

LESSONS OF WAR : THE GULF-CRISIS AND THE UN'S ROLE

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INTRODUCTION

The Gulf crisis, the subsequent war and its sequel brought into sharp focus several issues of importance to students of international law and international relations alike. Additionally, there arose the matter of ethics and morality in international behaviour following this sad but significant event in international politics.

The annexation and occupation of Kuwait by Iraq are not matters which can be condoned as acceptable international behaviour, regardless of the provocations, claims and counter-claims that litter the history of Kuwait-Iraq relations. To ignore or be indifferent to Iraq's conduct signifies a return to the law of the jungle in inter-State conduct internationally.

Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990 and occupied it. The Secretary General's peace initiative failed. Then the U.N. Security Council by Resolution 677, of November 1990, condemned the Iraqi attempt to alter the Kuwaiti demographic composition, and also added Resolution 678 on January 15, 1991, which set a deadline for Iraqi withdrawal.¹

Nevertheless, a few hours after the dawn of 15 January, 1991, America declared war against Iraq in pursuance of Resolution 678. President George Bush asserted that the Gulf-War would be America's last war because thereafter the New World Order (*Pax Americana*) would make wars unnecessary. Saddam Hussein was even more resolute when he readied himself to face "the mother of all battles". With such intransigence on both sides the deadly war began.

January 15, 1993, is the second anniversary of the Gulf-War. Even on this day the fears of a possible resumption of hostilities by the Allied forces against Iraq, which disregards the U.N. resolutions requiring Iraq to de-nuclearize its territory, have not disappeared. In this context, and in the face of the continuing and horrendous war in the former Yugoslavia,² the fratricidal attacks by the

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