

## THE GULF WAR AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER

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More than a year ago I was involved in a campaign in Israel against the impending war in the Gulf. Considering the mood of Israelis it was an impossible task. One of our difficulties was to convince people that the war might really happen. We felt that behind the pervasive dismissive attitude lay a great fear. The media played a double game: it reported repeatedly about the availability of various weapons of mass destruction in **Saddam's** arsenal, but it always allayed people's fears by playing down the danger, creating a nerve racking see-saw between alarming and calming. There was also the fear of Israeli retaliation, fuelled by some carefully placed nuclear remarks by government members. Some of us felt that below the serenity lay deep terror.

Some of my friends thought that we ought to amplify the fears and bring them to the surface by detailing the worst scenarios. Others were adamant against building on fear, arguing that this could backfire by pushing people to demand a pre-emptive strike. Indeed, upon the first Scuds most of our support disappeared. Some, usually liberal, literary figures unexpectedly joined with the racist Kahane followers in a demand to use Israeli nukes in a retaliatory strike on Baghdad. Later on, some colleagues, experts on strategic studies, speculated and lamented that Israel lost its deterrence stance due to its inaction. The gas masks distributed during the war are now permanently in our homes and are currently being replaced by a better model.

For some, the Cold War is over. Exterminism seems, for Europeans and North Americans, a nightmare from the past. Thompson and Halliday can set aside, at last, their fine arguments about the structure of the Cold War, the symmetrical or asymmetrical responsibility of the, now deceased, Soviet Union. They can ponder now about the future of CND and END. Western intellectuals will, no doubt, delve into Globalism, will construct and deconstruct New Social Movements, and argue about **multinationalism** and democracy. For others, less fortunate, who live in the **semi-periphery**, in the Middle East in particular, the waning of the core's Cold War has not changed much yet. For us the danger of exterminism has

increased in this interim of the new world order, Actually the term 'Cold War' has always been a misnomer, an incorrect designation, as far as **non-core** countries were concerned. At the turn of the decade, between 1989 and 1990, there was war in 39 states.' For safety's sake, at least for the super powers, lest it becomes all consuming, war was conducted outside – in our sphere, where we were the proxies.

In their introduction to *The New State Of War And Peace*, Michael Kidron and Dan Smith speculate that the new world order '... may, like the old, be well armed and prone to war or, at least, military risk-taking. But there would be two differences. New enemies would draw different lines of conflict and confrontation. And, unlike the Cold War, the new order will not – at least for a time, if ever – threaten total annihilation in total war.' Kidron and Smith obviously think about Soviets and Americans confronting and threatening each other – but these powers never fought each other directly. They interjected themselves into third party conflicts and subsumed these conflicts within their contest. From the bipolar system mentality of the Cold War almost every conflict, **intra-national** and international, was viewed strategically – not in itself or regionally, but in its imagined implications on the bi-polar global balance of power. What is being 'discovered' after the collapse of bi-polarity is that Communism and the Soviet Union are not, nor ever were, behind, or the cause of, many conflicts. As nationalist or fundamentalist regimes clash with the interests of the industrialised world, and as there is no more danger of escalation between the super powers, there is more likelihood of direct western involvement in local conflicts. The fact that these conflicts no longer threaten total global annihilation only increases their likelihood.

How did the Gulf War end? Did it end? Why did it start? What was it about? It had to do with oil, that much is clear. It had to do not so much with production sale or price, for Iraq too, had it stayed in Kuwait, would have also produced and sold, since **Saddam** needed the money even more than Sheik Jabar. It had to do with control. It had to do with safeguarding oil regimes for the West. But to safeguard from whom? Not from the collapsing Soviet Union or from a Soviet allied state, but from fundamentalist Islam and Iraqi nationalism. The Ba'ath regime exterminated the Iraqi Communist Party. By 1984 it renewed its diplomatic relations with the United States which it severed in 1967 as a result of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Iraq acted for itself, but also in Western interests against a previous threat to oil regimes by Iran's Ayatollahs. In the 1980–1988 Iraq-Iran war, the same **Saddam**, cruel and dictatorial as he ever was, was supported and supplied by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, by other Islamic and Arab states as well as by all major Western countries.

The story of Iran's Islamic revolution of 1979 is in a similar vein. The revolution was not pro-soviet. The Ayatollahs' objection to Communism was expressed both by their support of the Afghani rebels against the

Communist regime backed by the Soviet army, and by their suppression of the Tudeh (Iranian Communist Party) and other Marxist movements. The Islamic revolution toppled an oil regime, the autocratic Shah, who had himself been reinstated in a CIA-instigated coup in 1953 against an elected nationalist government which tried to nationalise the oil industry.

The Iran-Iraq Gulf war was not directly related to the bi-polar world order; it was a regional war, its origins preceded the Islamic revolution in Iran and had to do with the way in which the borders of modern Iran and Iraq were drawn by Britain. Charles Tilly is correct in observing that '... colonial boundaries that Europeans had imposed almost without regard to the distribution of people became defended frontiers of post colonial states . . .'. Iran and Iraq have related ethnic-religious or linguistic minorities across each other's border. They also have a dispute over Iraq's narrow access to the sea in the Gulf, similar to the dispute that Iraq has had, since its independence in 1932, with Kuwait over the way the British-drawn borders strategically parcelled out the previous Ottoman province of Basra, and left Iraq without a coastline.

The Gulf War 1991 cannot be understood without its predecessor – the Gulf War 1980–1988. It was the consequence of the consequence of the fundamentalist revolution of 1979 in Iran. That revolution destroyed the central oil regime in the Gulf, on which the West relied to secure its interests in this economically essential zone. Since the withdrawal of Britain from the Gulf in the 1960s, the West assigned the task of chief local guardian to the Shah. Unlike the other oil regimes (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman), Iran was tempted to build a strong and modern army, and the Shah started the White Revolution which was supposed to secularise and modernise Iran. The Iran experiment, a test case to conservative autocratic modernisation theory, in which many Western social scientists were involved, was an attempt to move away from the traditionalist model which prevails in the other oil regimes.

In those states the regime relies on the traditional semi-tribal power structure and tries to preserve it against social change. Oil revenues redistributed through the traditional ruling clans maintain a clientalist consent. This traditional structure – called 'the rentier state'\* – is in essence a politically and economically dependent and weak structure. To prevent the possibility of a military coup most of these countries have a minimal army, and the military forces are organised in different segregated institutions to provide countervailing forces in case of revolt. Oil revenues provide the highest standard of living to part of the population. It is a 'post-modern' consumer society without any productive base – consumption is entirely based on import. There is no indigenous working class, nor a substantial peasantry. The service sector is maintained by foreign workers, temporarily resident, with no citizenship or any political rights, living in

segregation from the relatively small citizenry. This weak state structure means that in a security crisis the regime must depend on external forces.

The religious revolution in Iran created such a danger. The spectre of the export of the revolution threatened the rulers in the area and the Western oil regime. The new Iranian state was not a danger to the West because of its Islamic laws and imposed life style – in that sense it was more of a threat to the large secular section of Iranian society. The danger posed by the Islamic state was that it was a strong state that announced that it did not intend to abide by the existing world order and that it represented a new world order unto itself. The threat by Iran to the West was not a pro-Soviet challenge. Neither was it an economic challenge: no-one knows exactly what is, after all, an Islamic economic system. The threat was of a different sort. The Islamic principle represents the subordination of the market to ideological and political principles. This, plus the fear of the expansion of the sphere of influence of these ideas, was the real threat. Ayatollah Khomeini decreed both the USA and the USSR 'devils'; his involvement in Afghanistan, and Soviet fears of the spillover of fundamentalist Islam into the Soviet Union's large Islamic population, made him no less a threat to the East than to the West. The Iranian revolution was a threat to the bipolar world order by the introduction of another world order, neither Washington's nor Moscow's but International Islam.

1979 was a remarkable year: Khomeini returned to Iran in January. **Saddam** Hussein became president of Iraq in July. Carter ordered the formation of the Rapid Deployment Force to respond to threats especially in the Gulf in October. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December. In January 1980 the Carter 'Doctrine' stated that the United States would use military force to protect its interests in the Gulf.' It is in these events that the roots of the two wars in the Gulf are to be found – and perhaps also the roots of the coming of the second Cold War, as Iranian affairs dominated the election campaign which brought Reagan to **power**.<sup>8</sup>

With the collapse of the Shah there was no other power in the Gulf except Iraq that could stop Iran. Iraq, however, was not among the trusted oil regimes. The Iraqi regime is another species which did not fit the neat bi-polar classification of the world. Initially a state created by the British, it, like Egypt, deposed its King in a military coup in 1958. It became, a decade later, a one-party, the Ba'ath, militarily-ruled dictatorship. The Ba'ath, in Iraq (and in Syria), has borrowed organisational principles from Stalinism and Fascism; it stands for **pan-Arabism**, but in fact, is strongly Iraqi nationalist. Ruling in a personality-cult style, the regime built a strong state. As Iraq too is a large producer of oil, it benefited, like other rentier states in the area, from huge oil revenues which were used to bolster the army and the state-party apparatus; but it also created a clientelist welfare state, a fairly good secular education system, agricultural **modernisation**, as well as state-owned strategic industries.

**Saddam** did not start the war with Iran on behalf of the US. He did it in order to take advantage of what, he thought, was a weakening and disintegrating Iranian army due to the revolution and to the stoppage of supplies by the US. Iraq's aims were nationalist: to reverse concessions wrenched from Iraq by Iran during the Kurdish revolt over the **Shatt-al-Arab**, Iraq's only outlet to the sea; and to regain control over Khuzistan – an area inside the Iranian border of Arabic speaking population. Iraq was also afraid that the Islamic revolution might spread among its large Shi'ite population in the south.

The war which was started from Iraqi nationalist considerations served, however, the interests of the pro-Western oil regimes and the two super powers. As long as the two major military forces in the area were occupied in sapping each other's strength, they could not afford to foment other major troubles. The two regimes, which did not fit into the bi-polar structure but were independent because of oil, were therefore 'helped' by both super powers and their allies to destroy themselves. The helpers, meanwhile, pocketed hefty profits from arms' sales. The Soviet Union first supplied Iran and then supplied Iraq, the West supplied both all along. We know now that US intelligence helped to avert an Iranian victory against Iraq and allowed private sales of US arms from as early as spring 1982.<sup>1</sup> The US support for Iran was also started earlier than had been thought, only a few months after Reagan took office in 1981. The help was covert and illegal, without the knowledge of the legislative branch (the Iran-Contra affair), via a third party, Israel, which had its own axe to grind against Iraq and seized the opportunity to destroy Iraqi nuclear installations in June 1981. The result of this help was to prolong the war and thus make it more expensive and more costly in human lives. Another effect was a build up of armies and weaponry on a scale and sophistication never before seen in semi-peripheral armies.

Iraq, however, was not a dependable ally, and this worried the US and Saudi Arabia. It was Iraq which, after being pushed back by Iran in 1982, started the attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf, threatening the international flow of oil. There was little the US could do about this at the time. The Rapid Deployment Force was in its embryonic stage. The US now needed an alternative infrastructure other than Iran to be able to move large forces quickly and to prepare for battle: ports, airfields, electronic surveillance, control and command posts and stored equipment. It was not until 1982 that the Saudis were willing to pay and host the Americans. What started as the sale of five AWACS planes developed secretly under Reagan and the new king, Fahd, into the most sophisticated battle infrastructure anywhere outside the USA. Construction ~~was not~~ completed until 1990 at an estimated total staggering cost of \$200 billion.'

Three points follow from this analysis: 1) With the collapse of the Shah there was no proxy powerful enough to defend the Gulf oil regimes – and

the USA had to get involved directly. The Iraq-Iran war provided the interval necessary to get organised. 2) US performance in the Gulf war in 1991 depended on the preexistence of a mammoth infrastructure and could not be replicated instantly in many other areas. 3) The size and cost of the Gulf infrastructure, described as 'the single greatest investment in [military] infrastructure in the history of **man**',<sup>8</sup> coupled with the continuity of turmoil in the area, means a long term future US presence in the Gulf and commitment to the Saudi regime – since its collapse, and the takeover of these installations by an 'unruly' regime, would threaten the stability of the whole area.

The end of the Iran-Iraq war was long overdue. It had run its course by June 1982, when the Iraqi invasion of Iran was repulsed. Iraq proposed a ceasefire, but Iran, now backed by arms from the US, declined. A stratagem was devised at this point, first by Iraq (September 1982) and then by Iran (May 1984), to involve 'Oil' in the war. Hitting ships, loading facilities, refineries, was to hit the enemy's economic ability to carry on with the war – but also to cause worry to the powers 'out **there**', and to make them also want to end the war. Instead, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia increased their pumping of oil, insulating the world economy from the effects of the war. Attacks on shipping were not confined to Western interests. The first superpower vessel to be hit was Soviet – by Iranian speed boats, followed shortly, in May 1987, by a missile (French) attack by Iraq, on the *USS Stark*, killing 32 American sailors. Another front opened by Iran was to attack clandestinely Kuwait and Saudi Arabia – Iraq's backers. The most famous was the attack on the Grand Mosque in Mecca in July 1987, but there were many others before. Bombardment of cities was started by Iraq: ironically, the Scuds were provided by the Soviets but the mobile launchers, the same as those used later against Riyadh and **Tel-Aviv**, were purchased from the USA. Gas, missile and nuclear technologies were sold to Iraq (and Iran) mainly by the West.

The last phase of the war, 1987–1988, was characterised by the US being drawn, more and more, into direct hostilities and military action against Iran: the US starts escorting Kuwaiti ships, Iran mines the Gulf, US forces attack Iranian vessels, Iran attacks a US tanker; in retaliation the US destroys Iranian offshore oil rigs, Iranian mining continues, the US attacks more oil rigs and Iranian military vessels and expands escort to other nationalities' ships in the Gulf. In a rebuke to Reagan's statement on the limits of sovereign actions of governments, **Khomeini** declares, on January 7th 1988, that the government has the power unilaterally to revoke any lawful agreements that are 'in contravention of the interests of Islam and the **country**'.<sup>9</sup> Saudi Arabia severs diplomatic relations with Iran in April. On July 3rd the *USS Vincennes* shoots down Iranian Air flight 655 over the Straits of Hormuz; 290 civilian passengers are killed. On the 18th of July Iran accepts UN resolution 598 calling for a ceasefire and the war stops on

the 20th of August 1988. By the end of the war it seemed as if the US, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were on the same side – against Iran – and that the USA was on a war path with Iran. The Soviet Union was not on any side in the dispute: it too stood for the right for free navigation in the Gulf, but was already deep in internal trouble.

The war which could have taken place between Iran and the US did not happen; instead it was waged against Iraq. Maybe it was because the Iranians knew when to back down. Perhaps, and this is just a speculation, they had more sense than **Saddam**, two years later, to understand that the US was 'after them' and was looking for an excuse to deliver a mortal blow to a regime which caused the US much trouble and embarrassment. After all, **Saddam** had reason to believe that the oil regimes and the US owed him gratitude for 'sacrificing himself' for the sake of the world oil order. He too knew that there was nobody else who could have engaged the Iranians at that point. Perhaps this explains his anger with Kuwait's arrogance – demanding back the debt which he owed them! Egypt performed much lesser services for the US during the 1991 war yet half of its debt to the US, the World Bank and the Gulf states was erased. **Saddam** could reasonably have hoped that the Saudis and Kuwait would return to their OPEC quotas and stop lowering oil prices by over-production, so that Iraq could recoup some lost revenues from the war years. He had reason, perhaps, to believe that his dispute with Kuwait over the ownership of the Rummeilla oil field, an old dispute, could now be settled on better terms. There was something strange about the Kuwaiti arrogant, self confident, stance to their negotiations with Iraq prior to the invasion. All this does not exonerate **Saddam**. The way he let himself be manipulated into this situation is extraordinary.

In 1992 Iran is now the stronger power, and rearming. Can it, after the Iraqi experience, feel safe that another adventure will not be schemed against its Islamic regime in due course? Maybe **Saddam** still has a role to play in the next act in this drama? Of late there have been **rumours** about a second strike against Iraq, **rumours** about a possible action against Libya. Sudan is in the grip of a fundamentalist group and the media claims that it has now become the latest haven for international terrorism. What about Algeria, where democracy has been prevented from taking its fundamentalist course? Tunis is straining to halt fundamentalism as is Jordan and the PLO. Egypt recently had to forbid a publication as blasphemous in order to placate its fundamentalist movement and so even does Saudi Arabia. Lebanon is not quiet yet, there too Shi'ite pro-Iran movements are still very active. On the secular nationalist pole Syria's **Assad**, more careful than **Saddam**, has not yet become a reliable ally of the United States.

In other words, even after the Gulf War, the Middle East remains the most dangerous region in the world, not least, of course, because of the continuing ramifications of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The strategic importance of the Middle East to the West made it the major recipient and

purchaser of arms in the world. The oil revenues and the Israeli-Arab conflict were – and remain – the major causes for this arms build up. The result is the existence of some of the largest armies and the most technologically advanced arsenals outside the major powers. Nor did the end of the Cold War put an end to nationalist strife in the area. Although the modes and scale of the Israeli-Arab conflict were greatly enhanced by the rivalry between the superpowers it does not have its roots in the Cold War but precedes it.

A major shift towards the West among the Arab states confronting Israel started long before the collapse of the Soviet Union. The **Israeli-Egyptian** peace accord of 1979 was part of the US containment policy towards the Soviet Union as it removed the most important Arab military force from the conflict's power equation. By doing this, the US neutralised the ability of the Soviet-backed Arab countries to conduct war against Israel. Israel, now under the ever more militantly nationalist government of Begin, utilised this peace for intensified absorption and settlement of the 1967 occupied territories. The resistance of the Palestinians was dealt with by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. This was meant to destroy the power base of the **PLO** and was colluded in by the Reagan regime which perceived the PLO as a 'terrorist' danger to the New World Order. The Israelis also offered the US their services to restore the old order in civil war-torn Lebanon. Israel failed to restore the Maronites to power, but it managed to deal the PLO a major blow. Ironically, instead of Palestinian influence in the south of Lebanon, there arose the Iranian backed fundamentalist 'Hezbollah' organisation which extended its influence in this mainly Shi'ite populated territory. American marines who landed in Lebanon in 1983 failed where the Israelis failed. But Syria came to an agreement with the US about quelling the civil war in return for control over most of Lebanon (the south remains under Israeli control). The continuation of the improvement in relations between Syria and the US was seen in Syria's participation in the allied forces against **Saddam** and in its taking part in the peace process with Israel.

The PLO, weakened after its withdrawal from Lebanon and at a political dead end with the Intifada, had made its bid towards the US in 1988 by renouncing the armed struggle and by its willingness to recognise Israel in return for a formula which would eventually lead to a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. But while Syria has managed to reap some tangible results from its rapprochement with the US, the PLO has not. Palestinian frustration was expressed in an anti-American position during the Gulf War. Israel has gained most, in the short run, from the collapse of the Soviet Union. First and foremost, the huge wave of **450,000** Soviet Jewish immigrants was the first demographically significant addition to the ratio of Jews to Arabs in more than two decades. This wave has sowed panic among Palestinians and has increased Israeli resistance to a **compro-**



mise. Second, the collapse of the Soviet bloc and Soviet influence in the world has brought the renewal and establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and many countries which either never had relations with Israel, or severed their relations with it after **1967**. Israel is no longer the pariah among nations that it was, and this without any changes in its policies. The new situation was best demonstrated in the rescinding of the UN resolution which equated Zionism with racism. As a result, Israel feels confident it may persist in its settlement policy and reject any withdrawal from the occupied territories. In line with American requirements for the New World Order, it participates in 'peace talks' but has hitherto manoeuvred successfully to forestall and delay any progress. Both the elections in Israel and the elections in the US will effectively postpone any significant pressure on Israel until **1993**.

While Israel appears to go along with the US, it has its own nationalist agenda which in the longer run is not consistent with the stabilisation of the Middle East. Moreover, the persistence of the Israeli-Arab conflict is a major factor in the continuation and escalation of an arms race in the area. Any agenda which is ostensibly part of the new world order's orientation towards disarmament cannot ignore Israel's nuclear project – which is far more advanced than any in the area. While Israel is quick to blame others for selling technologies for arms production to Iraq and other countries in the area, it is itself the main beneficiary of such sales, as well as the major arms producer in the area. Israel is now building a second nuclear strike capability, including anti-ballistic missiles (financed by the Star War project), its own military satellite, and submarines capable of carrying nuclear missiles (built and financed by Germany). Israel's chemical and bacteriological capabilities are also second to none in the Middle East. Any pressure by the US on Arab and Islamic countries in the area to disarm, which does not include Israel, is merely hypocritical. Arabs have rightly complained that while the US discourse on the New World Order is couched in universalistic terms it is not applied universally.

The Soviet Union or Communism have never been at the heart of the Gulf disputes. These only obfuscated another issue which, with the disappearance of the Cold War, is becoming very clear. At issue is the state and its position in the international capitalist order. To put it differently: the problem is 'the taming of the state', the lesser states, that is, and their subordination to the needs and rules of the World Market. The era of the bi-polar world order coincided with the period of establishment of the majority of the states of the world. The dismantling of the colonial order and the epoch of National Liberation started between the two world wars; however, since World War II it has gained momentum to produce, for the first time in history, a world of states, or, the state on a world scale. The concomitance of the process of National Liberation with the Cold War influenced both: National Liberation became part of the content and

meaning of the Cold War, and vice versa, the Cold War influenced the forms of the new states and their behaviour internally and externally.

The existence of the two political systems in global competition—with an ability for Mutually Assured Destruction—gave many new states a certain leeway and freedom of behaviour. They could find shelter, or at least support—political, economic and military—in the fold of the other bloc. At the same time, the ability of each superpower to impose uniformity on those within its sphere was limited by the competition between the superpowers and the possibility of switching sides. Within each bloc there evolved a cluster of 'core' states and 'peripheral' states. The core states were the ones that could become a *casus belli* between the superpowers; on the other hand, 'core' states were expected to resemble more uniformly the political and economic blueprint of the hegemonic power within their bloc. They had less freedom of internal change and mutation—lest the change be suppressed. States on the rim of the blocs varied quite a lot. Internal and regional conflicts and the need for credit, or all three, were the main dynamic forces which pushed new states towards one super power or another. In all, bi-polarity made possible a world zoo of states with a wide variety of species. This plethora, itself an outcome of the Cold War, has been perceived, however, as an outcome of 'Independence' and created fierce expectations in many new states of norms of freedom of the state, internally towards its own people, and externally towards other states, as an unrestricted sovereign.

This belief in the 'rights of states', was pursued by some regimes more vigorously than by others. These regimes, despite their often self proclaimed 'socialisms' were first and foremost Statist and Nationalist. Many internal policies, such as nationalisation of natural resources, state monopolies, a large state economic sector, agrarian reforms, health, housing and education projects, state regulated markets, mass mobilisation and one party systems were expedient 'Strong State' building strategems. These 'rights of states' often clashed with 'rights of the markets' and produced tensions or confrontations between these regimes and the main capitalist countries. Within a bi-polar conception of the world this was taken by many western socialists as a vindication of the 'progressive' nature of these regimes and of the need to defend them. This attitude which had its heyday in the 1960s in Western Maoism and Third **Worldism** still exists but it has become much weaker in the absence of a 'socialist bloc'. 'Markets' express disagreements with states through investment, loans and mercantile choices. After the Second World War, through the Bretton Woods regime, more powerful tools of international monetary control over states were created. These mechanisms, however, necessitated the participation and involvement of states. Since the 1970s, because of the growing debt-crisis, the IMF and the World Bank, controlled by the industrialised capitalist states, became powerful tools of controlling states

and their international socio-economic policies. The GATT and Free Trade agreements further restricted the rights of states as free economic actors. The UN and its various organisations also serve the function of limiting intra- and inter- state actions. The UN, however, depends on states and its weakness since 1945 to the end of the 1980s was itself a reflection of the divided bi-polar world order. The self-neutralising effects of the Cold War on the ability of the UN to reach decisions and to implement them left states much leeway and freedom of action."

All these tools were not sufficient to safeguard 'rights of markets' against states as they lacked sharp teeth – the compulsory aspect associated with coercive ability. That is one of the reasons why capital remains, in the last instance, dependent even in the epoch of supranational and multinational corporations, on states. When it comes to enforcement there is still no substitute. Supra-national interests lack an autonomous political apparatus; they must rely on the might of states to work on their behalf. Although the state, historically, precedes capitalism, capitalism works through states and, hitherto, has not been able to dispense with their services."

Despite the emphasis on economic measures to bring maverick states back in line, the major capitalist states never flinched from showing their muscle. As a matter of fact, after a lull in the 1970s, as a result of Vietnam, they escalated their overt military activities against other states in the 1980s: the US in Lebanon, Grenada, Bolivia, Libya, Iran and Panama; France in Lebanon, against Libya in Chad, in New Caledonia; Britain against Argentina. All these operations were against semi-peripheral or peripheral countries and were not directly related to bi-polar disputes. Moreover, they were taken against states within the rim of their own sphere or against regimes not associated with the other superpower. Operations against states within the other superpower's sphere tended to be covert.

With the collapse of the Soviet bloc the conditions which made possible a certain pluralism of forms of states have changed. The capitalist countries do not need any more to contain themselves and the pressure for disciplining and reforming the behaviour of third world states has increased. The direction of the demands being raised is to curtail the legitimacy, the ability and the effects of the use of force by small and medium states in international relations. These refer to economic or territorial gains by force, to the ability to purchase or produce arms, in particular arms of mass destruction and to the use of covert military operations against other states (state terrorism). Another direction allegedly sought for the New World Order is to pressure states to respect the human rights of their populations and to push towards democratic regimes.

These directions, if pursued, will erode two aspects of the idea of sovereignty: the ability of the state to wage war and the limitation of the legitimacy of the use of coercion by the state internally. These, coupled

with economically enforced policies of self-regulating markets via the IMF and the World Bank, and further extensions of free trade agreements, forecast a world of territorial states but of states devoid of most of the powers attached to the idea of nationalism and national self determination.

Furthermore, these ideas, noble as they may appear to be, do not pertain equally to all states. They will amount to taking away powers fiercely coveted and hard-won by many new states. These policies will be viewed by many states as the further concentration and centralisation of force, along with wealth, in the hands of a few rich capitalist states, increasing inequality and diminishing the chances of others to improve their standing in this hierarchy of states. Of all the states who will resist these measures, the most effective ones will be regimes which have the economic means to invest heavily in amassing power to build strong states. Some of them are in the Middle East; and Iraq is likely to be one of them.

#### NOTES

1. M. Kidron, D. Smith: *The New State of War and Peace*, N.Y. 1991, p. 23.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
3. C. Tilly: 'War and State Power' In *Middle East Report* July–August 1991, p. 38.
4. H. Beblawi, G. Luciani (eds.): *The Rentier State*, London, 1987; G. Salame (ed.): *The Foundation of the Arab State*, London, 1987; B. Berberoglu (ed.): *Power and Stability in the Middle East*, London, 1989.
5. C. F. Doran, S. W. Buck: *The Gulf Energy and Global Security*, Boulder, 1991; C. A. Kupchan: *The Persian Gulf and the West- The Dilemmas of Security*, London, 1987.
6. Doran and Buck, *op.cit.*
7. *The New York Times*, Jan. 26th, 1992, p1 + 4.
8. S. Armstrong: 'Eye of the Storm' In *Mother Jones*, Nov–Dec 1991, pp. 31–35.
9. Doran and Buck, *op.cit.* p. 217.
10. See, for instance, R. Vernon and D. L. Spar, *Beyond Globalism*, N.Y. 1989; C. Chase-Dunn: *Global Formation*, Camb, 1989.
11. See debate on N. Harris's *National Liberation*, London, 1990; in *International Socialism* No. 50, 51, 53, 1991.