalism

According to Doyle, liberal tradition goes back to Schumpeter's liberal pacifism, Machiavelli's liberal imperialism, and Kant's liberal internationalism (1151). The term liberal "resembles a family portrait of principles and institutions, recognizable by certain characteristics- for example, individual freedom, political participation, private property, and equality of opportunity" (Doyle 1152). Schumpeter's liberal pacifism assumes that with the development of capitalism and democracy peace will prevail and imperialism would disappear. He states that capitalist democracy stands "against the use of military force and for peaceful arrangements, even when the balance of pecuniary advantages is clearly on the side of war which, under modern circumstances, is not in general very likely" (Schumpeter 128). Machiavelli gives the opposite view of Schumpeter. He argues that republics are not pacifistic; they constitute the best form of imperial expansion (Doyle 1154). Kant's contribution to liberalism lies in his book *Perpetual Peace* written in 1795. In this work, Kant assumes that peace will be attained once nations accept the three 'Definitive Articles'. The first article states that "The civil constitution of each state shall be republican" (Kant 120). The second states that "The law of nations shall be founded on a federation of free states" (Kant 128). And the third, which introduces the concept of cosmopolitan right, states that "The rights of men, as citizens of the world, shall be limited to the conditions of universal hospitality" (Kant 137). Kant's main prediction is that humans are free and rational in making their choices and that out of fear, force, and advantages we as humans opt for actions that lead to perpetual peace (Doyle 1159).

Based on this tradition of liberal theory, Andrew Moravcsik claims that he “reformulates liberal international relations (IR) theory in a nonideological and nonutopian form appropriate to empirical social science” (Moravcsik 513). He does this in response to criticism posed by different scholars including Robert Koehane’s statement that “in contrast to Marxism and Realism, Liberalism is not committed to ambitious and parsimonious structural theory” (qtd. In Moravcsik 515). Moravcsik attempt is to rise up with liberalism to the level of Waltz realism and of Koehane’s Neo-Liberal institutionalism. He even goes beyond that and states that “Liberal theory is analytically prior to both realism and institutionalism because it defines the conditions under which their assumptions hold” (516).

The following section will present the basic assumptions of the liberalist theory as presented by Moravcsik.

Liberalists focus on the societal structure not only on the domestic level but also on a transnational level and studies how these factors contribute to shaping politics. “Liberal IR theory elaborates the insight that state-society relations- the relationship of states to the domestic and transnational social context in which they are embedded- have a fundamental impact on state behavior in world politics” (Moravcsik 513). Liberalists focus on “Societal ideas, interests, and institutions ... (as) shaping state preferences, that is, the fundamental social purposes underlying the strategic calculations of government” ... “For liberals, the configuration of state preferences, matters most in world politics- not, ..., the configuration of capabilities...”(513)

There are three assumptions in the liberal theory. The first stresses “The Primacy of Societal Actors” as it considers “The fundamental actors in international politics are individuals and private groups, who are on the average rational and risk-averse and who organize exchange and collective action to promote differentiated interests under constraints imposed by material scarcity, conflicting values, and variations in societal influence” (516).

This assumption indicates that liberalism perceives politics in a “bottom-up” (517) view. Interests of the people and the interest groups at the domestic level reflect itself in the formulation of foreign policy of a state. Yet these actors or interest groups do not live in harmony but are rather competing with each other due to the ‘material scarcity’, their ‘conflicting values’, and the ‘inequalities of political power’ distribution (517).

The second assumption deals with “Representation and State Preferences” and states that “States (or other political institutions) represent some subset of domestic society, on the basis of whose interests state officials define state preferences and act purposively in world politics” (518).

This assumption shows that states are not actors but rather representatives of the social actors. The state is the body that transmits the people’s preferences into policy yet not all groups have the same weight of representation. Societal pressure can change a state preference. State preferences are different from strategies. State preferences determine

the choice of policy or strategy the state adopts. “States do not automatically maximize fixed, homogeneous conceptions of security, sovereignty, or wealth per se...they pursue particular interpretations and combinations of security, welfare, sovereignty preferred by powerful domestic groups enfranchised by representative institutions and practices” (519-20).

The third assumption deals with “Interdependence and the International System” and states that “The configuration of state preferences determines state behavior” (520). In simple language, what a state wants determines what it does. “...each state seeks to realize its distinctive preferences under varying constraints imposed by the preferences of other states” (520). Liberalists stress variations in the configuration of state preferences while treating the configurations of state capabilities as fixed constraints. The link between the state preferences and the action of one state or more is referred to by policy interdependence. “Policy interdependence is defined here as the set of costs and benefits created for foreign societies when dominant social groups in a society seek to realize their preferences, that is, the pattern of transnational externalities resulting from attempts to pursue national distinctive purposes” (520). This pattern of independent state preference constrains state behavior. These patterns are divided into three groups each resulting in a different behavior. First, if the preferences of a dominant social group in a state do not conflict with other state’s preferences or even do not matter to other states, then the resulting nature is that of coexistence. Second, if the preferences of a dominating social group in one state are conflictual with those in other states and over and above endanger the preferences of other states then this results in a ‘zero-sum’ situation which results in

disputes. Third, if a collective problem exists then states discuss policy cooperation. Liberals in such case focus also on the social preferences and on domestic and transnational conflicts.

Liberal theory is perceived by Moravcsik to be a systematic theory. In order to prove his point, Moravcsik speaks first of 'transnational societal interaction' that is the responsiveness of state preferences to transnational societal context for example the responsiveness of social demands to changes in the global market which makes this theory relevant to changes in the international scene. Second, he claims that by focusing on domestic theories of preferences, liberalism is able of explaining the systematic outcomes of interstate interactions in other words it works at "linking social purpose to the symmetry and relative intensity of state preferences" (523). The state preferences are capable not only of determining its foreign policy but also the systematic outcomes as 'the *willingness* of governments to mobilize and expend social resources for foreign policy purposes' is what matters most and not its power capabilities. Liberals define power in terms of "the willingness of states to expend resources or make concessions...a function of preferences, not capabilities" (523). This is mainly what determines outcomes.

There are three variants of liberal theory; ideational, commercial, and republican. Ideational liberalism perceives social identities and values as the determinants of preferences and in the long run of interstate conflicts or cooperation. Social identity refers to a set of preferences shared by individuals specifying the right scope and nature of the

provision of public goods, which specifies the legitimate domestic structure. Public goods refer to geographical borders, political decision making processes, and socioeconomic regulations. These are not ends but means that are used to reach a desired preference. In this sense, foreign policy seeks to realize social views concerning legal borders, political institutions, and socioeconomic regulations. Legal borders are set by preferences on the 'scope of the 'nation''. Borders are said to coincide with the national identities of the most powerful social group. Political institutions are perceived differently by different groups. The way they are perceived identifies patterns of preferences and thus affects international conflicts and cooperation. For example many wars were fought for autocracy others are seen to be fought for democracy and so on. Socioeconomic preferences also shape the interstate behavior. For example, convergence of values among the different social groups can lead to cooperation on various issues for example the EC (524-528).

Commercial liberalism "explains the individual and collective behavior of states based on the patterns of market incentives facing domestic and transnational economic actors...the commercial liberal argument is broadly functionalist: Changes in the structure of the domestic and global economy alter the costs and benefits of transnational economic exchange, creating pressures on domestic governments to facilitate or block such exchanges through appropriate foreign economic and security policies" (528). For example governments may sometimes use warfare means to control international markets and monopolize resources. In short, commercial liberalism stress on the economic preferences of powerful groups in a society.

Republican liberalism focuses on the means by which domestic institutions combine the societal identities and economic interests of social groups and transforms them into what is known to be the state policy. The most powerful group is said to dominate policy formation.

Liberalism “explains policy as a function of the societal context, and focuses on how domestic conflict, not international anarchy, imposes suboptimal outcomes” (537).

II. 3. Convergences and Divergence

Realism and Liberalism

Though Realism and Liberalism assume their actors are rational actors still they are seen as opposing theories as they look at the same factors but from different perspectives. The basic unit of study for realists is the international system, whereas the basic unit for liberalists is the individual. Thus, realists focus on the macro level while liberalists concentrate more on the micro level. The logic driving actors differs between the two as realists believe that states seek survival whereas liberalists units seek maximizing their individual preferences. The main issues in studying politics for realists are the configuration of power capabilities whereas liberalists the configuration of preferences whether economic, social, or what so ever matter most. In studying the changes in any status quo, realists focus on state strategies that aim at preserving the national security, whereas, liberalists focus on preferences of dominant elite groups within a society as a changing mechanism i.e. realists believe that structures can only be changed through changes in the distribution of capabilities, whereas liberalist believe, that these changes could only occur through changes in the intentions and the actions of particular actors. In predicting the actions of units, realists study the variations in means (strategies and capabilities) while liberalists focus on the variations in ends (preferences) of certain groups or individuals. Motives and ideological nature of certain regimes are also looked at differently by each. Realists believe that these do not matter instead states' strategic considerations and their power capabilities matter; on the other hand, liberalists believe that the ideological nature of a certain regime and its motives set a state's preferences that are then reflected in the state's actions. Cooperation between states is also explained

differently by each. Realists focus on uncertainty and configuration of state powers as each state tries to enhance its power through allying with other states so they do not believe in cooperation as such but in the state's urge to ally with other states as a necessity for surviving the anarchic system. Liberalists instead focus on social preferences and unresolved domestic and transnational distributional conflicts as the basic factors in determining state cooperation for example if two dominant groups in two countries happen to share the same preference then the chances for cooperation between these two states are high. In defining power each defines it from a different angle. Realists define power in terms of distribution of capabilities while liberalists define it as the state's willingness to use resources according to preference.

Chapter two

III. Short History of the Gulf War

Iraq assumed Kuwait to be part of the previous Ottoman province of Basra. However, the actual causes of the Iraqi invasion were seen to be linked with the eight-year war with Iran than with this historical claim. The war with Iran did not only cause a massive number of human casualties, but it also damaged the Iraqi economy and left Iraq with an external debt of about 70 to 80 billion dollars (Gazit 8). On the other hand, Iraq was furious with both Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for exceeding their quotas in producing oil thus causing a fall in the oil prices that definitely did not play to benefit Iraq in trying to recover from a war that it claimed it had fought for the sake of all the Arab nations. Over and above, Iraq also protested Kuwait's 'stealing' of oil in Kuwait's northern border (Ghabra 286). On February 1990, and in the meeting of the Arab Cooperation Council, Saddam told the Jordanian King and the Egyptian President to ask the Gulf States to forgive him his loans and threatened by saying "Let the Gulf Regimes know that if they do not give this money to me, I will know how to get it," (qtd. In Claes 107). On July 16, Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz presented a memorandum to the Secretary General of the Arab League, in which Iraq again accused Kuwait of stealing Iraqi oil by setting up oil installations in the Rumaila oil field. Iraq also accused the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait of exceeding their oil quota at OPEC. A day later, Saddam and in a speech to the nation accused the Gulf States of conspiring with the West and threatened to use force to "ensure the restitution of our rights" (qtd. In Claes 108). On July 25, 1990, the US Ambassador April Glaspie had met Saddam Hussein. In this particular meeting, Glaspie had told Saddam that the US has "no opinion on the Arab-

Arab conflicts, like your Arab disagreement with Kuwait” (qtd. In Yousif 62). Later, after six days, Assistant Secretary of State in his speech to Congress said that “The US historically takes no position on the border disputes in the area, nor on matters pertaining to internal OPEC deliberations.” (qtd. In Gazit 19). On July 31, Jeddah talks failed between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti representatives (Claes 108). Having failed to convince the Gulf States to forgive him his debt and to stick to their OPEC quota and in view of the mixed signals that the US gave to Saddam, Saddam ordered his forces into Kuwait on August 1990. Within twenty four hours Kuwait was completely occupied. The Kuwaiti ruler, Sheikh Jaber al-Sabah and the ruling family and about 300,000 Kuwaitis fled to Saudi Arabia (Tripp 253). On August 8, Kuwait was formally annexed to Iraq and became the nineteenth province of Iraq (Mueller 15).

Iraq’s occupation of Kuwait came after the end of the Cold War and after the US had arrived as the only superpower. Moreover, the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990 marked the first challenge to the US new world position. This action had set a US principle for the new era simply that was “Don’t bully your neighbor” as was said by Bush after Iraq invaded Kuwait (Hansen 82).

The US now awakened by this move, worked towards forming an international coalition. Nonetheless, the US relied heavily on the Saudi approval in order to be able to deploy and fight from the Saudi land. In order to accomplish this, US Defense Secretary, Richard Cheney was sent to Riyadh. By that time, Turkey as well as Syria had had their strong stand against Iraq. Moscow had also sided with the US and condemned the Iraqi invasion.

The European community had also condemned the invasion and sided with the coalition. Even France ended up siding with the US. Over and above, the UN had issued its resolutions against Iraq with a big majority and an absence of a single veto. On August 2, Resolution 660 was passed condemning Iraq and demanding its immediate withdrawal. Then, after four days, Resolution 661 imposed an embargo on Iraq (Claes 109). On August 25, Resolution 665 was issued and imposed a naval blockade on Iraq. Resolution 662 of August 9 had declared the annexation of Kuwait void. On November 29, Resolution 679 reiterated all the previous resolutions and permitted the use of force in case Iraq doesn't comply and withdraw out of Kuwait (Gazit 23). A meeting between the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Tariq Aziz and US Secretary of State, James Baker was held yet to no avail. This meeting was initiated by the US president in a way to gather more support and to prove to all those that opposed him in the Congress that diplomacy up to its last minute failed. Twenty-nine countries joined the coalition (Gazit 29). War started on January 17, 1991. 270,000 person and 1500 tanks went into War that lasted six weeks and ended in the death of 100,000 Iraqi soldiers and thousands of Iraqi civilians (Loch 121-123).

Chapter three

IV. Presentation of Hypotheses

After presenting both theories, let us now move to see how these theories can apply to the case study presented here. The purpose of this paper is to reach a conclusion about which of the above mentioned theories can best explain why the US waged war on Iraq in 1991?

If we look at Realism, as it is described above, we can derive certain assumptions out of this theory. First, Realism assumes that there is an international system that is characterized by anarchy. Second, it assumes that the basic units in this system are states and that states are said to be equal in the tasks that they perform and rational in that they try to adopt the best strategy that would enhance their capabilities and preserve their national interests. Third, the state of nature among these units is the state of war. Fourth, these units differ in their power capabilities whether military or economic. Fifth, the distribution of these capabilities among the units defines the structure of the system and a change in the distribution of these capabilities alters the structure of the system. Sixth, states tend to flock together in the form of alliances so as to balance a state or other powerful states as each unit seeks its survival in a system where its security and national interests are seen to be threatened by the other actors in a self-help system. Seventh, the structure of the international system is seen to constrain and limit the action of states.

To study our case study here in terms of these assumptions, the argument becomes that the international system in 1989 had faced an alteration in the distribution of capabilities

and thus a change in the structure of the international system. In more empirical terms, the collapse of the Soviet Union had terminated the bipolar structure that dominated the international system during the Cold War. The US had arrived as the only super power and thus the new structure of the system is said to be unipolar.

Within this international system, Iraq had invaded Kuwait and tried to prove itself as a regional power. Iraq's occupation of Kuwait threatened one of the most vital interests of the US and that is oil. Moreover, Iraq threatened to become a regional power challenging the regional power of Israel. "Iraq had received substantial amounts of financial aid from Gulf States, and sophisticated military technology and equipment from the Soviet Union and the Western World. Its military supremacy in the Gulf was overwhelming" (Stein 67). The Iraqi action also threatened stability in the region which was a long desired objective that the US always wanted in order to ensure secure access to oil.

So, according to realists, in order to answer the research question, our focus should be on the international structure that prevailed at the time the US decided to go to war. And relying on a realist approach, we can predict that the US decision to go to war was a function of the international world system that prevailed during that period. In other words, two hypotheses may be derived here. First, if the realist approach is right, then the US waged this war on Iraq because Iraq had challenged the regional power system by occupying Kuwait at the time the US wanted to maintain its privileged position as the only superpower that is allowed to make basic decisions that would alter the regional system. Second and also based on the realist assumptions, the US waged this war to

protect stability in the Gulf region and consequently the supply of oil as a vital commodity needed for the survival of the capitalist and industrial system of the US and the maintenance of its superior position.

As for Liberalism, and as described above, the theory consists of three main assumptions. First, the basic actors in international politics are groups and individuals that are said to be rational and expressive of certain interests that are constrained by differences in the level of social influence these groups possess, conflicting ideas or values of these groups, and material scarcity. Second, states in defining their preferences act as representatives of these groups or individuals. Third, the configuration of state preferences determines its actions.

To try and apply Liberalism to our case study here, the main arguments become that the US arrived as an economically weakened nation after the end of the Cold War (Rabie 65). It invested too much of its savings on the development of Japan and West Germany. It also spent too much on its military the fact that weakened its economic ability. Economic problems were not the only problems the US faced but also social problems appeared.

These weakening domestic conditions could not absorb another problem especially a problem relating to oil. American oil companies can not permit Iraq to take the Kuwaiti share of oil and thus decide on the oil price inside the OPEC. Neither, can the US economy take the blow that might result of OPEC changing its pricing currency from the US dollar to any other currency. These risks are far too dangerous for the US economy to

take. On the other hand, other groups such as the Jewish Lobby who always supported the safe existence of Israel cannot allow through their connections for a state like Iraq to threaten to strike Israel in its heartland.

So, according to liberalism, in order to answer the research question, our focus should be on domestic and transnational societal conditions that existed within the US and forced it to go to war as well as on social actors. By relying on a liberal analysis, we can predict that the US decision to go to war was a function of the US domestic conditions and the role played by certain pressure groups towards that end. In other words, our hypothesis here becomes that if liberalist approach is right, then the US had waged war on Iraq in order to overcome the internal economic crisis. A second hypothesis is that the US waged this war as a result of pressure from social groups. And a third hypothesis would be that Bush waged this war in order to increase the possibility of his reelection in the coming election round.

Yet, our main question remains which of these two theories can best explain the research question presented here. In order to arrive at an answer, let us test the above-mentioned hypotheses. In order to test these hypotheses, we must test the variables that these hypotheses are composed of. In case of the realist hypotheses, we should focus on the characteristics of the international system and how that factor was the determining factor for the US to go to war. We should also study the relevance of the oil factor and how much of the US international policy was determined by its dependency on oil. For example we could focus on the US policy towards Saudi Arabia and Kuwait as two Gulf

States that exported oil. In the case of the liberal hypotheses derived from the liberal theory we should study the US domestic conditions at the time of the war and see how these conditions stimulated the US to wage this war. We should also focus on the role played by certain pressure groups towards that end. Is there clear evidence that certain groups had their hand in the US decision to go to war or is there not? Was that decision to go to war a result of a leadership crisis? Let us now try to answer these questions through relying on two major groups of authors, each applying one of the two approaches in analyzing the present case study.

Chapter Four

V. A Realist Reading

V.1. A Realist Reading of the reasons behind a US war on Iraq in 1991

Realists believe that the “rational core of national interest” (qtd. In Michael Smith 217) as E.H. Carr puts it remains at the bottom of any US action. As “For all the talk of a new era of international relations following the Cold War, realpolitik continued to be the name of the game in the Middle East...those that defied the United States were to be locked in a zero-sum struggle with an implacably belligerent foe” (Murden 44). Realists particularly perceive this war as a war that the US had to wage in order to preserve its interests in the Middle East. To the realists, the US can not allow for Iraq to challenge the regional balance of power system and thus affect the stability in the region. The US was no longer constrained with the cold war and the cold war politics. It arrived as a superpower in a new world order. So by trying to analyze the reasons behind the US waged war on Iraq, the focus will be, first, on the new world order and how that world system of unipolarity shaped US actions in response to regional challenges, second, on the relationship between the US and its friendly regimes in the Gulf as a facilitator for the US ‘job’ and to this matter the importance of the Gulf states to the US, and third, on the importance of oil as a driving factor in this world and how much oil is considered to be vital to the survival of the US capitalist system and thus to the US survival and security.

- **New World Order and Regional Equilibrium:**

To tackle the first point, I will first rely on presenting Birth Hansen's view on how the new world system developed and how did it affect the US decision to wage this war. Hansen presents certain variants of the realist approach in studying our present case study. He outlines a model that focuses on the changes in the international structure and how these changes affected the behavior of states.

Hansen is said to have adopted the realist approach in the sense that he interprets the Iraqi issue in terms of the international system that prevailed at that time. He believed that the new international structure had its affect on different regions in the world and particularly in the Middle East. Hansen based his argument on this variant of Kenneth Waltz: Theory of International Politics. According to Hansen's interpretation the

Neorealist theory provides a structural approach to analyze international systems...The theory points to similarities as well as variations of international politics, connecting them to the different numbers of great powers in existence. Analytically, the prevailing number of great powers corresponds to a specific structure, which induces specific dynamics, and patterns of alignment. When one structure is replaced by another, a systematic change takes place and as a result a series of outcomes comprising patterns of conflict and cooperation are to be expected. (Hansen 2)

Thus, the new world order that existed following the Cold War with a change in the number of great powers had its affect on patterns of conflict as well as cooperation in the world. Though these changes appeared still Hansen assumes that following the Cold War, the two assumptions of neorealism basically anarchy and self help still existed to which assumptions he based his argument.

Hansen perceives that the new world structure is unipolar and that "...unipolarity provides only one option, no dominant great power balancing, or no great power alliances as in the case of multipolarity, and the unipole is in a comparatively privileged position to pursue its interests and set the agenda" (Hansen 15).

Hansen studies the new changes in the world structure and comes up with a model for studying international relations after the Cold War; this model is what he calls the Model for Unipolarity. New characteristics and terminology were applied by Hansen such as flocking, single option, hard work, and the unipole's agenda. By flocking the author indicated that all states would flock around the unipole. Although all states would fear domination and conflict of interest with the unipole, they tend to flock around the unipole and to address its agenda as they seem not to have any other choice. Furthermore, in the absence of any other great power, these states have only one option of alignment and that is an alignment with the unipole or the single remaining great power. The great power on the other hand would not fear the competition of another great power and thus it would be in a more powerful position. The other states have to work hard as the unipole is not in a position of relying on smaller power allies with the vanishing of the zero-sum game and

thus these other states should rely on their own capabilities and work hard to protect their own interests. Finally, the unipole's agenda would affect and dominate the international agenda in the absence of any other power (Hansen 18-21). As for the other states, he says that these states "may take high risks out of fear or because they perceive a window of opportunity to obtain long wished for gains while everything is in a mess or because they want to prevent others from doing the same" (Hansen 14).

In summary, the relationship between the unipole and the other states can be characterized as other states' flocking (unipolarization) as well as attempts to avoid dominance and entrapment, the single option, the incentives to hard work (towards cooperation as well as conflict), high regional activity, decentralization, and the unipole's quest for facilitating management. The other states will balance each other in the light of these dynamics. Adaptation will prevail because of functional similarity. (Hansen 68)

As for our case study here, let us now move and try to see how Hansen's model applies to it. First, let's focus on how Iraq's occupation to Kuwait was within this new world context and how its action caused an alteration in the regional balance of power system. Second, how the US reaction to this regional challenge, first by forming the coalition and then by waging war was emanating from its assumed role as a world super power.

Iraq's occupation of Kuwait was seen to be within the context of the new world structure. Iraq lost the backing and the support of the USSR with the latter's collapse. "Iraq's

relations to the Soviet Union had loosened, the Soviet Union's status as a guarantor ceased to exist, and its support to Iraq was reduced (bringing about de-alignment); this represented a break with bipolar patterns. As a result, Iraq's position in the subsystem was weakened, and a power vacuum appeared as the Soviet Union retreated" (Hansen 121).

Iraq was left alone to protect its own interests;

...the single option indeed framed the Iraqi moves in the absence of Iraq's loss of its former asymmetrical alignment and the rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union. The invasion also pointed to the presence of the hard work condition. Iraq acted in accordance with the expected need of states to care for their international position, i.e. security, regionally and at a ground of increased regional activity. (Hansen 123)

However, Iraq's occupation of Kuwait also altered the regional balance of power order. By controlling Kuwait, Iraq had expanded its base of oil reserves and had come in border with Saudi Arabia. Plus, Iraq's proved intention of expanding Iraq was perceived as a threat to its neighbors that Iraq was blaming for its economic recession. "More than anything else, considerations of national self-interest and security as interpreted by each player – from Turkey to Iran to the US and the USSR, and from Japan to Egypt, Syria and Israel – helped explain each series of crisis moves" (Klieman 55).

As for the US, it played a leadership role and started to organize the International Coalition and the Operation Desert Shield. The declared objective of the US response “was to deter and prevent Iraq from further aggression in the area, against Saudi Arabia; and to put strong pressure on Iraq to make it withdraw from Kuwait.” (Hansen 124).

The Coalition was formed of former USSR allies and other US allies, some countries were democracies others were dictatorships. According to Hansen “This broad gathering represented a break with the bipolar patterns, symmetrical as well as asymmetrical, not least as far as the Middle East subsystem was concerned” (Hansen 125). The participation of the Arab states in the Coalition is explained as an act of ‘flocking’ around the ‘single option’ that was left after the USSR had left a power vacuum in the Middle East and the Arab states could no longer depend on that falling power (Hansen 125). By doing so, the small states seek protection from the unipole and looked for being rewarded by the superpower for their alignment. On the other hand, the unipole will respond to challenges to its vital interests and reassess its allies so as to react to significant changes in the international norms. Hansen quotes Freedman and Karsh, when they implied that “the Iraqi invasion was a clear-cut break with the international order, and consequently it is not surprising that the international reaction was as strong as it was” (Hansen 138).

The Operation Desert Storm was consistent with the new structure of the world order. It also brought about changes in the area that emanated from a change in the international system. First, the US as a superpower was directly involved in the area; whereas, in previous times the Middle East was used as a proxy area. This position of direct

involvement came with the consent of nearly all Arab states that on their part joined the Coalition and latter the war. Second, the alliances pattern between Middle Eastern countries shifted from being diverted into radical vs. moderate or conservative camps to one that is flocking around a single super power (Hansen 150).

So according to Hansen the US had 'deep' reasons emanating from its new role as a unipole to wage war on Iraq that can be summarized as follows:

- The US had decided to make an example of the Iraqi case which therefore provided a long-term political investment.
- Iraq's WMD-capacity provided the US with a strong incentive to curb this before fully unfolded as WMD-capacity demands a more cautious approach from the manager and thereby reduces its policy options
- A WMD-capacity is especially troublesome to the manager if the WMD-state also opposes the world order as did Iraq (159).

These reasons and the international atmosphere brought about the war. As Hansen continues by supporting his argument with a neorealist statement as he said "...the Iraq-US stand-off during the 1990's is explained by antagonistic positions towards the world order. In the case of non-adaptation neorealism points at two possible outcomes: that the weaker part subordinates at last, or that it will face serious problems, even 'death'" (Hansen 159).

So based on the changes in the international system Hansen sees that our case here can be summarized as such; “In the case of Operation Desert Storm, the new alignment patterns had distinctly unipolar characteristics as well: the parties flocked around the US, and they carried out the US-defined objectives in a US-led coalition even when it came to war” (Hansen 160).

The second realist assumption that Hansen adhered to is that states tend to look after their own interests that is the self help notion of Waltz. According to him, the US intervened to protect its interests basically stability in the Gulf and its needed oil supplies from a regional power that challenged these interests (Hansen 160).

However, let us now try and test the oil factor and how much it is needed to US economy in order to do so we will start first by presenting the strategic importance of the Gulf States.

- Strategic Importance of the Gulf States:

To Hansen, the second assumption of Waltzian realism that was still valid following the end of the Cold War was the self-help notion. Based on this assumption he perceives that the US waged this war on Iraq so as to preserve a national interest and in this case its free and stable access to the Gulf oil. In order to test this assumption, let us try to see how important is the Gulf region to the US and then how important is the Gulf oil to the US

capitalist system. To go deeper in our study we will try and see whether or not the supply of oil to the US was threatened by this invasion.

- **US Relations with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia:**

The Middle East and particularly the Gulf region is of high importance to the US. It is “a region at the juncture of Europe, Africa, and Asia; the heartland of Islam and Judaism; and in position of over two thirds of the world’s reserves of oil. The Middle East was of such strategic importance that it was difficult to imagine that US leadership in the world could exist without a significant degree of control over the region” (Murden 44).

Historically, the US’s interest in the Gulf had increased during the Cold War due to the presence of oil in the region. The US aimed at maintaining stability in the Gulf so as to ensure its secure and free access to the oil reserves of the region. Following the withdraw of Britain from the Gulf the US, aiming at securing its economic goals, invented the ‘twin pillars’ policy that relied on Iran’s power to fill the vacuum that the British had left in front of any USSR efforts towards control in the region. The second pillar of this policy was Saudi Arabia’s money. The ‘twin-pillar’ policy aimed at maintaining the region’s balance and it was guided by Nixon’s Doctrine on January 1970 (Ghabra 282). This Nixon US policy tried to keep the US away from direct contact in international affairs such as what had happened in Vietnam but relied on local countries to do the job with the US support and guidance. Nonetheless, with the vanishing of one of the two pillars (Iran) following the fall of the Shah and the Soviet invasion to Afghanistan, the US was left

with only Saudi Arabia to rely on. Thus, the Nixon Doctrine was replaced by the Carter Doctrine in January 1980. This new Doctrine called on the US to use its entire means including the military means to prevent any other force but its own from dominating the Gulf. Nonetheless, this did not work out as the US wanted as the general mood in the region was anti-Western. This was reflected in the assassination of Anwar Al-Sadat in 1981, the bombing of the US Marines in Lebanon in 1983, and the US shelling of Lebanese and Syrian targets (Ghabra 283).

Nonetheless, US relations with the Gulf States particularly Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had developed based on interests. As for Kuwait, it is considered to be a small country in the Gulf. In trying to safeguard its independence in 1961, Kuwait tried to distance itself from relations with Britain or the US as both countries were facing too much resentment from the Arab states. Kuwait's dilemma as a small country surrounded by Iraq and Saudi Arabia dictated on it certain patterns of action that aimed at its survival. Kuwait in the early years of its independence was highly supportive of the Arab cause and tried hard to maintain its good relations with its surrounding Arab states. Despite that, Kuwait was a non-Communist country and most of its economic relationships were with Western countries as a result any collapse in the US dollar would have its affect on the Kuwaiti economy. The fact that most of the Kuwaiti money was invested in the US and the West made the Kuwaiti position a double standard one. Despite this economic relationship with the US Kuwait tried to publicly keep its distance from that country as possible. However, with the Iran-Iraq war, the Kuwaiti ties with the US were strengthened. Iran began attacking Kuwaiti oil tankers in 1985 and so Kuwait sought refuge in the US. The US

decided to reflag Kuwaiti tankers in July 1987. This marked the first step in US-Kuwaiti security cooperation (Ghabra 283).

The US-Kuwaiti relationship entered a new phase after the invasion of the later country. “US fear of a power other than a Western power, or one friendly to the West, controlling the region contributed to the US response” (Ghabra 287).

As for Saudi Arabia, the US interest in that country had begun much earlier before its interest in Kuwait. It began in 1933 when King Abd al-Aziz granted an oil concession to the Standard Oil of California (SOCAL). This interest increased after WWII. Saudi Arabia was important to the US because of its oil reserves; a commodity highly needed by the US. In 1942-43, the US gave Lend-Lease financial aid to Saudi Arabia after the war had terribly affected its two main sources of revenue; the pilgrimage traffic and oil production. The US also helped in the formation of the Arabian-American Oil Company (ARAMCO). US-Saudi relations were even strengthened more after the announcement of the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1957 that called for the containment of Communism in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia remains one of the most important customers of the US military industry. “The Saudi expenditure per soldier has reached the staggering figure of \$223,592 annually,” (Ryan 97). The Saudi’s depend highly on the US for support and protection in front of both Saddam and the Islamic Iranian Revolution. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait increased the fears of the Saudi regime, though there was no evidence of an Iraqi attempt to attack Saudi Arabia, and gave it no choice but to accept the presence of a

high profile US military forces in its country despite popular resentment to such act (Gause 302-306).

Generally, “US and other international interests and involvement in the GCC region are likely to remain highly strategic and economic in nature because of what the GCC countries have, where they are, and what they do. They have an abundant supply of vital energy; they lie astride a crossroads between Europe, Asia, and Africa; and they are critical not only to the Western alliance but to much of the rest of the world as well” (Anthony 375).

The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait was an attack on a US friendly country and at the same time brought Iraq closer to Saudi Arabia which indirectly threatened the US aims. “The United States the world’s largest oil consumer, felt indirectly threatened by the prospect of Iraq, having taken the Kuwaiti oil reserves, being able to put political or military pressure on Saudi Arabia” (Claes 108-109).

Being in such a position, Iraq posed a threat to intimidate the region and to manipulate its supply of oil which was perceived to be a threat to the US interest in oil and to the world economy in general.

At the same time, the occupation of Kuwait presented an opportunity to the US to enhance its hegemony in the region.

It is certainly clear that whoever controls this region and dominates its huge oil reserves, estimated to be well over 600 billion barrels, also controls and influences much of the world's energy and financial directions. The US emerging as a victor, undoubtedly saw Iraq's invasion of Kuwait as a god-sent opportunity to further enhance its global hegemony. (Abdulla 1)

- **Oil:**

In order to proceed further in the realist argument, I will try to check how much oil is important to the US capitalist system.

In 1943, Franklin Roosevelt sent the American geologist Everette Lee DeGolyer to answer the question "How important are Persian Gulf oil reserves to the future of the world?" DeGlover's answer when he went back to Washington was that "The center of gravity of world oil production is shifting from the Gulf-Caribbean area to the Middle East and the Persian Gulf area, is like to continue to shift until it is firmly established in that area" (Yergin, 2003).

Following World War II, oil became a strategic commodity needed for the development of the capitalist system. Economic growth depended on oil as a substitute for coal. Air, water, land transportation all depended on oil. Industry in general including military industry depended on oil. Oil became "the resource most essential to the world's economic recovery" (Schneider 17). Dependence on Gulf oil increased as the economic

growth meant high level of energy consumption at the time the industrial countries that were oil consumers failed to produce alternative energy sources other than oil (Schneider 49).

Nevertheless, major industrial countries such as the US feared that western reserves of oil are not able of meeting this increase in the demand of this commodity which made them look for other resources (Schneider 18). The US government had realized that the Persian Gulf is the place where most of the world's oil is located. However, before and during World War II, the British controlled 80% of the Gulf oil; whereas, the US only accounted for 15%. In Iran in 1938, the British Petroleum Company was the only controlling company there. In Iraq, the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) a joint venture of British Petroleum, Royal Dutch/Shell, Campagnie Francaise des Petroles, Exxon, Mobil, and Gulbenkian controlled oil in the whole country. IPC also controlled oil concessions in Oman, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi. In Kuwait also the PB controlled a 50% concession. The only place where the US companies had a dominant position was Saudi Arabia (18). SoCal and Texaco were the two operating US companies in Saudi Arabia during WWII. During that time Saudi Arabia faced financial problems due to the halting of hajj pilgrimage and the slow development of its oil fields because of the war. The US companies feared that this crisis would lead to the fall of Ibn Saud the Saudi King at that time and with him the fall of the American concession. Therefore, they pressured Roosevelt to provide Ibn Saud with financial aid in return of low prices the US government would get Saudi oil for. At first, President Roosevelt disagreed and did not support Saudi Arabia directly up until

February 18, 1943 when he stated “that the defense of Saudi Arabia is vital to the defense of the United States” (Schneider 22).

So the US had realized that it should “gain control of a resource that was vital to its military security, its political power, and its future prosperity.” (19). Moreover, the US was interested in the recovery of Western Europe and Japan and so access to cheap Gulf oil would help towards achieving this goal. Also the US would want this commodity in building the liberal economic order (Schneider 19).

Over and above, US oil production has declined and therefore its dependency on imported oil has increased. “In 1970, the US produced about 20% of the world’s oil supply, and imported only about 12% of its domestic consumption. Today, it produces only about 10% of the world’s oil and imports about half the oil it consumes” (Tanzer 264).

To the US, the oil reserves had made the Middle East a target for domination (Bresheeth 246).

So to get back to our case study here, having Iraq control Kuwaiti oil makes Saddam in control of “one fifth of world’s oil reserves” (Claes 112) is not a situation that the US desired specially that its dependency on US oil is high. The US relied heavily on low and stable oil prices in order to gain economic advantage over its competitors (Murden 47).

In short, the US can not permit Iraq or any of the Gulf states to dominate any other state and to exert its power and be in a monopolistic position when it comes to oil (Michael 620). The US can not allow this cause “The prize was enormous. If successful, Iraq would become the world leading oil power, and it would dominate both the Arab world and the Persian Gulf, where the bulk of the planet’s oil reserves in concentrated” (Yergin, 1991: 22).

As was shown above the strategic importance of the Gulf States to the US is high and so the US would want to use its force and impose its agenda in this area as the only power that is not to be challenged. Iraq came out of its war with Iran with an exhausted economy and a debt of \$80 billion half of which was owed to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. However, Kuwait refused to forgive Saddam his debt and instead it increased its oil production violating its OPEC agreed on quota and causing a decrease in the oil prices a situation that Iraq couldn’t take (Bahbah 52). Kuwait even used oil from the Rumaila oil field which is practically located in the Iraqi territories. By doing this and by overproducing oil, “Kuwait became the tool of a US inspired campaign of economic warfare designed to weaken Iraq as a regional power once the Iran-Iraq war ended” (Becker 1).

V. 2. General Analysis of the Realist Approach

Arriving as a Super power in world politics, the US was concentrating more on the new dialogue with the USSR and the new rising democracies in Eastern Europe. It was more

concerned with the new world structure. So all through the events that took place in the Gulf, the US was giving mixed signals to Iraq. The inconsistency in the US position towards Iraq reflects the government's lack of concentration on what was really happening in the Middle East as it was more concerned with Europe and the new world structure. On February 12, 1990, John Kelly the Assistant Secretary of State with the responsibility for the Middle East was received in Iraq and met with Saddam. In this meeting Saddam was praised as "a force of moderation in the region, and the United States wishes to broaden her relationships with Iraq" (qtd. In Salinger and Laurent 4). Three days later, the voice of America broadcasting to the Middle East broadcasted a program that according to this station, it reflected the views of the US government. This program called for a mobilization of public opinion against dictators such as the Iraqi dictator. Saddam was furious about this and though Washington had sent him an apology still that was not enough as on February 21, the State Department had issued a report on the violations of human rights in which it dedicated 12 pages to the Iraqi case. Saddam's government was described as "the worst violator of human rights" (qtd. In Salinger and Laurent 5). Later, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives proposed an adoption of a resolution to condemn Iraq to which the Bush administration protested against and terminated the adoption (5).

Witnessing this rising tension between the two countries, the US Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, sent a message to Saddam, in a meeting hosted by the Iraqi president, saying that the US will not take any position in inter-Arab matters and that the US has "no opinion on the Arab- Arab conflicts like your border disagreement with Kuwait"

(Qtd. In Yousif 62). Though April Glaspie was informed of this meeting only an hour in advance and that she didn't have the time to refer to the State Department (Salinger and Laurent 45) and though there is no proof that this view expressed the view of the US government still coming from a US ambassador came as encouragement to Saddam. This in a way gave the green light to Iraq to enter Kuwait (Niva 56).

Not only did the US gave ambiguous signals to Iraq but its intelligence agency had news of the Iraqi plans to occupy Kuwait long before it happened. "Former CIA officer in the Middle East, Miles Copeland, informed BBC Radio that the CIA knew of plans for the invasion as early as April or May 1990" (Qtd. In Yousif 65). However, these news were left unnoticed till Iraq took its step and occupied Kuwait.

This act, now that it is real, imposed a great challenge on the US. A country, like Iraq, had occupied another country, Kuwait, in an area of high strategic importance at a time when the US was said to be a superpower. This shocking incident brought a revival to a US plan that considered military intervention in the Gulf ever since the fall of the Shah in 1979. President Jimmy Carter had had created a deployment force whose mission is protecting the oil fields. A secret plan on this with a code number 90-1002 was developed at that time. However that plan was specifically concerned with preparation for a confrontation with the Soviets in the Gulf (Salinger and Laurent 100). That same plan was used as a base for the used in the war against Iraq.

Ever since, the US worked towards forming the coalition and preparing everything necessary for this war including terrorizing Saudi Arabia through spreading news that Iraq wants to invade it. The US also sent its Defense Secretary to Saudi Arabia to get King Fahd's approval of the US deployment in Saudi Arabia though the Saudi's had no clue that Iraq had any intention to attack Saudi Arabia as was expressed by King Fahd to King Hussein while welcoming an Arab diplomatic solution in the first days of the crisis (New York Times, October 16, 1990, qtd. In Becker). The Iraqi act was not easy for the US to absorb at a time when it wanted to prove itself that it was worthy of the title it acquired following the Cold War. It refused to accept any diplomatic initiative proposed by different countries. Several Iraqi proposals were also rejected by the US the first of which was on August 12 in which Iraq said that it will withdraw from Kuwait if Syria withdrew from Lebanon and Israel withdrew from West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights. In August 19, Iraq suggested the replacement of US forces with UN forces and to deal with the Kuwaiti issue in a regional context. Another Iraqi proposal was submitted to National Security Advisor Scowcroft on August 23 which suggested a full Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait in return of the lifting of sanctions and full Iraqi control of Rumaila oil field (Navi 57-58). Another initiative was the French initiative announced in the 45th session of the UN General Assembly meeting to solve the issue in 4 stages (Navi 61). However all this was ignored by the US and in fact the Los Angeles Times report of October 29 revealed that the Bush administration was drafting the timetable for an attack on Iraq (Navi 63).

So in a way the new world structure and the new distribution of power capabilities left the US with the 'policeman role' to play; a role that realists tend to give to the US. A country was erased from the world map without the US consent. This was too great a challenge that the US was willing to take. Arriving as a superpower gave the US the privilege of setting an agenda that is binding to all, if not, the result would be destruction. And this is what the realist theory is about 'survival of the fittest'. So in the absence of any great power, the US will continue to impose its agenda.

Over and above, the US interest in oil as a source needed for its national security made the Iraqi-Kuwaiti issue an issue that can not be dealt with lightly. However, an alternative interesting view on the oil factor is presented by Toby Shelly. Shelly stresses the importance of oil in today's world. The shocks of 1973-74 and 1978-79 exerted a horror among the industrialized nations over the control the oil producing countries have of the price and availability of oil. The importance of this fuel echoed itself in the call for military intervention to secure its stable supply. Nonetheless, the UN embargo on oil from Kuwait and Iraq in 1990 has subtracted in July 1990, 20% from the OPEC production and almost 9% of the global supply. Nonetheless, the world did not in fact suffer from a third shock. The reason for this as claimed by Shelly is that "a change in industrialized world's management of its need for oil and thereby its strategic relationship with the oil producers of the Middle East" (166).

Shelly even moves ahead and tries to prove that the West had learnt its lesson from the previous two oil crisis and that the too much focus on oil as well as on the economic

issues is but a means to cover for the geo-political aim for domination of the Middle East by the West. The article claims that oil supply to the major industrialized countries was not threatened but to an extent Iraq may have threatened the Saudi Arabian oil production.

The West reaction to the first and second oil crisis and developments were similar to each other; the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) established the International Energy Agency (IEA) so as to coordinate consumer country defences against the oil producing countries, there was a slow down for the demand for OPEC oil, an erosion of OPEC's market share, and a stronger demand for other alternative sources. However, from all this an important lesson was learnt and that was that any conflict leading to a division of the OPEC countries showed that these countries are happy to compensate for the other's short in production.

In 1990, the West did not fear an oil crisis as they were sure of the extra production by OPEC, the existence of stocks, and the implementation of energy-saving policies.

The fear of instability in the Middle East had resulted in new energy plans such as the one produced in February 1991 by the Bush administration which called for a reduction of dependence on imported oil from unstable regions and an increase in domestic production (176).

The reliance on new options such as the access to Soviet gas and the instability in the Middle East had caused the West, according to Shelly, to reduce their dependency on the Gulf oil. Shelly even goes to say that “even the myth of the oil weapon will be laid to rest.” (179).

This alternative argument that mainly assumes that the Gulf crisis had no effect on the oil supply to the West as other countries like Saudi Arabia made up for the lost oil presents a true argument. It is true that the world did not face a third shock yet still the world’s dependency on oil as the main source for energy is also true. Toby Shelly’s argument had weakened the realist hypothesis that assumes that the US had waged this war for oil. The fact that the US did not stay and pose its control over Iraq is another issue that needs some focus. The US in waging this war had brought back the Gulf into its status quo. So a more accurate hypothesis might be that the US waged this war to keep a stable status quo in the Gulf so as to secure its flow of oil.

Despite its ability to explain for some factors, the realist theory was not able to explain for other societal and domestic factors that are related to the internal situation of the US at the time, the internal political system, the affect of certain people or pressuring groups on the US decision to wage war, and the president’s interest in this war. These issues were ignored when applying the realist theory to this case study as it doesn’t cover for this level of analysis.

Chapter Five

VI. Liberalist Reading

VI. 1. Liberalist Reading of the Reasons behind a US war on Iraq in 1991

Some scholars base their view on why the US waged this war on Iraq on the liberal view discussed above. These authors base their analysis on the societal context that pushed the US to take such action. Some focus on the economic domestic conditions inside the US at that time as the driving force for the US to go to war. Others, study the role of different societal actors such as transnational groups or certain people in the US government that pushed the US into war. Before presenting this alternative view, it might be useful to start by presenting the unique structure in which US foreign policy is made.

- Foreign Policy Making in the US:

Generally speaking there is a view in international relations that perceives the framework of the US foreign policy within the domestic context that prevails inside the US.

Within the United States, the domestic context of US foreign policy derives from societal forces and the institutional arrangements and structures established by the US Constitution. This context makes societal forces – political culture, public

opinion, and group interests and activity – a critical part of the US foreign policy arena, and it establishes a complex set of fluctuating arrangements among the people and institutions of the government. Hence, understanding how US foreign policy makers adapt to the issues and problems of the international environment first requires a grasp of the societal and institutional settings within which they act. (Scott and Crothers 2)

Here, Scott and Crothers, and when speaking about the societal setting distinguish between the ‘broad societal context’ or the political culture and the societal actors that affect the policy making. The political culture that the Americans identify themselves with is ‘democratic liberalism’. Liberalism refers to the emphasis on the rights of the individual and the individual freedom and protection by the rule of law. The economic meaning of liberalism is capitalism. Capitalism is built on the existence of the free market, private property and free enterprise. The US is democratic in the sense that government positions are occupied through elections as well as government decisions are reached at through voting. The government is supposed to be accountable to the people as it derives its authority from the people. The rights of the minorities are to be respected by law. The US is said to be ‘egalitarian’ indicating that citizens should have equal rights and equal chances in society. The US is ‘pluralist’ it accepts the decision of the majority. It is ‘legalist’ in the sense that the rule of the law is the only prevailing rule. And it is universalistic in the sense that it believes that all the above mentioned qualities should be empowered in all nations in the universe and that these qualities that might be looked at as “the American Way” are a model to be followed by others.

When speaking about the societal actors, Scott and Crothers describe the US institutional context which basically derives from the US Constitution. Here, the specifics of the US Constitution must be noted. The Constitution is accessible and accountable to the public and thus allows for the public to pressure the making of foreign policy and at the same time makes policy makers more sensible to appeasing these pressure groups. The Constitution firmly separates between the three powers. Nonetheless, it does not assign the task of foreign policy making to any side. Thus the task is distributed between the Congress and the executive without giving any part the right to lead. This ambiguity in the US institutional framework makes foreign policy an arena open for the influence of many domestic forces such as the president, advisors, bureaucracies, Congress, and the public. This complexity of the making of US foreign policy makes it an inconsistent one as it is produced and affected by different internal pressure groups that are in turn affected by international factors.

As Scott and Crothers put it policy emerges from the interaction of three circles. The first is the White House. This circle which is headed by the president commands the executive branch. It has access to the implementation of policy. The White House can set the agenda, motivate the bureaucracy, and pressure the Congress. The White House also makes use of the powers mandated to the commander in chief, chief executive, chief diplomat, and chief legislator thus giving the president more room to lead policy making. The second is the Foreign Policy Bureaucracy. This body comprises of the State Department, Defence Department, Central Intelligence Agency, as well as other

economic agencies. The purpose of this circle is to implement policy and to provide policy alternatives for decision makers. However, the different agencies in this circle affect the policy implementation and formulation through the disagreement and competition that often prevail in this institution among these agencies. The third is the Congress. This includes the leadership as well as members and committees from the previous institutions. The Congress is provided the mandate to legislate, require reports and briefings from the executives, advise and consent on treaties.

The fact that the making of foreign policy is not really associated with any institution allows for different decision making forms including those made by the president with the aid of his advisors, those done by the bureaucracy, those by the Congress, and those by the three together either in the form of interbranch or through subgovernment (alliance of subcommittees in the three bodies). Each form depends on the priority of the area decided upon or whether it is a crisis or a routine situation. For example, decision regarding the Cuban missile crisis was taken at the level of the president. Other complications to decision making include the existence of alliance among similar groups that belong to different institutions that work towards shaping US foreign policy. Their alliance facilitates their access to more information and enforcement of considerations of certain issues as these networks enhance the access to policy making tools to certain individuals (Scott and Crothers 1-21).

To elaborate more on the different US institution, I will move to discuss shortly each institution alone.

The US President is supposed to be the most powerful actor in the US. He occupies many roles such as the role of the commander in chief, the chief administrator, the chief diplomat, the chief of state and the chief of judicial office. Nonetheless, the president faces certain constraints such as time and information. Also he faces institutional constraints by the bureaucracy, the Congress, local governments, political parties, and pressure groups. Other factors also act at constraining the president's power. These include the press, public opinion, the courts, and the international environment.

The struggle between the legislative and the executive branches in the US, as was discussed above, also has its affect on the role of the president. Historically speaking it was known that at times of war the power of policy making shifts more to the hands of the executive i.e. the president. Whereas at times of peace, this power goes back to the hands of the legislative i.e. the Congress. Thus, the president's power grew most with the Cold War and with it the American bureaucracy. In 1947, the Congress passed the National Security Act which created the National Security Council, organized the military in the Department of Defense, and developed the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). However, following the tragedy in Vietnam things changed. The president faced new interest groups and social movements, a more critical press, and a skeptical public. His power grew to be more constrained. Ever since Vietnam, presidents found difficulty in gathering support around them as Ole Holsti and James Rosenau have said "Perhaps the only constancy in American foreign policy since Vietnam has been the conspicuous lack of constancy in its conduct" (qtd. In Rosati and Twing 34).

The Foreign Policy Bureaucracy refers to the State Department that is responsible for foreign relations; basically its mission lies in formulating and executing the US foreign policy, the Central Intelligence Agency that is responsible for collecting, producing, and disseminating intelligence, and the Defense Department (the Pentagon) that is responsible for protecting the national security (Jones 57-84).

The US Congress According to Ralph Carter, “Congress was more involved in foreign and defense policy making than a study of narrow war powers alone would suggest” (108). The Congress was able to use the powers it possessed to answer the president’s attempts and policies through compliance, resistance, rejection, or even through drawing a new policy on its own. The powers it used included legislation, appropriations, ratifications, institutional control as well as informal activities such as policy advocacy. Nonetheless, the Congress members are affected by various factors that interfere in their making of foreign policy. First, the international system that provided the legislators with new threats and opportunities following the Cold War generated disputes on what is/ are the best ways to act. Second, societal factors such as public opinion that legislators tend to satisfy so as to satisfy their desire of reelection, interest groups that also present the legislators with more public inputs, mass movements that sometimes overwhelm legislators on a certain issue, and the media that can affect the decisions of the legislators and at the same time might be influenced by them. Third, institutional factors that surrounded the legislators. These include the president that forms the context within which the congress acts, the Bureaucracy, party leaders’ members that are in opposition

with the president, the standing committees inside the Congress can determine policy by authorization or funding in the specific issues, and congressional caucuses that are informal groups of members that share the same ideas and thus try to push the policy in their own desired direction. Fourth, the individual factors that refer to the fact that the Congress is composed of individuals and these individuals have their views and ideologies that respond and are at the same time affected by the above mentioned factors (Carter 108-131).

- US Domestic Situation Just Before the War:

Let me start here by presenting the view of Mohammad Rabie in his book The New World Order: A Perspective on the Post-Cold War Era as he happens to be following the liberalist model in his analysis. Rabie presents the US domestic conditions just before the war.

According to Rabie, the US was facing a decline in its productivity and business ethics (64). By the mid of 1990 the US started suffering from an economic recession (65). The US suffered from “A huge budget deficit, a high trade deficit, a relatively weak dollar, a fairly high unemployment rate, an increasing number of institutions and incorporations forced into bankruptcy in the 1980s, and about one-third of the savings and loan associations have been declared insolvent” (65). In the 1988-91 period, the average of yearly trade deficit reached more than \$120 billion (66). The budget deficit reached in 1990 \$220 billion (67). Additionally, the US foreign debt in the same year exceeded \$900 billion (69). In trying to solve this crisis, the US started in the 1980s a policy of tax cuts

in an attempt to increase savings and to exceed the growth rate. However, the tax cuts in the US had led to more spending but did not succeed to increase savings and investment. As a result, supply stood far behind demand and the gap was filled with imports. Dependence on imported goods including imported oil increased to more than 42% of consumption in 1990 (70).

The shift in US preferences to give more concern to its economic crisis had caused changes in the US strategy towards the Arab Countries as Moravscik claims that “liberal theory provides a plausible theoretical explanation for variation in the substantive content of foreign policy.” (534). “The control of more than 60 percent of proven oil reserves by a small number of Arab countries would drive the world’s richest most powerful nations to try to conclude special arrangements with the oil-rich nations that serve their national interests. Moreover, certain nations, particularly the United States, could go beyond the establishment of special economic relations and into providing military protection for some oil-exporting countries,” (51)

Over and above, economic sources inside the US were aware of the fact that any decision by the OPEC countries to abstain using the US dollar as the currency for pricing their oil, would create a financial disaster to the US.

The greatest single support of the dollar today may be OPEC’s policy of establishing oil prices in dollars. Should the Middle East leave the American orbit, and the oil business leave the dollar zone, the American Century would

surely, quickly draw to an end. The dollar would fall like a meteor. Rich Americans would move their capital out of the United States and into safe heavens abroad. We would begin to learn what it means to be a soft-money debtor in a hard-money world. (qtd. In Rabie 92)

In addition to the internal economic crisis, the US is facing a social and political internal crisis. Such problems refer to the trading in drugs, poverty, violence, and crime. In 1990, 23,600 people were murdered, half of which were killed by people they knew. In the same year, 113,000 cases of rape were reported and about 1 million cases actually took place. More than 1 million are in prisons and the homeless counted to more than 3 million (76-77).

Based on the above analysis, Rabie reaches the conclusion that the deteriorating socioeconomic condition at home and the prestigious military image outside had led the US to launch its war in 1991 against Iraq (104). Despite the moral justification that the US tried to give for this war, Rabie sees its true goal in president Bush's words when he said "to protect the American way of life" which Rabie interprets as "protecting the supplies of oil from the Gulf" (104) and surviving the tough economic conditions. On November 30, 1990, President Bush also said that "the United States is dealing with a dangerous dictator...who desires to control one of the world's key resources" (qtd. In Rabie 104). The President also confirmed what Rabie tried to prove in this book by

adding that “the United States economy is in a serious slowdown and...if the uncertainty remains in the energy market, the slowdown will get worse” (qtd. In Rabie 104).

The CIA funded study “Japan 2000” predicts that the US might not be able to wage a new war without the financial and technology support of Japan. For instance, the leader of the Japanese right, Shintaro Ashihara,, said that “America could not have won the Gulf without Japanese money and technology.” (qtd. In Rabie 115). Thus, the continued weakening of the US economy provoked the United States “to use more of its abundant military sticks and less of its disappearing economic carrots to consolidate its global position and manage world affairs. In fact the new world order enlisted in waging war against Iraq in 1991 is one that tends to emphasize the might of military power over the logic of military persuasion and economic measures” (Rabie 38-39). This point of view is shared by Edward Said when he said “Today the United States, triumphalist internationally, seems in febrile way anxious to prove that it is Number One, perhaps to offset the recession; the endemic problems posed by the cities, poverty, health, education, production; and the Euro-Japanese challenge” (Said 3).

Alan Freeman in his article “The Economic Background and Consequences of the Gulf War” supports Rabie’s point of view by taking the same approach in trying to analyze the reasons behind the US decision to wage this war. He starts by quoting Christopher Huhne, the business and economic editor of the Independent on Sunday, commented on the Gulf War by saying:

Wars, once they begin, are always fought for the most noble of motives, especially by democracies. It is necessary political persiflage to pretend that our aims in the Gulf are the defence of the territorial integrity of small nations, the better to ensure that aggression never happens again.

The reality is not so simple, as there is an economic motive too. The real economic interests of the developed world in ejecting Saddam Hussein from Kuwait are surely the decisive motive for the war. (qtd. In Freeman 153)

Freeman argues that “a competitive economic system, ceaselessly and spontaneously, generates economic problems which it can solve by no other means than war, the highest form of competition.” (153). The US arrived from World War II as a victorious country with a high capital surplus that it devoted to arms and foreign investment while other countries invested at home. The US which had been the world’s greatest capitalist has become the world’s greatest debtor. But what caused this change? Following WWII, the US emerged as a leading industrial country with a capital surplus that it invested in the rebuilding of Germany and Japan. The US appeared as having an industrial supremacy, capital exports, and a military supremacy. Nonetheless, while the US had used its capital surplus in arms and foreign investment, other countries that lost WWII were investing at home. Thus the level of productivity was rising higher in these countries than it was in the US. The US trade position had also faced a major set back and instead of continuing to be a world provider it became a world importer. Freeman claims that “Against this economic background, the script for the Gulf War was not only already written but proofread, rehearsed and waiting only for the villain and an opening night.” (158).

According to Freeman the US wanted to solve its economic crisis through achieving two decisive goals in this war. First, the US pushed Saudi Arabia to raise its production from 5.4bn barrels of oil per day before the war to 8.6bn barrels during the war i.e. fifth of the total world's production. The result of this was that whatever OPEC decides regarding the oil prices it becomes in the Saudi Arabia's hands to determine. This increase in the production of oil helped keep down the price of oil to less than 20US\$ per barrel as compared to what the Iraqis were pushing for which was 25US\$ per barrel. The other goal was to use the petrodollars of the Gulf to fill its budget deficit rather than have this money go for financing regional political problems such as financing the PLO for example. Over and above, the US would guarantee that its companies were granted preference after the war. The International Business Week article entitled "To the Victor go the rebuilding contracts" states that

Still-undisclosed agreements between the US and the exiled Kuwaiti government specify that US companies will get preference after the war, according to diplomatic sources. After a behind-the-scenes complaint from Washington, Kuwait even rescinded the choice last month of Britain's Crown Agents as a major player in the reconstruction. 'A very large percentage of contracts is going to American companies,' says Fahd al-Hasawi, the Kuwaiti Minister of State for Municipal Affairs in Jiddah, who heads up reconstruction planning. 'America is helping us with all its might and all its children.' (qtd. In Freeman 162)

Thus the US wished to solve its economic problem by counting on the reconstruction contracts that its companies were favored to sign, by selling more arms that would benefit its arms industry, and by improving the oil balances that would favor its corporations (162). The US preference of solving its economic problems determined what the US did and that is waging war on Iraq.

Naom Chomsky, in his observation of the US policy towards the Middle East after the Cold War reaches a conclusion that is similar to Rabie's as he stated

The political leaderships in Washington and London have created economic and social catastrophes at home, and have no idea how to deal with them, except to exploit their military power. Following the advice of the business press, they may try to turn their countries into mercenary states, serving as the global mafia, selling "protection" to the rich, defending them against "third world threats" and demanding proper payment for the service. Riches funneled from the Gulf oil producers are to prop up the two failing economies. (87)

These setbacks in the American economy had nourished the US interest in Middle Eastern oil. Being in control of that commodity would have meant controlling 'the primary source of energy and in this case giving the US an advantage position it desires (Ahmad 15).

- Societal Actors:

Social forces such as the multinational corporations, political groups, and the media had their hand in drawing the US preferences and pressuring the US government into waging war against Iraq. US multinational corporations, for instance, had doubled their income from foreign operations from 25 percent in the 1970s to 50 percent in the 1980s through expanding their production abroad and marketing at home. In a world atmosphere of growing interdependence and competition, “large corporations and the business elite they produced began to develop an attitude that favored manipulative investing, sought cheap labor, and utilized economic power to pressure national and local governments and politicians to extract concessions” (Rabie 55).

To add on Rabie’s point, the international oil companies had a preference in increasing their manipulation of the Gulf oil vs OPEC. They were in favor of the ‘internationalization’ of oil politics and pulling it from the hands of OPEC. They were so much into the weakening of OPEC as an organization that is responsible for setting the oil prices and the oil quantities to be produced. In the *Petroleum Economist* (September 1990) these companies had set their position:

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, and the political ramifications of the landmark Western military involvement on Saudi territory, have changed the course of Middle East politics in the most significant manner since the creation of

the state of Israel. Moreover, the end of Kuwaiti independence has called into question the efficacy of the entire OPEC system, if not its very existence, and radically altered the political disposition of Middle East oil...

The effects of the Western military response to the current situation in the Gulf has been directly to internationalize the political disposition of world oil production from OPEC's most important members. Additionally, it has placed the West in the role of primary regional military power in the Northern part of the Gulf (qtd. In Tanzer 266).

Moreover, political infighting and the manipulation of the system by powerful and wealthy interest groups had also aggravated the situation (83). Rabie also stresses the role played by certain lobbies such as the Jewish Lobby in pressuring the US government. "US conduct during the Gulf War of 1991, which changed US priorities from only liberating Kuwait to destroying Iraq's military power, was not a function of the Western quest to control Arab oil only, but also of domestic politics driven by a relentless pro-Israeli lobby to eliminate the Iraqi military threat" (98). 46 out of 67 Democratic members of the Congress voted in favor of the war out of their strong support to Israel and their backing by the Jewish lobby (Ahmad, 18).

As for the US media, it had played a great role in selling the Gulf War to the American public. It justified and glorified the war. On the other hand it concealed the damage of the Iraqi infrastructure as well as the killing of hundreds of innocent people. Even after the end of the war, the media drove the world to focus on the Kurds that were forced out of

their homes and faced massacres after their rebel was harshly crushed by the Iraqi government. “The US government, which first refused to intervene in the Iraqi domestic affairs, was forced to switch positions and send its forces to occupy large portion in northern Iraq and create a “safe haven” for the Kurds” (84). The media in America is famous for its ability to concentrate on certain issues and appeal to the public in a very strong way that their voice is hardly unnoticed as they stimulate the public to demand certain actions from the US government. But why would the American media be interested in moving the public and consequently the US government to take action against Iraq? Rabie answers this question by drawing certain conclusions about the American media. First, big news organizations are huge businesses that make millions of dollars every year and billions of dollars in sales. So their interests lie with the business community. Second, the people who own the news organizations are integrated with the ruling elite (86).

Rabie again states that

US foreign policy today is largely a function of domestic politics rather than geopolitical considerations and moral principles. Domestic politics, in turn, are subject to election cycles and election politics, particularly the influence exercised by special interest groups during election seasons. And since objectives sought by such groups are usually contradictory and largely short term, US foreign policy has lately been inconsistent, lacking both a strong moral foundation and a clear

geopolitical perspective. Nevertheless, the United State's ability to project power around the world seems to have transformed the imperatives of domestic politics into rules of international law to be enforced by American power and observed by other nations. (106-107)

Certain people surrounding the president had their say in this war as well. Richard Perle was advocating a preemptive strike. Henry Kissinger said that "A sharp and short crisis is far more in the interest of all concerned with moderation than a long siege" and that the "surgical and progressive destruction of Iraq's military assets" is the way to proceed (Buchanan 213).

Institutions such as the Pentagon and the military corporations were also pushing for this war in what has "been called Pentagon capitalism or the permanent war economy. The war against Saddam Hussein showcases weapons smart and dumb, high-tech and low, and gives the Pentagon and military contractors a winning argument for new weapons systems and new rounds of subsidies" (Darnovsky et al. 481).

- President Bush, the War, and the Coming Elections:

Edward Smith also follows a Liberal approach in analyzing the reasons behind this war. But instead of focusing on a domestic crisis, he focuses on a leadership crisis which concealed a leader's preference. Smith personalizes his assumption by claiming that it is

a personal decision of George Bush to go to war; he even names his book George Bush's War. Smith refers to a specific meeting following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait that joined Bush and Margaret Thatcher as an important event in directing Bush's mind towards war. Before boarding his helicopter to Aspen, Colorado, where he was supposed to meet Thatcher, Bush stated to the reporters that "we are not discussing intervention [in Kuwait]. I am not contemplating such action." (qtd. In Smith 64). Thatcher, according to Smith, believed that Saddam should be punished. Her views reflected the bitter history the Europeans had to undergo in facing Hitler as well as the ties that join her country with Kuwait as Kuwait was a British protectorate for more than sixty years. In a joint press conference in the afternoon, Bush sounded different than he did when he was in Washington before he had left to Aspen. The president stated that "we are not ruling any options in, but we are not ruling any options out" (qtd. In Smith 66), thus leaving space for the military option. "Margret Thatcher had urged Bush to be "Churchilian" in handling Saddam, and Bush eagerly accepted the challenge...Time magazine, in naming Bush Man-of-the-Year for 1990, reported in awe that the president had made his decision after leafing through Martin Gilbert's *The Second World War*, citing Churchill's view that Hitler should have been stopped in the Rhineland in 1963" (Smith 70). In Smith's words; "Thatcher had ignited his [Bush's] urge for greatness, and Bush caught fire" (71).

Smith focuses on Bush's personality and his personal crisis at that moment as the background for 'Bush's decision'. He says that George Bush, had always been accused of lacking a moral vision. He was an opportunist. Critically, Smith claims that Bush had found that moral thing to talk about. However, as he says, "Future critics might suggest

with some legitimacy that with the November congressional elections looming, the US economy in the doldrums, the S&L debacle worsening daily, and his son Neil fast becoming the Democrats' equivalent of Willie Horton, the president seized on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as a needed diversion...Consciously or not, the president's vital interests had become America's vital interest" (Smith 77).

On going to war, Bush and on August 8, announced his decision to intervene on National Television. He said

Iraq has massed an enormous war machine on the Saudi border, capable of initiating hostilities with little or no additional preparation. Given the Iraqi government's history of aggression against its own citizens as well as its neighbors, to assume that Iraq will not attack would be unwise and unrealistic. And, therefore, after consulting with King Fahd, I sent Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney to discuss cooperative measures we could take. Following those meetings, the Saudi government requested our help and I have responded to that request by ordering US ground and air forces to deploy in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (qtd.

In Smith 97)

Bush's speech was a fabrication. It was a speech full of "I 's". The decision to intervene was according to Bush a response to the Saudi request and their fear of an Iraqi attack. Bush knew back then from the CIA and the Defense Intelligence that it was unlikely that Iraq would attack Saudi Arabia (Smith 97).

Smith asserts that

George Bush's concern to counter aggression was a personal feeling that he held strongly. It traced partially to his parental upbringing, and in ever larger measure to his schoolboy days at Andover. It reflected a romantic warrior ethic that runs deep in the values of the American establishment, a culture that prizes athletic accomplishment, martial virility, and moral certitude. As a child, Bush was thought to play fair. But he was also taught to punch a bully in the nose...Perhaps more important, it reflected what Bush's boyhood hero, the remarkable Henry M. Stimson, would have done (Smith 135-136).

Smith claims that Bush personalized the whole Iraqi issue as some kind of a confrontation between him and Saddam. "Bush was more emphatic. He continued to see the conflict as a confrontation between him and Saddam: a rerun of an old Western movie with George Bush leading the sheriff's posse." (Smith 232). Smith continues that "To pick a fight with Saddam, as Bush was doing, and to personalize it to the extent he did, strongly suggested a pressing need to prove himself as president" (234).

To prove his point Smith relies on the fact that Bush did not inform the Congress or the American people of the military option while crossing out all other options up until eight days after he signed his presidential order; "Bush discarded economic sanctions and, over the visible reluctance of the military high command, selected war as the preferable

option. That, too, was disguised. Not until eight days after signing the presidential order doubling the size of Central Command did Bush inform the Congress and the American people” (Smith 255).

Smith focuses also on the role of some close personnel such as the National Security advisor, Scowcroft who “Like Bush ... looked on the use of force as an option that was always available to policymakers, and he deplored the tendency of the American military to shy away from potential hostilities. “Can the United States use force-even go to war-for carefully defined national interests, or do we have to have a moral crusade or a galvanizing event like Pearl Harbor?”” (Smith 175). John Sununu, the chief of staff stressed “the electoral advantages of a quick military campaign against Saddam. A victorious war, he told the press throughout the autumn, would make Bush unbeatable in 1992” (Smith 175). Vice President Quayle & Defense Secretary Cheney; “Quayle...was busy cultivating the Israeli lobby, hoping to remain on the GOP ticket in 1992. Cheney, for his own political future, and perhaps aiming at a slot on the 1992 ticket, saw no reason to oppose the president, and continually prodded the Pentagon to provide viable military options” (Smith 175).

All in all, Smith criticizes the war and blames it all on Bush; it was his decision to go to war.

America’s forty-three day war with Iraq was fought to punish aggression. It was also fought to destroy Iraq’s military potential. It may have been fought to remove

Saddam Hussein from power. Certainly it was fought because president Bush decided there was no other option. The United Nations sanctioned the conflict, Congress approved it, and the American people supported it. But in the final analysis, this was George Bush's war, (Smith 252)

Smith's conclusion is that Bush ignored the congress. There was no deep analysis of the situation. It was a personal decision to go to war based on what Bush felt is right and what mostly suited his electoral need at that time.

In an article on "Presidential foreign policy", David Barret presents a similar view to that of Smith and sheds light on the process of decision making in the US and how certain decisions were solely the product of the president and not the congress. Bush decided in late October 1990 (without notifying the Congress or the public for some days) that the US would be changing its 'defensive' mode into an 'offensive' one. Bush even said clearly that he doesn't need a congressional resolution to permit me to announce war (Dumbrell 62-63).

By focusing on Bush's decision to go to war, it is useful as well to focus on certain issues that might have been of influence on Bush's decision to go to war. The election factor becomes of importance as the new presidential elections were due in 1992. The election factor was important in speeding things up. "...among the reasons for the President's deciding to bring things to a head in January, getting the United Nations to set a deadline, were both economic and political ones; according to this line of thought, the president

didn't want to risk a protracted war in an election year" (Drew 183). Winning a war and liberating a country and 'doing justice' might provide the American president with good propaganda. Certain officials surrounding the US president even admitted this. John Sanunu, the president's chief of staff was advocating that a short successful war in the Gulf would guarantee Push's reelection (Drew 183).

Survey agencies in the US such as the Gallup Poll showed that the approval of Bush's handling of his job as president increased from 64 between Jan. 11-13, 1991 (the week before the war) to 89 on February 28, 1991 (after the war). Whereas, and referring to the same dates, his disapproval declined from 25 to 8 (Miller 179-180).

VI. 2. General Analysis to the Liberal Approach

The societal conditions inside the US were a determining factor in the US decision to wage this war. Authors were able to present the different internal problems that the US was facing, they were able to describe them in numbers such as in the case of Rabie and they concluded that this war was done based on this economic background.

Liberalist arguments as mentioned above focus on societal factors as determining factors in world politics. The US was facing a difficult economic situation that might have pushed towards war.

On the other hand, certain people or pressure groups were shown to have exerted influence over Bush's decision to go to war. Though studying the influences of certain people (actors) on Bush's decision is sometimes difficult specially that, up to my knowledge, very few literature targeted this issue. As Drew puts it "It is impossible to get inside a politician's head and know what combination of factors-merits, presidential calculations or other long-term ambitions, friendships-motivated him. The politician himself may not know" (Drew 190).

Another famous liberalist argument focuses on the president himself. There is always a need for reelection and the US elections were due in 1992; a year to go from the Gulf crisis. This factor might be a good explanation of why Bush wanted a quick and decisive war in the Gulf unlike the American prolonged war in Vietnam. Bush wanted to avoid a prolonged war in the year were his concern should be on his election campaign. President Bush's statement on Gulf Crisis on 30 November 1990 as published by the Associated Press stated that

In our country, I know that there are fears about another Vietnam. Let me assure you, should military action be required, this will not be another Vietnam. This will not be a protracted drawn-out war. The forces arrayed are different; the position is different; the re-supply of Saddam's military would be different; the countries united against him in the United Nations are different, the topography of Kuwait is different, and the motivation of our all-volunteer force is superb. (qtd. In Noorani 181)

Moreover, the New York Times published an extract from a national security review, from the early days of the Bush Administration, dealing with “Third World Threats”. It read: “In cases where the US confronts much weaker enemies, our challenge will be not simply to defeat them, but to defeat them decisively and rapidly.” Any other outcome, it explained, would be “embarrassing” and might “undercut political support”” (qtd. In Noorani xxii)

So, all in all, Bush was hoping that this war will increase his public support in the next presidential election round in view of the economic crisis that he promised earlier to solve in his famous phrase to the Americans: ‘Read my lips—No. New. Taxes’ and which he failed to do.

Despite its ability to explain for some factors, the liberalist theory, as it is, was not able to explain for other structural factors that are related to state behavior within the new international system. This was an issue ignored by the liberalist analysis.

VII- Chapter Six

Conclusion & Recommendations

As was shown above in the section that dealt with the realist hypotheses, the three factors that the two realist hypotheses were based on; the new world structure, the strategic importance of the Gulf States, and the importance of oil to the US economic survival, were discussed in terms of their relevancy to our case study here. First, as for the world structure, it shifted from a state of bipolarity to a state of unipolarity as proved by Hansen. And this system of unipolarity has its own rules that dictated certain actions on states. The US arrived as the unipole; yet Iraq challenged the unipole and occupied another country in an area of high strategic importance. Second, the relationship between the United States and the Gulf regimes especially the historical relationship with Saudi Arabia helped to facilitate the US mission in protecting its strategic interests in the area and assuming its leadership role. Third, oil was proved to be a vital commodity to the survival of the capitalist system in the absence or the inefficiency of other energy resources.

By studying these factors, I can arrive and say that the US was acting within this new world context in an effort exerted towards keeping the status quo and maintaining stability so as to ensure cheap flow of oil.

Also as seen above, the US handling of the Gulf crisis, starting by its rapid diplomatic relations to form the coalition, ignoring any Arab, Western, or Iraqi proposals to solve the issue peacefully, convincing the Saudi regime of the need for the US troops inside Saudi Arabia, giving mixed signals to the Iraqi government before its invasion of Kuwait, working towards weakening the Iraqi army as well as economy, can lead us to certain answers to our research question as follows:

- The US waged this war for weakening Iraq as a regional power. Iraq had challenged the US as the only Superpower, that is believed to be the only one capable of drawing world agenda and altering regional power systems, by shifting the regional balance of power system in an area of high importance.
- The US waged this war for achieving and maintaining the status quo in the Gulf to ensure its access to the Gulf oil and to exert its power in the region, the US took an opportunity to save itself a presence in this vital region and took it in its own hands to protect its own interests in the absence of the Soviet military competition.

So by adopting the realist approach and applying it here to this case study we were able to arrive at potential answers to our research question here. But what about the liberalist theory and how well was it applicable to the same case?

The liberalist theory as applied here focuses on the societal structure rather than on the political structure. Societal actors and the domestic situation inside the US become our point of concentration i.e. the domestic structure of decision making inside the US and

the social and economic situation inside the US become the focus of study in answering the research question.

As shown above, the structure of decision making in the US allows for certain groups and actors to make decisions in foreign policy.

On the other hand, the US economic and social domestic situation has deteriorated. Based on Rabie's assumption and in trying to answer the question presented here, 'why did the US wage its war on Iraq in 1991?', one would conclude that the US was left with no other option but to use its military power as it was the only power left for the US to rely on in solving its economic crisis. As we traced Rabie's point view earlier we can move on and quote him when he states clearly that "The US military intervention in the Gulf ... was an attempt to remedy some aspects of the economic problem by military means" (Rabie 65). The US suffered from "A huge budget deficit, a high trade deficit, a relatively weak dollar, a fairly high unemployment rate, an increasing number of institutions and corporations forced into bankruptcy, and a stagnant productivity and investment" (Rabie 65).

So based on this analysis, potential answers to the research question are as follows:

- US waged this war on Iraq to keep oil prices low at the time Iraq was working towards an increase in oil prices so as to make up for its weak economy after its war with Iran.

- US waged this war because of recession in its economy. The US wished to use the petrodollars to cover up for its budget deficit.
- Bush waged this war to increase his publicity for the coming elections.
- US waged this war on Iraq knowing that its companies would be granted the Kuwaiti reconstruction contracts.

In conclusion, both theories were proven to be applicable to our case study. Once applied to this case study they were able to provide potential answers to the research question. Applying two contradictory theories in fact helped us to see a more comprehensive picture of the same case. As one might conclude that the results each theory arrives at can be seen complementary in the sense that they are better understood once brought together. Theoretically, realism focuses on the distribution of power among states. It focuses on the international structure that is said to be imposing constraints on state behavior. For realists the internal structure of states is irrelevant. In this case, realism only covers for one level of analysis that is the system level.

On the other hand, liberalism focuses on the societal culture in which states survive whether at the domestic or the transnational level. The most important actors are groups and individuals that are rational and happen to have preferences. These preferences reflect themselves in the strategies taken by states that result in systematic outcomes. In this case, liberalism is said to be 'multicausal' as it covers for the stage of defining preferences.

This conclusion is explained by two points. First, as realism happens to focus on the international structure, liberalism fills the missing part and covers for the domestic structure. Second, while realism focuses on the distribution of power and on hard politics, liberalism covers for the distribution of preferences and on societal factors. Thus, applying the two theories in a way gave us a more comprehensive reading of the case study.

To put this again into more empirical terms lets take 'oil' as an example. For the realists, control of oil is an important commodity for the survival of the US economic system. At the same time control oil is important for the US corporations. So the assumption is that the US waged war for oil but was it a war for survival as the realists would claim or was it a war reflecting a preference of the oil companies? Or was it both? After studying this factor from both perspectives, I was able to arrive at more comprehensive answers. According to the realist interpretation oil is important for the survival of the capitalist system. According to liberalist interpretation, the US domestic economic conditions were in a recession and the US waged this war on Iraq to keep oil prices low at the time Iraq was working towards an increase in oil prices so as to make up for its weak economy after its war with Iran. US waged this war on Iraq knowing that its companies would be granted the Kuwaiti reconstruction contracts.

So by looking at the societal as well as the political structures, we were able to arrive at a better and more comprehensive understanding of the case study. Societal structures are not as easy to pinpoint as the political structure that is more apparent. Therefore, to me

trying to apply a liberalist approach was much harder in terms of finding good evidence as compared to applying the realist approach and this is what created a challenge in this paper.

However, the fact that both theories have proven to be applicable to this case study doesn't negate that each theory has its faults or to put it in more appropriate words; each theory misses out on certain points in its analysis of the case study. Realism, for example, and as was discussed above in this chapter, does not cover up for domestic politics or does it give any attention to societal actors or the role played by the president for instance. The fact that these points have proven to have played such a role in making this war happen proves a weakness on behalf of the realist theory as such.

On the other hand, liberalism doesn't focus on the role played by the international system or the relations between states within that system nor does it give any attention to state security and self help within the world system. Empirically, the US acted as the only super power in the international system and this had played a role in defining its actions. The US had good relations with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait that were based on mutual interests. The US depended highly on the Gulf oil for the security of its capitalist system and its survival as a superpower. All these points were ignored by the liberalist analysis and thus proved a weakness on the part of the liberalist theory.

As was shown above, a synthesis of both theories gives us a more comprehensive reading of the case study. Each theory was proven to be able to cover up for the missing points that the other theory, as it is, couldn't cover for.

However, this study shows that although the two theories were proven to be applicable to the case study and complementary in the sense that once put together they tend to give us a better understanding of the case; still, it was perceived that realism is superior to liberalism in the sense that authors that presented a realist argument showed better hold of all the necessary evidence of their argument. On the other hand, authors that depended on liberalism were in most cases lacking the sufficient proof for their argument. This observation could be explained by the fact that liberalism is more demanding in the sense that it goes in its analysis deeper than realism as it focuses on societal factors that are not usually obvious to the researcher unlike what realism tries to focus on and that is the state behavior within the international structure which is usually obvious to all.

Recommendations:

After presenting my study here, I would like to present these plausible recommendations for future studies that might include the following:

- An analysis of the same case study but through the use of other theories of international relations. I would highly recommend Constructivism as I feel it can

explain this case in a different and special way. I would also recommend imperialism and globalism.

- A comparison study, based on this theoretical approach, between the US war on Iraq in 1991 and in 2003.
- A study that covers the US war on Iraq in 1991 and the Oslo Accords of 1993 as both being Post Cold War US contradictory efforts in the Middle East through applying theories like Realism vs. Institutionalism.

VIII.

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