

HISTORICAL UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (1986)

Esteemed Delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you all to the UFRGSMUN 2008 Historical United Nations Security Council. In its 6th edition UFRGSMUN brings you back to 1986 in order to discuss the situation between Iran and Iraq. Aiming to prevent further clashes and additional losses we invite you to join efforts and, perhaps, make history more venerable. Our team has been working very hard so as you can embark in this journey back to the past and take the most of this experience.

This year the chair is composed by students who have a common passion for foreign affairs, especially in what concerns the world's security. Paula Lazzari is one of our directors, currently attending her 6th semester of International Relations. She first participated as a staff member in a UFRGS Model United Nations last year as an assistant-director at the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL). Her previous engagement in UFRGSMUN happened in 2006, when she was assigned as the delegate from Turkey at that same committee.

Tiago Estivallet Nunes has also been a staff member of UFRGSMUN since last year. He was one of the assistant-directors of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), and this year he is one of the directors of HUNSC. At present, he is enrolled in the 8th semester of International Relations at UFRGS and cultivates an enthusiasm for security matters. Previously, he also took part of MUNs as a delegate, representing Algeria and Tanzania in the UFRGSMUN Security Council, respectively in the 3rd and 4th editions of the model. In 2008 he represented the United States of America at the Historical Committee in the Americas Model United Nations (AMUN).

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We sincerely hope you have a remarkable experience here in Porto Alegre, and that this simulation gives you the opportunity to improve even more your debating and negotiating skills as well as provides you with all the challenge and knowledge acquirement you may be expecting.

Even though we have worked really hard to provide you with a comprehensive view of the conflict, this study guide shall be considered only the starting point of your preparation. Taking this as a basis for further research, our team strongly encourages you to seek additional information in different sources. Furthermore, we urge you all check our website (<http://www.ufrgs.br/ufrgsmun>) regularly through which you will get informed about the developments in our conference. Do not hesitate in contacting us in case of any doubts!

At last, for realism purposes, from here on, this study guide must be seen from the point of view of 1986. Moreover, facts subsequent to 21 March 1986 shall not be taken into consideration. Looking forward to meeting you in March!

Yours faithfully,

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UNSC'S GENERAL BACKGROUND

Created on October 24th, 1945, the Security Council is considered the most important organ of the United Nations (UN) system – the only one able to make decisions which are binding upon nations. Primarily dealing with the maintenance of the world's peace and security, as stated in Chapter V of the UN Charter, the Council has faced great challenges in its more than 40 years of existence.

Reflecting the post-World War II scenario, it was composed of eleven members in its inception, five of them being permanent – namely the Republic of China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, with the prerogative of vetoing resolutions if they deem necessary. The number of members was expanded to fifteen in 1965. Besides the five permanent members, the others are elected for two-year terms, by the General Assembly, according to an equitable geographic distribution as well as to the Members' contributions to the maintenance of peace and security in the international scenario. At present, the non-permanent members are: Australia, Bulgaria, Congo, Denmark, Ghana, Madagascar, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.

Moreover, the Presidency of the Council is held by its members in rotation order following the English alphabetical listing of states, being granted one month each. Additionally to its members, any other Member State of the United Nations may take part, without right of vote, in the discussions of any issue brought before the Council whenever the latter judges the matter regards to that specific Member.

When dealing with threats to peace and security, the Council tends to plead with the parties to reach peaceful agreements, further investigating and mediating the conflicts whenever considered necessary. Even though the peaceful settlement of the conflicts is always considered primary, the Council also holds the right of action under Chapter VII, which states that it has the power to decide what measures shall be taken in order to maintain or restore peace and security – including the use of force.

1986 – THE SITUATION BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ

By Paula Lazzari, Tiago Estivallet Nunes, Christiano Cruz Ambros and Fabrício Brugali Dreger.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. The Gulf Region

Since the beginning of civilization in the Gulf, the dynamic geopolitics of the region has led the territories, which became to be what we currently know as the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Iraq, to have several animosities. First of all, Iran is the inheritor of the Persian Empire, while Iraq is the successor of the Babylonian Empire. In the sixth century BCE,¹ Mesopotamia was subjugated by and subsumed into the Persian Empire for nearly four centuries. Later then, Alexander the Great conquered the region, placing it back under Macedonian rule for nearly two centuries. Along with the previous transformations, the Arab conquest of the region, in the seventh century BCE, changed significantly the political, social and religious composition of the region as a whole.

Mesopotamia, currently Iraq, became the centre of the huge Arab Empire and one of the main pillars for the reproduction and dissemination of Arabic culture and Islam. On the other hand, Persia, currently Iran, was Islamized, but maintained its own culture, regarding not only its language but also its arts and writings. Consequently, the majority of Iranians speak Persian dialects while the vast majority of Iraqi population speaks Arabic. These facts, however, only partially explain the reasons for that Iranians identify themselves as Persians while Iraqis identify themselves as Arabs.

Furthermore, the Gulf is the home of three large religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism, being Islam clearly dominant in the area. Just as there are several variations of Christianity, there are numerous differences in the interpretation of Mohammad's words producing variants of Islam. Two of the great factions of Islam, both of which are particularly

¹ For the purposes of this study guide Common Era (CE) is considered to be the period of time subsequent to the first year of the Proleptic Gregorian Calendar. Any date before that will be referred as Before Common Era (BCE).

important for the region, are the Sunni Muslim and the Sh'ia² Muslim. Mainly, the differences between the two groups emerged with the death of Mohammad and the dispute over his rightful successor. While the Sh'ia believe that the Imans would be the only source of religious guidance, the Sunnis, being the orthodox followers of Mohammed, contest the religious and secular guidance of the Iman, therefore attributing the political leadership to the figure of the caliph. Another fundamental issue to understand the Iran-Iraq war is the concept of *jihad*, which is associated with the spread of the word of Mohammed to the pagans. That concept has been extended to incorporate the notion of a “holy war”, a term that has been used by the leaders of both governments to refer to the present conflict.³

The increasing political costs of maintaining such a vast Empire weakened the power of the caliphate and, when the Mongols killed the last caliph of Baghdad, the Arab Kingdom ceased to be a political reality. In 1410 the Ottoman Empire conquered the region, overruling the Mongol occupation. Later on, the Persians conquered part of it in 1508, initiating a series of elongated battles with the Ottomans. The major effect of this, for the Gulf, was the accrument of the disagreements between Sunnis and Shi'a Muslims, since their religious schemes were used by both sides – the Ottomans and the Persians, respectively – in order to mobilize internal support.

From 1638 to the World War I, the Ottomans, predominantly the Sunnis section, subjugated Iraq. During this time, the Sunnis acquired administrative experience, which allowed them to monopolize the power in Iraq for most of the twentieth century. Concurrently, Persia confronted invasions of Afghans and Turks, coming from Central Asia, but managed to maintain its cultural unity and its Shi'a Islamic religion.⁴

The Gulf has always been a strategic territory, as it is a passage for different continents and oceans.⁵ In the western perception, the region's strategic importance is justified by the role that some Gulf States have played in countering soviet opportunism in the Middle East. Economically, the Gulf is a prominent source of crude oil and natural gas reserves, and it represents the world's primary route for transporting Middle Eastern oil – which is why the

² The variants Sh'ia; Shia; Shi'ah; Shiah or Shiite are common in the English language. Throughout this study guide, though, the spelling adopted is Sh'ia. Nevertheless, whenever it appears in the middle of a quote, the spelling will be maintained according to the authors' originals.

³ MARTINSON, 1984.

⁴ WIMMER, 2003.

⁵ For further research on the Gulf's strategic importance, see BAKHASH, 1985.

Gulf's importance to the world has increased since the end of the nineteenth century, when these resources were discovered in those lands. In this sense, foreign powers turned their attention to Iranian and Iraqi territories. In Mesopotamia, the Anglo-German dispute for commercial supremacy can be mentioned as one of the issues that led the World War I to occur, dissolving the Ottoman Empire and placing Iraq under English protectorate until 1932.

For the above mentioned reasons, ethnic, ideological and religious differences between Iran and Iraq remain until today. The government of Iran is of the Shi'a sect while Iraq is of the Sunni. Furthermore the Iraqi ruling party, the Ba'th regime, is secular while the Iranian government is fundamentalist. This is further complicated by the fact that although the Iraqi *government* is Sunni, its population is from 60% to 65% Shi'a. The Iranians tried to take advantage of this fact by embarking on a campaign designed to enflame the Shi'a population of Iraq and subvert the Iraqi government in 1979-80. The Iraqis responded by increasing their military readiness posture thus starting a spiral conflict that eventually resulted in the outbreak of the present hostilities.

1.2. Political Changes: The Iranian Revolution

The Iranian Revolution was a turning point for the political dynamics of the Gulf region. While establishing the theocratic Islamic Republic, the revolution changed the long monarchical tradition of the region, threatening thus the old political order of the Gulf.

Prior to the Revolution of 1979, Iran, under the leadership of Reza Pahlevi, strongly relied on Western political and economic support, particularly from the United States. This became especially significant after the Americans restored the throne to the Shah⁶ in 1953. Furthermore, a great portion of Iranians accused their monarchy of trading Iran's petrodollars in exchange for imports of consumer and industrial goods, as well as for weapons, all of which were Americans.⁷

Historically, relations between Iran and Iraq have always been turbulent. In Iraq, the rising to power of the Socialist Party of the Arabic Resurrection, known as the Baath party, in 1968, has brought old territorial claims to Iran's present foreign policy agenda. In addition to

⁶ Title given to the monarch of Iran.

⁷ EBRAICO, 2005.

the conflict that occurred in 1975, regarding the possession of the Shatt al-Arab waterway, Iraq also incited separatist activities in the Iranian provinces of Khuzestan and Balochistan.

Nonetheless, after the Islamic Revolution, the ancient and enduring rivalry in the Gulf has assimilated a more confrontational component based on the dichotomy between the Pan-Islamism – and the revolutionary Sh’ia Islamism – in Iran, and the Arab Nationalism in Iraq. It is interesting to note that the revolutionary Sh’ia Islamism was developed within Reza Pahlevi’s monarchy as a reaction to his proposal of a Western-oriented modernization for the country. In this sense, during the 1960s, the Shah initiated what he referred to as the “White Revolution”, which consisted in a series of reforms, including the agrarian one. These structural modifications resulted, at the same time, in the marginalization of the middle classes and the rural oligarchies, and in a massive exodus of peasants and the creation of belts of misery around Tehran.⁸ The main opponent of the regime was the Sh’ia clergy, customized by the figure of Aiatollah Khomeini. Conclusively, the reforms did not bring substantial benefits for the people, mainly due to the corruption of the monarchical elite and the high military expenditures of the government, basically acquiring arms from the United States. Thus, the speech of Khomeini against the government was marked by the Islamic moral in the politics, as well as by the anti-American ideology. Therefore, in 1975, the Shah banned all political parties, leading to the enlargement of the opposition and its diversification between Marxists, nationalists and Islamists.

In September 1978, the increasing political instability of Iran was visible, with movements against the government continuously growing. Therefore, Pahlevi decided to introduce the Martial Law, which caused a mass protest in Tehran and became known as the “Black Friday”. Since the religious leaders continued to instigate the revolution in Iran, the Shah decided to press the Iraqi authorities to deport Khomeini,⁹ who remained in Iraq, and in October he was sent to Paris. In December of the same year, more than two million people flooded the streets of Tehran demanding the fall of Shah Reza Pahlevi and Khomeini’s regress. Triumphantly, Khomeini returned to Iran on February 1st, 1979 and effectively took power on 11 February, with great popular appeal and with a slight resistance of the army.

⁸ FUSER, 2005.

⁹ The ayatollah was sent into exile in 1964, after opposing to the White Revolution and denouncing the Iranian government and the American presence in the country. After spending a year in Turkey, he went to Najaf, Iraq, in September 1965.

In a final manner, the Islamic Revolution significantly shook the political balance in the region, because it urged the Muslim Sh'ia majority to overthrow the monarchies of the region and to establish new Islamic republics. This was especially alarming to Iraq, a Sh'ia majority country, ruled by a Sunni minority. In 1980, the government of Iraq used a former border conflict – namely the dispute around the ownership of the Shatt al-Arab channel –, to invade Iran. It is claimed, though, that Saddam's real intentions were to weaken the power of Iran so as to guarantee that its fundamentalist fervour would not spread out to the region, hindering the possible threat it could represent to his personal authority in Iraq.

1.3. The Outbreak of the Conflict: Iraqi Invasion

The Iran-Iraq war can be identified as a result of a power vacuum developed in the Gulf after the withdrawal of Britain's forces in the late 1960s. The British had exercised their influence in the region for over a century and their departure left space for the appearance of another supremacy.¹⁰

After almost half a century of direct domination by the British, Iraq could not find stability,¹¹ mainly because of its heterogeneous population and the conflicts of interest among them. In this sense, General Qassim¹² was murdered in February 1963 in a military *coup d'etat* led by the Ba'ath Party. After an interlude out of the command, when a countercoup led by Abdul-Salam Arif took the power, the Ba'ath Party regained the control of the government and, in order to reach sustained governmental authority, started to purge political opponents. During the first years of the new government, Iraq directed hostilities against the West, developing an amiable relation with the USSR¹³ and declaring war against Israel during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, therefore abandoning the approach adopted in the 1950s. In 1979, Saddam Hussein became the president of Iraq, continuing the aggressive external affairs orientation and the persecution of the remnant rivals.¹⁴

On the other hand, Iran emerged as a potential threat to Iraq and to western interests as well. The grievances of the 1970s and the changes in both governments caused the relations

¹⁰ PELLETIERE, 1992.

¹¹ In less than ten years, Iraq experienced five different regimes and three *coups d'etat*.

¹² General Abdel-Karim Qaasim reached the power in 1958, overthrowing the monarchy of Faisal II.

¹³ Its culmination was the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the USSR and the Republic of Iraq, signed on 9 April 1972 (SMOLANSKY, B. M.; SMOLANSKY, O. M, 1991).

¹⁴ MILLER; MYLROIE, 1990.

between Tehran and Baghdad to hastily deteriorate. As a result, border disputes in addition to political differences and religious schemes led Iraq to invade Iran in 1980. Furthermore, Iraq would be particularly exposed to Iranian subversion due to the growing of anti-Baath movement that was developing among its large Sh'ia population. Besides, the appearance of a new Iran, more distant of the occident and with a religious legitimacy could supplant the growing influence of Iraq among the Arab states.¹⁵

After Iraq's initial successes in the war, Iran mobilized its population under the revolutionary banner and counter-attacked. With the Iranian military's ranks swelled by martyrs prepared to give up their lives to defeat the invaders, Iran's numeric superiority counterbalanced the qualitative military advantages that the Iraqis may have had.¹⁶ Even having an unorganized and scattered army, the Iranians could cease the invasion of their territory and managed to keep their positions during the first two years of conflict.¹⁷

The year of 1982 was an evident turning point of the dispute. Iranian forces managed to push Saddam Hussein's army from the areas conquered and started pressuring Iraq's territory. The Iraqis then responded as to contain the Iranian army that was using human-waves tactics to advance over its territory. At this moment, the conflict became bogged down in a long and tough war of attrition in which neither side could gain the upper hand. This war of attrition has been kept until the present year.¹⁸

2. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

One must acknowledge that the reasons that led to the outbreak of the conflict can be identified either in longstanding disputes – as stressed above –, inasmuch as in recent disagreements. Therefore, in order to better understand not only the motivations of the ongoing war, but also to recognize the issues that must be resolved, what follows ought to be seriously taken into consideration.

¹⁵ XAVIER, 1997.

¹⁶ Iraq forces were, by the beginning of the war, supplied mainly by Soviet war equipments while Iran had American made aircrafts and armaments. For more information on Iraq and Iran force strengths and the movements of both armies, see MARTINSON, 1984.

¹⁷ MARTINSON, 1984.

¹⁸ MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL PUBLICATION, 1990.

2.1. Ethnic, Ideological and Cultural Differences: Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism

When tracing an ideological framework as to study the Gulf region up to the present, the formation of Pan-Arab and Pan-Islamist ideologies must be addressed. Those sets of ideas are determinant to a revision of the mindset behind the events that led to the outbreak of the war between Iran and Iraq in 1980.

Historically, “Pan-Arabism arose as an opposition movement in Ottoman Syria, Palestine, and Iraq around the turn of the century. It remained a minority movement until the Ottoman collapse in 1918, but after the Ottoman defeat it became an overwhelmingly dominant movement in these territories”.¹⁹

This ideology advocated the unity and independence of Arabs *regardless of religion*, and posited “the existence of one multi-state Arab nation to which the peoples of the individual Arab states belong. The components of the nation are a common language and history, and shared sentiments and interests”.²⁰ During the 1950s, that was the predominant ideology that permeated the Gulf region, being particularly significant over states where secular Pan-Arab parties ruled.²¹ Even at present time, in Iraq, Tariq Aziz, the deputy prime minister under Saddam Hussein, is a prominent Pan-Arabist.

However, in the following decade, when Iraq entered the Arab-Israeli Six-Day War in 1967, the “Middle East became further polarized, with Israel and Iran on one side and Iraq with several Arab states²² on the other”.²³ As a result of the defeat of Arab armies in the Six-Day War, Pan-Islamism took on a predominant role over nationalism and Pan-Arabism in the region. As opposed to the former, the model predicated by Pan-Islamism is a political movement that stresses the unity through faith of all Muslims, *regardless of ethnicity*.

Finally, with the Iranian Revolution that ousted Shah Mohammad Pahlevi from power, Islamists were instigated to renew their efforts, which posited a significant challenge to the secular nationalist governments throughout the region.²⁴ Therefore, the circumstances in which the appeal of Ayatollah Khomeini resounds, being deeply influenced by Pan-Islamism,

¹⁹ DAWN, 1988.

²⁰ KHALIDI, 1988.

²¹ Such as the Baath and Nasserist Parties in Egypt, Libya, Iraq and Syria.

²² “The majority of the Arab states, namely Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, funding Iraq. The only major Arab dissenter was Syria, who viewed Hussein’s Ba’th party as a threat to the Syrian Ba’th party, thus supporting Iran for a portion of the war”. BAHADORI, 2005.

²³ BAHADORI, 2005.

²⁴ NAHAS, 1985.

remount to the emergence of religious fundamentalism²⁵ and the continuing poverty in Iran, despite the profit from oil incomes. “His appeal is not restricted to Shi‘ites, but extends to the Sunni masses and intellectuals, inasmuch as his rallying cry is not Shi‘ism but Islam”.²⁶

In conclusion, there is a strong opposition between Hussein’s Ba’th party and Khomeini’s Islamic Republic, which culminated in a war of competing interests. In order to achieve their objectives, each party attempted to generalize its campaign. While Saddam Hussein “repeated the claim that this war was fought for the Arab peoples against the Persians, [...] Khomeini, on the other hand, asserted that it was a necessary war to ensure the livelihood of Islam”.²⁷ Moreover, the ideological factors behind the complexities of Persian-Arab history are only one aspect of the conflict between Iran and Iraq. Other motivations, such as geopolitical and economical incentives, were also determining to the outbreak of the conflict.

2.2. The Shatt al-Arab

During the twentieth century, and “especially since 1945, international legal laws prohibiting territorial conquest and favouring the self-determination of states have become progressively strong”.²⁸ When looking back on the geopolitical origins of the Iran-Iraq war, territorial issues such as conflicting territorial claims emerge as a direct and important source of altercation in the Gulf region. Although non-territorial conflicts also played key roles in the contention, territory has been the measure in accessing their outcomes, since control of the disputed land is the primary means of demonstrating prevailing power.²⁹

As previously stated, while the causes of the conflict were varied, one of most relevance was the right to access and control the Shatt al-Arab waterway. The waterway itself is essential for the fact that it allows agricultural production in the region, and also because it serves as a means of transportation, within the country and for exportation, where rest the ports of Basrah and Khorramshahr.³⁰ This is of strategic importance to Iraq, which has

²⁵ Since the Iranian Revolution, Islamic fundamentalism became a term used to explain the political Islamic movement based on fundamental Islamic belief.

²⁶ KHALIDI, 1988.

²⁷ BAHADORI, 2005.

²⁸ KOCS, 1995.

²⁹ SWEARINGEN, 1988.

³⁰ MARTSCHING, 1998.

restricted access to the Gulf. Hence, “there is no doubt at all that for the Iraqis unopposed usage of the Shatt waterway and of the small stretch of Iraqi territory debouching on the Gulf is seen, in economic and security terms, as vital”.³¹

The control of the waterway and its use as a border have been a source of contention between the predecessors of the Iranian and Iraqi states since the Peace Treaty of 1639, signed by the Ottoman and Persian empires. Ambiguities in the agreement and difficulties such as the establishment of a border lacking in detail led to disputes that have not been resolved up to these days. While this arrangement proved sufficient in many areas, it was not the case in the Shatt al-Arab region,³² leading to the outbreak of hostilities already in the nineteenth century. Therefore, the diplomatic activity that shaped the course of the Iran-Iraq boundary resulted in the signature of other treaties defining or modifying it.

As a result, negotiations between the British, Russians, Ottomans and Persians prepared the signature of a second accord: the 1847 Treaty of Erzeroum and its 1848 Explanatory Note. This treaty also did not succeed in resolving the issue as it lacked in clarifying the course of the border in the Shatt al-Arab region; and in establishing the possession of the eastern bank of the river.³³ For this reason, this treaty also proved to be insufficient and led to the signature of the 1913 Constantinople Protocol, which established a mediating commission to mark the boundary.

In the early 1930s, “accusations and counter-accusations of border violations were made, and both sides argued the boundary issue in an inconclusive hearing before the League of Nations in 1934-35”.³⁴ Nevertheless, it was only in the aftermath of World War I, and with Great Britain’s involvement in the development and administration of the border, that the dispute was first placed in an Iran-Iraq context.³⁵ That resulted in the Saadabad Pact Regional Security Agreement between Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan, signed in Tehran in July 1937, in which a commission to determine the boarder was established. “Above all, the pact was a sign of good will among the signatories and sought to prevent increased Soviet

³¹ MARTSCHING, 1998.

³² MARTSCHING, 1998.

³³ MARTSCHING, 1998.

³⁴ SCHOFIELD, 1989.

³⁵ MARTSCHING, 1998.

expansion in the Middle East”.³⁶ It was only with the Iraqi revolution of 1958³⁷ that Great Britain’s intimate and continuous involvement in border delineations ended.³⁸

“Despite increased foreign presence in Iran and Iraq, tensions remained high between the two countries over the Shatt al-Arab boundary issue”.³⁹ The balance of power significantly shifted in Iran’s favour after a Kurdish uprising in Iraq in 1974, which was assisted by the Iranian government who sought to alter the water frontier. As a result, the Shah of Iran and the Baathist government of Iraq negotiated and signed the Algiers Agreement⁴⁰ In March 1975,⁴¹ which established the border along the thalweg principle,⁴² creating a roadblock to Iraqi expansion. The most significant impacts of the agreement were the shifting of the river boundary and of navigation rights. Remaining divergences over that matter “proved to be a major stumbling-block in the United Nations-sponsored peace talks between the two states”.⁴³

Finally, in 1979, Saddam Hussein demanded a revision to the Algiers Agreement, specifically referring to the border delimitation along the Shatt al-Arab river, which Iran refused. This led Hussein to ultimately denounce the 1975 Agreement⁴⁴ and declare Iraq’s sovereignty over the whole of the Shatt al-Arab, which set the ground for border clashes between Iranian and Iraqi troops in 1980.

2.3. Other Geopolitical and Boundaries Issues

³⁶ BAHADORI, 2005.

³⁷ The 1958 revolution, also known as the 14 July Revolution, was a military *coup d'état* that overthrew the monarchy and ended with the proclamation of a republic in Iraq.

³⁸ Foreign powers sought to participate in Persian and Ottoman affairs since the discovery of oil in the Middle East in 1908.

³⁹ BAHADORI, 2005.

⁴⁰ U.N. TREATY SERIES VOL. 1017, 1985.

⁴¹ “The main terms of the agreement were the following:

‘(1) That the two sides should demarcate their land boundaries in accordance with the 1913 Protocol of Constantinople and the minutes of the 1914 Delimitation Commission.

(2) That both parties agree to delimit their river boundaries according to the *thalweg* line, i.e. the median line in the mid-channel [of the Shatt al-Arab].

(3) That they establish security and mutual confidence along their common borders and ‘undertake to exercise a strict and effective control with the aim of finally putting an end to all subversive infiltrations’.

(4) That the two parties also agree to view these provisions ‘as indivisible elements of a comprehensive settlement’, and that any violation of any provision would be regarded as a violation of the spirit of the agreement.’” ALGIERS AGREEMENT. In: BAHADORI, 2005.

⁴² According to the median line in the mid-channel of the Shatt al-Arab.

⁴³ SCHOFIELD, 1989.

⁴⁴ U.N. Doc. S/14192 (1980).

Although the Shat al-Arab issue shall be considered the major geopolitical matter within the present conflict, other issues are also of fundamental understanding. Disputes around land and offshore boundaries have been a matter of dispute for over 500 years.⁴⁵ Additionally to the Shat al-Arab clash, Iraq also claims the control over the province of Khuzestan – a southwest oil-producing province of Iran, inhabited by a sizeable percentage of Arab population with close cultural, ethnic and ideological ties with Iraq.

During the early 1960s Iraq claimed control over the province and supported the Arabistan Liberation Front (ALF).⁴⁶ Later on, Egypt joint efforts and launched together a movement for an Arab appropriation of Khuzistan. Nonetheless, the 1975 Iran-Iraq Treaty put Iraq aside the claim, even though other Arab States⁴⁷ kept on supporting the secession of the province. The scenario, however, changed once again with the outcome of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Ever since, Iraq has been engaged in aiding the separatist movement of that region.

An additional source of disputes between the Arab states and Iran concerns the islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs. The frictions date back to the beginning of the twentieth century, when the island of Abu Musa, which had previously belonged to Iran, was incorporated to the British Empire in 1921. Before the end of the British protectorate, the island was set under administration of the United Arab Emirates. That lasted until 1971, when Iran seized the territories of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs. Over the next years, disagreements over the region remained, and with the outbreak of the war between Iran and Iraq, capturing the Islands became one of Saddam Hussein's goals.

Furthermore, the imprecise situation in what regards to the boundary in the Shatt al-Arab region also incites problems with the delimitation of the territorial sea. The aforementioned Algiers Agreement provided for freedom of navigation for Iranian and Iraqi watercrafts, “regardless of the delimitation of each country's territorial sea”.⁴⁸ By this arrangement, there is no legal definition of the boundary beyond the Shatt al-Arab. As a consequence, Iran and Iraq have not yet agreed upon a boundary of their territorial waters up to the present days, and neither state has published details of the limits of its territorial sea.

⁴⁵ AMIN, 1982.

⁴⁶ Arab organization formed with the intent of persuading the Arab population in the south-west of Iran.

⁴⁷ Libya and Syria, for instance.

⁴⁸ INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES RESEARCH UNIT, 2007.

On this matter, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS),⁴⁹ regulated that “coastal States exercise sovereignty over their territorial sea which they have the right to establish its breadth up to a limit not to exceed 12 nautical miles”.⁵⁰ In the absence of a boundary agreement between states with adjacent coastlines, UNCLOS “requires states not to extend their territorial sea beyond the median line with neighbouring states, unless historic title or other special circumstances exist which justify a departure from the median line”.⁵¹ Although the treaty dates of 1982, it has not come into force up to the present day, since it did not receive the minimum amount of ratifications or accessions.

Given that Iran is neither a party to UNCLOS, nor to the 1958 Geneva Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone, the country is not obliged to the provisions of those conventions regarding baselines and territorial sea delimitation. Therefore, “Iran measures its territorial sea from a system of straight baselines. Even though the legitimacy of these baselines is questionable, they certainly complicate the jurisdictional picture in the boundary area”.⁵²

2.4. The Evolution of the Conflict

Notwithstanding the apprehensiveness with the changes in the Middle East politics caused by the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, the relations between Iran and Iraq did not collapse immediately. Since the Algiers Pact, their affairs had been roughly calm. In an attempt to maintain it this way, the Iraqi President Bark sent a message to the recently established government of Tehran conveying his best wishes for the friendly people of Iran.⁵³ Moreover, in August 1979, Iraqi authorities invited Mehdi Bazargan to visit Iraq with the aim of improving the relations between the countries.

However, with the fall of the moderated Bazargan’s government in Iran and the rise of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the relations between the two countries started to deteriorate rapidly. The escalation of hostilities that led to the present conflict started as early as on September

⁴⁹ UNITED NATIONS, 1982.

⁵⁰ UNITED NATIONS, 2002.

⁵¹ The median line is the line every point of which is equidistant from the nearest points on the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial seas of the neighbouring states measured. Source: INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES RESEARCH UNIT, 2007.

⁵² INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES RESEARCH UNIT, 2007.

⁵³ GLOBAL SECURITY, 2005.

4th, with armed clashes along the border.⁵⁴ A few days later Saddam abrogated the 1975 treaty and declared the Shatt al-Arab under Iraq's control, furthering the hostilities. Yet, the combat operations officially started only on 22 September, when Iraq invaded the Iranian territory through three different places along the 733 mile border amid the two countries, in an attempt to immobilize any Iranian defence.

When justifying the attacks Saddam Hussein outlined his aims as: (1) the recognition of Iraq's genuine and sovereign rights over Shatt al-Arab land and waters; (2) the Iranian refrain from interfering in any Iraq's internal affairs; (3) Iran's adherence to the principles of good neighbourliness; (4) the Iranian renounce of the occupied islands in the Gulf – namely Abu Moussa, Big Tumb and Little Tumb – in benefit of the United Arab Emirates.⁵⁵ As the battles went on, though, the stated purposes for the attack slightly changed: the hindrance of Iranian expansionism – possibly exporting the Islamic Revolution to other countries in the Middle East – appeared as an essential task for Hussein's regime.

Willing to accomplish its goals hastily, Iraq employed 7 of its 12 divisions on the attack. At first, not much resistance was put by the Iranians. Its first real opposition occurred when Iraqi troops tried to take Khoramshahr, the city set resistance with numerous Padasran⁵⁶ and regular army troops.⁵⁷ In the battles interim, Saddam Hussein obeyed the first United Nations' proposal of ceasefire.⁵⁸ Khoemeini, however, refused to comply with it, as Saddam ordered its troops into Khoramshahr.

On 24 October 1980 Iraqi troops succeeded in taking Khoramshahr. At that time, Saddam had already achieved its main strategic objectives and seemed to wait for the collapse of the Iranian regime and for a settlement which guaranteed its claims over the Shatt al-Arab. Moreover, as both sides had had a great number of casualties and as the winter season had arrived, the armed operations were ceased temporarily.

Attacks and counterattacks continued throughout the years. The use of children (some being less than 12 years old) in the Iranian human waves attacks marked the course of

⁵⁴ COOPER; BISHOP, 2003.

⁵⁵ GRUMMON, 1982 *Apud*: MARTINSON, 1984.

⁵⁶ Iranian paramilitary force.

⁵⁷ MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL PUBLICATION, 1990.

⁵⁸ U.N. Doc. S/RES/479 (1980).

conflicts.⁵⁹ The involvement of paramilitary forces – such as the Iranian Padasran and Basij – is also a characteristic of the present war.

During the spring of 1982, Iran managed to reverse the outcomes of the war by overcoming the blockage of Abadan and recapturing Khoramshahr. In order to preserve its army forces from further casualties, Iraq withdrew to the border in 1982. This marked the end of what can be identified as the first phase of the war. Yet, even before the Iraqi withdrawal, Saddam proposed the negotiation of a peaceful settlement, which was refused by Khomeini, who at that time wanted to take control over the southern Iraq from the Ba’thist.

Both sides have filed complaints of attacks against civilian population since 1983.⁶⁰ On 3 November 1983, however, for the first time the government of Iran addressed a letter to the UN Secretary General⁶¹ requesting an investigation over the use of chemical weapons in the conflict by Iraq. The investigations confirmed such accusations.⁶²

Over a year ago, in February 1985 more than a million casualties had already been reported.⁶³ Beyond the great human losses, the economic wreckage, caused by the continuous clashes, is also a cause of concern and seems to be difficult to surpass. The harm for the infrastructure and the profit losses with oil revenues seem to transcend the conflict itself and are likely to have a vast impact for both countries over the next decades.

3. PREVIOUS INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

3.1. The United Nations Security Council and the Adopted Resolutions

The Security Council was established originally to deal with international disputes or acts of aggression that could disrupt world peace. In this sense, the Council was given authority to act in the Pacific Settlement of Disputes and with respect to Threats to the Peace and Acts of Aggression.⁶⁴ This would be put into practice in the early stages of the Iran-Iraq war. Yet, “at that time there was little or no coordinated effort by the five permanent members of the Security Council. The Soviet Union, the United States, and other individual

⁵⁹ MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL PUBLICATION, 1990.

⁶⁰ U.N. Doc. A/38/165-S/15729 (1983) and U.N. Doc. A/38/177-S/15743 (1983).

⁶¹ U.N. Doc. S/16128 (1983).

⁶² U.N. Doc. S/17911 (1986).

⁶³ SONNENBERG, 1985.

⁶⁴ Charter of the United Nations, Chapter VI and VII.

governments took measures on their own to prevent the war from spreading, but little effort was made to concert the efforts of governments for this purpose”.⁶⁵

Conscious of the proportions the conflict could achieve, the Security Council met right after the eruption of the armed clashes that officially marked the beginning of the military war. On September 23, a presidential statement⁶⁶ was released informing the international community of the deep concern the Council had with the situation. Five days later, the first resolution⁶⁷ on the matter was adopted unanimously, which called upon “Iran and Iraq to refrain immediately from any further use of force” and to settle the dispute by peaceful means, besides urging both sides to accept any appropriate offer of mediation. Although calling for a cease-fire, the resolution neither referred to the Iraqi aggression nor urged the withdrawal of forces to internationally recognized boundaries. Presently in the same year, the President of the Council stated the permanent concern of the international community with the continuation of the conflict and evoked the UN Charter recalling the Member States’ obligations to settle their disputes while refraining from the use of force against any other state.

The third resolution, however, was approved nearly two years later, on 12 July 1982. In that occasion, the Council called “for a cease-fire and an immediate end to all military operations”,⁶⁸ and further summoned “a withdrawal of forces to internationally recognized boundaries”. A team of United Nations observers would also be dispatched to verify and supervise the cease-fire and withdrawal. At last, the resolution urged “that the mediation efforts be continued in a co-ordinated manner through the Secretary-General” with a view to achieving a comprehensive and honourable settlement, acceptable to both sides. Only three days after approving the above mentioned resolution the Council met in consultations and once more expressed its concerns with the development of the situation amid the belligerent countries.⁶⁹ Later on, through resolution 522,⁷⁰ the Council officialised its preoccupation with the continuation and escalation of the conflict as well as welcomed the readiness of one of the sides in the implementation of the previous resolution calling upon the other part to do

⁶⁵ URQUHART; SICK, 1987.

⁶⁶ U.N. Doc. S/14190 (1980).

⁶⁷ U.N. Doc. S/RES/479 (1980).

⁶⁸ U.N. Doc. S/RES/514 (1982).

⁶⁹ U.N. Doc. S/14190 (1980).

⁷⁰ U.N. Doc. S/RES/522 (1982).

likewise. Although Iraq had already shown readiness to implement a cease-fire, Iran repeatedly opposed to this possibility as long as Iraqi troops remained in its territory.⁷¹

With the aggravation of the situation on ground, the resolution adopted in 1983 seemed to address the situation in a more proper manner. At that time, the Council condemned the violations of humanitarian international law, especially the Geneva Conventions of 1949,⁷² as well as affirmed the right of free navigation in international waters. Nonetheless, the conflict remains unresolved for almost six years now and the Council has been taking decisions in this regard thereon. Its latest decision stressed its concerns with humanitarian and economical losses issued by the conflict; emphasized the inadmissibility of the conquest of territories by the use of force; besides calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities and for the exchange of prisoners-of-war in co-operation with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

3.2. Missions Dispatched by the Secretary-General

Allegations of violation of international law principles due to the use of chemical weapons have been frequent during the Iraq-Iran war. Notwithstanding, both belligerent states are parties to the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which prohibits “the use of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases”⁷³ in military conflicts, and of all analogous liquids, materials or devices, as well as the use of bacteriological methods of warfare. Iran became part of the Protocol in 1929, while Iraq acceded to it only in 1931. “The latter state did so with an express reservation that its government would not be bound by the prohibitions in question towards any state whose armed forces did not respect the provisions of the Protocol”.⁷⁴

On 3 November 1983, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran alleged for the first time that chemical weapons were being used in the conflict by Iraq.⁷⁵ The reference to such weapons was asserted in the context of reiterating a request made previously,⁷⁶ that the

⁷¹ AMIN, 1982.

⁷² The Geneva Conventions of 1949 consist on a series of treaties on international law, which were established in order to regulate humanitarian and war related issues. More detailed information available at <<http://www.genevaconventions.org/>>.

⁷³ Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (Geneva Protocol 1925).

⁷⁴ ROBINSON; GOLDBLAT, 1994.

⁷⁵ U.N. Doc. S/16128 (1983).

⁷⁶ U.N. Doc. S/16104 (1983).

Secretary-General should send a mission to the area to acknowledge damages to civilian targets.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the Iranian government has reiterated allegations of the use of chemical weapons in several subsequent letters as well as in private discussions held by its Permanent Representative with the Secretary-General. On 26 March 1984, a report was sent by specialists to the Secretary-General, confirming that chemical weapons in the form of aerial bombs had actually been used in the areas inspected in the mission.⁷⁸

In that same year, by request of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Secretary-General appointed another mission⁷⁹ to investigate Iran's allegations that Iraq violated the Geneva Conventions of 1929 regarding human rights. Finally, the designated specialists submitted a joint report to the Secretary-General in March 1986. Then, for the first time, the UN group of experts specified the party guilty of violation, confirming the use of chemical weapons by Iraq against Iranian forces in the course of the Iranian offensive into Iraqi territory. The main chemical agent used was identified as mustard gas, although on some occasions nerve gas has also been employed. Nevertheless, specialists could not determine the extent to which those agents were used, within the time and resources available at the time.

In a final manner, the Secretary-General repeatedly has declared that he strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons wherever and whenever this may occur. Accordingly, the UN Security Council has also issued a statement condemning the use of chemical weapons during the Gulf War.⁸⁰

3.3. Other Initiatives

Outside the UN system, other initiatives to terminate the war have been undertaken by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Since the very beginning of hostilities the organization is involved in the efforts to stop the clashes. Less than ten days after the outbreak of the conflict, a mission had already been dispatched to Teheran and Baghdad on behalf of the organization.⁸¹ In October of the same year the Secretary-General of the OIC, Habib Chatti, visited both countries for the second time. The proposal of the organization laid on the founding of a commission of Islamic Heads of State to mediate the conflict. In 1981, the

⁷⁷ U.N. Doc. S/15834 (1983).

⁷⁸ U.N. Doc. S/16433 (1984).

⁷⁹ U.N. Doc. S/17911 (1986).

⁸⁰ U.N. Doc. S/17911 (1986).

⁸¹ U.N. Doc. S/14205 (1980).

mission visited the countries, but unfortunately failed in achieving its purposes. In the same year, another mission, headed by the president of Guinea, visited Baghdad and made some progress regarding Iraq's acceptance to the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry as to determine which party was the aggressor in the war. Furthermore, other peace proposals have been delivered by the governments of Syria and Saudi Arabia, with the purpose of uniting the Arab world as to resolving the present issue.⁸² After these leading actions, "a new international dimension has been added [to the conflict] with the further involvement of outside powers, including the United States and the Soviet Union, in efforts to protect shipping in the Gulf".⁸³

An additional step toward peace in the Gulf region was taken in 1981, when the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries attempted to send a good-will mission to the region. Even though the proposals made by the Non-Aligned Peace Mission⁸⁴ were taken into consideration by the parts, they did not attain any further solution. Later on, in 1982, Algeria tried to establish another parallel process of negotiation with the belligerent countries. Unlike the OIC, Algeria was trusted by Iran. Nevertheless, the activities of the Algerian team and those of the Secretary General's special representative Olof Palme's were not coordinated.⁸⁵ Thus, those efforts eventually proved to be unsuccessful.

In June 1984, both Iran and Iraq agreed on settling a moratorium on attacks against civilian targets. This arrangement collapsed in March 1985, when Iraq launched another series of bombings against Iranian cities. "After the moratorium broke down, the Secretary-General presented an eight-point comprehensive plan to both sides. This plan encountered opposition from both parties. Iraq insisted that the date for the final cease-fire be specified in advance, and – more importantly – Iran informed the Secretary-General when he visited the area in April that it could only accept the plan if the Security Council "rectified" its previous behavior. There has been no real progress since then, although both sides have welcomed the Secretary-General's recent proposal that a tribunal be established to determine who started the war".⁸⁶

⁸² AMIN, 1982.

⁸³ URQUHART; SICK, 1987.

⁸⁴ The mission was composed by representatives of Algeria, Cuba, India, Pakistan, the Palestine Liberation Organization, Zambia and Yugoslavia.

⁸⁵ KING, 1987.

⁸⁶ KING, 1987.

4. BLOC POSITIONS⁸⁷

Australia believes that an immediate cease-fire is necessary to achieve peace in the Gulf region, ensued by negotiations that aim at respecting the borders of the belligerent countries and at preventing future attacks by any side. The main concern of the Australian government is in regard to the countless violations of international law principles that occurred during the conflict, especially those involving the use of chemical weapons.

The **People's Republic of Bulgaria** maintains a relationship of cooperation and respect toward both belligerent countries, believing that it is possible to reach a fair and mutually beneficial arrangement for Iran and Iraq. Bulgaria denounces the involvement of third countries' interests in the conflict, stating that such a situation endangers international peace and security.

The **People's Republic of China** is concerned about the stability in the region of the Gulf. It believes in the capacity that the Security Council has to reach a reasonable accord for Iran and Iraq and calls for greater efforts in this regard. The country supports the proposals toward the achievement of such agreement in accordance with international law principles. China considers that no fundamental conflict of interests exists between third world countries and, therefore, differences between them should be settled through consultation or negotiations. Moreover, it shows its preoccupation with the use of chemical weapons in the war.

The **Republic of the Congo**, being an African state member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, shares a similar position with Ghana. Congo highlights the necessity of a prompt cease-fire that is followed by negotiations that are impartial and beneficial for both countries.

Denmark, having a long history of friendly relations with Iraq and Iran, calls for a rational agreement between the parties, putting an end to hostilities. Denmark believes that

⁸⁷ This section was written in accordance with the speeches delivered by the countries' representatives at the United Nations Security Council from the year of 1980 to the present. The full text of speeches is available at the United Nations Bibliographic Information System <<http://unbisnet.un.org/>> in the meeting records of the sessions.

through cooperation between both countries, along with the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, aggressions shall be led to an end.

The **French Republic** is worried about the threat of a possible escalation and widening of the conflict. Therefore, the country believes that an urgent end of hostilities should be undertaken and a fair agreement must be encouraged, respecting the sovereignty of both countries. In this sense, the former frontier between Iran and Iraq, traced by the Algiers accord should be respected. Furthermore, France ponders that throughout this process the resolutions taken by the Security Council must be respected, particularly in what regards the respect of human rights.

Ghana maintains good relations with both Iran and Iraq. Furthermore, the country is also a state member to the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Ghana believes that the countries which stand in a better position so as to influence a pacific resolution to the conflict are either allied to one of the parties or to the other, and hence providing resources for the continuation of the war. The country denounces and condemns the usage of chemical weaponry in the conflict, and suggests a revision of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, asserting that this agreement is no longer effective. Moreover, the country emphasizes that the decisions reached by the Security Council should not be a source of unilateral punitive actions by a state or a group of states regarding the two belligerent nations.

Madagascar fosters the mediation efforts taken by the Security Council. Moreover the country maintains that any accord must be equitable for Iran and Iraq, in which the belligerent countries shall play the key role defining the content and scope of any agreement, in cooperation with the Security Council of the United Nations.

Thailand maintains diplomatic relations with both sides and supports all measures that may lead to peace. It also accentuates the importance of an immediate cease-fire as a priority, as well the importance of the withdrawal of all force to the internationally recognized boundaries. Thailand emphasizes the relevance of the past actions undertaken by the United Nations organs. Furthermore, the country is concerned about the use of chemical weapons by any of the parts and, in this regard, supports every effort to ensure compliance to the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

Trinidad and Tobago moves toward the position of most countries of the Council, agreeing with the resolution 582, concerning the necessity of an urgent cease-fire between Iran and Iraq, emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territories by force.

The **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics** addresses the Iran-Iraq war not only as a regional issue, that is to say, as a conflict that occurs in an area that is close to its borders, but as a serious threat to international peace and security. The Soviet Union believes that the disputes between the two countries must be resolved through diplomatic means, therefore defending an immediate cease-fire and declaring that the only interested in the war are those who wish to see Iran and Iraq weakened and the region unstable. The USSR opposes to the usage of the conflict as an excuse for foreign intervention in the countries' internal affairs, especially in what regards the administration of regional natural resources. Besides, the USSR asserts that the presence of armed forces in the area, such as the posting of third countries' war crafts in the Gulf, is another element that contributes to the aggravation of the threat of an escalating war that could reach international proportions.

The **United Arab Emirates** demonstrates great concern about a dispute between two Islamic neighbours. UAE believes that the conflict should be resolved at the negotiating table and offers itself as a mediator between the two countries. United Arab Emirates strongly opposes to the possibility of occupation of any Arab territory, in accordance with the pan-Arabism principles and following the tendency of the Non-Aligned bloc. Its main concern is the action of great powers in the region, which could change the equilibrium of power in favour of foreign interests. UAE deeply regrets the lack of cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the Security Council.

The **United Kingdom** champions an immediate ceasefire, followed by the withdrawal of all troops from the occupied territories, under supervision and monitoring of UN personnel authorized by the Security Council, organized and administrated by the Secretary-General. The use of chemical weapons in the conflict is strongly condemned by the UK, invoking the Geneva Protocol of 1925. The country also condemns and calls attention upon attacks against neutral shipping from third states who are not involved in the hostilities, defending the international law principle of free navigation rights.

The **United States of America** calls upon the Iranian government to immediately cease hostilities, considering that Iran is the responsible for hindering the attempts of the international community to reach peace. United States urgently recommends the end of the military operations by both countries and the accomplishment of a fair and peaceful resolution without delay. For this achievement, the country considers the principles of international law, in what regards the peaceful settlement of disputes, opposing to the seizing of territories by

force. Nonetheless, it emphasizes the obligations taken by the belligerents under the Charter of United Nations, as a manner to pressure Iran and Iraq to reach a deal. The United States of America stresses its worries about the threat that the conflict presents to a region which is of vital importance to the economic health of the world. Therefore, the extension of the war to the neutral neighbours is a great concern that would menace American interests. Furthermore, the United States claims for freedom of navigation to and from the Persian Gulf, as an imperative issue for the international community. USA strongly opposes to the employment of chemical weapons and calls for an immediate end of its use.

Venezuela is another party of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Besides maintaining a relation of cooperation with Iran and Iraq and favouring a policy of common interests defence, Venezuela believes that the human and material costs of the war are not restricted to the belligerent nations or to the region involved, as they reach the entire world. The Venezuelan government believes that a significant reason for the maintenance of the conflict is the continuity of armaments exports to the belligerent countries, stating that peace will not be attained unless third countries cease to export weaponry to Iran and Iraq. Besides, Venezuela strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons in the war, and also champions that it is urgent that the Council reaches a solution for the conflict. Finally, the country defends that under no possible circumstance should any other state intervene in the war unilaterally.

5. QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. How can the Council and the members of the UN cooperate as to neutralize a possible escalation of the conflict?
2. Bearing in mind the recent development of the Iran-Iraq war, how can the Council address the allegations of use of chemical and biological weapons in the conflict?
3. What actions may be taken in order to preserve the civilian population and assure civilian rights throughout the pacifying process?
4. How can the Security Council act in order to prevent third parties' interests from worsening the situation and obstructing the settlement of the conflict?
5. Considering the actions undertaken by the Council up to the present time, what will be the role of this very Council and of the Secretary-General so as to achieve a peaceful and enduring solution for the matter?

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