

**CHAPTER I**

CHAPTER - IIntroduction

By 1939, the existence of the League of Nations more or less came to an end. This is due to the fact that it failed to prevent the Second World War. But it made its shadowy existence until 1946, when it was formally dissolved. Its place was replaced by the United Nations. The foundations of this new world organisation were laid down by the Allied Powers during the course of the second world war. As the fear of war, destruction and instability grew fierce, the idea of establishing a new and powerful world organisation to ensure peace and stability became stronger. Finally through deliberations at various conferences and declarations, on October 24th 1945 the United Nations organisation came into existence with its head quarter at New York.

" The main objectives of the United Nations were," to maintain and promote international peace and security", " to develop friendly relations among nations", " to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character; and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all", and " to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations".<sup>1</sup> Since we have acquainted with the objectives of United Nations Organisation let us now shift our attention to the study of gulf region with special reference to war between Iran and Iraq and the role played by the United Nations for the purpose of ensuring peace in the region.

### Gulf Region :

The gulf region has been economically, strategically and politically important since the 19th century. " It is the meeting ground of three continents - Europe, Asia and Africa."<sup>2</sup>

It is also the birth place of Islam, Christianity and Judaism. " This region includes World's two important waterways - the straits connecting the Black Sea with the Mediterranean and the Suez connecting the Red Sea with the Mediterranean."<sup>3</sup>

The shortest air route from Europe to Asia passes through this region. Any country desirous of global supremacy, obviously should have control over the Middle east. However, Middle East is more cherished and valued for its vast reserves of petroleum or black gold, as it is called. Among the gulf countries Iran, Iraq and Kuwait have predominance due to their petroleum resources.

### Iran :

"Iran is structurally and topographically extremely complex."<sup>4</sup> " The whole area was severely affected by tertiary earth movements which produced three great swathes of mountains"<sup>5</sup> - the zagros on the west, the Elburz extend from the north west to the east, and the Afghan Baluchi systems on the eastern borders. Total area of Iran is " 1,648,000 Sq.Km."<sup>6</sup> " Total population of Iran according to " 1967 U.N. estimate is 26,84,000".<sup>7</sup> " Farsi/Persian is the dominant language but as a result of ethnic diversity there exists minority languages such as Turkish",<sup>8</sup> Kurdish, Luri and Arabic, Recently, French and English is also used.

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"Iran is a constitutional monarchy under an imperial decree of 1906".<sup>9</sup> The emergence of: " Modern Iran dates from 1925 when Reza Khan who came to power in the chaos following World War I, became Reza Shah and set about restoring the authority of the central government and establishing externally the national status of the country".<sup>10</sup>

#### Iraq:

" The Republic of Iraq has its heartland in the central low lands of the Euphrates - Tigris system (Mesopotamia), to the north of which lie the Assyrian hill lands and the mountain highlands of Kurdistan and to the South and West of which extends the Iraqi - Syrian desert".<sup>11</sup> " The northern highlands on the otherhand lie in an area of structural disturbance".<sup>12</sup> It is in this region that most of Iraq's mineral wealth lies. Iraq's total area is "4,34,900 Sq. Kms."<sup>13</sup> Her total population is "8,440,000"<sup>14</sup> according to 1967 U.N. estimate. Her " official language is Arabic, used by 75% of her population".<sup>15</sup> " Islam is the religion of the State".<sup>16</sup> However, religious minorities are living in Iraq like Christian communities of Uniates, Nestorian, gregorian and orthodox. And religious groups of Yazidis and sabaeans also live here.

Iraq was part of the ottoman empire from the 16th century. In 1916, it was captured by the British and later became a kingdom ruled by Nuri Pasha-al-said under the League of Nations mandate in 1921. Subsequently, it became an independent monarchy under the Hashemite dynasty which was

overthrown in 1958 through a military coup. But : " The Hashemite dynasty never took root in the hearts of Iraqis; the land owning class which was favoured by the mandatory and in return detested by it took charge of the land after Britain left and ran it in its own interest. The oil companies made money; the Iraqis got very little out of their own wealth hidden underground. British creation of Iraqi army officered by young students of the middle class perhaps added a good slice of the discontent caused by the numerous political parties which mushroomed in free Iraq".<sup>17</sup> In 1968 the baath socialists came to power through a further coup. The country has been ruled by President Saddam Hussein since 1979, with an iron hand. At present, i.e., since April 1970 Iraq is governed under a provisional constitution promulgated in 1968 after the July coup. Let us now shift our attention towards the study of Iran - Iraq War.

#### Iran - Iraq War :

In Sept. 1980 a heavy fighting between Iran and Iraq broke out. The immediate cause of the fight had been the disgraceful and humiliating treaty of 1975, signed under the Algiers agreement. The other important and strong cause was Iraq's ambition of regional supremacy.

As per the Treaty of 1975, Iraq had to make the important territorial and waterways concessions to Iran. The important of which was the shatt-al-Arab, at the head of which the largest Iraqi port Basara is situated. Basara was bifurcated between the two countries. This concession deprived Iraq of asserting its position in the gulf region.

However, on the one hand with the ouster of Shah the Iranian defence forces were completely demoralized. The country was facing a civil war. The clergy were divided. The economy was in shambles. Also the religious minorities like the Kurds, the Jews etc., were being ruthlessly persecuted. The U.S. hostages were held for 14 months. This made Iran a vulnerable and a tempting target for aggressions. On the other hand Iraq had seen further consolidation of the Baath regime led by Saddam Hussein. Moreover, with the political, social and economic turmoil in Iran, Saddam Hussein found an oportune moment to settle scores with Iran once for all. However, Iraq's invasion of Iran in September 1980 was a major miscalculation on the part of President Saddam Hussein. He underestimated Iran's national and Military power. After an enervating war which lasted for eight long years, a ceasefire was finally agreed in 1988. After understanding the causes of the outbreak of war in a nutshell, let us now turn our attention towards the importance of the study. In this connection one should take note of the attempts made by United Nations to solve the dispute peacefully. However, sincere attempts made by the United Nations did not bear fruit. In this context, it is essential to know the reasons for the failure of the United Nations. So that this may prove as a lesson for the United Nations in dealing with conflicts in future.

#### Importance and Scope of the study :

The Gulf region has been very important for the super powers. They do not tolerate the emergence of any predominant

power capable of jeopardising their vital interests in this region. The Middle East is considered to be the hot bed of politics. Petroleum is found in abundance here. In fact it is said that the Middle East is sailing in the sea of petroleum. Nearly 4000 barrels of oil is daily pumped out of its fields. It meets the 2/3 of world's total demand. Obviously, oil is the principal industry of Middle East and the only commodity to earn the foreign exchange. The Middle East oil is the life blood of European economy. It meets 80% of the consumption of petroleum of Europe, 90% of Japanese and 10% of the U.S. The industries, aeroplanes, ships and other vital instruments of economy of these countries would come to a stand still if this resource was stopped.

Although the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. - the super powers of the time produce self sufficient oil to meet their national requirements, yet the oil of this region is indispensable for the maintenance of their supremacy. Moreover, there was the " Proxy War " that was in existence between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. This made these two super powers influence the politics of this region and see that the valuable oil does not pass into the hands of the rival.

The struggle for controlling the West Asian Oil started in the beginning of the 20th Century. Britain was the first country which endeavoured to lay a firm grip over Middle Eastern Oil. In 1912, Britain established " Anglo-Persian Oil Company " in order to explore oil in South Iran on wide range of concessions. The utility of oil in the first half of the

20th century attracted almost all the European states towards the Middle - East. The oil companies of Holland, Britain, France and the U.S.A. contracted the oil fields on royalty basis from the sheiks of the region. However, Britain and France had to foresake their monopoly in Middle East due to changed situation after World War II. The void created by Anglo - French exit from Middle East attracted the super powers of the post World War II era. Consequently, the region was turned into an arena of big power rivalry. Obviously, it became a challenge for U.N. to find an amicable settlement among the contenders, i.e. Iran and Iraq.

Keeping this in view a detailed study of this subject is required to be done. This helps us to understand the attitude of UN regarding the conflict and also the real intention of the super powers in this region. Moreover, it also to an extent reveal how Iraq and Iran are used by super powers for their own benefit.

The U.S.A. propagated that its intervention was necessary in order to protect the weaker state that is Iraq. But the U.S.S.R. wished to protect its own interests in the gulf. Hence at times she supported Iran and at times Iraq. Thus it is necessary to comprehend why both the superpower intervened and how ultimately they were succeeded in establishing their position and dominance.

#### Data and Methodology :

This study is totally dependent upon library research. As such secondary and tertiary data are collected from relevant books, periodicals, journals and newspapers.



The methodology adopted is a case study approach. Hence the attention is focussed on the contending parties vis-a-vis superpowers and also the interaction between them and the United Nations. The analysis will be based on logical deductions. This study may help us to understand how United Nations behaves in an extreme crisis situation, i.e. war and what are the constraints it has experienced in its striving to bring about peace in gulf region in particular and world in general.

#### Organisation of the Study :

The organisation of the study is as follows :-

The Second Chapter, " The Profile of the Warring Nations ," deals in brief with the historical background, geography, religion and political events of both Iran and Iraq.

The Third Chapter, " Genesis of Conflict ," highlights on the reasons that lead to confrontation and ultimately culminated into war between Iran and Iraq.

The Fourth Chapter, " Intervention of Superpowers," focusses on the role and policies of the superpowers, i.e., the U.S.A. and the then U.S.S.R.; in the conflict and the attitude of the warring Nations towards them.

The purpose of this chapter is to pin point when and how the Super Powers entered into controversy and their motive towards each other. At the international level generally the Superpowers by intervening in the affairs of the third power test their own strength in a geographical region. In this regard Iraq and Iran provided a very congenial ground for both

the U.S.A. and the then U.S.S.R. For the purpose of convenience this chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part the intervention of U.S.S.R. in Iraq - Iran conflict is analysed. In the Second Part the intervention of U.S.A. is analysed. This chapter provides a base to the next chapter in the sense that the political turmoil, that is, created by the Superpowers and the attitude of warring nations towards them ultimately determine the role of the U.N. in the conflict between Iraq and Iran.

In the Fifth Chapter, " UNO and its efforts," the role of the United Nations in ending the war between Iran and Iraq is assessed.

The purpose of this chapter is to reveal the role played by the United Nations in Iran -Iraq conflict. However, the student of International Politics should not forget the inherent limitations of the United Nations which in day-today situation limits its capacity to solve the conflicts between Nations, placed before it. Hence the inquiry starts from this point. In this chapter after delineating the limitations of the United Nations an attempt is made to analyse how these limitations hinder United Nations to solve the controversy which ultimately lead to war between Iran and Iraq. Hope this exercise will highlight the root factors which hinder United Nations to solve the conflict between Iran and Iraq.

The Sixth and Final Chapter presents the major findings arising out of the study.

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