

CHAPTER IV

C H A P T E R - IVINTERVENTION OF SUPER POWERS

The purpose of this chapter is to pin point when and how the Superpowers entered the Iraq - Iran 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 sense Iraq and Iran provided a very congenial ground for both the U.S.A. and the then U.S.S.R. Moreover, this chapter also high-lights the attitudes of powers in conflict - Iran and Iraq - regarding both the Superpowers. For the purpose of convenience the 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.

(A) Intervention of U.S.S.R. in Iran and Iraq :

Weakening of Soviet Dominance:

" Soviet foreign policy toward the Middle East suffered several setbacks in the early and mid 1970's. For example in 1972, Egypt's President Anwar Sadat expelled most Soviet military advisers from Egypt."¹ In 1976, he also abrogated his treaty of friendship and cooperation with Moscow. Further more, the Arabs widely blamed the inadequate Soviet support for their defeat at the hands of Israel in the Oct. 1973, war. This defeat of Arabs, made most of Arab States believe that Moscow

had no influence over Israel and that only Washington had the capacity to influence Israel. Many Arab governments, radical and moderate, pro-tempore, cooperated with the U.S. for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Hence Moscow was side-tracked as far as Middle Eastern diplomatic moves were concerned.

Moreover, in the Persian Gulf, the Shah of Iran was a close ally of the United States " The conservative Arab monarchies (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirate were also firmly linked with the west. Except for Kuwait, they all refused even to exchange embassies with the Moscow."² To some extent, Soviet Union was influential in Iraq and South Yemen. But, even in Iraq, the Iraqi Baath regime " did not hesitate to suppress the large Iraqi Communist Party."³

Soviet policy elsewhere in the Gulf was also a failure. When Iraq assaulted and invaded Iran in Sept. 1980, the Soviet Union immediately halted military assistance to Iraq and it begun helping Iran. This was necessary on the part of Russia because Iran borders the U.S.S.R. It has along coastline on the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. It also possessed a relatively large population. Hence Iran was and still is a geographically and strategically more important country to the U.S.S.R. than is Iraq. But the Soviets failed to gain any sort of influence in Iran. On the contrary, " Khomeini brutally suppressed the Tudeh (the Iranian Communist Party) gave military assistance to some Mujahidin groups fighting Soviet troops and the Marxists regime in Afghanistan. Further, he also condemned and announced the U.S.S.R. as the other " great Satan." "⁴

In 1978-79, however, the fate of the Soviet Union appeared to be changed. It begun influencing the Gulf and the Middle East. This change occurred due to two reasons. One, the failure of the U.S. sponsored Camp David Accord. This Accord was signed between Egypt and Israel and almost all Arab Governments alienated themselves from it. This they did because in that Accord there was no provision made for an independent Palestinian State. Thus Radical and Moderate Arab Governments broke their relations with Egypt and criticized the U.S. for sponsoring an agreement that favoured Israel and ignored the Palestinian Cause. Second, the rise of stridently anti - American Ayattollah Ruhollah Khomeini to power in 1979. Khomeini's emergence in Iran was a blow to U.S. influence and dominance in Iran. The above two elements once again provided an opportunity for the Soviet Union to develop its relations with Iran - especially on the basis of common anti - U.S. foreign policy. However, continuous presence of Soviet military troops in Afghanistan, marred the Soviet hopes. And the Soviet Union failed to gain from the opportunity on the contrary, Soviet Union's efforts to expand its influence and dominance in the Gulf received a serious set-back. Immediately Saudi Arabia ended its relations with the Soviet Union. In Jan. 1980, it organised the Islamic Summit Conference, which condemned the Soviet attack. Saudi Arabia and several other monarchies in the Gulf region feared the invasion of Afghanistan. They feared the invasion because they felt that it was a part of the Soviet plan to advance to the Gulf and eventually to attack the existing monarchies. The fear of invasion created a feeling of insecurity in most Arab

Countries. This feeling of insecurity made them move closer to the U.S. and the West.

The Iraqi bid for regional leadership created almost insurmountable difficulties for the Soviet Union. It militated against its support for the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. It also challenged the previously pre-dominant positions of Syria and Iran in the region. The renewal of rivalry between Iraq, on the one hand and Syria and Iran on the other, thrust Moscow into the Center of another inter-Levantine struggle. This was also a blow to the long-standing Soviet objectives of forming a preponderance among these regimes.

The paralysis of Soviet Unions position could be attributed not only to the lack of opportunities provided by the Arab States for greater Soviet participation but also due to Soviet disinclination to get involved in the politics of the region. Another factor that weakened Soviet Unions position was its foreign policy apparatus. It was undergoing a considerable stress and strain due to the crisis in Poland, the continuing occupation of Afghanistan, the attempt to normalize its relation with China, and the management of East-West relations. In a whole range of issues the above were of crucial importance to the Soviets than the Middle East. Even on the domestic front, the U.S.S.R. was facing a serious problem due to their fourth successive harvest. This brought about a change in Soviet Union's decision making process. It began taking more of introverted decisions. Further the Soviets were anxious of improving their relations with Washington. Grain Sales, pipeline issued and disarmament negotiations received higher

priority on the Soviet manifesto. And the opportunities in the continued instability in the Middle East received only secondary priority on the Soviet manifesto. Because, according to the Soviets, the above fact might necessitate Soviet involvement, which the Soviet Union could not afford at that time. It also meant further deterioration in the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. relations.

Inclination towards West :

" The emergence of a more pro-Arab and anti - Israeli consensus in Europe,"⁵ helped Arab States to diversify their sources of supply. Earlier these states were exclusively reliant on Soviet weapons and assistance " Iraq for ex :- has received a considerable quantity of weaponry, especially from France, including F-1 mirages, Frelon helicopter and AM-39 air-to-surface missiles. As a result of this Iraq now received less than two-third of its military equipment from Moscow as compared with 95% at the time the ' Friendship Treaty ' was signed."⁶ This Treaty was signed in 1972.

Further , radical and moderate, oil rich Arab countries by and large preferred to rely more on the west and not to the Soviet Union for the development of their economies. " Iraq's President Saddam Hussein, for instance, stated in an interview with ' Time Magazine ' July 1982, " I believe America has three fundamental interests in the region - commercial trade, improved economic relations and keeping countries from being attracted by the Soviet Union. These three conditions can be fulfilled. Take technology and expertise. Do these exist in the Soviet Union or in America? I will answer you. The technology

we require exists in the United States, or in Europe and Japan," Hussein statement "⁷ was based on the existing trade figures; which showed that in 1981 Iraq's total oil trade with the Eastern block amounted to only \$ 499 million as compared to \$ 19,121 million in trade with the Western industrial countries. This was down from the 1980 figure of \$ 27,689 million, due to drop in Iraq's oil exports. This immense disparity in the volume of Arab trade with the West and the Soviet Union clearly reflects the huge impact which oil wealth has had on freeing even the politically radical Arab countries from dependence on the U.S.S.R.

The decline of pro-Soviet Arab nationalism and the growth of oil wealth detracted the ability of the U.S.S.R. to exercise leverage over the states in the region. For e.g. - diminishing Soviet influence in Iraq. Two policies pursued by President Saddam Hussein of Iraq clearly reflect the decline in Soviet fortunes, since 1978. The first was Hussein's decision to move against the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP). Till 1978, ICP was allowed to participate alongwith the ruling Baath Party in the National Front. But, in 1978, the Iraqi Baath regime suppressed the large ICP, arrested and executed the Communists in Iraq. However, the Soviets remained totally silent on the suppression, arrests and executions of Communists in Iraq. But Iraq complained that Moscow was withholding concessions, including better treatment for the ICP. " The Iraqi Baath Party paper " Al Thawra claimed that Soviet interference in the domestic politics of Arab states was a direct result of dependency on Soviet weapons. " The Arabs have recently become aware of the need to recognize the link between the possession

of sophisticated weapons and the requisites for using such weapons on the one hand and cultural development on the other".

In accordance with this finding, the Iraqi Minister of Information stated in an interview with 'Al Nahar' on June 21st 1980, that Iraq hence forth would no longer seek weapons exclusively from the U.S.S.R."⁸

Second, in February 1980, the Pan-Arab charter was promulgated by Saddam Hussein. According to this charter a central component of Iraqi strategy for expanding its regional role was to distance Iraq equally from both the Superpowers. In the words of "Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, while Iraq still considered the U.S. to be "enemy number one" by virtue of its alliance with Israel, never-the-less "if the Soviet Union occupies any part of the Arab homeland, I shall look upon this just as I look upon a British, American, French or any other occupier." "⁹

"Further, the Iraqi, Foreign Minister, Sadoon Hanmadi declared that the Soviet repusal to supply weapons would not quickly or easily be forgotten."¹⁰ Even Saddam Hussein "found it difficult to differentiate between Soviet and American attitudes toward the war, claiming that both of them were apparently indifferent to its outcome: " it is strange that the Superpower kept maintaining the position of onlookers toward the bloody conflict between Iraq and Iran --- the present era has not witnessed a State such as that in which a conflict has been left raging for two years without any serious attempt to stop it----." "¹¹

Impact of Iran's invasion and the U.S.S.R. :

In July 1982, Iran launched its own invasion of Iraq. This kindled the hope in the minds of Soviets to reconsider their policy and to renew the supply of weapons. Soviet commentators responding to Khomeini's pledge to topple Hussein, stated that "no one, except the people of the concerned country has the right to say that the regime in another country is to his liking or not." The Soviet leaders were well aware of the fact that their interests would not be served by the establishment of yet another militant Islamic Republic, this time in Iraq. For, in Islamic Iran, Moscow's once high hopes were gradually turning into bitter disappointment.

The radical Arab nationalism which prevailed in the 1950's, 1960's and early 1970's, found much common ground with Soviet ideology. But the militant Islam which has rocked the Middle East since the fall of the Shah is antithetic to the very fundamentals of Marxism. However, after initial hesitation Moscow did welcome the downfall of the Shah. It encouraged the rabid anti-American excesses of the early Khomeini period. Euphoria over this massive reverse for American fortunes in the Gulf even prompted Brezhnev in his speech to the 26th party congress in Feb. 1981 to decree that Islam under certain circumstances could be harnessed to serve progressive ends and inter-alia, therefore, Soviet ambitions. But Khomeini's brand of Islam was not like the Nile, whose energies could be harnessed by Soviet engineers and translated into a symbol of Soviet power like another Aswan dam. Its direction of flow change without warning; flooding to wipe out American influence and surging next to overwhelm Soviet hopes.

The U.S.S.R. evaluated many aspects of policies positively. It continued to support the Iranian people. On March 9, 1982, an article of Pavel Demchenko was published in the major Russian News Paper 'Pravda'. "Most notable in the Demchenko article was the litany which it presented of anti Soviet steps currently being taken by the Iranian authorities. These included the reduction in the size of the diplomatic staff of the Soviet embassy in Teheran; the complete closure of the consulate in Resht; the Russian-Iranian Bank; the Soviet Insurance Society and Transport Agency; the suspension of the Iranian Society for cultural relations with the U.S.S.R.; and the denial of entrance visas to Soviet journalists. In addition to these specific acts, Demchenko condemned the increased pitch of anti-Soviet statements issued from the Shiite clergy, including "conservative elements on the extreme Right operating around Khomeini," whose aim is "to show the development of Iranian-Soviet relations; even if this would harm their country's economy and Iran's ability to resist imperialist pressure." Since March 1982, Soviet-Iranian relations have sunk to an even lower level. The crackdown on the leftist Mujahedeen-al-Khalq forces was followed in July by the arrest of Tudeh Party officials; the banning of their publication Ittihad-al-Mardom and purge of some Tudeh members from positions within the central bureaucracy."¹²

Initially the U.S.S.R. did not react publicly to the Iranian moves against the Tudeh Party in Iran. Also it did not say much about the persecution of the Mujahedeen. But, by Oct. 1982, the situation changed. The "detailed reports began to appear in the Soviet media. One of Moscow's most Sr.

analysts, Valentin Zorin, was quoted on Soviet television on Oct. 13, as saying that the Mujahedeen had taken "an active part in the struggle against the Shah's regime" and played a key part after the revolution in supporting Khomeini. However, he went on, there were now "bloody internecine signs of warfare and mass persecution of the organisation and this is now having a most serious effect on the internal situation in Iran". Zorin attributed the Iranian decision to launch an offensive against Iraq to a desire of the clergy to shift the public focus away from domestic turmoil, thereby staking their credibility on military success.

The crux of the issue is the Soviet view that Iran's previously stated adherence to a "neither east nor west policy"¹³ was in fact changing to one of anti-Sovietism. Definitely Moscow did not like the change and it wished to prevent such a shift. But in the words of one of the commentators, "it takes two hands to clap". The litany of other punitive measures taken by Khomeini to further diminish Soviet influence includes the total banning of all Russian language teaching, although as the Russians point out, English, French and German are still being taught. Exhortations by the ruling clergy to fight the influence not only of the Americans but also Mujahedeen and the Russians are greeted by orchestrated chanting from the crowds "Death to the Americans! Death to the Russian! Death to the Hypocrites (the Mujahedeen)!"

On the economic front initial Soviet hope for expanded co-operation had met with success. But, later on, after the signing of the transit agreements, which allowed the passage of Iranian goods otherwise trapped in the country after the

outbreak of the Gulf War, things looked bleak. The Iranians were held out for higher prices for the gas which they were contracted to supply through the first Iranian gas transit pipeline (IGAT-I) connecting the two countries, thus causing gas shortfalls in the Soviet Central Asian Republics. And the announcement in Sept. 1982 by its energy minister ^{2/}that Iran had decided to route IGAT - II, the materials for which had already been supplied by Moscow, through Turkey rather than the U.S.S.R., only angered the Soviets further, leading them to declare that, "it should be stated very 'frankly that there are some' people in Iran who have acquired a pro-west inclination and who are artificially preventing the expansion of this economic co-operation with the U.S.S.R.

The continued Soviet military occupation of Afghanistan created further enormous difficulties in Moscow's efforts to convince Iran of its desire for normal "good neighbourly relations". Tehran has always ~~apposed~~ the Soviet presence in Kabul and has allowed Afghan rebels to operate from its territory. But later on the Iranian stance became more overtly hostile. According to the U.S. state Dept. officials, in the early spring of 1982 Iran fired on Soviet helicopters in hot pursuit of Afghan rebels inside Iranian territory. This act was followed in August by a declaration from Iran's Ambassador in Geneva that Iran resolutely condemned "the imposition of a puppet govt." in Kabul and that Teheran was ready to recognise an Afghan govt.-in-exile.

Soviet rebuttal :

Soviets responded by accusing these "dignitaries" of seeking to use the Soviet presence in Afghanistan as a cover

for attempts to diminish Soviet prestige in Iran and simultaneously increased the regimes pro-western orientation.

Soviet Union would have very much liked to see an improvement of its relations with Iran. Its interest in doing so was manifest. The arrival in Teheran in June of a new Soviet Ambassador V.K. Boldyrev, and Iranian experts, and the former head of the Foreign Ministry's Middle East Dept.; and the simultaneous "upward demotion" of former Ambassador Vinogradov to the totally powerless post of Foreign Minister of the regional Russian Republic signified Moscow's awareness that diplomatic relations between the two countries had not in the past two years always been handled as skillfully as the situation demanded when the Soviets realized the above fact they became much more careful and cautious in their assessment of the Iranian Revolution. Thus the objective of influencing the politics in Iran remains only "a feature" of Soviet policy.

Shift in Soviet Policy - threat to western Interest :

The shift in Soviet concerns and its emphasis in foreign policy on security and stability were conditioned by the gradual and peaceful transition of the leadership into the post - Brezhnev era. The cautious and careful manner in which leadership changes have taken place in the Politburo in the last two years reflected the efforts being made by the Soviet to avoid "succession crisis". It also appeared from its behaviour in the Middle East and elsewhere that the U.S.S.R. was keen to avoid, any more unnecessary shocks and traumas to the system at that juncture.

Beyond attempts to make the Reagan initiatives ineffective especially in favour of the Fez proposals and wait for better opportunities in Iran and Iraq, was there any other Soviet objective which represented a basic threat to western interest ? The answer to this was in the affirmative. This was proved by the fact that - one, the 'wait and see' stance of the Soviet press following Sadat's assassination had been replaced by a cautious but distinct optimism in Moscow. Second, a whole series of article in the news papers suggested that Russian and Egyptians alike were nostalgic for "the good old days" when the two countries were united in a bond of friendship.

However, the Soviet press and officialdom did not discount the obstacles in the path of improving relations with Iran, for eg. the Camp David Accord. "In an 'Izvestia' interview with Egypt's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Boutros Ghali, on July 10, 1982, said that, "the Egyptian Government wants to improve its relations with Moscow. Moscow was also heartened by Egypt's firm denunciation of Israel's behaviour in Lebanon and Cairo's recall of its Ambassador from Tel Aviv"¹⁴

But renewed Soviet hopes in Egypt seemed very far from being realized. President Mubarak had a different conception of Egypt's role in the Arab world than did his predecessors. Hence cairo opted to play the Russian Card in an effort to signal its displeasure over Washington's policy. But it seemed less likely that the Egyptians would ever allow the reestablishment of the Soviet influence and dominance over national and foreign policy which existed during Nasser's time.

Gorbachev's Presidentship :

However, the Soviet image in the Middle East had begun to improve during the presidentship of Michael Gorbachev. Since Gorbachev came to power in March 1985, Soviet union improved its relations with all the major countries of the Gulf.

"The most important Soviet diplomatic break through with the conservative Arab Gulf states, however, occurred in Kuwait. In 1986, Kuwaiti officials had asked the U.S. to protect their Oil tankers from Iranian attack"¹⁵ Iran attacked Kuwait as a retaliatory measure to prevent Kuwait from providing financial and material support to Iraq. "The Reagan administration initially refused,"¹⁶ because it wanted to protect its secret ties with Iran. After, the refusal of the United States to help Kuwait, Kuwait made the same request to the Soviet Union. This request was agreed in early 1987. The U.S. government then immediately changed its decision and offered to protect all Kuwaiti tankers in order to exclude the Soviet Union from any role in the Gulf. "In the aftermath of the Iran-gate revelations about the U.S. transfer of arms to Iran, Washington was anxious to restore its credibility as the principal protector of the GCC states against Iran."¹⁷

From the Soviet Union's point of view, "the Kuwaiti invitation was an important milestone in Moscow's efforts to improve relations with conservative GCC states."¹⁸ Since mid 70's Kuwaiti's were purchasing weapons from the U.S.S.R. but they were always cautious about their relations with the U.S.S.R. They never moved closer to the Soviet Union. Thus for the first time ever, Kuwait's invitation gave an opportunity to the U.S.S.R. to play an active role in defending

the GCC states - the role that had exclusively belonged to the U.S.A. and the U.K. This move of Kuwait gave an hope to the U.S.S.R. that, other GCC states would also adopt friendlier attitude towards it. Moscow also hoped that this involvement would provide an opportunity for the expansion of Soviet arms sales to Kuwait and the initiation of such arm sales to other GCC states.

However, Moscow deliberately avoided to compete with Washington to be the Superpower in the field of naval vessels. Washington's naval vessel were protecting most of the tankers in the Gulf. Moscow avoided to have its own naval build up in the Gulf because Moscow realized that it would lead to an equal or even greater American naval buildup. Moreover, the Soviet Union did not want to improve its relations with the GCC states at the cost of its relations with Iran. Its first priority was to improve relations with revolutionary Iran. Iran, however, disliked the Russian move of protecting Kuwaiti shipping. This could be proved by the fact that, in May, 1987, a speedboat reportedly operated by Iran's Revolutionary Guards attacked a Soviet freighter. The Soviet Union did not retaliate, instead it neglected the entire incident. Nor did it raise any fuss when another Soviet vessel was also struck in May.

"As the war of nerves between Washington and Teheran escalated during the summer of 1987, the Soviet navy maintained low profile in the Gulf. Suddenly, in early August 1987, the U.S.S.R. and Iran announced a major economic co-operation accord. The Soviet Union agreed to build a pipeline to carry Iranian oil to the Black Sea. An additional connection between the Soviet and Iranian railway systems was also planned"¹⁹

In the summer of 1987, Washington succeeded in its efforts to have a United Nation's Security Council resolution passed asking both sides in the conflict to accept cease fire. Iraq accepted the cease fire but Iran did not. The United State then proposed a Security Council resolution calling for an arms embargo against Iran until it accepted a cease fire. The Soviet Union, however, did not support the move and made its position clear.

Soviet diplomats, instead, tried to persuade Iran and other Arab states that while the U.S.A. was their enemy,,the U.S.S.R. was their friend. And the U.S.S.R. alone could help bring peace to the Gulf. Moscow highlighted the importance of peace between Iran and Iraq. According to the Soviet Union peace was necessary so that the Muslim World could once more focus its united attention on Israel - the common enemy. The Soviet Union pointed to the fact that the continuation of war served the U.S. and Israeli interests by diverting the Muslim attention from the Arab - Israeli cause.

In pressing his peace proposals for both the Gulf War and Arab - Israeli conflict, Gorbachev seemed to be proving that the Soviet Union was the only Superpower that could talk with all conflicting sides and all sides should co-operate with Moscow to resolve the conflicts and thus make way for peace. Gorbachev succeeded in convincing both Arab and Israeli moderate states that Soviet participation could enhance the peace process.

While strengthening the Soviet Union's position in the Gulf and the Middle East, Gorbachev did not pursue any new policies. His policies were similar to those of his

predecessors. The only new policy was the Soviet Union's willingness to talk with Israel. Policies of Gorbachev did not undergo much change but the situation in the Gulf had changed a lot. Previously the Gulf States were wary of its relations with the U.S.S.R. They opposed and objected the U.S.S.R.'s role and existence in the Gulf. However, during, Gorbachev's period they welcomed more Soviet role and were more enthusiastic in pursuing relations with the U.S.S.R.

Change in the attitude of Iran and Iraq :

"In the early 1980's Iran may have been content to remain at odds with the rest of the world".²⁰ By 1986-87, however it changed its stand. It began actively courting the U.S.S.R. Because Iran realized and believed that Soviet military assistance to Iraq would cause obstacles in the path of Iranian victory over Iraq- in the Iran-Iraq war. Thus to prevent Moscow from providing aid to Iraq and to prevent it from co-operating with the U.S.A. Iran provided various incentives to Moscow.

At the same time, that is, in 1987 even Iraq's military situation deteriorated to a considerable degree. This made Iraq increasingly desperate and dependent on the Soviet union. Iraq had an ever stronger incentives to retain friendly relations with the Soviet Union, despite the Soviet overtures to Iran.

The Iranian leaders want improved relations with the U.S.S.R. in order to convince Moscow that it should curtail its support and aid to Iraq and oppose the U.S. efforts to cut off arms to Iran. But, if Iran succeeds in weakening or actually defeating the Baath regime in Iraq, then it would mean danger to both the Superpowers and also the other Gulf States. Also

Iran, would not hesitate to turn its back to Soviet Union, once it achieves a position of dominance. Thus by attempting to increase its power in both Iran and Iraq through supporting both the nations, the U.S.S.R. would actually end up losing almost everything.

Even though Gorbachev's policies achieved greater success in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, he was not in a position to transform that greater influence and success into preponderance in the region. Moscow was able to maintain good relations with Iraq as well as improved relations with the conservative Arab Gulf states and Iran. But it was difficult for Moscow to strengthen its relations with one nation without affecting its relations with the other nation.

Finally, the undoubted growth in the Soviet military power, during the course of the war - or in the past two decades - helped Soviet Union in accomplishing enormous benefits. These benefits were in terms of strategic parity and a capability project force in both contiguous and peripheral areas; from Afghanistan to Ankara. But in the Middle East, the Soviet Union underwent various shocks and traumas. Hence the position of the U.S.S.R. in the Gulf was at times fruitful and at times futile.

Hitherto we have examined the role of U.S.S.R. and the net result of its intervention in Iraq-Iran conflict. And also the attitudes of contending powers, that is, Iran and Iraq and other Arab states regarding U.S.S.R. Now let us turn our attention to the role of the U.S.A. in the Gulf war vis-a-vis the attitude of Iraq and Iran and other Arab states towards U.S. policy in Gulf region.

(B) Intervention of U.S.A. in Iran and Iraq :

"United States diplomacy has been active in the Middle East since the end of World War I". Woodrow Wilson who was the President of the United States sent a commission called 'King Crane' to the Middle East in order to examine the probable consequences of the British Balfour Declaration of 1917. This Declaration had promised a "Jewish Homeland in Palestine".

"World war II created greater interest in the Middle East"²² This time it was regarding the independence of the Jewish Homeland. "The British mandate over Palestine ended on May 15, 1948; and when the independent state of Israel was proclaimed, both the United States and the Soviet Union recognized the new republic the same day, May 18, 1948"²³

Moreover, Middle East has always remained the crucial geographic region as far as American foreign policy is concerned. This was evident from the fact that Middle Eastern affairs were and are often prominently featured in an American Presidential elections.

President Jimmy Carter's Administration and Iran - Iraq Attitude :

"President Jimmy Carter's administration, like those that preceded it, adopted as its primary objective in the Middle East, the termination of the Arab - Israeli conflict. President Carter adopted this objective in order to achieve regional peace, and stability and to ensure United States interests in the region and beyond."²⁴ The Administration adopted the above approach because "Middle East settlement was essential for a more peaceful world. The threat of global confrontation and the risk of nuclear war were real".²⁵ So the

U.S. administration believed, that, it was high time for it to actively intervene in the Middle East. Further their "inaction may also have profound economic consequences."²⁶ Moreover, the special relationship with Israel and the development links with the Arab states also motivated the U.S. "²⁷ To adopt more vigorous role in the Middle East.

One notable factor concerning Jimmy Carter's Administration was that, during his presidency the U.S. government was more preoccupied with the Middle Eastern region than did any other region. This was due to camp David Accord, Iranian seizure of American hostages - a fourteen months drama, Israeli election etc. The camp David Accords seemed to be Jimmy Carter's greatest foreign policy success, while the Iranian seizure of American hostages distracted his administration for more than fourteen months. However, the Israeli elections and the long stalemate in the United States-Iran negotiations provided an excuse for a virtual paralysis of policy during the last year of the Carter administration.

The Iranian Revolution and the Carter Administration :

Although Iranian foreign policy had become increasingly independent on the United States throughout the 1970's, the Shah's period. During this period "the United States became even more closely identified with the regime of Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlevi, probably because of our approval of Iranian foreign policy and our desire to maintain Iranian oil production and export at maximum levels. Although the popular press was often highly Supportive of the Shah, the liberal and highbrow newspapers and magazines"²⁸ were highly critical of

the repressive aspects of the Shah's regime. President Carter's own human rights campaign pointed out to the political conditions within Iran; but the importance of Iran to American interest was thought to be so great and the challenges to the Shah's regime so petty that the administration decided to remain mute and suffer all sorts of embarrassments. From their perspective, they were not unequivocally associated with the Shah's policies, National and Foreign. The Carter administration, with some initial hesitation approved the Iranian - Iraqi agreement, which was made in 1975, to all but liquidate the Kurdish problem. The Administration was also pleased with the Iranian stand of using force to keep the straits of Hormuz open to tankers. The Administration felt uncomfortable when the Shah advocated a more aggressive price strategy for OPEC but it was pleased that he insisted on the highest possible petroleum output. The U.S. government was not at all disturbed by the tensions and rivalries that existed between Iran and Saudi Arabia. However, Saudi policy was calculated to appeal to Washington and to threaten Iran with a diminution of American support.

To some extent, America was worried regarding the Shah's pursuit of irresponsibly perceived goals of regional leadership. However, "his efforts at expanding Iranian influence in the region enhanced regional stability. The Shah was moderating influence on Indo-Pakistani relations. He supported Egypt and more moderate Arab states"²⁹ He was willing to supply petroleum to Israel and thus relieve the United States of a significant obligation. The Shah also helped in restricting the influence of communist oriented

governments in the region. The best example of this was Dhofar rebellion. When the Sultan of Oman was facing the Dhofar rebellion, the Shah sent some of his troops to help subdue the rebellion and thus helped restrict the influence of the communist oriented government of South Yemen. Thus, there are number of reasons why Americans were negligent of the represiveness of Shah's regime.

The regime's invulnerability made the United States feel more comfortable as far as its interests in the region were concerned. "As the Shah's position weakened, the United States came under greater pressure to increase its moral and material support for his regime"³⁰ Shah's weakened position demanded change in the U.S. policy, accordingly the U.S. policy makers began to assess alternative responses. But the policy makers failed to give any constructive policy. Instead they worsened the situation. President Carter was angrily disappointed with the U.S. intelligence regarding the uncertainty of the situation in Iran. The Iranian role was vital and the Shah's position important as far as the United States was concerned. According to the U.S. government there was no alternative to the Shah.

However, the U.S. government failed to pursue any constructive policy to preserve the Shah's government. Instead overestimating, the Shah's repressive strength, the administration asked the Shah to weaken the opposition by making liberalizing reforms"^{31*} This further angered President Carter because he had been misled into believing that a liberal reforms and policies would work.

When the liberal policy failed, the United States adopted another policy towards Iran. "On Dec. 29, 1979, the Shahpur Bakhtiar government was appointed by the Shah to prepare for elections; the Shah left the country shortly thereafter; and the generals were persuaded to stay back with Bakhtiar and uphold constitutional legitimacy"³² This made the U.S. believe "that the revolutionary movement would collapse if its middle class support could be separated from its extremists religious and leftist elements"³³ Once again the U.S. policy makers failed to grasp the situation. This time the U.S. underestimated the revolutionary movement and overestimated the military capacity. The movement was too far advanced and the military was too demoralized and shattered for the Bakhtiar device to work.

Thus the fall of Shah had negative impact on the U.S. relations with other moderate governments in the Middle East - especially Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel. They lost faith in the U.S. government. Because they believed that the U.S. had the capacity to save the Shah's government, but deliberately the U.S. did not do so, Consequently, the American policy towards Iran "had considerable impact, on the Saudi response to Camp David program and on the success of American mediatory efforts to achieve an Israeli - Egyptian agreement"³⁴

The Iranian case, therefore, was the most disturbing case of all, which the Carter's administration faced. In this case the administration lost its initiative in slowly building its relationship with Iran, which was occasioned by a matter quite peripheral to their national interest and marginal to their present concerns in Iran. Never-the-less, the Iranian

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crisis continued a process already defined by a paradoxical and complex combination of American hegemony and American passivity.

Fall of Shah and the reaction of the Middle Eastern governments towards America :

Fall of the Shah's regime drastically affected the American interests in the Middle East. They were severely criticized by the Arab Governments. Iran, which previously played the regional regulatory role, was unable to exert any significant international pressure. Iran's weakened position made some of Arab States play a very aggressive role in the Middle Eastern region. With impotent Iran and with the growing pro-Palestinian sentiment of the revolutionary movement, both Saudi Arabia and Iraq were free to challenge American policy. Furthermore President Assad of Syria was anxious to reduce long standing tensions with the rival Iraqi government. He took a step in that direction which was met with a favourable response in Iraq.

"Egyptian President Sadat's advisers had expected a reluctant acquiescence to the Camp David accords from Saudi Arabia."³⁵ But Cairo miscalculated the Saudi response. "There was considerable discussion among the highest Saudi leaders, but in the end those who distrusted the United States and advocated an 'Arab Policy' prevailed"³⁶ America, then tried to pressurize the Saudi Government, but with no success. The Saudi Government believed that if it yielded to U.S. pressure, that might aggravate inter-Arab disputes, drive the PLO to terrorist extremes, force Assad into the arms of Iraq's then Vice President Saddam Hussein and ultimately open the Gulf to disruptive political currents.

Hence, most of the key Middle Eastern Actors reacted very strongly against the U.S. policy. The scope of the U.S. policy was thus narrowed to two major positions in the Middle East - first, an unswerving but unimaginative support for the bilateral peace process between Egypt and Israel and second, a barely audible insistence on the unobstructed flow of petroleum from the Persian Gulf.

Last Years of Jimmy Carter's Presidency :

Jimmy Carter had some notable diplomatic successes in the region, the Camp David accords and the Israel-Egypt peace treaty but he struggled through the final year of his presidency under the impact of two crucial and shattering events - One, the seizure of the American Embassy in Teheran and second, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

In the final year of Carter's Presidency, the American policies were at all time low. They faced a severe paralysis of their position, which opened the doors of the Middle East for Soviet entry. It allowed the Soviet Union to gain a strategic advantage in weapons. It also subordinated the role of Americans to the resolution of secondary regional issues, thus making things difficult for the incoming administration of Ronald Reagan.

President Reagan's Period :

When President Reagan came to power in 1980, the relations between Iran and America were all time low. On the one hand, Reagan administration was faced with the problem of seizure of U.S. Embassy by the Iranian students fundamentalist.

Reagan

On the other hand, by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

However, U.S. neglected the above two problems. The approach that Reagan Administration adopted towards the Middle East; was drafted by keeping in view the policies of the Soviet Union. The Reagan approach is based on several assumptions; they are as under :

- The Soviet Union is the primary threat to a region which supplies about 35 percent of the oil consumed in the free world economy;
- in order to concentrate on thwarting Moscow's expansionism, Washington should deemphasize efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute;
- Soviet power can best be contained militarily by putting more money and muscle into the Rapid Deployment Force and encouraging a European contribution, even if indirect, to the RDF;
- " a consensus of strategic concerns" should be developed among the countries stretching from Pakistan westward through Saudi Arabia to Egypt and Turkey; and including Israel;
- if a "strategic entity" can be created among these countries, some of the regional states may be persuaded to accept U.S. ground forces - a necessary requirement if the Soviet threat is to be effectively curbed"³⁷

The above mentioned assumptions prove that the Reagan's approach was more directed toward Soviet Union than the warring nations. However, the Reagan Administration's assumptions were never brought into reality. Because most of the Gulf countries deliberately distanced themselves from America; though at times

they asked for the help from America.

In the meanwhile the Reagan Administration succeeded in releasing the hostages, in the year 1981. In the process, the U.S.A. itself was made hostage by the Iranians. However, they could not do much in case of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Further, most of the times the U.S.A. maintained neutrality as far as the Gulf War was concerned. It did not take much interest in the conflict. It's only interest was to control the oil and maintain its military bases in the region. Moreover, it also wanted to contain the spread of Soviet power in the region.

The U.S. policy in the Middle East was marked by inaction. Further they never adopted consistent policy toward the Middle East; they more often proceeded in a fragmentary manner. In the meantime, i.e. in 1986 the Iran contra-affair came to light, in which it was revealed that the U.S.A. provided weapons to the Iranians for the release of U.S. hostages held in Lebanon. This proves the dual standard that Reagan Administration adopted towards the Middle East crisis.

Thus it can be said that, all the Administrations which came to power in the United States never had any set programme toward the Middle East. The subsequent Administrations were affected by the Soviet policies in the Middle East.

Hitherto we have also examined the role of the U.S.A. toward the Middle East. Now let us try and find out the steps taken by UNO to solve the conflict.

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