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THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

AbbyMun 2022

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Director's letter

Dear Delegates,

My name is Michael Xie, and I would like to formally welcome you to the Historical Crisis Committee (HCC). Having started my MUN career in grade 7, this will be my third year of participation in Model UN. Serving alongside me will be your Chair, Daniel and Assistant Director, Carla Nino—as your dias team, we are all ecstatic to meet you.

Ever since attending my first MUN conference in 2019, I have been welcomed to a community full of inspiring people. Not only has my love for public speaking been reinvigorated, I have also met countless new people who have tremendously impacted me. I genuinely hope you can make the best out of ABBYMUN 2022, working with fellow delegates, engaging in fruitful debate, and enjoying the intense yet fun atmosphere.

For this committee, we will be traveling back in time to a pivotal moment of international history- *The Persian Gulf War*. Marked by a period of fear, unprecedented tensions, and political turmoil involving a world superpower, it is up to you to lead your bloc to success. The Dias team has spent numerous hours preparing the committee and we hope to keep this committee exciting and challenging for our delegates.

The paramount purpose of this background guide is to provide you convenient access to the fundamental information and context of our topic. However, being an advanced crisis committee, we encourage you to go beyond what is discussed here and conduct your own research. Should you have any questions or concerns about the committee or topic, please feel free to contact me anytime via the committee email hcc.abbymun@gmail.com—this will also be where you submit your position papers. I sincerely hope that you can make the best of this conference and wish you the best luck in your research and preparations.

Best Regards,

Michael Xie

Director of the Historical Crisis Committee (HCC)—ABBYMUN 2022

Committee Overview

Taking place in the early 1990's, this crisis committee is composed of a diverse body of delegates, with the most emphasis being placed on the leaders of the US-Led Coalition and Iraq. The gulf war is often regarded as one of the most tense times in the late 90's, as millions of citizens were put on edge due to the uncertainty of their future. This committee is tailored for experienced delegates who are comfortable taking initiative.

Positions that delegates hold during the committee will not change, but alongside directives created by the dais team, plans of action are bound to evolve throughout the crisis. While members of the coalition will hold a firm anti-Iraq stance throughout the historical portion of the crisis, their plan for a diplomatic resolution may change after the invasion of Kuwait. By this same logic, the people holding each position will also change several times during the crisis, and the speaking skills of each delegate will be tested by their accurate portrayal of the characters that they must represent. Additionally, this means that delegates may choose to assassinate others, forcing the targeted delegate to change their speaking style or alter their policy.

Although position papers are not mandatory, they are mandatory to be considered for an award. Moreover, writing a position paper enables delegates to grasp a deeper understanding of their stance.

Topic Introduction

Often regarded as one of the most efficient US military victories, the Gulf War started in August, 1990 and ended after a ceasefire was called on February 28, 1991. On August 2nd, 1990, Iraq officially invaded Kuwait. Due to the formidable size of their military that invaded Kuwait, the city was overtaken in the matter of 2 days. Whilst the Kuwait military had only 20,000 troops and next to no heavy machinery, the Iraqi army invaded with over 100,000 personnel, hundreds of tanks, and thousands of artillery pieces. Despite the Kuwait military's determined spirit, Iraq was able to destroy or capture the majority of their air bases and killed upwards of 4200 soldiers. Just two days after the start of the invasion, Iraq had complete control of Kuwait.

Any course of events could lead to catastrophe— this conflict is already almost at its peak of tension and crises. You must utilize your best diplomatic skills and imagination in order to attempt to resolve the conflict, with minimal bloodshed, if possible. Throughout the conference, ensuring that your actions are the right thing to do are crucial; in this conflict, any small decision could lead to major problems.

Current Crises Update

The time is set to the early months of 1990. Iraq has already emerged from the almost decade long war against Iran. Whilst they were victorious, the nation was sunken in debt and was at the peak of its post-war economic crises. Unable to repay the 37 billion dollars, Iraq demands that its debt is forgiven. Unheard by both Kuwait and the UAE, Saddam Hussein became enraged and threatened to reignite a dispute over the long-standing question of ownership of the Warba and Bubiyan islands. Moreover, Iraq has accused Kuwait and the UAE of breaking quotas set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, resulting in Iraq losing billions of dollars in oil exports. At the same time, Iraq-US diplomatic relations are deteriorating at an alarming rate. The US and Israel have also been accused of deliberately lowering oil prices. At this point, the world is at a peak of tension, with

international relations being at a low. Saddam Hussein is verbally threatening Kuwait, but has not commenced its invasion yet. It is up to you delegates to determine the fate of Kuwait and the rest of the world.

Topic History

Iraq emerged from the 1980–1988 Iran–Iraq War with its state intact and a heightened sense of national pride, but laden with enormous debts. Iraq owed \$37 billion to Gulf creditors in 1990 after borrowing heavily to fund the war effort. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein called on the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait to cancel the Iraqi debt they held, saying that the loans should be viewed as compensation for Iraq's defending of the Arabian Peninsula against Iranian expansionism, but his demands went unheeded. Saddam Hussein's decision to issue threats against Kuwait, Iraq's wealthy but militarily weak neighbor, was influenced by the Gulf states' refusal to forgive Iraq's war debts.

After Kuwait rejected Saddam's request for debt relief, he threatened to reignite a dispute over the long-standing question of ownership of Warba and Bubiyan islands, *to which Iraq ascribed importance because of the secure access they afforded to its ports on the Khawr 'Abd Allah—the waterway to the Persian Gulf that remained the only possible alternative to the closed Shatt Al-'Arab which was cluttered with debris from the Iran-Iraq War.*

The disputes over the Bubiyan Island and The Warba islands had been at the center of a long history of territorial disputes between Iraq and Kuwait. When Britain ended its protectorate over Kuwait in 1961, then Iraqi Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Qasim declared Kuwait to be an "integral part of Iraq." Iraq threatened to exercise sovereignty over Kuwait, but the consistent presence of British troops in Kuwait forced the Iraqis to retreat. Subsequent administrations abandoned this claim by recognizing Kuwait's independence, but Baathist Iraq never formally recognized a common border between the two countries.

Still, there were no major border disputes until 1990, when Iraq was in the throes of the postwar economic crises. In July, Saddam accused Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates of breaking with Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) production quotas, overproducing crude for export, driving down prices and depriving Iraq of major oil revenues. Moreover, Saddam Hussein claimed that Kuwait was stealing oil from the Rumayla oil field that straddles the Iraq-Kuwait border. He also demanded that Kuwait cede control of Bubiyan and Warbah islands to Iraq.

Relations between the United States and Iraq deteriorated during this period. Iraq accused the US and Israel of deliberately weakening Iraq by encouraging Kuwait to lower oil prices. When Iraq began to threaten Kuwait in early July 1990, the United States commenced operations in the Gulf to warn Iraq against military action against the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. Despite this demonstration by U.S. forces, President George H.W. Bush pursued appeasement policies against Saddam Hussein in hopes of easing the Iraqi regime and policies. On April 12, 1990, he sent a delegation of US Senators led by Senator Robert Dole to meet with Hussein. Senator Dole delivered a message from the White House indicating that the US wanted better relations with Iraq. A letter from President Bush to Saddam delivered by U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie on July 27 echoed this sentiment.

Timeline of Events

September 12, 1980

The Iran-Iraq conflict officially begins; the result is an almost decade-long war.

August 20, 1988

The Iran-Iraq war ends, with Iraq being victorious. Although the country is at a peak of national pride, it also faces a severe post war economic crisis. Iraq later demands for its debt to be forgiven, however they are unheard.

April 12, 1990

President Bush sends a delegation of US Senators led by Senator Robert Dole to meet with Hussein. Senator Dole delivered a message from the White House indicating that the US wanted better relations with Iraq.

May 28-30, 1990

Hussein asserts oil overproduction by Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates is "economic warfare" against Iraq.

Early July, 1990

The United States commenced operations in the Gulf to warn Iraq against military action against the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait.

July 15-17, 1990

Iraq accused Kuwait of stealing oil from the Rumaylah oil field on Iraq-Kuwait border and warned of military action.

July 27, 1990

U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie delivers a message from President Bush to Saddam Hussein. His message echoes the sentiments shown by the US delegation in April.

Blocs

US-Led Coalition (USA, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, Egypt, and 35 other nations)

The US-Led Coalition consisted of 39 nations from multiple different continents, of which 28 contributed troops. These countries worked vigorously in conjunction with the UNSC in order to avert Iraq from engaging in conflict with Kuwait. Prior to the Iraqi military incursion of Kuwait, this coalition strived to resolve the conflict diplomatically. However, following this event, they were forced to engage in military conflict with Iraq—prominently in Operation Desert Storm, which ensued Operation Desert Shield. The US-Led Coalition, often referred to as the Coalition of the Willing, also formed a UN Special Commission committee which focused on the developments throughout the Gulf war

Iraq

Prior to the invasion of Kuwait, Iraq had just emerged from the 1980–1988 war against Iran. Although its state was intact and the country was at a peak of national pride, they were laden with significant debt—a sum exceeding 37 billion dollars. Despite their efforts to call upon the UAE and Kuwait to cancel their wartime debts, they were given no response. In retaliation, Saddam threatened to reignite a dispute over the long-standing question of ownership of Warba and Bubiyan islands. Later in 1990, during the peak of its post war economic crises, Iraq accused the UAE and Kuwait of

breaking quotas with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. US-Iraq relations rapidly declined. Soon after, Iraq invaded Kuwait by force, and easily overpowered the country within hours.

Guiding Questions

- 1) Prior to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, what peaceful resolutions could have been considered by the US and other coalition nations?
- 2) How would the US and other nations respond had they anticipated the invasion of Kuwait?
- 3) What were the effects of the Iran-Iraq war on the gulf war?
- 4) In what ways did the UN's policies affect the outcome of the gulf war?

Further Reading

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Wxj-xCiay0>

Provides a general overview of the gulf war and the background behind the period.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/gulf-war>

Provides insight on the ecological effects of the gulf war.

<https://tnsr.org/2021/02/the-gulf-wars-afterlife-dilemmas-missed-opportunities-and-the-post-cold-war-order-undone/>

Provides information on the lasting impacts of the gulf war and also discusses missed opportunities.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=FdxkWTYKYCE>

Provides information on the massive role that the United Nations played in the gulf war.

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