The 1991 Gulf Crisis and US Policy Means

An Analysis of the Transition from ‘Soft Line’ to ‘Hard Line’ in US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq

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PREFACE

My interest in the Gulf crisis developed from contact with fellow students interested in the Middle East. The choice of theme for the thesis gradually developed as I explored different aspects of Iraq and the Gulf crisis in papers submitted for courses at the Masters study in political science.

My thanks first goes to my adviser Tanja Ellingsen for her advise and support in the shaping and structuring of the thesis, and for constructive comments on the many drafts I have submitted to her during this last years. Further, I thank her for encouraging me to undertake the study trip to Washington DC where an important part of the data for the analysis was collected.

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To my fellow student during the last three years, Onar Aanestad, thanks for being an exhaustless source of motivation. My thanks also goes to the rest of the Middle East group for making sense of my unstructured drafts in the first stage of the thesis. To librarian Hanne Nielsen, thanks for your help with the literature and references of this thesis. For proof reading the thesis I owe thanks to John Beeg. In writing this thesis, I relied on Kunnskapsforlagets dictionary and the grammar check of Microsoft Word 7.0. However, I assume full responsibility for the remaining linguistic errors.

The IT-section deserve thanks for enduring numerous questions on the layout of the thesis and for the (coincidental?) installation of a CD-ROM reader in my ‘hour of need’. Finally, I want to thank my friends and family for enduring my absentmindedness and lack of time for you in the past year.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

PREFACE........................................................................................................... 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS: .................................................................................... 3

1. INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................. 7

1.1 Introduction to the Gulf War Case .......................................................................................... 7

1.2 The Question of the Thesis................................................................................................. 8

1.3 The Object of the Thesis ................................................................................................. 10

1.4 The Causal Model........................................................................................................... 11

1.5 Delimitation and Clarifying of Concepts .................................................................................... 14

1.5.1 The Number of Actors ..................................................................................................... 14

1.5.2 The Middle East ........................................................................................................... 15

1.5.3 The Gulf States ........................................................................................................... 15

1.5.4 The Gulf Crisis and The Gulf War ................................................................................... 16

1.6 Outline of the Following Chapters ........................................................................................ 16

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .................................................................... 18

2.1 Defining and Measuring Foreign Policy ................................................................................ 18

2.2 The ‘Soft Line’ Policy ................................................................................................. 21

2.2.1 The CCC-program........................................................................................................... 21

2.2.2 The BNL-scandal........................................................................................................... 23

2.3 The ‘Hard Line’ Policy ................................................................................................. 25

2.3.1 Sanctions................................................................................................................ 26

2.3.2 Desert Shield ............................................................................................................. 27

2.3.3 Desert Storm ............................................................................................................. 29

2.3.4 US Policy after the Gulf War ....................................................................................... 31

2.4 The Influences of US Foreign Policy - Idealism and Realism........................................... 33
4.2.1 The Cold War .................................................................................................................. 66
4.2.2 The New World Order ..................................................................................................... 68

4.3 The Arab-Israeli Conflict ................................................................................................... 71
4.3.1 Iraqi Moderation ............................................................................................................. 71
4.3.2 Iraqi Hostility .................................................................................................................. 76

4.4 The Gulf Stability ............................................................................................................. 78
4.4.1 Iraq as Stabiliser .......................................................................................................... 78
4.4.2 Iraq as Destabiliser ....................................................................................................... 83

4.5 The Access to Oil ............................................................................................................. 86
4.5.1 Iraq as Stable Oil Producer ............................................................................................ 86
4.5.2 Iraq as Unstable Oil Producer ....................................................................................... 89

Part II: The Causes of Change in US Policy Means ................................................................. 91

4.6 Security .......................................................................................................................... 91

4.7 Autonomy ....................................................................................................................... 101

4.8 Welfare .......................................................................................................................... 105

4.9 Status and Prestige ........................................................................................................ 110

5. CONCLUSIONS ............................................................................................................. 118

5.1 Summary ......................................................................................................................... 118

5.2 The Findings of the Analysis .......................................................................................... 119
5.2.1 The Structure of the International System ................................................................. 119
5.2.2 The Arab-Israeli Conflict .......................................................................................... 121
5.2.3 The Gulf Stability ..................................................................................................... 122
5.2.4 The Access to Oil ....................................................................................................... 123

5.3 Concluding Remarks ..................................................................................................... 124

APPENDICES ................................................................................................................... 126

Appendix I: List of Abbreviations and Acronyms ................................................................. 126

Appendix II: Dramatis Personae ......................................................................................... 127

Appendix III: Maps ............................................................................................................. 128
## List of figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>Kegley and Wittkopf’s Sources of American Foreign Policy as a Funnel of Causality</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.2</td>
<td>A Simplified Model of a Political System</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.2</td>
<td>The Causal Model</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. INTRODUCTION

On 17 January 1991 the Gulf War started as the US-led allied coalition launched the military operation ‘Desert Storm’ to force the Iraqi army to retreat from Kuwait. The Gulf War marked the climax of confrontation in the Gulf crisis that began five months earlier with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990. The crisis also marked the change in the means of the US policy toward Iraq. Until the invasion, the USA pursued a ‘soft line’ to achieve its objectives in Iraq. The means of the policy were influence through diplomatic dialogue and economic incentives. Starting with the invasion, this changed to a ‘hard line’, where sanctions and eventually war was the means.

Why then, did the ‘soft line’ fail? Why, from the US perspective, were sanctions and war necessary to deal with the changed circumstances of the US-Iraqi relationship? The thesis aim at giving an explanation to these questions in order to understand why the US policy toward Iraq changed from the ‘soft line’ to the ‘hard line’.

1.1 Introduction to the Gulf War Case

Since the Vietnam War perhaps few armed conflicts have been subject to as many analyses as the Gulf War (with the conflicts in former Yugoslavia as the major exception). Several aspects of the conflict warrant this attention:

1) Never before had an Arabic state annexed another, as Iraq did when it declared Kuwait the 19th province of Iraq. The Gulf War was also the first time ever Arabic states went to war against each other. In the Middle East, although not considered the most peaceful corner of the world, conflict is associated with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Intra-Arabic conflicts are usually solved without the use of force. The Gulf War divided the traditionally unified Arab states; 12 states supported the
international coalition against Iraq, while 8 states and the PLO wanted the conflict resolved without external (Western) intervention (Hasselknippe 1995:2).

2) The Gulf War was the first post-Cold War conflict. As such, it was a touchstone as to how conflicts are to be solved in the future. The absence of superpower rivalry influences the way conflicts are dealt with in institutions like the UN. The Security Council condemned the Iraqi invasion and passed resolutions to take action against Iraq. The US view was expressed by Secretary Baker:

"An outstanding achievement of the current crisis has been the ability, I think, of the United Nations to act as the founders intended" (Baker 1991:1).

In this, he referred to the permanent members' abstention of vetoing resolutions against Iraq. During the Cold War, initiative from one superpower to pass resolutions against states of interest to both the superpowers ran the risk of being blocked by the other's veto.

3) In conjunction with the end of the Cold War, the Gulf crisis was the USA's first chance to consolidate its role as the sole remaining superpower. The Gulf War presented the USA with the opportunity to strengthen the image of the USA as the 'world's policeman'. American success in the Gulf helped rid the USA of the 'Vietnam-syndrome', which has tainted US foreign policy in the last 20 years. The Vietnam War was a protracted war with many American casualties, despite the superior US military technology. In the Gulf, the war lasted 42 days, plus the loss of allied and American lives were relatively low.

1.2 The Question of the Thesis

The USA has a history for intervening in conflicts. The most recent examples include Grenada, Panama and Libya. The USA supported quick military action in these countries, despite the scars of the protracted Vietnam War. On the other hand, the US involvement in Lebanon during the Reagan administration had, according to Palmer (1992:178) run into trouble. This was because the:

"American involvement had appeared limited, but had turned out to be bloody and open-ended".
The US involvement during the Cold War era was usually unilateral and rooted in the struggle against communism. The USA thus bore the costs of intervention alone. With the end of the Cold War, the rationale for military intervention to contain communism in the Third World was gone. In the Gulf War, the USA gathered support from a wide range of states to form an international coalition, even support from other Gulf states.

Although the US has an interventionist reputation, they do not take military action everywhere. It requires large capabilities to bear the costs of a military intervention and international support is necessary for a third party to interfere in conflicts. Without international legitimacy, the intervention is regarded as interference in sovereign states' internal affairs. Upholding or defending democracy and peace are the rationale the USA often use to intervene in conflicts. In conflicts like the Indonesian occupation of East-Timor (since 1975), human rights violations and other circumstances that may warrant intervention are present. In this case, however, the USA has not intervened. The Middle Eastern states, except for Israel, do not have democratic rule. The Gulf states generally are ruled by an autocratic monarch or sheikh, like Kuwait. Iraq stands out as a republic with secular rule. The rationale for intervention in the Gulf War then, was not defending or upholding democracy. In the Gulf War President Bush connected US intervention with peace and security. The objects were fourfold: to obtain an Iraqi retreat, restore the Kuwaiti government, secure the stability in the Gulf and protect American lives abroad (Bush 1991a: 198). This was the official basis of US intervention in the Gulf crisis and hence gives the rationale for pursuing the ‘hard line’ after the invasion. The thesis however is concerned with why the ‘soft line’ failed, that is why the shift to ‘hard line’ was necessary. The question of the thesis then is:

*Why did the USA change their policy toward Iraq from ‘soft line’ to ‘hard line’ in the Gulf crisis?*
1.3 The Object of the Thesis

This thesis reviews the US policy toward Iraq in the Gulf crisis, even if the outline of the policy and the decision to take action against Iraq was made by the UN. The basis of this focus is that the USA was the main actor in the UN decision making process during the crisis. Although the UN Security Council took the formal decisions, the USA was the driving force. The USA initiated action against Iraq in the UN, they gathered support for the allied coalition and provided leadership for the military operation, as well as bearing a majority of the costs of the Gulf War (Freedman and Karsh 1993).

The object of this thesis is to develop a model of possible explanations to the change in US policy. At first glance the reason for the US attitude towards Iraq may seem obvious. Iraq took on an increasingly more hostile and aggressive approach towards Kuwait in the months before launching the invasion forces on Kuwaiti territory and hence the USA responded accordingly. Interaction among states is more complex than that. Using a scientific approach to answer the question of the thesis, require a systematic analysis of the problem. The thesis puts forth a causal model to this end, in which the explanatory strength of the variables is examined.

Defining foreign policy and reviewing its content is the starting point of this thesis. Among the available definitions, this thesis use the one offered by Kegley and Wittkopf. In chapter 3 foreign policy is reviewed along with the rest of the theoretical framework. Suffice here is to cite the definition used in this thesis:

“We begin by defining foreign policy as the goals that the nations’ officials seek to attain abroad, the value that gives rise to those objectives, and the means or instruments used to pursue them” (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:7, italics added)

There is no given set of factors to fully explain what determines the outcome of a state’s foreign policy. Different approaches are liable to give diverging answers, depending on the focus of the approach. Hermann and East (1978:17) point to Allison (1969) as unravelling strikingly different interpretations of the same occurrence when focusing on different sets of explanatory variables and different frameworks. Different levels of analysis direct the focus to the behaviour and attitudes of
respectively individuals, groups within the state or the state in the international system (Holsti 1995:17).

Putting the focus on the micro level, the interaction of individuals or groups of individuals are analysed to determine the impact of the outcome. The division of power between the Congress and the President pose an interesting perspective for analysis. Foreign policy is outlined by the President and his staff, while the implementation is dependent on Congressional support for funding. The influence of the US bureaucracy on the President’s decisions is another dimension. Presidents' design policies, but depend on the knowledge of professional bureaucrats for implementation. Bureaucrats then have a potential to influence the outcome of the decisions through their professional advice. Yet another perspective is the influence opinion and pressure group may exert on the policy. Strong interest groups have a potential to influence the policy making process through professional lobbyists. On the macro level, the actors are states. This perspective is concerned with the interaction between states, and each state is conceived as one coherent actor. This thesis analyses the changing US policy from a systemic level, that is how US policy is influenced by the international system of states. Disregarding the domestic level inadvertently means loss of information in this aspect of the policy making process. On the other hand, considering the state one actor simplifies the analysis. The complexity of state interaction is reduced, providing a general view of what caused the US policy to change.

1.4 The Causal Model

The variables of the analyses constitute the context, or the independent variables, in which the dependent variable, US policy, are formed. The task is to analyse what effect the change in the context variables exerted on the US policy. In view of the scope of the thesis, the range of variables must be limited to a few for the analysis to be feasible. Hudson (1996:329) portrays the major US objectives in the Middle East since the World War II:
“A half century of regional involvement in every conceivable way - through diplomacy, aid, culture, education, espionage, subversion, and (not least) the projection of military power - has secured the ‘holy trinity’ of American interests: Israel, oil, and anti-communism.” (Italics added)

With this as the point of departure, the variables to be examined are:

1) **The Structure of the International System.** This refers to how the US policy was effected by the changed structure of the international system. During the Cold War, the superpower rivalry between the USA and the Soviet Union dominated not only the formation of US policy, but the conduct of the international system of states as well. The turning point came with the decline of the Soviet Union. As the Cold War came to an end, the world structure changed. President Bush called it the ‘New World Order’, referring to the opportunity to create a world where the major states co-operate to reduce conflict. The precise content of the new structure still is not clearly defined, but the loss of the US foremost guideline in policy formation in the past 50 years is certain to effect US policy.

2) **The Arab-Israeli Conflict.** The key US ally in the Middle East is Israel, hence Israel’s security is an important goal to the USA. In the conflict, Israel is supported by the USA, while Arab states back the Palestinians. Iraq traditionally was one of the states most active in supporting hostility toward Israel. Iraq moderated its position as the bilateral US-Iraqi relations improved, and as PLO modified its opposition to enter peace talks with the Israelis. Leading up to the Gulf War, Iraq reverted its position and again constituted a threat to Israel.

3) **The Gulf Balance of Power.** The pretext for access to Gulf oil is stability in the region. Balancing the power of Gulf states competing for influence in the region reduce the risk of armed conflict and unpredictability in the access to oil. The Iran-Iraq War exposed the vulnerability of the oil export through the Persian Gulf, effecting export also from states not directly involved in the war. In upholding the balance of power in the Gulf, US policy during the war turned from a neutral policy to a qualified tilt toward Iraq. Supporting Iraq and exerting what leverage the US had on Iraqi policy, seemed preferable to dealing with radical Islamic Iran with its anti-Western attitude. Iraq emerged from the war with Iran as the new military power in the region and with aspiration to gain leadership in the Arab
world. On the other hand, the war put a serious strain on the Iraqi economy. US backing of Iraq ended as Iraq invaded Kuwait, which again brought instability to the region.

4) Access to Oil. The world’s largest known oil resources are located in the Gulf region and as such it has great influence on the world market. The access to oil is closely connected to the stability of the Gulf, as stable conditions are a prerequisite for a stable export of oil through the Persian Gulf. Management of Gulf oil has been fairly predictable, in terms of the oil producers generally abiding by the OPEC quotas and the general OPEC policy. The importance of oil to the USA is stressed by the assessment of oil as vital to US national security. Iraq, prior to the Gulf crisis, was second only to Saudi Arabia as the world’s largest oil producer. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, Iraq had the potential to control up to 20% of the world’s oil. This potential increase in Iraqi economic power, had Iraq succeeded, created an unpredictable situation. The Iraqi relation to OPEC would markedly change and ultimately would have had a profound effect on the world economy.

On the basis of these variables, the causal model of the thesis is formed. The model itself is presented in greater details in chapter 3, see page 43. Here it suffice to note that the four independent variables are divided into two categories, where the first three are of a structural kind and the last is an economic variable. The variables are interconnected, both within and between the categories. Albeit this thesis analyses the variables separately, the connection between the variables will emerge in the analyses. The independent variables influence the outcome of the dependent variable, the US policy means toward Iraq.

The first part of the analysis examines what changes have occurred in the context variables in order to understand the basis for the US shift to the ‘hard line’ policy. In order to structure the analysis, the second part of the analysis draw on Holsti’s (1995) theory of states’ general purposes for their policy. According to Holsti (1995:84) contemporary states conduct their policy to maintain security, autonomy, welfare and status and prestige. The analysis examines to what extent the change in context, that is the independent variables, constituted threats to these objectives. The analysis then
examines how these threats influenced the choice of the US policy means in the Gulf crisis.

1.5 Delimitation and Clarifying of Concepts

In analysing a complex issue like the interaction of states, delimitation of the problem is necessary to ease the overview. In addition, clarifying the major concepts is necessary to avoid misconceptions on the content of the terms.

1.5.1 The Number of Actors

The focus of this thesis is the analysis of US policy in the Gulf crisis. Other actors beside the USA nonetheless played a significant part in the Gulf crisis. Prior to the Gulf War, Soviet efforts to avoid war included negotiations with Iraqi officials, trying to solve the crisis peacefully (Freedman and Karsh 1993:175). The European Community sent delegations to Baghdad for the same reason. In the Middle East, Britain especially was assumed to have greater experience in dealing with the Arab world, due to their heritage as a colonial power in the region (ibid.: 262). The British contribution to the allied coalition, in terms of military support and sharing the costs, also was large (ibid.: 110-114).

Considerations on the scope of the thesis as well as the complexity numerous actors would pose to the analysis preclude their inclusion. In the analysis of the selected variables, the role of other actors will be mentioned, but explicit analysis of their role is omitted. Focusing only on the major actor, the USA, simplify the overview of the case and reduce the complexity of the issue. On the other hand, a more comprehensive explanation to the problem is lost. One pitfall is that the thesis risk conveying mainly the US view. To compensate for this, the US view will as far as possible be contrasted with opposing explanations or views. The thesis does not convey the whole picture, but make efforts to critical review a limited part of the problem.
1.5.2 The Middle East

Butenschön (1992:96) point to the problem of defining the Middle East:

“The Middle East has no ‘natural’ boundaries, and there is no conventional or academic consensus as to its precise extension”.

Definitions offered are of a geographic nature or based on certain criteria, like culture, political institutions, etc. When concentrating on geographic definitions, Butenschön (1992: 97) however contend there is a core area stretching

“from Egypt to the West and includes Iraq to the East”.

Another problem is pointed out by Saivetz (1994:271):

“The unravelling of the USSR has expanded the borders of the Middle East, as the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union become incorporated into the Middle East state system”.

The concept of the Middle East may not be a static term, but change over time. Butenschön (1992:97) offer a solution to the problem:

“... individual scholars have to construct, explicitly or implicitly, a ‘Middle East’ of their own, designed to fit their research purpose”.

For the purpose of this thesis the Middle East will contain the ‘core area’ countries in addition to Israel and Iran. These states are included as the US policy formation considers events in these states. The expansion to the former Soviet republics will however not be included, as their incorporation into the Middle East system occurred after the Gulf War. For a map of the Middle East countries included in this thesis, see appendix III.

1.5.3 The Gulf States

The term Gulf or Gulf States refer to the Republics of Iraq and Iran, in addition to the members of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC). The GCC is constituted by the Kingdoms (or Emirates) of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Saudi Arabia is the leading member of the GCC, and exert great influence on the GCC’s policy.

1 The UAE is a union of the following 7 emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dub, ‘Ajman, ash-Shariqah, Umm al Quwayyn, Ra’sal Khayman and al-Fujairah.
Another term relating to this is the sea-area of the Gulf. There is some strife over the common label *Persian Gulf* as opposed to the Arab states claiming the name *Arab Gulf*. In this thesis the *Persian Gulf* is the term used.

### 1.5.4 The Gulf Crisis and The Gulf War

Both terms are used frequently during the thesis and a distinction between the terms is in order. The Gulf crisis refers to the period from the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, until the end of the Gulf War. The Gulf War refers to the military intervention, lasting from 17 January to 28 February 1991. The war between Iran- Iraq (1980-1988) was however also called the Gulf War. As such, the Gulf War of 1991 is the second Gulf War. In the thesis, the former is referred to as the Iran-Iraq war, while the latter is labelled the Gulf War.

### 1.6 Outline of the Following Chapters

*Chapter 2* accounts for the theoretical framework of the thesis. First foreign policy is defined and the problems of measuring policy behaviour are addressed. Then a description of the US ‘soft line’ and ‘hard line’ policies are given as a background for the analysis. They constitute the values of the dependent variable, that is the US policy means toward Iraq prior to and during the Gulf crisis. Further, the contrasting ideologies of realism and idealism are presented as sources of influence on the US policy formation. Then the manner in which the theory of realism will influence the analysis is clarified. The causal model and the assumptions it is built on are presented in this chapter, along with an account for the structuring of the analysis. The chapter concludes with the hypotheses that are to be tested in the analysis.

The methodology of the thesis is the subject of *Chapter 3*. In this thesis, qualitative analysis is used as the tool of analysis. The chapter presents the application of the research design, the case study method, on the thesis. Further, the validity and reliability of the data are assessed. Connected to this is the problem of mainly US sources of data for the analysis.
The analysis of the data is conducted in *Chapter 4*. The chapter consists of mainly two parts. The first part accounts for the change that occurred in the context of US foreign policy, in the independent variables. The last part analyses to what extent the change in context threatened the US objectives of maintaining security, autonomy, welfare and, status and prestige. In structuring the analysis in this way, the thesis arrives at the relevance of the independent variables and establishes what explanatory strength they have on the outcome of US policy means.

The final chapter, *Chapter 5* provides a summary of the main findings of the thesis and discusses to what extent the thesis is successful in answering the questions it set out to explain. In giving this answer, the hypotheses put forth in chapter 3 are evaluated as the explanatory strength of the independent variables is determined.
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to give a satisfactory answer to the question of this thesis, a theoretical framework for the analysis is needed. This chapter attempts to put forward a causal model for this purpose and explains how this model is to be used in the analysis.

First, problems encountered when measuring foreign policy is addressed. Second, this chapter gives an account for the background of the Gulf crisis as the transition from the ‘soft line’ to the ‘hard line’ is presented. Next, the contest between idealism versus realism as the main influences of US policy making is presented. This forms the basis of applying the realist perspective to the analysis. Realist assumptions also underlie the goals of security, autonomy, welfare and status and prestige that Holsti (1995) put forth as the determinants of state behaviour. The realist approach also is reflected in the independent variables of the causal model; the structure of the international system, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the gulf stability and the access to oil.

The purpose of the model is to determine the explanatory strength of these variables on the dependent one, the means of US policy. For this purpose, the thesis puts forth a main hypothesis from which four sub hypotheses are deduced, originating from each of the independent variables. By testing this set of hypotheses in the analysis, the explanatory strength of the causal model is to be determined.

2.1 Defining and Measuring Foreign Policy

The starting point when establishing the theoretical framework for this thesis is clarifying the concept that is to be analysed - foreign policy. Hermann (1978: 28) calls attention to the traditional lack of consensus in defining foreign policy. Theorists often give a general, not explicit definition of the concept. They emphasise different aspects of the concept, depending on which subpart of the general phenomena their research concentrates upon. The definition used in this thesis is by Kegley and Wittkopf (1996). They are mentioned by Hermann (1978: 28) as having contributed
constructively to conceptualise or categorise foreign policy. Moreover the definition by Kegley and Wittkopf (1996) is the basis of their comprehensive causal model of American foreign policy, which aims at including all the relevant aspects of foreign policy making. This model forms the basis for the design of the causal model in this thesis.

Kegley and Wittkopf (1996) include three components in the definition of foreign policy; 1) goals, 2) values and 3) means. The connection between them emerges from the definition of foreign policy provided by Kegley and Wittkopf (1996:7, italics added):

“We begin by defining foreign policy as the goals that the nations’ officials seek to attain abroad, the value that gives rise to those objectives, and the means or instruments used to pursue them”.

The first to consider in using this definition is the problem of measuring foreign policy. How then can one best explain foreign policy? The definition gives the framework to search for the explanatory factors, but there are many potential variables to choose from. There are different methods of solving this problem. Values are deep-rooted attitudes and as such, they can not be observed directly. They have to be measured indirectly by some set of indicators. The next question is that of measuring goals. According to Hermann (1978:31), foreign policy is traditionally explained through conceptualising the governments’ goal with its behaviour, that is conceiving policy as goal-seeking behaviour. One of the main drawbacks of this approach is that:

a) behaviour can occur as a response to the behaviour of the environment, or also
b) the states’ behaviour is a source to the environments’ behaviour

(Hermann 1978: 28f)

In addition, this perspective presumes that the government acts as:

“a unified rational agent with a coherent set of goals and objectives…”(Hermann 1978:29).

The thesis will return to this assumption as the realist approach is discussed. Suffice here is to note that (democratic) governments’ goals are elaborated through a process influenced by various groups, often with conflicting goals. In other words, the main
problem of measuring a state's goals is interdependence; states mutually effect each
other’s behaviour. In a causal model, the problem is one of separating cause and
effect. Hermann’s (1978:32) suggested solution to this problem is to:

“conceptualize the external actions of national governments in terms of behaviors
rather than goal-seeking policies”.

The advantage is that there is no need to establish the states’ goal structure, and that
behaviour is easier to observe and therefore measure, than goals. This point to
concentrate the analysis of policy to observing the means of the policy rather than
values and goals.

The definition of foreign policy gives a comprehensive basis for Kegley and
Wittkopf’s (1996) model. They focus on the interaction between all the components
in order to put forward a causal model that ‘catch all’ aspects of US policy. The
model purports to explain how and why the goals, values and means shape US foreign
policy. Their contention is that the interaction process - or the policy making process -
constrains the policy’s ability to adapt to new challenges, yet changes to meet new
demands are not ruled out (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:7).

Goals, values and means all are properties of US foreign policy. The desire to fulfil
certain goals gives rise to foreign policy. What again give rise to these goals are
values. Means are the instruments used to conduct the adopted foreign policy and
hence the behaviour that is possible to measure direct:

“Peace and prosperity, stability and security, democracy and defence - these are the
enduring values and interests of American foreign policy” (Kegley and Wittkopf

The stability of values and goals that influence the policy making process enables this
thesis to regard these components of foreign policy as parameters. This thesis
contends that the US values and goals remain relatively stable during the period of
time that this thesis spans. They are therefore regarded as constants and not included
in the analysis. The means of US policy, in contrast, change to fulfil the goals of the
policy. It is necessary to differentiate the policy means according to the context. This
means that the policy must be changed in order to adjust to the change in context, that
is change in the independent variables.
The next two paragraphs give an account for the dependent variable; the US policy means before and after the crisis, constituted in the US ‘soft line’ and ‘hard line’. The historical background of the Gulf crisis is presented to give an overview of the issue to be analysed and to show how the policy means were adjusted to as the context of US policy-making changed.

The ‘soft line’ was pursued from the beginning of the 1980’s as the USA intensified their attempt to improve their diplomatic and economic relations with Iraq. Even as the bilateral relations deteriorated leading up to the Gulf crisis, the policy was pursued. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 abruptly marked the shift to the US ‘hard line’ of sanctions and ultimately war toward Iraq. The ‘hard line’ pursued during the Gulf crisis extends to the bilateral relation today, more than seven years after the end of the Gulf War.

2.2 The ‘Soft Line’ Policy
In this thesis the term ‘soft line’ is used to denominate the US policy toward Iraq prior to the Gulf crisis. However, in the available material the denomination of this policy varies. Karabell (1995: 31, footnote 14) adopts the term ‘constructive engagement’ from US administration officials to describe the US policy. However, according to Joyce Battle, editor of the Iraqgate document series, to her knowledge this term was not encountered as an official term describing the policy toward Iraq (Battle 1998 [conversation]). Official use of the engagement term is encountered in the thesis, as in a State Department report on the US Iraq policy. The report expresses the intent to ‘engage’ Iraq over the coming years (State Department 1990a: 1). For the purpose of this thesis, ‘soft line’ is used in order to mark the contrast to the ‘hard line’ policy during and after the Gulf crisis.

2.2.1 The CCC-program
The ‘soft line’ policy contains a set of diplomatic and economic means. According to Karabell (1995: 31) the ‘soft line’ or ‘constructive engagement’ policy aimed at influencing Iraqi foreign policy in a positive direction, without the use of sanctions or other coercive means. The purpose was to tie Iraq closer to the USA by diplomatic
and economic means and hence increase the US leverage on Iraq. Sanctions were deemed inappropriate because they would alienate Iraq as an ally and cause the loss of what leverage the USA had on Iraq (ibid.: 31). The strategy used to pursue the policy therefore was one of ‘carrot and stick’:

“In NSD-26 [National Security Directive 26 of 2 October 1989], the carrot was economic inducements and trade, and the stick was the continued pressure on Hussein to end his unconventional weapons programs and to clean up his human rights record” (Karabell 1995: 33).

The US-Iraqi relations had been cut off by Iraq in 1967 as a result of the Arab-Israeli war (US Defense Intelligence Agency 1984:5). During the early 1980’s the bilateral relations improved. As diplomatic ties were restored by 1984, the means of the ‘soft policy’ toward Iraq was initiated. The primary ‘carrot’ was the economic incentives of the CCC-programme. In the words of L.S. Eagleburger, Deputy Secretary of State during the Bush administration:

“the CCC program is designed to assist US agricultural exporters and producers by developing foreign markets for US commodities” (Eagleburger 1992:5).

The economic incentive offered by the CCC-program was not exclusively designed for Iraq, more than 40 countries participated (ibid.: 5). The program provides short and medium term credits. The Foreign Agricultural Service is responsible for accounting, raising funds in case of defaults of payments and ensure the proper documentation of the programs. The foreign buyer (Iraq) contracts to purchase US commodities on a deferred payment basis. The CCC program guarantees up to 98% of the amount owed to the US banks by the foreign bank, hence providing very favourable credit terms to the foreign buyer (National Security Archive Index 1994:151). The program does not include direct payments to the foreign country. The extent of the program amounted to a total of approximately $5 billion in CCC credits from 1983 through 1990 (Department of Justice 1994:11).

The ‘carrot’ of the CCC-program was balanced by the ‘stick’ of diplomatic pressure on Iraq to moderate their policy in certain fields (State Department 1990b: 1). Iraq’s human rights abuses and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction,

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2 CCC is short for the Agriculture Department’s Commodity Credit Corporation. The programme entailed the guarantee by the US Agriculture Department for Iraqi purchase of US agriculture and -related products (Karabell 1995:29).
including chemical weapons procurement, were the primary target of the US concern (ibid.: 2).

2.2.2 The BNL-scandal

The first blow to this policy came with the so-called BNL-scandal\(^3\). In August 1989 documents were seized from the Atlanta branch of the BNL Bank. It attracted great media attention, not only to the BNL-scandal itself, but to the overall US policy toward Iraq. Regarding Iraq the essence of the scandal was speculations that BNL-Atlanta knowingly had issued CCC-guaranteed loans to Iraq which had been diverted from the intended agriculture purchases to illegal purchases of weapons and weapons-related technology (Karabell 1995: 34). Even as investigations followed to reveal any corruption or abuse, the significance of the CCC-program is reflected in the reluctance to impose sanctions as a reaction to the scandal:

"... it is worth noting that all sanctions legislation against Iraq that the Congress proposed in the first half of 1990, except for the Inoye-Kasten bill, exempted the CCC program from whatever sanctions might be imposed" (Eagleburger 1992:7).

The consequence to the CCC-program was a division of the 1990 credits in two tranches, the second half only to be released after a positive result of the investigations (ibid.: 37). This was a considerable blow to the credibility of the CCC-program as a mean to influence Iraq. Retaining the second tranche pending the outcome of the investigations calmed domestic opposition to continue the program, but increased the tension in the relations with Iraq (Karabell 1995: 34f). The final report on the matter, the Hogan report, concluded with five export control violations. On the most serious matter, diversion of CCC funds for weapons procurement, the Hogan report maintains no evidence of illegal activities by US agencies or officials were found. Nor were any crime of bartering CCC commodities for military equipment committed (Department of Justice 1994:5). In a comment on the report L.S. Eagleburger admits irregularities, but of a less severe kind than initially feared. Department of agriculture detected a pattern of unexpected high prices for certain

\(^3\) The BNL-scandal was named after the Italian Bank, Banca Nazionale del Lavoro.
commodities, but apart from this no violations by Iraq on the requirements of the CCC program were not found (Eagleburger 1992: 6).

The spring of 1990 intensified the strain on the US-Iraqi relations; in March an Iranian-born British journalist was executed in Iraq on espionage accusations. Two smuggling attempts were revealed by British and American customs officials; one concerning nuclear components, the other components for the so-called long-range Iraqi ‘supergun’ (Palmer 1992:152). In addition Saddam Hussein held a speech on 1 April threatening to use chemical warfare against Israel in the event of a confrontation. These events led the USA to question Iraq’s observance of diplomatic norms and their commitment to refrain from use of chemical weapons (US Embassy Iraq 1990b: 2f). The effect was that the US position on the bilateral relations became more strained. The USA expressed that the Iraqi actions had caused a ‘sharp deterioration’ in US-Iraqi relations (ibid.: 1).

At last the CCC-programme became too much of a liability to the Bush-administration. Negative press coverage and Congress opposition closed down the programme on 29 May 1990 (Karabell 1995:42). At the time sanctions were imposed on Iraq, approximately $ 1.9 billion were outstanding in credit guarantees. Of the first $ 500 million tranche for 1990, about 20% were not used before sanctions came into force (ibid.: 7).

The cost of Iraq's behaviour in the fields of human rights and proliferation eventually outweighed the benefits to the USA of upholding the ‘carrot’ part of the strategy. However, as Karabell (1995: 45) notes, the USA pursued the ‘soft line’ policy until the actual invasion on 2 August 1990. An incident to illustrate this point is the eventually infamous 25 July meeting between the US Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, and Saddam Hussein. The controversy surrounding this meeting stem from the contention that Glaspie gave Iraq the ‘green light’ to invade Kuwait. There is no official US record available on this meeting. However, a translation of an Arabic transcript was printed in New York Times on 23 Sept, 1990. The passage interpreted as the US green light is:

“But we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait” (New York Times 1990a).
The critic of Glaspie goes to that she did not warn Saddam Hussein forcefully enough of the US desire for a peaceful settlement of the dispute (Karabell 1995:44).

However, Glaspie acted according to US policy. A similar wording found in the instructions cabled to the Baghdad Embassy a few days prior to the meeting:

“The US is concerned about the hostile implications of recent Iraqi statements directed against Iraq’s neighbours, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. While we take no position on the border delineation issue raised by Iraq with respect to Kuwait, or on any other bilateral disputes” (Baker 1990a: 2).

However, it is questionable whether Glaspie’s statement had any decisive impact on the Iraqi behaviour:

“Barring an ironclad threat to oppose Hussein by force, there was little Glaspie could have said or done that would have made a difference” (Karabell 1995:45).

Chomsky (1991b: 8) presented an alternative explanation. He suggests that Saddam Hussein may have misunderstood the US signals as a ‘green light’ for Iraq to take all of Kuwait. Hussein’s intention possibly was to set up a puppet regime on the model of the USA in Panama or other cases, or possibly to gain a bargaining chip to achieve ‘narrower ends, possibly with broader ends’.

In sum then, the ‘soft line’ failed to moderate Iraqi behaviour. The ‘carrot’ of the CCC-program was not a strong enough incentive, nor was the ‘stick’ of diplomatic pressure enough to prevent Iraqi hostility. The majority of the policy collapsed as the CCC-program was closed down. The attempt to continue influence though diplomatic dialogue was not forceful enough to avoid the Gulf crisis.

2.3 The ‘Hard Line’ Policy

In the early morning of 2 August 1990 Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait, marking the start of the Gulf crisis. The occupation, and the subsequent annexation of Kuwait as Iraq’s 19th province a few days later, set off widespread condemnation of Iraq, both from the Western and the Arab world:

“...it was such a textbook case of aggression that there was never any question that an elemental rule of international order had been broken” (Freedman and Karsh 1993:73).
2.3.1 Sanctions

The USA, UK, Italy and France reacted immediately by freezing Kuwaiti and Iraqi assets abroad, while the Soviet Union suspended weapons shipments (Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991:239). The same day the UN Security Council passed resolution 660 condemning the invasion and calling for the unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops (UN Security Council 1990a). The resolution was almost unanimous. Cuba and Yemen, not having received instructions, abstained from voting, but did not oppose the resolution (Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991:78).

In this situation, the US policy abruptly shifted to the ‘hard line’. The essence of the policy was economic sanctions toward Iraqi trade and finance and eventually war. Kegley and Wittkopf (1996:103) have adopted the definition of sanctions by Leyton-Brown (1987):

“deliberate government actions to inflict economic deprivation on a target state or society, through the limitation or cessation of customary economic relations”.

With the UN Security Council resolution 661 of 6 August 1990 economic sanctions were formally imposed. All export or import of Iraqi and Kuwaiti commodities and products were prohibited, including weapons and military equipment. There was only one exception to the boycott, supplies intended strictly for medical purposes and food (UN Security Council 1990b).

Resolution 661 did however not provide authorisation for the enforcement of the trade embargo, this was secured in resolution 665 on 25 August 1990 (UN Security Council 1990c). A strict enforcement of the embargo was necessary for its efficiency. Freedman and Karsh (1993:144) maintains this turned the embargo into an effective blockade4 which both set the precedent for international support for the use of force, and in so doing, shaped future American decision-making.

The UN resolution did not provide for the use of military force to implement sanctions, but as Freedman and Karsh (1993:87) notes just pursuing economic sanctions without US military backing was not an option.

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4 The difference between sanctions or embargo and blockade is described by Freedman (1993:144): “In international law a blockade has been defined as a naval operation undertaken in time of war to prevent vessels of any or all states from entering or leaving specific coastal areas”.
2.3.2 Desert Shield

The US military apparatus for intervention in the Gulf was not in place at the time of the invasion. The headquarters of CENTCOM, the Central Command responsible for potential Gulf intervention, was located in the USA. It was composed of units to be taken from other commands in the event of a crisis in the Gulf (Freedman and Karsh 1993: 85). The problem, Palmer (1992:166) notes, was that it would take about seventeen weeks to deploy US forces to the Gulf, plus eight to twelve months to build up a force capable of driving Iraq out of Kuwait by force. Another US concern was the fear of an expansion of the conflict to Saudi territory. Iraqi troops exceeded the number necessary for occupying Kuwait and after occupying Kuwait City they advanced toward the Saudi Arabian border (Freedman and Karsh 1993: 86). The USA was apprehensive as to whether Saudi Arabia, like Kuwait, would ask for help before it was too late (ibid.: 86). Saddam Hussein advocated an ‘Arab solution’ to the conflict, playing on Arab suspicion of the former colonial powers. Containing the crisis to the region would prevent foreign powers from ‘invading the Middle East again’ (Freedman and Karsh 1993:69).

Saudi Arabia feared that the Americans not would be serious in their military support of the country. This was spurred by experiences from the Iranian revolution in 1979 when the US support stopped short of token gestures and the Saudis felt they were left to face the consequences alone (ibid.: 87). The Saudis yet recognised the Iraqi threat:

“...he who eats Kuwait for breakfast is likely to ask for something else for lunch”

(Freedman and Karsh 1993:88).

On the other hand, the USA needed to be convinced they could rely on the Saudis which had the choice of relying on the USA or appeasing Saddam Hussein (Freedman and Karsh 1993:87). Freedman and Karsh (1993:73) points to three elements indicating the serious and sustained pressure on Iraq: American leadership; the active co-operation of the Soviet Union; the close involvement of the United Nations.

As a result of discussions with USA in the first days after the invasion, Saudi Arabia on 6 August requested help and allowed US ground forces on their territory
On 8 August Bush announced the deployment of troops to defend Saudi Arabia. This initiated the military operation called Desert Shield (Bush 1991a:197). The nature of the operation at this point was defensive:

“The mission of our troops is wholly defensive. Hopefully, they’ll not be needed long. They will not initiate hostilities but they will defend themselves, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other friends of the Persian Gulf” (Bush 1991a:199).

The US troop deployment was followed up by Arab states on 10 August, when the Arab Summit decided to send troops in defence of Saudi Arabia. These actions were condoned by the European Community (EC) and NATO. By 19 August all the GCC states had promised co-operation with the international military effort (Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991:239f). The international coalition altogether counted 38 nations providing troops, aircrafts, ships, medical teams and money (Palmer 1992:170).

Although the US troops were vulnerable in the initiating stage of deployment, Iraq refrained from attacks. Palmer (1992: 169) suggests one explanation - that Saddam Hussein did not take the US effort seriously. The US effort to defend Saudi Arabia seemed effective as the Iraqi forces capable of striking into Saudi territory began to move back and was replaced by more defensive deployments. As Freedman and Karsh notes ‘a line had been drawn in the sand’ (Freedman and Karsh 1993:94).

As Iraq showed no signs of retreating from Kuwait, speculations of an offensive option began (Freedman and Karsh 1993:201). An offensive option was not feasible in the first months as the scale of the deployment required time for its completion (ibid.: 203). Domestically, a shift toward an offensive option was not a big problem. From the start Desert Shield received broad political support in the USA.

Internationally, other governments were informed of the US plans (ibid.: 209). The need for a solution to the conflict also grew stronger because of the foreigners caught up in Kuwait and Iraq by the crisis virtually became hostages in the crisis. Those allowed by the Iraqis to leave lacked the means to do so, while those who had the means (Westerners and Soviet nationals) were denied permission (Freedman and Karsh 1993:131).
According to Palmer (1992: 175) the embargo was effective in isolating Iraq, but he argues that economic measures alone were not enough to force Iraq from Kuwait. Bush on 8 November announced the shift to an offensive option:

“After consultations with King Fahd [of Saudi Arabia] and our other allies, I have today directed the Secretary of Defense to increase the size of US forces committed to Desert Shield to insure that the coalition has an adequate offensive military option should that be necessary to achieve our common goal” (Bush 1991b:228f).

As diplomatic initiatives failed to solve the crisis and the military build-up grew larger, the allied coalition began to prepare for the possibility of war. In strictly legal terms Article 51 of the UN charter provided authorisation for intervention, but for the Bush administration a UN resolution was preferable in order to secure domestic backing, that is Congressional approval (Freedman and Karsh 1993:229). According to Freedman and Karsh (1993: 230) the passing of the resolution was timed to the end of November, as the US presidency of the Security Council was left to Yemen in December. On 29 November resolution 678 was passed against the votes of Yemen and Cuba and with China abstention. Although the text of the resolution avoided this wording, it did in reality give Iraq an ultimatum - if Iraq by 15 January 1991 did not comply with the 11 resolutions already passed, the UN authorised member states to:

“..., to use all necessary means to uphold and implement resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area” (UN Security Council 1990d).

2.3.3 Desert Storm
Diplomatic efforts were made right up till the deadline of 15 January, but did not yield a positive result. On 9 January 1991, Secretary of State Baker and Foreign Minister Aziz met in Geneva. The meeting was unproductive as the Iraqis refused to pull their army out of Kuwait and the USA would not accept anything less than a complete and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal (Palmer 1992:189).

According to Palmer (1992:194), Saddam Hussein’s lack of diplomatic finesse and his misunderstanding of the West solidified the strength and staying power of the international coalition against Iraq. Shortly after the deadline given by resolution 678, the Gulf War began on 17 January 1991. Air raids toward Baghdad started the military intervention, called Operation Desert Storm. During the first stage of the war,
air strikes were used to gain supremacy in the air and incapacitate the Iraqi strategic command and control system (Freedman and Karsh 1993: 301). Iraqi infrastructure, such as electrical power, communication, roads, bridges and rail were among the prime targets (ibid.: 330). This was supported by naval and ground offensive operations (ibid.: 301). Conducting the war mainly from the air as opposed to a ground war reduced the risk of heavy casualties on the part of the Allies. According to Palmer (1992:213) the air campaign also reflected the US effort to avoid engagement in the region. This contrasts with the US role as a *de facto*, if not a formal, protector of the Gulf since the 1970’s (ibid.: 245). Lack of Iraqi resistance ensured Allied air supremacy at an early stage. As Freedman and Karsh (1993:307) notes:

*“The only offensive action taken by Iraq was the launching of Scud missiles against Israel and Saudi Arabia”.*

To counter these attacks, the USA, in addition to surface-to-surface missiles on the ground, provided Patriot defence missiles to eliminate the Scuds before reaching their targets. The apparent success of the Patriots, the USA claimed interception of 45 out of 47 Scuds, do not convey the whole picture. The low hit-rate of the Scuds also is attributed to the poor construction of the missiles. They often broke up as they re-entered the atmosphere, reducing the potential damage of the attack (ibid.: 310).

During the war, the coalition held despite the fear of a protracted and bloody conflict, possibly with severe ecological and economic consequences. According to Freedman and Karsh (1993:342) this is attributed to the limited Allied losses and the apparent success in containing the war to Iraq and Kuwait, apart from the fore mentioned Scud attacks on Israel. Israel, although targeted by the Scud attacks, held back and did not get directly involved in the war, thus avoiding the Iraqi attempt of linking the Gulf crisis with the Israeli-Arab conflict. According to Freedman and Karsh (1993: 362), Iraq’s best hope of a credible outcome of the conflict was a war on the ground because a protracted war would reduce Saddam Hussein’s chances of political survival.

By mid-February the Allied reluctance to engage in a ground war had disappeared. Saddam Hussein was searching for a cease-fire as the Iraqi air force was smashed or had fled to Iran, and the Iraqi navy had been destroyed in air strikes. Allied military
leaders came to recognise that they had overestimated Iraqi capabilities and underestimated the effectiveness of the coalition’s air power (Palmer 1992:228).

On the ground Iraq had artillery superiority, but the Iraqi army was breaking up as the increasing number of deserting Iraqi soldiers revealed. In addition the minefields at the front were poorly laid and not adequately maintained (ibid.: 228). On 24 February the ground war was launched. The Allied forces met little resistance and by 26 February Saddam Hussein had ordered his troops in Kuwait to withdraw (Palmer 1992:236). By 27 February Kuwait City was liberated. In the early morning of 28 February Desert Storm came to an end, as the Iraqi force was beaten and pulling back (ibid.: 238). Palmer (1992:194) sums up the factors eventually leading to Saddam Hussein’s defeat:

“He squandered whatever chance he had to win a battlefield victory when he passed up the opportunity to attack Saudi Arabia. His accord with Iran secured his left flank and rear, but so raised the domestic political costs of his venture in Kuwait that a diplomatic settlement became extremely unlikely”.

In sum, the US losses in the war were relatively low. 148 were killed in action, while 458 were wounded. For the coalition altogether, the numbers were 240 and 776 respectively (Freedman and Karsh 1993: 409, table 16). In comparison, the Vietnam War demanded about 58,000 US casualties. The USA in the Gulf War demonstrated the ability to conduct a swift and effective military operation with low casualties, as opposed to the protracted Vietnam War that has effected US intervention policy in the last two decades.

2.3.4 US Policy after the Gulf War

In the aftermath of the war, Saddam Hussein remained in power, but his position was severely weakened. For the first time in modern history, the Iraqis rebelled against the government. In the south the Shiite uprising resulted in control of the major cities. Encouraged by their contact with the US administration the Kurds in northern Iraq rebelled in early March 1991. For a few months, northern Iraq was under de facto Kurdish rule, and even held election for parliament (Freedman and Karsh 1993: 410-411). As Western support failed to come through both attempts to overrule the Hussein regime fell through. From the start of the Gulf War, the US ‘formula’ used to
describe the US attitude toward Saddam Hussein was that the USA would ‘not move
directly against him, but ‘would be delighted if Iraqis did so’ (ibid.: 411). The UN
mandate was interpreted not to include the removal of Saddam Hussein from office,
as this would violate the principle of non-interference. China and the Soviet Union
expressed especially strong opposition to such an outcome. Additional objectives
were the fear that Saddam’s martyrdom could fuel regional unrest or that a weakened
Iraq would fall prey to separatists and neighbours (Freedman and Karsh 1993: 412).
US intelligence in March 1991 predicted Saddam’s fall within a year without outside
interference. Arab members of the coalition confirmed this, believing that Saddam
Hussein could not long survive the post-war turmoil in Iraq (ibid.: 417). The attention
was soon directed to Europe and the situation of the former Soviet Union.

According to Freedman and Karsh (1993: 417), the internal insurrection in Iraq
knocked this strategy off course. Iraqi forces cracked harshly down on the uprising in
the south and soon an offensive to the same end was initiated toward the Kurds in the
north. The thousands of refugees brought Allied attention to the situation and
instigated the creation of ‘safe havens’ under Allied auspices (ibid.: 420-421). Once
again Iraq was subjected to foreign intervention by an US-led UN operation. In sum,
Saddam Hussein remained in power, but he had demonstrated his post-war strength.

Even now, seven years after the Gulf crisis, Iraq has not fulfilled the demands
dictated by the UN sanctions and the sanctions remain in effect. Resolution 687
adopted on 3 April 1991 decided that Iraq ‘shall unconditionally accept the
destruction, removal, or rendering harmless, under international supervision’ of all
chemical and biological weapons plus all long range ballistic missiles. The Iraqi
compliance with the resolution is to be controlled by UN appointed inspectors, under
the auspices of a special commission called UNSCOM (UN Security Council 1991:
article 8). In carrying out this task, the UN inspectors have faced smaller and larger
complications, depending on the ebb and flow of Iraq’s drive to have the sanctions

5 ‘Safe havens’ were created as a result of UN Resolution 688 on the Kurdish question. The Resolution condemned the
Iraqi actions in Iraq, especially in the north, and laid the basis for foreign interference. An international effort, called
Operation Provide Comfort, provided humanitarian aid to the Kurdish refugees. Turkish reluctance to accept Kurds onto
their territory and the large quantity seeking refuge in Iran exceeding the Iranian capacity, led to a UN guarantee for the
Kurds within Iraqi borders, the so-called ‘safe havens’ (Freeddman and Karsh 1993: 421-422).
lifted. This has resulted in confrontations of different magnitude between Iraq and the UN. To obtain Iraqi compliance with the UN inspections the USA have threatened with the use force on several occasions. The main conflicts occurred in November 1997 and November 1998 as Iraq refused to co-operate with the US and UK inspectors. The latter crisis almost triggered a military response by the USA. As of 16 December 1998, renewed co-operation problems with the Iraqis set of a US and UK military response. In the last few days air raids have reached targets in Baghdad.

Considering the words of a major critic of the Gulf crisis, the Gulf crisis is likely to effect the US policy for a long time to come:

“Critics have suggested that the United States achieved far too little in the war, because Saddam Hussein was not overthrown, Iran remained as hostile and Kuwait as undemocratic as ever, and Saudi Arabia shed neither its isolation nor its archaic ways” (Chomsky 1991c: 3).

2.4 The Influences of US Foreign Policy - Idealism and Realism

The design of the causal model draws on Kegley and Wittkopf’s (1996) model of explaining American foreign policy. Their theoretical point of departure is the contest between power and principle as the major guidelines in US policy formation in most of this century. This gives the policy a historical as well as a theoretical context in which changes can be analysed. The theoretical expression of this power - principle contest is the battle between realism and idealism as the formative norm in the policy making process (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996: xxvii).

The theory bases of idealism and realism are connected to the foreign policies of internationalism and isolationism. Internationalism prescribes an active involvement in international affairs, while isolationism promotes retrenchment. Idealism prescribes either a ‘quest’ to reform an immoral world - internationalism - or withdrawal from it - isolationism (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:47). The power-based realism prescribes international involvement on a relative-gain basis, and thereby both internationalism and isolationism can be applied - depending on the states’ assessment of their

2.4.1 Idealism

Idealism is linked to the principle side. Østerud (1991:268) describes idealism as an academic and political trend promoting peaceful solutions to conflicts and hence creating a more stable international order. Kegley and Wittkopf (1996:621) offer a similar definition:

“A body of thought that believes fundamental reforms of the system of international relations are possible”.

This school of thought arose in the wake of World War I. It was a reaction to the power-based philosophers of that time and the collapse of the old balance of power system that the war symbolised. The theory claims that a fundamental community of interest exists in the international system. When each country act in its own best interest, the cumulated result will be in the best interest of all (Østerud 1991:268). Achieving this require opening up to other states on certain issues:

“The idealist agenda includes open diplomacy, freedom of the seas, removal of trade barriers, self-determination, general disarmament, and collective security” (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996: 621).

In this respect, Østerud (1991:268) points out, the idealist ideas are an analogy to the liberal economic doctrine of free trade.

Idealism in an American context is closely associated with President Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921). He was the ‘father’ of the League of Nations, where he promoted collective security as the cornerstone. Kegley and Wittkopf (1996:70) label this ‘Wilsonian idealism’. Kegley and Wittkopf note that in the Cold War era the Wilsonian means had to be rejected, as power was the overriding element in containing Soviet communism. In the post-Cold War world however, Wilsonian idealism may again be applied. An example is the argument used for American
leadership in world affairs, as in the New World Order President Bush envisioned after the Cold War. As the sole remaining superpower, America has a responsibility as well as an opportunity to establish a moral hegemony in the world (ibid.: 70). Idealism in US foreign policy is reflected in an ethnocentric view that the nation has a unique place in the world, that US behaviour are based on the ‘special mission’ of the USA (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:46).

Unable to reconcile the advantages of withdrawing from an immoral world with the benefits of reforming it, idealism has fluctuated between isolationistic and internationalistic expressions in American foreign policy (ibid.: 46). The interwar period was characterised by Wilsonian idealism, e.g. the League of Nations, yet this period was one of isolationism according to Kegley and Wittkopf (1996:47). In the internationalist period after the World War II, idealism was displayed through US initiative in creating international and regional institutions like the UN and OAS (Organisation of American states). Idealism also was reflected in expansion of foreign trade, launching foreign aid programs and promoting military alliances (ibid.: 48). In essence, the idealism of American foreign policy is displayed through exercising American leadership or hegemony in the world.

2.4.2 Realism

Realism represents the power side and comprises:

“A school of thought in international relations which holds that the structure of the international system, defined by the distribution of power among states, is the primary determinant of states’ foreign policy behavior. Political realism views conflict as a natural state of affairs and urge nation-states to seek power to protect their interests” (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996: 625).

The realist criticism of idealism primarily goes to the disguise of power as principles. The opening up to other states will not yield the best result for all because the states with the largest economic or military capabilities will reap the benefits at the expense of the weakest (Østerud 1991:268).

The realist theory involves a view of states as sovereign, unitary and rational actors. Viewing the state as a unitary actor implies according to Underdal (1984:67) that public policy is assumed to be based exclusively on one ‘mind set’, including one utility function and one belief system. This may be achieved by reducing the number
of mind sets effecting the policy into one by an aggregation mechanism. The requirement of rationality assumes a ‘conscious calculation by an actor searching for what for him would be the best solution to whatever problem he may have’ (ibid.: 64). Arguments to counter these propositions are abundant, but the main critic goes to that this view is too simple to explain the behaviour of states.

The primary goal of unitary, rational actors is to maximise their utility in the international system under the condition of anarchy. Realism further divides into classical and neo realism. Their common perception is that international anarchy makes co-operation among nations difficult even when they have common interests (Grieco 1994:1). They differ in their perception of how and why anarchy constrains the willingness to work together (ibid.: 1).

Classical realism, as advocated by one of the major realists Hans Morgenthau, abides more strongly to the original assumptions of power as the overriding motive for states’ behaviour:

“International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aim of international politics, power is always the immediate aim” (Morgenthau 1973:25).

The skills of statesmen in reaching a balance of power to stabilise the international system and manage the inevitable conflicts between the states are also an important focus of classical realism. The priorities of realism then are:

“… the primacy of the political over the economic domain, as well as a separation of the domestic and international realms” (Underhill 1994:25).

Neo realism is no unequivocal school of thought. Østerud (1991: 273f) points to at least three different schools; modified realism, structural realism and game theory. The first modifies the assumption of the state as a unitary, rational actor, that is it recognises the influence of non-state actors and international interdependence. The second is associated with Kenneth Waltz and emphasises the structure of the international anarchy as a determinant of states’ behaviour. The distribution of economic and military capabilities determines this structure. Ruggie (1986:152)

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6 For more details on critic directed toward the realist theory, see e.g. Underdal (1984).
7 Anarchy here means the absence of an overarching political authority, as opposed to for instance a state’s government on the national level (Underhill 1994:23).
criticises Waltz for focusing on the primacy of a static systemic structure, failing to provide a mechanism for change (Underhill 1994:31). The last school uses strategic games to explain behaviour under the condition of mutual uncertainty.

The realist view of states' behaviour is summed up by Grieco (1994:37-50); States’ position in the international system is determined by their power and capabilities relative to other’s and states strive to maintain or enhance their position. Their will to co-operate is determined by their perception of the relative gain they obtain and how this again effects their position in the international system.

The expression of realism, or realpolitik, in foreign policy is the dominance of military thinking:

“The logic of realpolitik encourages the practice of coercive behaviour abroad”
(Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:89).

In the American context, realism is reflected in the militarisation of the foreign policy following World War II (ibid.: 89). During the Cold War, power was the overriding element in containing Soviet communism (ibid.: 71). In the Cold War period, the frequency of the use of military force for political purposes:

“…reinforce the conclusion that policymakers frequently and consistently pursue political purposes by resort to force short of war” (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:98).

Kegley and Wittkopf (1996: 98) list three interventionist features of US foreign policy: 1) maintenance of a high military profile abroad, 2) displays of force short of war and 3) outright military intervention. On eight occasions, the USA overtly used military power to accomplish foreign policy objectives in another country8. Relating to the Cold War internationalist and isolationist periods (1940-1966 and 1967-1986 respectively), intervention and military force short of war were used less frequently in the isolationist period (ibid.: 98). Kegley and Wittkopf (1996:99) point to about 150 situations during the Cold War when the USA could have intervened, but did not do so. From this they conclude that anticommunism was compelling if not determinant (ibid.: 99). In terms of the relative gain assessment, in most cases intervention did not channel large enough benefits to warrant US involvement.

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2.4.3 *Idealism or Realism as the Formative Norm?*

Although idealism and realism compete for supremacy in American foreign policy formation, they also coexist. In periods' one of the traditions may dominate, but they never dispel the other (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996: 540). Kegley and Wittkopf’s contention that idealism dominated the foreign policy after 1915 and realism has dominated since 1945 is a subject of discussion. The foundation of organisations like the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in the immediate post World War II period points to the contrary. These institutions were founded in the first Cold War years when, Kegley and Wittkopf (1996: 70) contend, Wilsonian means were ousted to the benefit of power as the mean to contain communism. These institutions display strong idealistic features, as they are based not upon the existing distribution of power among states, but rather upon co-operation to alleviate the situation of the worst-off states. In addition the Bretton Woods economic regime (1945-1971) promoted the balance of liberal economic ideals with the states' domestic responsibilities (Cox 1994: 45). Melby (1996: 27) purport that the containment policy of the Cold War rendered it possible to effectively integrate realpolitik (realism) and idealism. The basis of his contention is that the containment policy created consensus between realists and idealists during the Cold War. The policy functioned as the perfect instrument to secure solid and broad support for the need for an ambitious and internationally committed foreign policy. The view of US policy after 1945 as dominated by realism is hence not unequivocal.

The delimitation’s made in this thesis give a level of analysis where the state is the unit of analysis. An implication, albeit not a necessary one, of choosing the systemic level in the analysis, is the view of the state as a unitary, rational actor. This all accord with the *realist* position. For the purpose of this thesis the simplification of state interaction offered by the realist view is useful to gain overview of the causes of change in US policy. This is not to say that idealistic features are to be overlooked as factors of explanation. The realist approach in this thesis accord with the neo realist structural version associated with Kenneth Waltz. Although the question is

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9 For a reference to the development and fall of Bretton Woods, see for example Helleiner (1994).
approached through the ‘lens’ of realism, the aim is not to test the theory of realism *per se*. The main consequences of this choice are:

1) The view of the *state* as the analysing unit, assuming it to be a rational, unitary actor - disregarding the influence of different groups with diverging interests in the policy making process. This is not to say that individuals or groups do not matter in the analysis, but the thesis will not go into the impact of their behaviour on the outcome of the policy-making process.

2) The anticipation that the states act from a power-based assessment, making the *survival* of the state their primary motive or goal. This does not preclude a state from acting in the best interest of others, but only if this enhances the state’s international position, or at the very least not jeopardise its current status.

### 2.5 States’ General Policy Goals

Before embarking on the task of designing the causal model of the thesis, it is useful to review which goals states generally seek to accomplish with their foreign policy. Holsti (1995) present a theory classifying the overriding goals common to most contemporary states. They should not be mistaken for the specific US goals that the US policy means originate from. Holsti (1995:84) contend that from a rational view every state identifies their purposes and then organises the means of attaining them. The four common purposes are: 1) Security, 2) Autonomy, 3) Welfare and 4) Status and prestige. According to Holsti (1995: 84) states do not attach equal value to each of the purposes:

> “Those who make foreign policy may wish in an ideal world to maximize all of them, but in the real world to maximize one of them may be at the cost of another”.

#### 2.5.1 Security

Security, or rather national security Holsti (1995: 84) notes, is the states’ rationale for maintaining military forces. Security needs to be protected against internal as well as external threats. In this thesis, internal threats such as crime or coups’ d’etat are not the issue. The focus is on the external threats the USA faced from Iraq in the Gulf
crisis. Beside threats from other states, non-state actors such as terrorist groups may pose threats to a state’s external security. Although states in the 20th century rarely wage war on each other compared to preceding centuries, national security often is the rationale for intervening in an armed conflict, like the American intervention in the Gulf crisis (ibid.: 85). In accounting for which threats evoke military responses, Holsti (1995:85) refer to Barry Buzan’s distinction between threats and vulnerabilities.

Vulnerabilities refer to the state’s geographic characteristics, exposing it to military invasion or economic coercion. For long, the location of USA on a separate continent, made it almost invulnerable to external threats. Today, improved military technologies, such as long-range missiles, have increased their vulnerability toward other states. Other developments such as increased terrorist activities also enhance the risk of reaching targets within the USA or targeting US interests abroad.

Threats is defined by Holsti (1995:85) as:

“This more immediate capabilities in the hands of adversaries that may be used to exploit vulnerabilities”.

The US perception of the ‘Soviet threat’ during the Cold War is an example of the Soviet potential to exploit US vulnerability. The Soviet military capabilities laid the basis of the US fear of a Soviet attack. Threats to a state’s physical survival are today not a common threat. Holsti (1995:86) point to Hitler’s conquests during World War II as the exception, beside the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait. The present threats are more in the line of threats to ideas and ideologies, economic assets or national wealth. To cope with threats Holsti (1995: 87) maintain governments can enhance their security by decreasing their vulnerabilities and/or by diminishing the perceived threat from one or more perceived adversaries.

2.5.2 Autonomy

According to Holsti (1995:96) autonomy is:

“This ability to formulate and carry out domestic and external policies in terms of a government’s own priorities, whatever those might be. It is the capacity to withstand influence, coercion, or rule by others”.
In this thesis, the domestic policies are not the focus of interest. The USA, like all states, is subject to influence by other actors, or states. However, the large US capabilities enable the state to perform their policy with a low degree of influence from other states, let alone coercion or rule by others. Holsti (1995: 96) points out that a state’s autonomy does not preclude obligations and various forms of self-limitation, provided they are undertaken voluntarily. In this respect, the USA can be said to have a high degree of autonomy to carry out the policy it wants to pursue.

Holsti (1995:96) further notes that the doctrine of sovereignty provides the legal basis for autonomy. Most contemporary countries today are sovereign, but this does not preclude coercion from other states and constraints caused by asymmetrical vulnerabilities. As an example, Holsti (1995: 96) points to developing countries that charge they have formal sovereignty, but still enjoy little autonomy because the international economic system leaves them with little latitude of choice. The USA, again because of its vast capabilities - economic as well as military, enjoys a relatively high degree of autonomy. Costs of unilateral actions, however, can erode the state’s autonomy. In the Gulf crisis, the USA relied on the support of an international coalition to take action against the Iraqi aggression. Were the USA to take unilateral action, without the legitimacy provided by the UN and the international coalition, the cost of the intervention might have been high, both economic and in terms of US international reputation.

2.5.3 Welfare

The modern welfare state requires the government to supply more than security for its citizens:

"... governments main task are to provide their citizens with social services and promote economic growth and efficiency; these tasks generally enhance or sustain public welfare" (Holsti 1995:97).

To achieve this goal, the state is dependent on trade in commodities and services with other states. In liberal democracies, like the USA, the survival of the government in elections hinges on their capacity to manage and strengthen the national economy. For the USA to provide not only the welfare state, but maintain it’s international position as one of the most powerful states in the world, a strong economy is essential.
2.5.4 Status and Prestige

The meaning attached to these terms by Holsti (1995:107) is:

“political associations seek to generate deference, respect, and sometimes awe among others”.

Traditionally military prowess and might secured the state’s status and prestige, in the form of military displays and demonstration of the use of force. Today, leadership in science and technology largely contribute to a state’s status and prestige. The USA is one of the leaders in both fields. Soviet weaponry is generally viewed inferior to those of the USA. For civil use, US achievements in science and technology also are recognised among the best in the world.

2.6 The Causal Model

2.6.1 Theory Bases: The Models of Kegley and Easton

The next step is to design a causal model for this thesis. The model takes as its point of departure the causal model by Kegley and Wittkopf (1996, hereafter Kegley’s model) and Easton’s (1965) model of political analysis.

Kegley’s model is based on a model by political scientist James Rosenau, which developed a framework for comparative studies of the foreign policy of different countries. The model is adapted to the specific American foreign policy, but without the comparative element. Kegley’s model retains Rosenau’s source categories, which group all potential forces of influence to a nation’s foreign policy into five categories. Kegley and Wittkopf (1996:14) then explain the connection between the source categories:

“Each of these source categories encompasses a large cluster of variables that, together with clusters comprising other source categories, shape the course of American conduct abroad”.

The model gives a framework to understand American foreign policy. The content of the source categories is not explicit given, even if the categories are assumed to be

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10 In this thesis, the theory and model of Kegley and Wittkopf (1996) are the basis for the causal model. References are made to Kegley and Wittkopf (1996) rather than Rosenau (1980), although Kegley and Wittkopf (1996) base their work
exhaustive and mutually exclusive (ibid.: 19). The categories and their main content are:

1) The External (Global) Source Category: refers to the attributes of the international system and to the characteristics and behaviors of the state and the non-state actors comprising it. It includes all ‘aspects of America’s external environment or any actions occurring abroad that condition or otherwise influence the choices made by its officials’ (citing Rosenau 1980). (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996: 19).

2) The Societal Source Category: comprises ‘those non-governmental aspects of a political system that influences its external behavior. Its major value orientations, its degree of national unity, the extent of its industrialization are but few of the societal variables that can contribute to the contents of a nation’s external aspirations and policies’ (citing Rosenau 1980). (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:21).

3) The Governmental Source Category: refer ‘to those aspects of a government’s structure that limit or enhance the foreign policy choices made by its decision-makers’ (citing Rosenau 1980). (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:22).

4) The Roles Source Category: refers to the impact of the office on the behavior of its occupant (citing Rosenau 1980). (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:23), and

5) The Individual Source Category: include ‘all those aspects of a decisionmaker - …values, talents, and prior experiences - that distinguish his [or her] foreign policy choices or behavior from those of every other decision maker’ (citing Rosenau 1980). (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:25).

No source category acts independently from the others. Their interaction is described by Kegley and Wittkopf (1996:14f) as a ‘funnel of causality’ where every source category is treated as a causal agent acting in conjunction with the others. The source categories operate as input to the foreign policy process, whereas the actual foreign policy performed abroad is conceived as the output. This interaction is depicted in the figure below:
Kegley’s model defines input variables as the independent variables that are to explain the output variable, or the dependent variable. The model is a dynamic one in which the input - the source category variables - determines the output variable - US foreign policy. The output variable again influences the input variables, making it a process of continuous mutual influence. Kegley and Wittkopf (1996:16) refers to the actual foreign policy-making process as an intervening variable, in order to conceptualise the linking of the foreign policy inputs to the output.

Easton (1965) presents another framework for analysing political systems that give a somewhat different, yet complementary perspective. Like Kegley and Wittkopf (1996), Easton (1965:70) identifies the factors influencing the political system. He separates the political system from its environment and contends that changes in the environment disturb the functioning of a system. The political system responds to changes in the environment, what Easton call sources of stress to the system:

“...I shall examine concepts that will help us to reveal and analyze the precise way in which events and conditions in the environment are transmitted to the political system as potential sources of stress” (Easton 1965:103).

Easton (1965:111) present a flow model of the political system that contend:

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**Figure 3.1 Kegley and Wittkopf’s Sources of American Foreign Policy as a Funnel of Causality**

(Source: Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:15)
“...what is happening in the environment affects the political system through the kinds of influences that flow into the system. Through its structures and processes the system then acts on these intakes in such a way that they are converted into outputs” (ibid.: 111).

Easton (1965:112) calls his model a simplified model of the political system because the complex political processes are depicted as elemental as possible:

![Figure 3.2 A Simplified Model of a Political System](Source: Easton 1965: 112)

The inputs of the model are demands and support. Easton (1965:120) define demands as:

“articulated statements, directed toward the authorities, proposing that some kind of authoritative allocation ought to be undertaken”.

The demands directed toward the political system have to be sustained by some kind of support to wield enough influence for the system to change (ibid.: 116). Influences on the political system may also occur from within the system itself. Easton (1965:114) labels these kinds of inputs withinputs. The inputs and withinputs act together in producing output from the system. Easton (1965: 126) explains output as transactions moving from the system itself to its environment. Not every event resulting from the processes in the political system is outputs. Easton (1965: 126) describes outputs as the authoritative allocations of values or binding decisions and the actions to implement, and actions related to implement these decisions. The
political system’s function as self-regulating necessitates feedback on the effect of the outputs. Feedback enables the decisions-makers to decide whether their decisions and actions have the intended purpose of regulating new demands on the system or maximising support (ibid.: 127f). The relation between the system and the environment Easton (1965:111) explains, are that the inputs of the environment are the outputs of the political system. This relationship is dynamic, in that there is a continuous flow of outputs from the political system that flows through the environment and manifests itself as new input to the system.

In adapting these frameworks to the causal model of this thesis, the inputs of Easton’s model are conceptualised as the goals of US foreign policy. The withinputs of the causal model are conceptualised as the source categories presented in Kegley’s model, and the outputs as the US policy means. As the values and goals of the US foreign policy is perceived as constants in this thesis, the focus of the analysis is how the change in context, or environment, effects the output of the model - the US policy means.

The limited scope of this thesis and the vast scope of each of the source categories urge a severe limitation in the variables to be examined in the analysis. The interaction or rather interrelation of Kegley and Wittkopf’s (1996) source categories pose a dilemma to this thesis:

“... no source category by itself fully determines the outputs. [The source category collectively determines the American foreign policy]...1) by generating the necessity for foreign policy decisions that result in foreign policy action: and 2) by influencing the decision-making process that converts inputs into outputs” (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:16).

The main concern in solving this dilemma is; is it possible to retain a deep enough understanding of the question if all the source categories are considered explanatory factors? Is it possible to give a wide enough explanation of the question without considering all the interrelated source categories? The choice is between a general outline of the explanatory factors or a deeper understanding of a few factors. The risk of the former is to get a superficial understanding of the question, the risk of the latter is to lose important implications of the interrelation with the other variables. This thesis chooses to concentrate on a few variables from the External Source Category,
although aware of the risk of losing valuable information on the effect of the other variables. What enables the selection of a few variables is that equal importance is not attached to all variables:

   “certain factors are more important in some instances than others” (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:29).

In a previous edition of Kegley and Wittkopf’s book (1979), the source factors are ranked after perceived influence to the policy-making process. The External Source Category was then ranked second to last. In the current edition (1996) Kegley and Wittkopf admit the specifics of the situation - the circumstances - determine the importance. One argument supporting this view is the assessment that the USA perceived the Gulf crisis as a case of ‘high politics’. ‘High politics’ are matters of great importance to the state’s national security, and the argument contend that this status help suppress the influence of the domestic factors on the foreign policy. As an example, in the decision-making process of the Gulf crisis, most of the decisions were made on basis of the recommendations of the Bush administration’s ‘inner circle’ of advisers (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996: 361). In crisis situations Kegley and Wittkopf (1996:29) claims individuals are more likely to be especially important. This points to including some variables from the Individual Source Category. Yet, crisis situations entail narrow dead-lines and therefore reduced access to information. This promotes a more unitary decision-making process and the diverging interests of domestic groups are subdued to resolve the crisis. The influence of the other source categories will not be disregarded entirely in the analysis, but only regarded to highlight special parts of it; as examples and to explain processes or decisions that requires an understanding of the domestic sphere of the USA. The particular features of American policy entail the President’s need for congressional approval of the proposed policy. Kegley and Wittkopf point out that this pertain less to foreign policy, where one can speak of ‘Presidential pre-eminence’. Political scientist Aaron Wildawsky support this:

   “In foreign policy, in contrast, he [the President] can almost always get support for policies that he believes will protect the nation” (cited in Kegley and Wittkopf 1996: 338).
The approach of the thesis is consistent with the realist ‘lens’. In order to treat the actors as unitary and rational, it is necessary to rule out of the analysis all the different domestic factors that can effect a decision\textsuperscript{11}. This reflects only a necessity of the approach to conduct a feasible analysis, it does not overlook the facts of the decision-making process.

\subsection*{2.6.2 The Independent Variables}

The independent variables of the causal model for this thesis correspond with Kegley and Wittkopf’s External Source Category. According to Hudson (1996:329) the three major goals of the USA in the post World War II era was: 1) the anti-communism or the containment policy, 2) security for its key-allies, Israel in the Middle East and 3) stable access to Middle East oil. Using this classification helps filtering out the relevant variables influencing the US interests in Iraq.

In categorising the independent variables the classification of the External Source Category that Kegley and Wittkopf offer is used. Kegley and Wittkopf (1996: chapters 6,7) arrange the cluster of variables into two: 1) the international political system and 2) the world political economy. From this basis two overarching types of variables emerge in the analysis. The first type is structural variables, concurrent to Kegley and Wittkopf’s international political system. The second is economic variables, concurrent to Kegley and Witkopf’s international political economy.

The analysis examines the effect of change in the independent variables on the dependent variable, the US policy means. The policy means made a definite turn as the Gulf crisis arose. The specific moment when change occurred in the independent variables may not always be as easily detected, but to enable the analysis to focus on the situation before and after a major change, the variables are all dichotomised. The variables and their values are given a brief account in the following.

\begin{footnote}{Dr. Hrach Gregorian, President of the Institute of World Affairs, Washington DC opposed this approach during my meeting with him at my study tour to DC. To overlook the qualities of the leaders handling the crisis will rule out an important dimension in his view. He pointed out to me that in the Gulf War case, the leader-characteristics of President Bush - having personal experiences from World War II fighting - presented an interesting and important dimension as to how he handled the crisis (Gregorian 1998 [Conversation]).}%
Structural Variables:

1) The Structure of the International System: The international system changed fundamentally with the end of the Cold War. The values of this variable are then labelled ‘Cold War’ and ‘New World Order’. The exact point of transition between these periods is hard to pinpoint. The fall of the Berlin Wall in October 1989 is usually referred to as the start of the end of the Cold War. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the secession of several East European states from the Warsaw pact followed, while the Soviet Union itself did not dissolve until 1991. The end of the Cold War can be said to be anywhere in between these events. Despite the lack of an exact point in time when the Cold War ended, for the purpose of this thesis, the status of the world structure at the time of the Gulf crisis is what matters here. The relationship between the superpowers was not reminiscent of the antagonism characterising the Cold War, although the Soviet Union still existed. A new organising structure of the international system was in place.

2) The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Arab, and especially Iraqi, opposition to Israel have prevailed since the foundation of Israel in 1948. Iraq moderated its position on Israel in the 1980’s to accord with the main stream Arab policy of complying with the PLO view. In the same period, the US peace initiative (eventually concluded with the Madrid/Oslo Peace Accords in 1993) provided hope of increased security for Israel in the US view. Dating back to Saddam Hussein’s infamous 1 April speech of 1990, Iraq officially reverted to its old position of hostility. In the speech, Saddam Hussein threatened to ‘burn up half of Israel’, using chemical weapons to counter any Israeli attacks. This variable then divides into ‘Iraqi moderation’ and ‘Iraqi hostility’.

3) The Gulf Stability: The major conflict in the Gulf beside the Gulf crisis, was the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). During this war, US policy shifted from strict neutrality to a qualified tilt toward Iraq. From the US point of view, the threat to Gulf stability in this conflict, was the Islamic fundamentalist Iran. Iraq provided a counterweight to Iran, as a potential stabiliser in the Gulf. Iraq emerged from the war as the new military power of the region, with the 4th largest army in the world.
At the same time Iraq’s economy was in ruins after the war with Iran. This produced ambivalent condition in Iraq, and Iraq was no stable ally for the USA. With the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Iraq became a new destabilising factor of the Gulf. This variable then dichotomises into ‘Iraq as potential stabiliser’ before the Gulf crisis, and ‘Iraq as destabiliser’ starting with the Gulf crisis.

**Economical Variable:**

1) *The Access to Oil*: The Access to Middle East oil has been relatively stable since the 1973 oil crisis. The OPEC quota system provides a relatively low and predictable oil price without too high fluctuations that upset the world market. Iraq, as one of the world’s largest oil producers, second only to Saudi Arabia, played a prominent role in supplying oil to the USA and the Western economies. Had the Iraqi annexation of Kuwaiti oil reserves proved successful, this stable situation would have changed. In the US view, Iraq’s potential to control up to 20% of the world’s oil resources would make it an unpredictable actor in the oil market. This enormous increase in economic power would give Iraq the potential to disrupt the US and world economy. The values of this variable then are labelled ‘Iraq as a stable oil producer’ before the crisis, and after the start of the crisis ‘Iraq as an unstable oil producer’.

### 2.6.3 The Dependent Variable

Going back to paragraph 3.1, the dependent variable is the ‘Means of US foreign policy toward Iraq’. Prior to the Gulf crisis, the means used by the USA to achieve its foreign policy in Iraq was diplomatic dialogue and economic incentives. Karabell (1995) refer to this as the policy of ‘constructive engagement’, exerting a positive influence on Iraq, that is pursuing the US objectives without the use of force or coercion. The formal starting point of this line of policy was in 1984, as Iraq and USA resumed diplomatic contact after the cut-off of relations following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The policy was upheld until the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait launched the

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12 This term is Karabell’s own. According to Joyce Battle, the editor of the Iraqgate document series, to her knowledge this term was not encountered as an official term describing the policy toward Iraq (Battle 1998 [conversation]). See also 2.2 for a further discussion of the term.
Gulf crisis on 2 August 1990. As the Gulf crisis was a fact, the means of US foreign policy changed to economic sanctions and eventually war. The Gulf war lasted from 17 January 1991 to 28 February 1991, but the sanctions are being upheld until Iraq comply with the demands of the UN Resolutions put forth during the crisis. The dependent variable then dichotomises into ‘soft line’ describing the means of US policy up till the Gulf crisis, and the situation after the start of the crisis is labelled ‘hard line’.

2.6.4 The Causal Model of the Thesis
To sum up, four independent variables are deduced from the framework of Kegley and Wittkopf (1996) to explain the US foreign policy in the Gulf crisis. Three from the cluster of variables relating to the structure of the international system - the structural variable, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the stability variable, and one from the world political economy - the economic variable. These variables, together with the dependent variable - the means of US foreign policy - are the basis of the causal model. Relating to the framework suggested by Easton (1965) to explain change in the political system, the inputs of the model are conceived as US goals, the withinputs is the independent variables and the output is the US policy toward Iraq. Both Kegley and Wittkopf (1996) and Easton (1965) stress the dynamic characters of their models, in that feedback provide a mechanism for change. Feedback on the US policy by the environment constitutes new inputs to the model. Including this in the causal model of this thesis enable the thesis to analyse the effect of change in the context, the independent variables, on the US policy means, the dependent variable. The model is depicted in the figure below:
2.7 Hypotheses

In line with the question of the thesis, why the US policy means changed from ‘soft line’ to ‘hard line’, what is to be analysed is the explanatory strength of the independent variables. That is, the focus of the analysis is their explanatory strength as determinants of the shift in policy means. The overriding contention of the causal model is that change in the context variables, or the independent variables, induce change in US policy means, that is the dependent variable. In this thesis, the context variables assumed to influence the US policy means are selected from the cluster of external factors. As a consequence, the main hypothesis to be tested in the analysis is:

\[ H_1: \text{External factors caused the US ‘hard line’ in the Gulf crisis} \]

This hypothesis is based upon the assumption that external factors induced the change in US policy means. As discussed previously in this chapter, other factors also may provide an explanation of the question of this thesis. The opposing hypothesis, the null hypothesis, of this thesis then is:

\[ H_0: \text{External factors did not cause the US ‘hard line’ in the Gulf crisis} \]

In order to clarify the focus of the analysis a set of sub-hypotheses connected to each of the context variables are put forth. These individual hypotheses supply different explanations to the question of the thesis. In this respect they may be said to be competing. In developing the causal model, the relationship between the variables was tentatively explained. As the variables are interconnected the hypotheses to some
degree also may be *complementary*. It is the contention of this thesis that the set of
sub-hypothesis is more complementary than competing. They all are deduced from the
main hypothesis (H1) and together form the explanation of the question of the thesis.

Regarding *the Structure of the International System* this thesis claims that the
major determinant of US policy during the Cold War was the containment policy. The
major change that occurred in the transition from Cold War to New World Order was
the disappearance of the communist threat to US foreign policy. In the Gulf crisis this
enabled the USA to perform the policy without the risk of superpower confrontation,
the Soviet Union even was a party to the international coalition. Albeit not a
prerequisite, this thesis hypothesise that this was the major determinant of the Us
policy in the Gulf crisis:

*H11: The absence of super power rivalry opened up to the US ‘hard line’ in the
Gulf crisis*

In *the Arab-Israeli Conflict* the US policy is directed at the security of Israel. Prior
to the Gulf crisis US policy aimed at moderating Iraqi behaviour, so as to reduce Iraqi
opposition to a US initiated peace process and reducing Iraqi contributions to
terrorism against Israel. Iraq’s renewal of threats toward Israel shortly before the Gulf
crisis marked the reversion of their moderation line. The Iraqi behaviour reactivated
the US fear of an Iraqi obstruction of the peace process and the security of Israel:

*H12: The Iraqi threat to Israeli security explained the US ‘hard line’ in the Gulf
crisis.*

Next, US interest in preserving *the Gulf Stability* implies a policy of balancing the
power of the Gulf states. Following the collapse of the ‘Twin Pillar’ strategy in the
wake of the 1979 Iranian revolution, US attention was directed toward Iraq as the
Gulf state with military capabilities to contain radical Iran. After the Iran-Iraq War
Iraq displayed increasingly more aggressive tendencies towards its Gulf neighbours,
claiming economic compensation for their effort in the war. Hence Iraqi threats to
Saudi Arabia and especially Kuwait threatened the Gulf stability:

*H13: Iraqi threat to Gulf stability explained the US ‘hard line’ in the Gulf crisis.*
The last issue is the Access to Oil. Over the last few decades industrialised USA has deepened its dependence on Gulf oil to foster its economic growth. In the Iran-Iraq War Iran threatened the access to oil during the ‘tanker war’, while Iraq and OPEC attempted to maintain a stable supply. Iraqi threats to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia leading up to the Gulf crisis renewed US fear of instability in the Gulf. After the invasion of Kuwait Iraq possessed an immense potential economic power as they had access to 20% of the world’s known oil resources. The USA feared an unpredictable Iraqi oil policy independent of the OPEC quotas would upset the world market:

**H14: Iraqi threat to stable oil production explained the US ‘hard line’ in the Gulf crisis.**

These hypotheses constitute the basis for the analysis. Prior to the analysis itself, the methodology problems of the thesis remain to be discussed in the next chapter.
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study of international politics is a complex one. The issue is the relationship between states. The motive for their behaviour is composed of domestic as well as external considerations. As the phenomena in question are submitted to different and sometimes contradictory influences, the task of the researcher is to filter out the factors most relevant to the question. In this endeavour, the scientific method is preferred to guide and structure every step from the shaping of the research question, to the choice of theory, the data collection and the performance of the analysis. By adhering to the criteria of a scientific design, the findings of the analysis become more credible. The research question and the theory are presented in the previous chapters. In this chapter the methodology issues of the thesis will be discussed. It is necessary to evaluate if the method selected does structure the thesis and answer the problem of the thesis in a satisfactory and scientific way. This implies that the relevance and the reliability of the data are scrutinised. In essence, reviewing the sources of data determine the credibility of the thesis. The method used to achieve this in this thesis is the case study method.

3.2 The Case Study Method

3.2.1 The Choice of Research Design

Researchers generally choose between two main types of approaches, or methods, to answer their question; the quantitative or the qualitative method. According to Hellevik (1991:14) both are used to answer empirical questions. They differ as to how they find the pattern of the empirical material that is analysed. Quantitative methods investigate the relevant features of the material by systematising the findings and
expressing them numerically. In contrast, when using the *qualitative* method, it is the researcher’s impression or interpretation of the material that constitutes the pattern on which his analysis is based.

In the field of social sciences there are five main strategies available to the researcher. He can do an experiment, a survey, an archival analysis, a historic analysis or a case study. Yin (1994:4) comes up with three conditions for choosing between different strategies:

1) the type of research question
2) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events, and
3) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events.

The case study method is described by Yin (1994:1) to be the preferred method when:

> “‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.”

Case studies are one of the most frequently used methods in social sciences, including political science. The method is nonetheless focus of criticism in a wide range; it is accused of insufficient precision and objectivity, and rigor (ibid.: xiii). Yin (1994:2) meets this criticism by presenting a method for design, analysis and reporting the research results that he maintains overcome the weaknesses charged on the case study method. Another criticism, or ‘misconception’ as Yin (1994) labels it, is that every phase of the research require different strategies. The case study method is believed to be appropriate only in the exploratory phase of research. Yin (1994: 3f) refutes this idea, and maintains that a pluralistic strategy is more appropriate regarding all the research strategies. Each might be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. This thesis is mainly explanatory, as it seeks to find the relevant factors to answer why the US policy toward Iraq changed. An element of description is found in chapter 4 where the background of the context is provided.

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13 Margarete Boos (1992:7) notes an additional purpose for case studies - the educational. She offer an alternative typology of case studies, consisting of 8 functions the method may have; heuristics, configurative-idiographic interpretation, disciplined-configurative method, plausibility probe of alternate hypotheses, falsification of hypotheses, deviant case method, illustration or teaching tool.
3.2.2 The Case Study Design

What is a case study? Yin (1994:12) argues that most definitions are insufficient in that they merely cite the topic in focus or confuse the method with certain data collection techniques. He offers a technical definition that covers the areas in which the case study design is appropriate to use:

“A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (ibid.: 12):

This enables the case study method to be used when the researcher wants to cover contextual conditions of the phenomenon. In this thesis the impact of the changing context on the policy means chosen by the USA are examined. Second, in real-life situations it is not always possible to distinguish the phenomenon from the context. This may be relieved by placing the following demands on the data collection and data analysis strategies. The case study inquiry:

- copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than the data points, and as one result
- relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
- benefits from the prior development of the theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (ibid.: 12).

Yin (1994: 12) concludes that as long as these criteria are followed the case study method has overcome the main criticisms. He puts the method forward as a comprehensive research strategy, including data collecting tactics and design.

The design of the case study research consists of five components (Yin 1994:20):

1) a study’s questions,
2) its propositions, if any
3) its unit(s) of analysis,
4) the logic linking of the data to the propositions, and
5) the criteria for interpreting the findings.

The research question was presented in the introductory chapter 1. In chapter 2, the most significant variables of explanation were deduced from the vast number of
variables that influence the US policy. The *propositions* and their connection to the question were made. The propositions indicate the scope and direction of the thesis and they guide the search for the relevant data to answer the question. This chapter covers the component of the *unit of analysis*, in connection with the presentation of the independent and dependent variables. The last two points belong to the analysis in chapter 4. It is based on the propositions from the theory chapter and data from the different sources are put together to see if they give a converging conclusion.

### 3.2.3 The Unit of Analysis

Yin (1994:39) proposes a classification of case studies based on the number of cases and units of analysis. This thesis is a single-case study, as the US policy is studied in the light of just one event - the Gulf War of 1991. The rationale for this single-case study is what Yin (1994: 39) calls the critical case. It tests whether the theoretical propositions are explained by the selected variables, or discover if there are other, more relevant explanations to the phenomenon.

Hellevik (1991:39) defines the unit of analysis as who or what that is to be analysed. Yin (1994:21f) points to the difficulty of deciding accurately what the unit of analysis is. To solve the problem, the point of departure is to relate it to the definition of the research question. The case in question is the Gulf crisis of 1991, and the thesis shall answer *why* the US policy changed toward Iraq. This implies a perspective with states as the basic units. There is one unit of analysis in this thesis, the USA. A case study with only one unit of analysis Yin (1994: 39) labels a holistic case. In chapter 2, the rationale for this perspective was discussed along with the implications on the decision-making process. As to other actors, they indirectly influence the decision-making process, but are not considered independent actors, or units of analysis in this thesis.

In conclusion, this case study is a single-case, holistic one. The potential problems with this approach, Yin (1994:42) notes, are that a case study of this kind does not examine the problem in details or that the study is too abstract, lacking clear measures or data. The latter problem is evaded as discussed in chapter 2; the difficult task of establishing the US goal structure is avoided by merely observing the US behaviour.
The risk of not examining the problem in close enough detail is the real risk of all case studies on this level. To make the thesis feasible, a severe limitation of variables is necessary as accounted for in chapter 2. Even the simplest problems might be charged with not taking into account all the relevant aspects. Then, when it comes to the complex problems of states and state interaction, simplifying them might be the better approach to begin to understand the issue. By including all the relevant factors, one easily ascribes equal significance to each. By simplifying the picture, the researcher is forced to evaluate in advance which factors contribute most to the issue.

3.2.4 The Variables

The last point in this section is the variables of the thesis. The causal model was developed in the previous chapter. The dependent variable is the means of US policy, or the strategy the USA use to carry out the adopted foreign policy. In chapter 2 the rationale for selecting the means of the policy as the dependent variable was given. The independent variables are the context in which the policy is formed. The four most important variables pertaining to this case are investigated; the structure of the international system, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the stability in the Gulf and access to oil. Hellevik (1991:165) notes that the causal model and what he labels a ‘model of measurement’ both indicate the relation between the dependent and independent variables. The difference is constituted by the model of measurement indicating the relation, but not the strength, between the theoretical variable, which one are unable to measure directly, and the operational expression of the independent variables influenced by it. The causal model, by contrast, illustrates the relationship between the actual phenomenon and the variables. None of the models are depicted in this chapter, as the difference is hard to depict visually.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

The efforts to follow a structured research design imply two key concepts; reliability and validity. According to Hellevik (1991:159) reliability is determined by how the data is measured and refers to the accuracy with which data is collected and managed.
To secure that the researcher measure what he intended to measure, he must clarify if the empirical phenomenon comes under the concept he is measuring. For this purpose, certain criteria should be used to determine this. Validity pertains to the collected data’s relevance to the problem in question. High reliability is a prerequisite, but not a sufficient one, for high validity. To determine the quality of the research design, Yin (1994:32f) proposes four logical tests, commonly used in empirical social research. Those are:

- **Construct validity**: establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied
- **Internal validity**: (used only in explanatory case studies) establishing a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships
- **External validity**: establishing the domain to which a study’s findings can be generalised
- **Reliability**: demonstrating that the operations of a study - such as the data collection procedures can be repeated, with the same result.

Yin (1994:33) offers a scheme of tactics to ensure that the case study attains high scores on each test:

**Construct validity** is best attended to by collecting data from multiple sources, that is data triangulation. In this way the different sources provide several measures for the same phenomenon, and one are surer that the measures chosen for the dependent variable are correctly operationalised. By this method one build a chain of evidence that further support the correct operationalisasion. Yin’s last point, to use key informants to review a draft of the case study report, is not used in this thesis. Many case studies use informants or interviews to collect information, but due to limited resources this thesis does not benefit from this. The data is collected from written sources.

**Internal validity** applies to this study, as it is of an explanatory kind. To establish that the causal model proposed really reflect the causal and not a spurious effect on the dependent variable, is probably the most difficult requirement to meet. Yin’s
The 1991 Gulf Crisis and US Policy Means

(1994: 33) proposed strategy of time-series analysis is not relevant to this thesis. The findings of this thesis are not compared to any previous studies in the same field and the dynamic feature of the thesis precludes a comparison at different points in time. The next strategy, pattern matching, might be adapted to the thesis. First a pattern is built by predicting the outcome of the analysis, and then the actual pattern resulting from the real situation is tested. The remaining strategy, explanation building, is the one used in this thesis. Basing the explanation of the phenomenon on theoretical propositions, the causal links are revealed through the analysis.

**External validity:** In order to establish whether the findings might be generalised to a domain outside the boundaries of the case, Yin (1994: 33) suggests replication. Case studies rely on analytic generalisation, as opposed to the statistical generalisation of surveys (Yin 1994: 36). The generalisation pertains to generalising the results to theory, not other cases. The replication strategy applies to multiple-case designs, and as such this test is not feasible to perform on this thesis. The aim is not to test the theory relevant to the thesis *per se*, but to use it as a framework for explaining the research question.

**Reliability:** To ensure the reliability of the case, the use of a case study protocol and/or a case study database is the proposed strategy. The limited scope of the thesis and the limitation on the available resources precludes an extensive effort on this field. Here it must suffice to refer to the sources as they are used during the thesis and to carefully document all the sources in the list of references. The major part of the sources is readily available in Norway, except the data from the National Security Archives in Washington. The access to these data is however not restricted.

### 3.4 The Sources and Data Material

Yin (1994:12) asserts that multiple sources are preferred when collecting data in the case study design. Using data triangulation strengthens different aspects of the case’s validity and reliability. The construct validity test necessitates data from different sources in order to strengthen the operational definition of the dependent variable. The major advantage of triangulation, according to Yin (1994:92), is that the
researcher in building a chain of evidence from multiple sources, develops converging lines of inquiry. That is, the credibility of the findings increases as they are based on information from several different sources. This also applies to the reliability of the case study. In collecting data from as many sources as possible, the thesis becomes more complete and the reliability of the findings increases.

The type of sources used in this thesis can be categorised in two:
1) **Primary sources** are documents, etc. issued directly from the policy makers themselves.
2) **Secondary sources** are books, articles, etc. presenting information in a second hand manner. That is, even if the source is based on primary sources, the material is to some degree interpreted or processed by the author.

As earlier noted, interviews are not used as a source of information in this thesis. In this thesis, the persons relevant to interview would be US decision-makers or scholars with special knowledge of US policy. Interviews with such persons are hard to obtain and the limited resources available precluded interviews as a source of information in this thesis. There is one exception, Dr. Gregorian of the Institute of World Affairs accepted me during my study trip to Washington DC in February 1998.

### 3.4.1 Primary Sources

The data in this category originate from the National Security Archive (NSA) and US Department of State Dispatch. The NSA in Washington DC is a non-governmental organisation. The NSA is using the Freedom of Information Act to get previously classified documents produced by US government officials and the Congress declassified. The NSA document collection used in this thesis is called Iraqgate: Saddam Hussein, US Policy and the Prelude to the Persian Gulf War. The documents cover the period of 1980-1994. The US Department of State Dispatch is a collection of non-classified official statements, speeches, etc. produced by the US government. In this thesis the latest CD-ROM version is used, spanning the period of January 1980 to May 1996.

Generally, official documents and statements are regarded as highly trustworthy. This should secure high reliability of these sources of data. The non-classified
documents are produced for the public. As such, they may be influenced by tactical considerations or ‘propaganda’ purposes, which to some extent influence the reliability. The content and the wording of the documents may be carefully selected to convey what the government intend for the public to know, or to influence the public’s perception of the subject in the document.

The reliability of the NSA documents is also regarded as high, as this is an original source and the documents are part of the basis for the decisions examined in the analysis. The fact that this data were classified, strengthens the reliance that they convey more accurately the intention of the decision-makers. Sensitive issues are probably referred to in a more open manner as the data were meant for a limited audience. Still, large portions of the documentary records remain classified. As there is no telling which type of information still is classified, the validity of the thesis suffers.

3.4.2 Secondary Sources

The secondary literature on the Gulf War is extensive and the reliability and validity of the material should guide the selection of information in this category as well. The first to consider is the authors of these sources. As earlier noted, secondary sources always imply some degree of interpretation or processing of the original data material. When assessing literature for this thesis, authors relying on scientific methods, such as researchers or scholars, are regarded as contributing to a higher reliability of the thesis than for example authors of journalistic articles. Regardless however, the purpose of the secondary source must be considered in relation to this thesis. What are the authors' intention with the book or article, and do it differ much from the purpose of this thesis. The result is that even a direct quotation should if possible be checked with the original source, to understand the context in which it is stated. In this thesis, books and articles by scholars constitute the major part of this category, like the book “War and Peace in the Gulf” by Ehteshami and Nonneman (1991) who both lectures Middle East politics at Universities in Great Britain. Another example is the article by Hudson (1996), an expert on the Middle East.
Another problem pertaining to issues dealing with war and security is military censorship. Ottosen (1991) points out that media encountered restrictions when reporting from the Gulf War in 1991. Military censorship pertains to all wars, but in this case to access information at all, reporters had to adhere to certain conditions. News pools were created to restrict and direct the information released from the war. This influenced the objectivity of the information, as one part of the conflict controlled the information available. The thesis does not rely extensively on reports from the actual war, but the objectivity of the available data is to be kept in mind.

3.4.3 Conclusion
The major flaw of all the sources in this thesis is the lack of balance in the data. The overwhelming majority of the sources are American. This creates a bias toward the Iraqi point of view in the thesis. This bias is hard to overcome as the restricted resources precluded a study trip to Iraq in addition to the one that was made to Washington DC. The lack of knowledge of Arabic is another hindrance to the accessibility of Iraqi sources. Some of the authors of the secondary sources originate from the Middle East area, if not from Iraq - an example is the Iranian born Ehteshami and Nonneman (1991). Their contribution might compensate the bias somewhat, in that they have another point of departure than the Western and American sources. The extent to which this balance the thesis is questionable as the majority of these authors are researchers with American and Western institutions. In sum, one of Yin’s (1994) most important criteria for a satisfactory case study, the requirement of triangulation, are not satisfactory met in this thesis. In this thesis, the accessibility of US sources is abundant, whereas contrasting or opposing sources from Iraq or otherwise are hard to come by. The contention of this thesis is that despite this major flaw, the findings of the analysis are of interest. The awareness of this bias sharpens the critic with which the existing sources are reviewed.
4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the causal model is analysed to determine how the change in context variables effected the choice of US policy means. The causal model presented in chapter 2 is dynamic, in that it is a process of continuous mutual influence between the context variables, or the independent variables, and the dependent variable. The outcome of the process, the values of the dependent variable - US policy means - are presented in section 2.2 and 2.3. This chapter deals with the context variables and is divided into two main parts. In the first section the content of the context variables is accounted for, according to the dichotomisation of the variables outlined in chapter 2. The second part analyses how this change in context explains the change from ‘soft line’ to ‘hard line’ in US foreign policy toward Iraq. In analysing this process states’ general policy goals accounted for in section 2.5, are used to structure the analysis.

The analysis put the collected evidence, the data, up against the hypotheses deduced in chapter 2. The explanatory strength of the hypotheses is determined by whether the data support or weaken the assertions made by the hypotheses. In the conclusion of this chapter, what best can explain the change in US policy hopefully will emerge.


4.2 The Structure of the International System

This context variable contains the values of ‘Cold War’ and ‘New World Order’. The Cold War was the major determinant of US policy formation for more than half a century. US policy in this period is closely connected to the ideology of containing communism. The reflection of this is comprised in doctrines formulated by the
presidents during the Cold War era. After the fall of communism, a New World Order is envisioned to structure the international system of states. The implications of this order may yet not be clarified, but the term was used by the USA already during the Gulf crisis, hence it deserve attention in this thesis.

4.2.1 The Cold War

The Cold War emerged shortly after World War II, making the containment policy the foremost international US objective. The purpose was to contain Soviet and communist influence in other countries. The USA soon came to consider communism the main threat to world peace. The US perception of Soviet rule was that of a totalitarian and expansionist regime, aiming at world domination by the means of revolution (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:58). The strategy used to contain the communist threat has varied between basically two types. One of these was the general, indirect and asymmetrical strategy where the perceived threat was met also in other fields than the provocation itself (Østerud 1991:324). An example is Eisenhower’s principle of Massive Retaliation providing:

“the maximum [nuclear] deterrent at a bearable cost” (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:108f).

The strategy's purpose was to threaten with mass destruction of areas highly valued by the Soviet leaders; their population and military and industrial centres. On the other side there is the specific, direct and symmetrical strategy of immediate retaliation of the perceived threat, and only in the same field (Østerud 1991:324). The strategy of Flexible Response devised during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations represent a strategy of this kind. According to Kegley and Wittkopf (1996:91) the strategy implied that the USA and its allies possessed the capabilities to respond to an attack by hostile forces ‘at whatever level might be the appropriate, ranging from conventional to nuclear weapons’.

The US containment policy reflected the structure of the international system in this period. The Cold War world was one with a bipolar structure, comprised by the superpower rivalry between the USA and the Soviet Union. The bipolar order entailed a contest on the international level between the superpowers for influence in strategic
regions of the world, the so-called spheres of interest. The emphasis on the Middle East as a sphere of interest varied during the different US administrations. Eisenhower in the 1950’s and early 1960’s deepened the political and military involvement in the Middle East, despite the attention directed to communist China’s intervention in the Korean War (Palmer 1992:85). According to Palmer (1992: 85) President Johnson reversed Eisenhower’s policies, intervened in the ongoing conflict in Southeast Asia (Vietnam), and, in an effort to win the war, redirected American political, economic, and military capital away from the Middle East. It is Palmer’s (1992: 85) contention that a more active and engaged USA in the Middle East might have prevented the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Events in the late 1960’s put the defence of the Middle East and the Gulf back on the US agenda. Until then, Great Britain with American backing had been the primary Western power responsible for Middle East security and the stability of the volatile Persian Gulf (ibid.: 86). The British position was based on their heritage as a colonial power in the region. This was the situation Nixon was facing when he took office in 1969. The vacuum in Middle East security coupled with war fatigue from the deeply dividing Vietnam War and the American people were no longer willing to ‘bear any burden’ (Palmer 1992:87). The president’s solution was the ‘Nixon doctrine’:

“Neither the defense nor the development of other nations can be exclusively or primarily an American undertaking. The nations of each part of the world should assume the primary responsibility of their own well-being; and they themselves should determine the terms of that well-being. We shall be faithful to our treaty commitments, but we shall reduce our involvement and our presence in other nation’s affairs” (Palmer 1992:87).

In the Gulf this resulted in the ‘Twin Pillars’ policy; Iran, not the USA was to replace the British in the security system of the region. To provide some balance within the Gulf, and to reassure the pro-Western Arab states at odds with the non-Arab Iran, Saudi Arabia was declared the second regional power. Saudi capabilities, especially their small population made them an inferior partner in this security system (ibid.: 88).

The Carter administration was the first administration to resume office not facing an Indochina crisis. According to Palmer (1992:101) Carter assumed a premature relaxed attitude toward communism, but an appropriate concern for the deteriorating US Middle East position. This is reflected in what is called the Carter doctrine:

“Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force” (Palmer 1992: 106).

With the Carter doctrine, the USA for the first time assumed de facto primary responsibility for Gulf security, as Nixon’s ‘Twin Pillars’ had fallen along with the overthrow of the Iranian Shah in 1979. Militarily, the doctrine resulted in the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) in the Gulf. It was developed to counter possible Soviet aggression as well as threats to Gulf oil supplies, as displayed through the Iran-Iraq war (ibid.: 110). Reagan’s commitment to Gulf security is called his corollary to the Carter doctrine. It went beyond Carter’s pledge to defend the Gulf:

“There is no way...that we could stand by and see [Saudi Arabia] taken over by anyone that would cut off the oil” (Palmer 1992: 118).

This statement was a response to the concern for the defence of Saudi Arabia during the Iran-Iraq war.

The last president in office during the Cold War, George Bush, did not state a doctrine related to the bipolar structure of the world. Rather, his doctrine envisions the world structure after the Cold War, called the New World Order.

### 4.2.2 The New World Order

By late 1989 the bipolar world structure began to change. The fall of the Berlin Wall in October signalled the beginning of the end of the Cold War. The USA turned their attention toward Europe and the developments there as the ‘Iron curtain’ fell in one Eastern European country after the other. The process ended with the dismantling of the Soviet Union itself in 1991. Most of the former Soviet republics eventually reorganised into the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The republic of

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15 Palmer is citing Carter’s State of the Union Address, 23 January 1980, State Department, Basic Documents 1977-1980, #15).
Russia assumed the leading position within the CIS. However, Russia does not measure up to the former Soviet Union’s power and capabilities, and therefore is not considered a superpower on equal footing with the USA.

Along with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the foremost guideline in US foreign policy making - containing communism - disappeared. The question was what new organising principle should now apply to the international system and US policy? President Bush, in a speech on Sept 11 1990, described the emergence of a New World Order envisioning a historic period of co-operation between states:

“a new era - freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace, an era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony” (Bush 1991d: 2).

In the State of the Union Address on January 29 1991, Bush elaborated on the concept of the New World Order:

“a new world order where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind - peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law” (Bush 1991c:1).

Warren Christopher, Secretary of State in the first Clinton term, further defines the US role and objectives in the post-Cold War order. He stresses US leadership and continued engagement in international affairs, co-operation with the world’s most powerful states, institutions for global and regional co-operation, and promoting democracy and human rights (Christopher 1997: 5-10).

Bush’ concept of a New World Order does not prescribe a precise US strategy for foreign policy, generally nor specifically for the Middle East. Pelletreau (1997:246) sums up the new situation as ‘the restless search for a new paradigm for US foreign policy’. The process of determining the exact content of this paradigm is still not concluded, but the term already is applied to US policy. Pelletreau (1997: 247) points to Bush’ New World order as the rationale for the USA:

“to lead the international community in turning back such lawless acts as Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait”.

The end of the internationalised ideological conflict between communism and liberalism provided optimism to the prospects of the new international system.
Fukuyama’s (1993) concept ‘the end of history’ portrays the triumph of democracy and free market over communism. The more pessimistic view is represented by Huntington’s (1993) ‘clash of civilizations’. According to Pelletreau (1997:247) his predictions are of a world where traditional fault lines between people and cultures would widen and tear apart the fragile political and economic ties that bind the world’s nations’. Sid-Ahmed (1997:259) comment upon the uncertainty of the situation:

“The term ‘new world order’ entered into wide usage despite the fact that it lacks a clear definition and is subject to different interpretations, if only because it describes a phenomenon still in the making[10].

The New World Order may be perceived as a contest between an unipolar and multipolar world. As an advocate for the multipolar view Lai (1997 point to that the end of the Cold War did not bring about a unipolar world. Instead, the world has become increasingly more multipolar since the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. As a result Japan, Russia, China and the EU (especially Germany) now are established as the major players in international politics, ‘each seeking recognition that is equal to that of the United States’ (Lai 1997:1). Holm and Sørensen (1995:3) point to one advocate for the unipolar view, Krauthammer, who claimed that we live in a unipolar world dominated by the last remaining superpower, the USA. Sid-Ahmed (1997:259) note that the unipolarity of the New World Order do not include imposing on the world the hegemony of one superpower, the USA, rather ‘as consecrating the supremacy of a single system of values’. His criticism goes to that this value system is Western, emphasising liberal democracy and human rights - values not readily transferable to the Middle East. Yet another explanation of the content of the New World Order offers a division of the world into one ‘zone of peace’ and one ‘zone of conflict’, encompassing the traditional North-South distinction [11](ibid.: 3).

An attempt to put forth a new strategy was made by the Clinton administration:

[10] Although theorists agree that the bipolar order of the Cold War period is obsolete, there are dissension as to whether it is replaced by a new international order in the strict sense. According to Hedley Bull, the definition of an international order is: “a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states, or international society.” (Bull 1995:8).
The successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement - enlargement of the world’s free community of market democracies” (Lake 1993:5).

The strategy is based on the perception of a core of liberal democracies that help foster and consolidate newly created liberal democracies. The priority then is to counter aggression from states hostile to these liberal democracies, by isolating them diplomatically, militarily, economically, and technologically (ibid.: 9). The last part is the humanitarian agenda, which combine aid and the promotion of liberal democracy in ‘regions of greatest humanitarian concern’ (ibid.: 5).

To sum up, the views differ as to what the New World Order actually does imply. The common denominator however, is that the bipolar structure of the Cold War is obsolete and that the new world structure still is developing to its final form.

4.3 The Arab-Israeli Conflict

This section deals with the US interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the prospects of a peace process to ensure Israeli security. The traditional attitude of the Arab world toward Israel has been one of suspicion and hostility ever since Israel’s foundation in 1948. Glavanis’ (1994: 117) description of Israel as a ‘militant and expansionist Zionist state … on the Palestinian part of the Arab homeland’ expresses these sentiments. Iraq is no exception. The Iraqi policy toward Israel however has not been unequivocal all through the period. In the 1980’s the policy took a turn in a more positive direction, until it reverted to the old position of animosity leading up to the Gulf crisis in 1990. The context relating to Iraqi behaviour on this issue is dichotomised into the emerging ‘Iraqi moderation’ prior to the Gulf crisis, and the reversion to ‘Iraqi hostility’ shortly before the crisis arose.

4.3.1 Iraqi Moderation

As the foremost regional ally, the security of Israel is of importance to the USA. The US interest in Israel resulted, according to Hudson (1996:333f), from domestic pro-Zionist lobbying coupled with the need to counter the Soviet influence of the Arab states. The incorporation of Israel in the Middle East has resulted in Israel becoming a regional superpower and hence manifested itself as an important US ally. US dedication to secure security for Israel is expressed by several US administrations.
Among the examples are the Carter doctrine which aimed to advance the peace process between Israelis and Arabs (Palmer 1992:107) or as stated during Clinton’s first term:

“One of the basic tenets of our policy throughout this period [since Israel’s founding in 1948] was and remains our commitment to Israel’s security and well-being. This commitment, I underscore, is unshakeable. This is especially the case as Israel take the risk for peace in the Arab-Israeli peace process” (Djerejian 1993:1).

Hudson (1996:335) maintains there are two highlights in the numerous efforts to settle the conflict peacefully; one is the Camp David agreement, the other is the Madrid/Oslo process. Both serve the US policy of securing the normalisation of Israel’s status in the Middle East.

As one of the most vocal opponents of Israel, Iraq traditionally has been in the front line of potential threats to Israel, because of their aggressive foreign policy. Iraqi foreign policy is influenced by the ideology of the ruling Ba'ath Party. The party originated in Syria in 1944 and was exported to Iraq in the early 1950’s. A branch also was founded in Jordan and Nasserism in Egypt springs out of Ba'ath (Farouk-Slugett and Slugett 1987: 87f). The prevalent trait of Ba'athism is pan-Arabism. This is a vision of Arab unity, with all the existing Arab states merging into one nation. In the pan-Arabic ideology, Israel and Iran was considered threats to Arab unity as the only non-Arabic states in the Middle East. Partly from this stem the Arab and particularly Iraqi opposition to Israel, as a non-Arab state in the heart of the Arab world. This is coupled with Israel’s location on territory claimed by the Palestinians for an independent state, a claim dating back to the end of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. The nationalist Ba'athism is essentially secular, but:

"Islam was the prime ‘moment’ of Arabism in which Christians as well as Muslims could and should take pride" (Farouk-Slugett and Slugett 1987: 88).

Israel distinguishes itself by a non-Islamic religion, governing one of the most important locations of religious worship - Jerusalem. The city represents a religious centre for both Christians, Muslims and Jews.

Due to internal divergence in the Syrian Ba’ath party, the 'old guard' was disowned in an intra-Ba’ath coup in 1966. Following the emergence of a ‘new generation’ of more pragmatic Ba’athists, it came to an ‘irrevocable split’ between the Syrian and
Iraqi wings of the Party (Farouk-Slugett and Slugett 1987:90). Ehteshami and Nonneman (1991:35f) describes the general Iraqi foreign policy to be dominated by socialism, revolution and pan-Arabism in the 1960’s and early 1970’s. The ideology conflict with Syria resulted in isolation from the other Arab states and Iraq drawing closer to the Soviet Union. Israel, as the closest US ally in the Middle East, was the prime target of Iraqi hostility in this period. It is in this context that Iraq developed a close relationship with the radical Palestinian factions fighting for secession from Israel. Saddam Hussein opposed the moderate Palestinians and Yassir Arafat’s leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation - PLO (State Department 1986:1). The nature of this relationship included Iraqi support for terrorist activities, like permitting the Abu Nidal terrorist group to operate on Iraqi territory (US Embassy UK 1983:6).

By the mid-1970’s Saddam Hussein’s growing influence changed the focus in a more pragmatic direction. The emphasis on socialism and revolution was reduced to the benefit of pan-Arabism. As a consequence Iraq now pursued a non-alignment line, rather than alliance building, more in line with Arab mainstream policy. Iraq also made an effort to normalise the relations with the other Arab states and took on a more pragmatic approach to international relations. According to Ehteshami and Nonneman (1991:37) this pragmatism was based on the realisation of a gradually more multi-polar global system and may be linked to an economic aspect. Improved trade-relations with the other Gulf states led to a higher degree of governmental and private relations. In addition improvement in Iraqi physical infrastructure linked Iraq closer to its neighbours, especially with Kuwait. In terms of international relations, the closer relations also may have economic foundations. It is in part attributed to the fact that the Soviet Union could not provide all the necessary ‘building blocks’ that the boosting Iraqi economy needed in its rapid development after the oil price hikes of 1973-74 (ibid.: 37). Ehteshami and Nonneman (1991:36) also point out the necessity of this line of policy to satisfy Saddam Hussein’s personal ambitions. As the leader of an active and leading Iraq in the Middle East, he could manoeuvre himself into a position of ‘a, if not the leading Arab statesman’.
Iraqi retreat from extreme pan-Arabism resulted in a more moderate policy also effecting the Iraqi approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict. By the end of 1983, the US State Department, while preparing to resume diplomatic contact with Iraq, noted that:

“Iraq will support peace initiatives that are supported by the Palestinians.

Iraq considers Yasir Arafat the legitimate leader of the PLO and the spokesman for the Palestinians.

Iraq would support an arrangement between King Hussein and the Palestinians to enter the peace process” (State Department 1983b: 4).

Iraqi accept of the moderate Palestinians, Yasir Arafat’s leadership and Palestinians entering peace talks represent a turning point in the Iraqi policy. This was the grievances Iraq previously used to support radical Palestinian terrorist activities. The Reagan initiative for a peaceful solution to the conflict did not encompass the creation of a Palestinian state, the main claim of Palestinians. Yet in the field of terrorism USA saw improvement. The State Department noted with satisfaction the Iraqi expulsion of the Abu Nidal terrorist group from their territory (ibid.: 6). The improvement in the Iraqi terrorist accord may also be attributed to more pragmatic considerations. Iraq in the 1970’s used terrorism to intimidate Arab moderate governments and moderate elements within the PLO. According to the State Department, by the early 1980’s terrorism had become a less useful instrument of Iraqi policy as:

“Widespread use of terrorism against Arab targets was largely inconsistent with Iraq’s pan-Arab leadership aspirations in the pre-war period [the Iran-Iraq war]” (State Department 1986:1).

By 1984, as the USA and Iraq resumed diplomatic relations, Iraq even went as far as to oppose Arab radicals (US Defense Intelligence Agency 1984:4). The USA assessed that the bilateral relationship with Iraq now was due for conditioning. A long-term relationship with Iraq was linked to the developments in the Arab-Israeli issues as well as the bilateral relations itself:

“Iraq, thus far, has been able to obtain from the US essentially what it wanted while sacrificing few of its political ideals” (ibid.: 5).

If the US approach failed, there was a risk of alienating Iraq with its neighbours:
“An isolated Iraq is dangerous and could swing to radical positions. Intra-Arab struggles may weaken the collective Arab threat to Israel but they also prelude progress in the peace process” (ibid.: 5).

By 1988, as the US ‘soft line’ was well on its way, the USA had come to believe firmer in the Iraqi moderation line toward its neighbours:

“Iraq’s shift toward moderation, cooperation with neighbors, and mainline Arab position on Palestine seems permanent and deepening” (State Department 1988a: 1).

There still remained areas of disagreement in the bilateral relationship. There were frictions over the commitment to the PLO, human rights, nonalignment, and Iraqi suspicions of US motive and goals in the Middle East (ibid.: 1).

The Iraqi record on human rights and use of chemical weapons among other things triggered a Congress proposition for an Economic Sanctions Bill by 1988. This caused the State Department to evaluate whether they should resort to sanctions or uphold the diplomatic and economic incentive to influence Iraqi policy. Sanctions were deemed inappropriate, as this would inflict a negative effect on the peace process. The State Department states that reduced US leverage means the USA could not ‘offset a partial return to radicalism’ (State Department 1988c: 1), while:

“Iraqi closeness to the mainstream PLO could affect - negatively - the latter’s involvement in issues related to the peace process” (ibid.: 2).

Hopes for utilising US leverage in the relationship with Iraq were not only based on preventing a negative effect in the Arab-Israeli conflict. US expectations even went as far as believing in a positive Iraqi contribution by 1989, encouraged by dialogue (State Department 1989a: 4). As Deputy Secretary of State Eagleburger explained in 1992, Iraq appeared to offer prospects of moderating their behavior:

“We also hoped that Iraq could play a helpful role - or at least not play an unhelpful role - in the Middle East peace process” (Eagleburger 1992:3).

According to Karabell (1995:34), Secretary of State Baker believed that a moderate Hussein could be ‘instrumental in forcing the Palestinians to the negotiating table’. In addition the United States hoped that Hussein would be useful in solving the civil war in Lebanon. Behind the expectation of an active Iraqi role, lay the US belief that this would present an opportunity for Iraq to portray itself as moderate to the West. Iraq had long maintained it would accept anything the Palestinians do, and USA voicing
this could enhance the moderate image Iraq sought to project to the West (State Department 1989a: 4).

4.3.2 Iraqi Hostility

As the US-Iraqi relationship began to deteriorate with the 1989 BNL-scandal so did the Iraqi moderation line toward Israel. Iraq linked the critic against the CCC-programme to the US-Israeli relationship and the USA was aware that Iraq saw the US actions as ‘inspired by a US view that Iraq is a threat to Israel’ (State Department 1989b: 3).

The attitude toward Iraq was still one of friendly relations, even if the BNL-scandal had cast a shadow on the good intentions of the Iraqis. In early 1990 the outline for a policy for Iraq, open the review with an intent to ‘engage’ Iraq in the coming years, but with a clear understanding of the framework within which this engagement will occur and the ends to which it is directed’ (State Department 1990a: 1).

The strain on US-Iraqi relations intensified throughout the spring of 1990 with the execution of the British journalist and unravelling of the smuggling attempts (see p. 24). The growing Iraqi hostility toward Israel reached a peek on April 1, 1990, in a speech by Saddam Hussein where:

“... he threatened to ‘burn up half of Israel’ in retaliation for an attack on Iraq, and boasted that Iraq possesses binary chemical weapons” (State Department 1990d:7).

In this, Iraq officially abandoned its moderation line toward Israel in the Arab-Israel conflict and reverted back to the traditional policy of hostility. The Iraqi threat was a real one. Iraq does not share borders with Israel, but the distance between the two countries is not greater than that they have a mutual military ability to strike each other. This was the case in 1981, when Israel lunched an attack on the Iraqi plant Osirak, which the Israelis suspected was the base of Iraq’s nuclear program.

Likewise, the Iraqi procurement of medium-range missiles leaves them with the capability to strike Israeli targets. The US reaction to this development by late April 1990 was that the Iraqi actions had caused a sharp deterioration in US-Iraqi relations (US Embassy Iraq 1990b:1).
The US position was that it recognised Israel’s fear of Iraq as a threat to their security, but also that Iraq feared Israeli attack like the one on their Osirak nuclear reactor in June 1981 (ibid.: 1).

Iraq showed signs of reverting their moderation line even before the invasion of Kuwait. In March 1990, Iraq placed missile launchers near the Jordanian border, where they were capable of reaching Israeli and Turkey targets (State Department 1990c: 6). By May 1990 the State Department prepared an options paper for dealing with the recent acts and statements of the Iraqi government. The options reviewed are of a broad spectre, both economical and political, but on the whole they display no real severing of the relationship (State Department 1990e). Regarding the initiation of the peace process, as late as 27 June 1990, in a meeting between Ambassador Glaspie and Deputy Minister Hamdun, the USA assumed a positively inclined Iraq (US Embassy Iraq 1990c: 2). However, the possibility of Iraqi involvement or assistance to terrorism affecting Israel was not ruled out and:

"Iraq should understand that the US ‘will respond’ to any new terrorist attacks on its interests and to any terrorism which further heightens regional tension” (ibid.: 3).

As the Gulf crisis arose, the US fear of Iraqi terrorism increased:

"We believe there is a significant possibility that Iraq could resort to terrorism as part of its response to pressure from the United States and others both during and after the current crisis” (State Department 1990f: 1).

The US based this perception upon Iraq’s previous record on terrorism and the rebuilding of ties with terrorist groups in the months prior to the crisis. Intelligence to support this account was collected shortly before the invasion (ibid.: 1). Iraq tried to link the issues of the Gulf crisis with the Arab-Israeli conflict. The USA rejected this issue-linkage, but Iraqi actions in the crisis raised the issue again. The USA feared chemical weapons (CW) attacks on Israel by the means of Ballistic Missiles (State Department 1990g: 2). During the crisis, Iraq on several occasions deployed SCUD missiles to this end as predicted by the US. The Israelis kept out of direct confrontation with Iraq during the conflict, despite the Iraqi attacks on their cities. The Israeli restraint to retaliate and participate in the war countered the Iraqi attempt to turn the Gulf crisis into an Arab-Israeli conflict (Baker 1991:3). Instead the defence
of Israel was partly left to the USA, which deployed their Patriot anti-missile system to protect Israeli territory (see p.30).

4.4 The Gulf Stability

The next variable to consider is the balance of power in the Gulf. The US interest in this issue stems from the region’s strategic importance, primarily due to the vital importance represented by the Gulf oil, as expressed in National Security Directive 26 (NSD-26):

“Access to Persian Gulf Oil and the security of key friendly states in the area are vital to US national security” (US Execute Office of the President 1989:1).

In order to maintain access to oil, the major suppliers of Gulf oil must exist in an environment of stability, if not peace. There is three Gulf states with military capabilities to threaten the balance of power in the Gulf; Iran, Iraq and to a lesser extent Saudi Arabia. The remaining GCC states are too small and military weak to possess any real influence. The US perception of, and influence on, the Iraqi role in the Gulf balance of power is the issue in this section. The dichotomy of this variable gives the two values of ‘Iraq as stabiliser’ prior to the Gulf crisis and ‘Iraq as destabiliser’ as the crisis arose.

4.4.1 Iraq as Stabiliser

To the USA, preserving Gulf stability require that no state alone possess the capabilities to disturb the balance of power in the region, rather:

“Our interest in the Gulf require consideration of three centers of power - Iraq, Iran and the GCC states [in which Saudi Arabia are the leading state]” (State Department 1990b: 1).

The three Gulf states comprising the Gulf balance of power are not homogeneous. Ehteshami and Nonneman (1991:108) present a basis for conflict in the states’ different identities; 1) Socialist Ba’athist Republicanism (Iraq), 2) Radical Islamic Republicanism (Iran) and 3) Traditional (Islamic) Monarchy (Saudi Arabia).

Prior to the Iranian revolution of 1979, the West (led by USA) was pursuing a dual policy of strengthening Iran and Saudi Arabia against the Soviet supported Iraq, the
so-called ‘Twin Pillar’ strategy. According to Ehteshami and Nonneman this resulted in an (inadvertently) competition for relative supremacy (i.e., among the three Gulf powers) as well as for absolute supremacy (i.e., between each other - Iran and Saudi Arabia) (Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991:92). This influence narrowed the Gulf powers’ perception of ‘national interest’ and geopolitical visions, to coincide with the global zero-sum security considerations of the superpowers; the battle for Gulf leadership precluded extra-regional strategic interests. Prior to the Khomeini regime in Iran then, the ‘alliance’ between Saudi Arabia and Iran rested on a perception of two moderate and pro-western monarchical systems containing the ‘radical’ republic of Iraq. Iraq, on the other hand, perceived Iran to threaten the envisioned pan-Arab unity, because it saw Iran as being an outspoken non-Arab, pro-western country (ibid.: 108).

During the Shah rule, Iran constituted a regime favourable to the USA because of its positive attitude toward the West and their geopolitical strategic position. The US support for the Iranian military build-up in the 1970’s was based on trust in Iran and because Iran was willing and able to assume the role of defender of US oil interest. The US trust in Iran was based on mutually shared perceptions about the nature of the Soviet threat, about the need to preserve the political status quo in the Gulf and about the importance of Israel’s security (State Department 1990a: 2).

The Iranian revolution and the subsequent Iran-Iraq War changed this picture dramatically. Iran’s expansionist ideas connected to radical Islamism now threatened both the moderate Gulf monarchies as well as the primarily secular Iraq. This changing strategic balance, amongst other reasons, instigated the Iran-Iraq War. Saudi Arabia backed Iraq openly in the war, while the GCC declared their ‘neutrality’. According to Ehteshami and Nonneman (1991:97) the ‘balance of power’ situation in the late 1970’s was in the process of developing into a ‘three-way military’ tussle when the 1979 Iranian revolution took place. The events of the revolution, the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq War halted this process and changed the balance considerably.
Iran is superior to both Iraq and Saudi Arabia in size and population. Prior to the Iran-Iraq War, Iran also was the military superior power in the Gulf. Iran had access to the US and European arms' market, as did Saudi Arabia. Iraq mainly got their supplies from the Soviet Union. This changed during the 1980’s. One expression of the altering military balance was Khomeini’s decision to mix ideology with defence policy. Khomeini, in his disassociation with the West, cancelled several major arms deals initiated by the Shah to purchase advanced equipment (Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991:105). The development in the 1980’s is characterised by four simultaneous processes (ibid.: 101f):

1. Iraq greatly increased its armed forces and the quality improved as they diversified their military equipment to include European (mainly French) arms.
2. Saudi Arabia and the GCC also raised both the quality and the quantity of the arms' procurement, albeit they did not match Iraq.
3. The protracted war with Iraq depleted the Iranian military at an alarming rate, while the replacement did not make up for the loss. Iran suffered from the Western arms embargo initiated after the revolution, and the prices on the grey and black arms' market were high. As a result: “Iran was forced to accept ‘second best’ by relying heavily, and increasingly on older Soviet-bloc arms and … [third world countries]” (Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991:102).
4. Iran and Iraq, and to a lesser extent Saudi Arabia, sought to obtain independence from foreign purchases through developing their own military industry.

In sum, Iran went from military superiority in the 1970’s to military inferiority in the 1980’s. After the Iran-Iraq War, Iran relied on ‘older-generation’ weapons, while Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the GCC had gone a long way to update their armies with ‘new-generation’ weaponry. Saudi Arabia though, despite their increased military strength, still display vulnerability; they have a high ‘territory to population’- ratio. This means risk of monumental security vacuums if the armed forces are too thinly dispersed on the ground. (Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991: 95). To sum up, Iraq during the 1980’s had assumed the position as the military most advanced power in the Gulf.

As long as the USA backed the pro-Western Iran, the USA did not make a great effort to exert influence in Iraq. Diplomatic relations was cut off in 1967. In addition,

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18 Iran, with its 635.000 sq. miles and 51 mill. (1988) inhabitants are the all together the largest country of the three. Iran’s population outnumber Iraq (18 mill. 1991) and Saudi Arabia (16,5 mill 1988) four times. Iran’s area is close to that of Saudi Arabia (865.000 sq. miles), and almost four times that of Iraq (170.000 sq. miles) (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1989: vol. 21, vol. 27).
Iraq’s pan-Arabic vision and non-alignment line caused a negative attitude toward the West, as well as the moderate Gulf monarchies. Gradually the relationship with the other Gulf states improved, as a result of Saddam Hussein ambitions to gain leadership in the Arab world. Iraq’s attack on Iran, which started the Iran-Iraq War, might have been designed to show the Iraqi resolve and military strength as a regional power. US intelligence reported that Iraq felt that the Iranian military was weak and could be easily defeated (Joint Chiefs of Staff 1980:2).

Relations between Iraq and Iran have never been the best. A radical Iran renewed Iraq’s fear of Iranian dominance in the Gulf. In addition to Iran challenging Iraq’s pan-Arabic ideology there were disagreement on the delineation of the Iran-Iraq boundary. However, the major contribution to the war was perhaps strategic, geopolitical considerations, dating back to the foundation of the Gulf states. In Sevrés the borders of the new nation-states were drawn by the victors of World War I, mainly the former colonial powers of the Middle East. This left Iraq with only one access to the Persian Gulf, the narrow strait of Shatt ‘al-Arab, which they share with Iran. With only one sea-port, located at the Shatt ‘al-Arab’s outlet to the Gulf, Fao is the strategic Achilles heel of Iraq. Iran, on the other hand, has extensive access to the Gulf through their long coastal line, spanning all of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman (see maps in Appendix III). To compensate, Iraq has since long claimed a historic right to the Kuwaiti islands of Bubiyan and Warba. These islands would give Iraq an alternative sea route through the Khor Abdullah strait. The issue has been the reoccurring subject of several negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait, but Kuwait has always dismissed the Iraqi proposals. The Algiers Agreement of 1975 between Iraq and Iran, temporarily solved the controversial questions of boundaries and sovereignty over Shatt ‘al-Arab (Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991: 143f). US intelligence assessed that Iraq used this old dispute as an alternate motive for starting the war:

“The [censored] expects the provocations to continue until such time as the IR [Iran] leader reacts and provides IZ [Iraq] forces with an excuse to invade IR.” (ibid.: 2).
A border incident in early September 1980 caused Iraq to abrogate the Algiers Agreement, claiming full sovereignty over the Shatt ‘al-Arab. Iraq invaded Iran on 22 September 1980, and thus the Iran-Iraq War was a reality. It was a protracted war with long periods of stalemate, which drained both states of military, human and financial resources. In the end, no major changes were achieved in the territorial status. The war escalated in 1984 with the ‘war of the cities’ and the ‘tanker war’. In an attempt to break the stalemate, Iraq attacked Iranian cities and oil facilities in the Gulf. The Iranians eventually retaliated by striking at the oil transport from Iraq’s Arab neighbours and others, internationalising the so-called ‘tanker war’ in 1986. Iraq itself was cut off from the Gulf oil transport after Iran captured Fao in 1986, but received considerable economic support from Saudi Arabia and the GCC (Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991:44).

During the Iran-Iraq war USA initially followed a line of strict neutrality caused by ‘our poor relations with both combatants and concern for the security interests in the Gulf …’(State Department 1983a: 1). The policy was one of preventing either combatant to escalate the war and threaten the security of Saudi Arabia, with whom the USA had a better relationship. The policy helped preventing superpower involvement, escalation of the conflict to the remaining Gulf states or others, and keep the option to develop future relationship with Iran while minimising the possibility of Soviet influence (ibid.: 1). As circumstances changed with the restoration of diplomatic relations between USA and Iraq in 1984 and as US fear of an Iranian upper hand in the war increased, a de facto tilt toward Iraq began to emerge (ibid.: 2). By tilting qualified toward Iraq, without letting go of the image of a neutral policy the US would:

“For further improve our bilateral relations with Iraq and encourage its non-alignment [regarding the Soviet Union]; support our objectives of avoiding Iraq’s collapse before revolutionary Iran without going so far as to alarm Israel” (State Department 1983a: 8).

In the assessment of supporting Iraq and urging the parties to enter a cease-fire with no clear winner, there lay a belief that the US could assert some leverage over Iraq:

“…. Iraq will be vulnerable, hence unlikely to embark on foreign adventures in the Gulf or against Israel” (State Department 1988a:1).
The USA hoped to secure the Gulf stability and at the same time improve the US-Iraqi relations, foster a moderation in the Iraqi policies and restoring Iraq as a counterweight to Syrian influence in the area (ibid.: 5). Syria and Iran, albeit for different reasons, had a common enemy in Iraq. Syria opposed the existence of Israel, hence their influence was contrary to the US goal of security for their key ally in the region. The Iran-Iraq war did end in a cease-fire in 1988, and eventually the parties concluded a peace treaty on 15 August 1990, after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991: 242).

4.4.2 Iraq as Destabiliser

To the US dismay, Iraq did not come out of the war as vulnerable as the US expected:

"Iraq emerges from the war as the dominant military power in the Persian Gulf, with a well-equipped battle-hardened army. Much of its economic infrastructure intact, an estimated 100 billion barrels in oil reserves, and a new self-confidence bordering on arrogance" (State Department 1988b: 1).

This contrast with the US assessment just 6 months earlier:

"In the likely case that the Iran-Iraq war ends in an armed truce rather than a peace treaty or a decisive victory, Iraq will be vulnerable, hence unlikely to embark on foreign adventures in the Gulf or against Israel" (State Department 1988a: 1).

The Iran-Iraq war drew Iraq closer to the USA, because they both shared the goal of containing Iran. As the war ended, their common interest was no longer so strong (State Department 1989a: 1). To preserve their influence in Iraq, the USA had to find a new base for their policy toward Iraq. Relations concentrating on trade could avoid extreme Iraqi behaviour and further US interests in the region (Eagleburger 1992:3).

The US still regarded Iraq as a potential moderating force in the region:

"The lessons of war may have changed Iraq from a radical state challenging the system to a more responsible, status-quo state working within the system, and promoting stability in the region" (ibid.: 3).

Albeit the US expected a more moderate appearance from Iraq, there still were issues that clouded the picture; the Iraqi view of Iran demanded caution in the US approach to Iran. Issues for debate were the improvement in the Iraqi chemical weapons and human rights record, and caution as to the Iraqi considerable military capability and the Iraqi exacerbating of differences with the USA (ibid.: 2). The US
policy after the Iran-Iraq war was one of dual containment of both the potential regional hegemons, Iran and Iraq, based on George Kennan’s containment theory:

“… a totalitarian state [use] foreign policy success and nationalist grandeur as substitutes for real improvements in the domestic standard of living” (State Department 1990a:4).

The object relating to Iraq was not to view or threat Iraq as a pariah. The policy would, however, attempt to limit options (ibid.: 4).

The USA anticipated new focuses abroad in order for the Iraqi government to contain domestic dissatisfaction. Although Iraq military emerged strong from the war their economy was suffering badly. The country was heavily indebted after the war with Iran. The total cost of the war, including lost oil revenues, damaged infrastructure and the resources spent, are estimated to twice the combined oil revenues of Iran and Iraq since they began exporting oil (Palmer 1992:154).

Additional stress was caused by the big amounts Iraq owed to the Arab Gulf states\textsuperscript{19}. Even with the substantial oil reserves intact, the need for reconstruction after the war was great.

Another question was the one of how to employ the large army in times of peace. The Iraqi military capability was that of the fourth largest army in the world and Iraq had more battle tanks than the United Kingdom and France combined (State Department 1990a: 2). Two years after the cease-fire with Iran, the army still held wartime propositions, causing a severe drain on the strained Iraqi economy. Palmer (1992:155) claims that good administration of Iraqi agricultural production and reduced defence expenditures would have enabled Iraq to recover. The post-war aid declined, albeit Iraq did receive some funding from the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) and the US CCC-programme. The refusal to reduce the defence expenditures can have a psychological explanation as well. In terms of security Iraq had no reason to maintain the high level of alert. Palmer points to the defeat of Iran, which shattered its economy as well as its army. The Syrians did not pose any threat due to the development of the Lebanese civil war and Iraq possessed a military capability larger

than Turkey (Palmer 1992:153). One of the likely areas of focus abroad was the territorial claim Iraq since long had made on the Kuwaiti islands of Warba and Bubyian. Iraq even had border disputes with Saudi Arabia (State Department 1990b: 2). In the context of the relationship with Iran, the US interest was to resolve the no peace/no war situation caused by the cease-fire. An arbitrated solution to the Shatt-al-Arab question was an important factor of such a solution. In the context of the Arab world, preventing an isolated Iraq that might go radical again was the key objective (ibid.: 5). The US suspected the Iraqi focus on these issues also was related to the tense economic situation in Iraq. The Iraqi pressure on territorial issues might be used as a leverage to extract economic concessions from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The Iraqi view was that they fought against Iran on behalf of the other Gulf states as well, as these did not have the military capability to stand up to Iran. The other Gulf states would then have to contribute to the cost of this defence by compensating Iraq for their economic losses during the Iran-Iraq War.

On July 25 1990 the American Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie met with Saddam Hussein in Baghdad. At this time, Iraq’s conflict with its Gulf neighbours over the debts they owed to Kuwait and the other Gulf states also exerted its effect on the OPEC-meeting in Geneva. Iraq wanted the debt to be remitted and in order to gain leverage in the conflict and Iraq linked this to border disputes with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (US Army 1990:3). The US stance on this issue was passed on by Glaspie on the 25 July meeting:

"But we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflict, like your border disagreement with Kuwait" (New York Times, 23 Sept 1990).

The fact that this statement came just a week before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, was interpreted as Glaspie giving Iraq a ‘green light’ to invade Kuwait. The controversy surrounding Glaspie’s statement is elaborated in 2.2.2 (p.24-25). As Iraqi access to Bubiyan and Warba again was denied by Kuwait, Iraq proceeded with the invasion and annexation of Kuwait. In two years Iraq’s role had turned around, from the foremost stabiliser in the Gulf to the main threat to Gulf stability.
4.5 The Access to Oil

The last variable differs from the previous ones in that it considers the economic aspect, not the structural dimension. Nonetheless this variable is closely connected to the structural variable Gulf stability, in that the strategic importance of the Gulf hinge on the vast oil resources. The two are connected in that the status of the Gulf stability effects the access to the Gulf oil. Unstable situations like the Iran-Iraq war and the Gulf crisis make the access to oil unpredictable and hence this uncertainty is reflected in the oil price.

Developed countries, of which the majority is states in the West, depend upon oil for their industry and general economic growth. The USA includes oil in the factors vital to their national security (US Execute Office of the President 1989:1). The significance of oil extends beyond merely being a commodity to be traded in the world market:

“Oil has perhaps become the major determinant of today’s global military-political-economic balance” (Kubursi and Mansur 1994: 313).

In economic terms, the picture is one of demand and supply; the Western states are the world’s major consumers of oil and constitute the demand side, while the major suppliers are the oil producing states in the Gulf region (Kubursi and Mansur 1994: 313). In this context, the role of Iraq is an important one. Second only to Saudi Arabia, Iraq is one of the largest oil producers in the world (State Department 1990b: 1). Iraqi behaviour therefore has great repercussions in the oil market, like the invasion of the oil rich Kuwait. The values of this variable are ‘Iraq as stable oil producer’ prior to the Gulf crisis and ‘Iraq as unstable oil producer’ after the invasion.

4.5.1 Iraq as Stable Oil Producer

The significance of oil extends beyond its mere value as a lucrative commodity. The explanation of the link between economics and national security for the USA is:

“First, there is the basic point that a robust and advanced industrial economy is the bedrock upon which rests America’s military and political power. In practical terms, this means that a modern industrial base is essential to the maintenance of American military superiority” (Kimmit 1991:1).
The developed countries rely heavily on oil to fuel that industrial base. Access to oil and at an affordable price is therefore essential. As Kimmit (1991:1) further notes, oil may also indirectly be used for political purposes. American political power enhances US political influence abroad. For instance, the USA uses the power of its market, as well as economic assistance, to bolster key political relationships. As an example, the CCC-program the USA directed toward Iraq was intended to improve their relationship. Although the US has a high degree of self-sufficiency of oil, their dependence on external sources is high. Kubursi and Mansur (1994: 313) note that the domestic US energy capacity in recent years has fallen behind the consumption demand. Import has risen from 35% in 1973 to 50% in 1990. Gulf oil, especially Saudi oil, account for virtually all the additional import and the Gulf’s share of total US import has reached 25% (ibid.: 317). It is no coincidence that the deepened US oil dependence is relieved by oil from the Gulf:

"While oil resources are more or less available across the world, one of the great anomalies of nature is the immense concentration of huge, easily accessible, and cheap oil supplies in the Middle East and particularly in the Gulf region" (Kubursi and Mansur 1994: 324).

Access to the Gulf oil has several times been markedly affected by events in the Gulf. Prior to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait the 1973 OPEC oil boycott and the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) had great repercussions on the access to Gulf oil. Following the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, OPEC decided to quadruple oil prices. This oil hike was a part of the 1970’s ‘oil revolution’. Until 1971 the oil price was $ 2 per barrel. By the end of the decade the price of oil had increased to about $ 35 per barrel (Hudson 1996: 332 f). Another major consequence was a structural change. The balance of oil power shifted from the oil companies (mainly US and Western) to the oil producing countries (Hudson 1996:333). The 1973 oil price hike demonstrated that the Arabs through OPEC possessed the ‘oil weapon’ and was willing to use it. Even if the USA was effected by the oil boycott, according to Kubursi and Mansur (1994:319) this neither threatened US control of the Gulf nor was it contrary to US interests:

"If anything, this logic substantiates our claim that the OPEC price hike provided the Americans with the chance to recover the massive funds they lost and the Europeans and Japanese amassed during the Vietnam War".
Since 1973 the West and the USA have taken measures to counter the effect should similar events occur again. Stockpiling oil, encouraging usage of alternative energy forms and more fuel-efficient vehicles was part of Carter’s 1977 comprehensive energy policy to reduce US dependence on OPEC oil (Hudson 1996: 333). As a result the global oil market has become far more stable. This also is attributed to the Saudi Arabian ability and willingness to cushion price shocks, by regulating their own oil production to maintain a stable oil price (ibid.: 333).

The ‘tanker war’ again strained the access to oil, as Iran tried to block all oil export through the Persian Gulf by attacking oil tankers. The ‘tanker war’ started in 1984 as Iraq attempted to block Iranian oil export by attacking Iranian oil facilities. This caused the USA to anticipate Iranian retaliation (State Department 1983a: 2). The USA calculated different options to bypass the Iranian threat to the oil export, but no short-term solutions sufficed to maintain the necessary quantity of oil (ibid.: 3). By 1987 the ‘tanker war’ internationalised the Iran-Iraq war as Iran escalated attacks on non-Arab ships in the Gulf. This provided the necessary support for the US ‘tilt’ toward Iraq in the war:

“Cap felt it clearly was time to drop any pretense of even-handedness…Iran is the aggressor in this case; and we should not only be supportive of Iraq, but should be seen to be supportive” (National Security Council 1987:1).

In 1986 oil prices collapsed as a result of the oil glut in the early and mid 1980’s (Palmer 1992: 120). In April the oil price fell below $ 10 per barrel reinforcing the trend of deteriorating oil revenues of the major Arab oil producers (Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991: 230, Palmer 1992: 120). The collapse deprived both OPEC and non-OPEC members of their collective effectiveness and the ‘Arab oil weapon’ virtually disappeared (Hudson 1996: 333). Hudson (1996:333) depicts the US oil policy after 1986 as ensuring protection of the GCC from regional (Iranian) or exogenous (Soviet) inroads:

“Iraq provided the military shield, the GCC states the money, and the United States the intelligence data to beat the Iranian Islamist challenge”.

In sum, the role of Iraq in this period is one of a reasonable stable oil producer. Ehteshami and Nonneman (1991: 43) note that Iraq after 1975 increasingly
emphasised the economic aspect of their relationship with the Gulf states. They tie this to the interlinking of the Arab economies as a prerequisite for Arab unity - pan-Arabism. During the 1980’s Iraq co-ordinated its oil pricing policy with that of the other Gulf states, participated in a number of pan-Gulf organisations and was the one Gulf state with the military capability to protect the Gulf from radical Iran. Ironically the next challenge to the Gulf oil came from this former protector as Iraq invaded Kuwait, partially to gain access to its vast oil resources.

4.5.2 Iraq as Unstable Oil Producer

The devastated Iraqi economy after the war with Iran called for vast resources to reconstruct Iraq’s infrastructure and financial situation. As noted (p. 84) the situation was complicated by Saddam Hussein’s maintenance of an army with wartime proposition. All together this required more resources than offered by the US CCC-program and post-war aid from the Gulf states in addition to Iraq’s own oil revenues. An OPEC summit in May 1990 agreed to a three-month production cut-back as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE exceeded their OPEC quota earlier in the year. Iraq reacted with implicit threats to the over-producers by accusing them of economic warfare (Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991: 237f). During the summer the situation became more tense as Iraq in mid-July accused the Gulf states of conspiring with the USA to keep oil prices down for the purpose of undermining the Iraqi economic recovery. Iraq accused Kuwait of extracting more oil than their share from the joint oil field of Rumaila, demanding economic compensation for the Kuwaiti ‘theft’ of oil. Iraqi grievances also included demands on the Gulf’s states to remit the Iraqi debts from the war with Iran, in addition to new contributions and a higher oil price (Palmer 1992: 153). As Kuwait rejected the Iraqi accusation, Iraq reacted by deploying 30,000 troops to the Kuwaiti border, approaching 100,000 troops by late July (Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991:239). Palmer (1992: 154) explain the vitality of oil quotas and prices to Iraq:

"Iraq and Iran had spent their oil revenues and reserves on the war...The other Gulf states had spent billions on arms, but held vast reserves invested in the West". 
The result was that the Gulf states, except the belligerents, now was integrated into the Western economic system, and some even earned more from their investments than their oil production (ibid.: 155).

During this period as the Iraqi posture became increasingly more defiant, the USA ‘took the advice of its friends in the region and waited while the Arab leaders attempted to work out an Arab settlement’ (Palmer 1992:157). The cautious US statements during the 25 July meeting between Ambassador Glaspie and Saddam Hussein may be reviewed in light of the approaching 25-27 July OPEC summit in Geneva. During the meeting Iraq obtained Kuwaiti concessions on raising the oil price and reducing Kuwaiti quotas (ibid.: 158). There was not consensus as to whether Iraq was going to invade Kuwait at all. Middle East and Gulf leaders reassured the USA that the Iraqis would not attack and so did the Soviets. In Jidda, talks were scheduled between Kuwait and Iraq on 1 August to solve the dispute. On the other hand, American intelligence deduced from the Iraqi build-up near Kuwait that an invasion was imminent (Palmer 1992: 159). In the event of an Iraqi attack, the USA anticipated Iraq’s goal would likely be focused on obtaining a port on the Persian Gulf, rather than completely conquering Kuwait (Joint Chiefs of Staff 1990:3). As the Jidda talks broke down in less than two hours, Iraq used the lack of Kuwaiti concessions as the formal reason for the invasion on 2 August 1990 (Palmer 1992: 159).

In terms of access to oil, the invasion constituted an alarming scenario to the USA. Iraq alone controls about 10% of the world’s oil resources. Added the Kuwaiti reserves, after the invasion Iraq all together had the potential to control up to 20% of the world’s known oil resources (Kimmit 1991:3). In light of the recent Iraqi demands toward OPEC, the USA feared the consequences of this scenario:

“Saddam would have in his grasp the power to wreak havoc with the world economy” (Kimmit 1991:3).

The assessment of Iraq’s new role was that Saddam Hussein would foster economic dislocation and consequently political instability in the Middle East and beyond (ibid.: 3). Hence the stable oil producer from the 1980’s had turned into not only an unstable
The 1991 Gulf Crisis and US Policy Means

Part II: The Causes of Change in US Policy Means

The US reason for intervention in the Gulf crisis were described by Bush on 6 August 1990 as he stated the US goals in this crisis:

"Four simple principles guide our policy. First, we seek the immediate unconditional and complete withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Second, Kuwait's legitimate government must be restored to replace the puppet regime. And third, my administration, as has been the case with every president from President Roosevelt to President Reagan, is committed to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf. And fourth, I am determined to protect the lives of American citizens abroad." (Bush 1991a: 198).

With this as the starting point the impact of change in the context variables on the choice of policy means constitute this section of the analysis. Relating to the states’ general policy goals as described by Holsti’s (1995), the effect of change in context is analysed in light of its impact on US national security, autonomy, welfare and, status and prestige.

In this section of the analysis the lack of sources of the US foreign policy making process is more evident than previous. The available declassified sources ‘dries out’ around 1989, hence this section is primarily based on the official US sources, in the form of speeches and statements.

4.6 Security

The traditional US objectives in the Middle East as expressed by Vice President Quayle is: 1) containing Soviet expansionism, 2) balancing the power of the Middle East states and 3) secure the access to oil (Quayle 1990: 1). With the end of the Cold War, according to Quayle the first objective was realised, while the latter two remained to be fulfilled. In addition, a new strategic objective arose with the Gulf crisis, the ‘strengthening of the foundations of world order’ (ibid.: 3). Secretary Baker in late October 1990 gave three explanations for the USA to respond forcefully toward Iraq. First, the Iraqi aggression threatened world peace. He pointed out that appeasing aggressors seems tempting in the hope they will not commit further
aggression (Baker 1990b: 1-3). Still, this is not a feasible option he maintains. Aggression should not be rewarded and ‘civilised rule of conduct’ should apply. Second, the Iraqi aggression constituted a regional challenge in the volatile Middle East. In order to resolve the many conflicts in the region, changes must occur peacefully, not by force (ibid.: 2). Last, the Iraqi aggression challenged the global economy. Baker foresaw the potential for a deep recession world-wide by an Iraqi stranglehold on the Gulf energy resources (ibid.: 3). The rationale for US intervention are summed up by Bush:

“We’re in the Gulf because the world must not and cannot reward aggression; We’re in the Gulf because our vital interests are at stake; and we’re in the Gulf because of the brutality of Saddam Hussein” (Bush 1990: 1).

During the Cold War the USA perceived Soviet communism to be the major threat to their national security. National Security Council memorandum of April 1950, NSC 68, is called the blueprint for the militarisation of American foreign policy and the containment strategy of the Cold War. In addition to military means of containing communism, NSC prescribed covert economic, political and psychological warfare (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:87). The superpowers’ contest for influence in the ‘spheres of interest’ reflected the global dimension of the conflict. None of the superpowers however succeeded in obtaining full control over the strategic important Middle East area. As an example, US naval forces have been present in the Gulf since 1949, but the USA never achieved approval for land based troops in the Gulf prior to the Gulf crisis (Baker 1991:5). This is contributed to the Arab states upholding a policy of non-alignment, even between themselves. There are no formal alliances among the Arab states. However, the Arab League and since 1989 the Arab Co-operation Council (ACC) constitute a forum for co-operation and discussion.

Vice President Quayle (1990:3) pointed out that as long as the Cold War persisted, the superpower rivalry for ‘spheres of interest’ entailed that regional crisis in the Third World had a potential to trigger superpower confrontation. Hence the powers put considerable pressure on their clients in their respective ‘spheres of interest’ to abstain from rash behaviour. Prior to the Iranian revolution Ehteshami and Nonneman (1991:92) give this description of the superpowers’ distribution of Gulf ‘clients’:
“..., and while the Soviet Union was grooming Iraq to be its power broker in the Gulf, the Western camp (led by the United States) was busy consolidating its position by continually strengthening the Iranian - Saudi Arabian ‘Twin Pillars’ “.

As Iran was lost as a US ally following the 1979 Iranian revolution and as the bilateral US-Iraqi relations were restored, Iraq became the centre of US attention. As described in 4.2.1 the USA promoted Iraq as the bulwark against the Iranian threat to Gulf stability and access to oil with the US ‘tilt’ toward Iraq in the Iran-Iraq War. In this relationship the USA had to consider the Iraqi non-alignment line:

“US, as Iraq understood it, was not trying to bring Arabs into American sphere, but only to keep them out of Soviet sphere so that commercial and other relationships could be carried on normally” (US Embassy UK 1983: 4).

This point to the USA promoting the ‘soft line’ policy toward Iraq at this time; a forceful policy to achieve US goals would risk Soviet interference and sometimes more can be achieved with peaceful means than force.

With the end of the Cold War, the potential for superpower clashes diminished, but so also did the powers’ restraining policy toward their (former) clients (Quayle 1990: 3). Regional conflicts now became a major US concern in the Gulf. Even if Iraq is non-aligned, superpower pressure in the Cold War era may have contributed to subdue regional conflicts, like the border dispute Iraq since long have had with Kuwait. As the need for caution in regional conflicts due to potential superpower involvement receded, several regional conflicts flared up again after the end of the Cold War. As an example, in former Yugoslavia the basis of conflict was present during the Cold War, but armed conflict did not break out until the end of the Cold War lifted the Soviet restraining policy on the belligerents. In the Gulf both superpowers had an interest in Iraq as a regional power and even if Iraq’s relations with its neighbours were not the best, the basis for an armed conflict was not as evident as in the Yugoslavian case. Through the Arab League Pact force is rejected as a mean of resolving disputes. Furthermore, although there has been many inter-Arab conflicts over the years, incidents never resulted in inter-Arab warfare (Lewis 1991:405). The implications to the USA of the waning communist threat and the shift of focus from a global to a regional perspective is expressed by the US State Department:
“Our changing relationship with the Soviet Union is altering the East/West setting. This shift however, does not alter the fact that our policy toward Iraq - as well as other states in the area - should be framed in a regional context…” (State Department 1990a: 1).

As described in 4.2.2 the New World Order was still in the making, but the major change caused by the new structure of the international system was that the Soviet Union and the USA no longer considered each other the major threat to their political systems. In the period that the Gulf crisis arose, the international system was characterised by transformation and uncertainty. In addition there was not yet an established pattern predicting the reaction to regional aggression like the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In this respect, the end of the Cold War might have created the opportunity for Iraq to act. The New York Times (23 Sept 1990b) cite a senior Administration official, not named, to have stated:

“We were essentially operating without a policy…The crisis came in a bit of a vacuum, at a time when everyone was focusing on German reunification.”

These US views implicate that the Iraqi aggression alone was the root of the US shift of policy means from ‘soft line’ to ‘hard line’, rendered possible by the lifting of superpower restraining policy on their clients in the ‘spheres of interest’. Chomsky (1991c: 6) to some extent support this view:

“First, there is now no fear that ‘regional tension’ might lead to superpower confrontation; Second, ‘no longer must the United States contend with countries whose cantankerousness was reinforced by Moscow’s interest in continuing unrest’.”

The impact of the Soviet Union’s new role on the US-Iraqi relations was brought up when Assistant Secretary Kelly in February 1990 as the first official of the Bush administration met with Saddam Hussein in Baghdad. The Soviet Union now concentrated on internal issues rather the superpower contest with the USA. In the Middle East the Soviets and the USA according to Kelly shared virtually no goals, there was just a 5 % correlation (US Embassy Iraq 1990a: 1). He further pointed out that in the US view ‘the Soviets seem sometimes to seek to be all things to all parties’ (ibid.: 1). In this he referred to the Soviet seeking good relations with both Iran and Iraq, the PLO as well as Israel and their weapons transfers to Syria while favouring

 Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon. The weakened Soviet position did however not give the USA free hands in the Middle East:

"But there is no reason for US to think that change in an adversary of 50 years give the US an unchallenged position … We are concerned with peace, justice and stability in the Middle East" (US Embassy Iraq: 4).

Furthermore, Kelly conveyed to Saddam Hussein that the US role in the Middle East would be a positive one in the absence of superpower rivalry:

"Of particular note was his [Saddam Hussein’s] assumption that the US can achieve peace more effectively without the complications of an active Soviet policy in the Middle East. His message was clear: Iraq prefers peace to war and hopes the US succeeds" (ibid.: 6).

The USA sought to convince the Iraqis they were serious and committed, but that the relationship had to go both ways:

"The balance sheet on the relationship must be positive: benefits for US interests must outweigh concerns over Iraq’s behavior in some areas” (State Department 1990b: 1).

In contrast to the US view, Chomsky (1991b: 3) claim that what motivated the US policy in the Middle East not was fear of superpower confrontation, rather:

"the primary target has always been Third World independence, called ‘radical nationalism’ or ‘ultranationalism’ in the internal planning record, a ‘virus’ that must be eradicated”.

Regarding the impact of the Soviet Union’s fall on the choice of US foreign policy means, he contends that:

"...the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from the world scene has made it easier for the US to resort to force to gain its ends…” (Chomsky 1991c: 6)

This contrasts with the USA view. As the communist threat vanished as the foremost US enemy symbol, the USA refuted speculations of Islam as the new enemy in the post-Cold War era:

"..., the Cold War is not being replaced with a new competition between Islam and the West” (Djerejian 1993:5).

Chomsky (1991a: 9) emphasise that the basis for US policy in the Middle East is the region’s energy resources, hence:

"...the enormous profits reaped must remain under the effective control of the US, its corporations, and dependable allies and clients” (Chomsky 1991a: 9).
Chomsky (1991a: 10) maintains that the ‘radical nationalism’ threatened the US control of the oil resources in which Kuwait was of special concern. Ever since a national military coup overthrew the US dependent Iraqi regime in 1958, the Israeli role in the US policy in the Middle East increased:

“The National Security Council advised that Israel might provide a barrier to Arab nationalism, articulating the basis for one element of the system of control over the Middle East developed in the years that followed” (ibid.: 10).

The shift in perspective from global to regional following the fall of the Soviet Union did however not leave the USA oblivious to continued threats in the Middle East. In early 1990 the State Department instigated a review of the US policy toward Iraq. USA was prepared to act unilaterally in the Gulf, but ‘in an ideal world it would be preferable to do so in concert with a friendly, regional hegemon’ (State Department 1990a: 2). Such a regional hegemon had to meet two requirements: (a) the capability to play that role, and (b) share a vision of Gulf order with which the USA are comfortable’ (ibid.: 2). Iraq had the capability, but did not share the US view of Gulf order, Saudi Arabia shared US views, but lacked the capability, and Iran met neither criterion. To compensate for the lack of a reliable ally in the Gulf, US policy best would be served by pursuing a containment policy against the potential regional hegemons Iran and Iraq, thereby checking their power (ibid.: 2). In this new situation the USA saw two strategic threats to their interests in the Gulf:

- Moscow may develop a unique superpower role in the northern Gulf with relations to both Iraq and Iran. Moscow will not be able to extend its own influence significantly but it may be able to accelerate the decline of ours. Moscow’s efforts to unilaterally mediate Iran-Iraq disputes are indicative of what to expect.

- The regional conflict will fuel proliferation of advanced weaponry. It has already brought ballistic missile and chemical weaponry to the area. We can expect it to also drive nuclear proliferation. The danger of escalation is real. In turn, such uncertainties in an environment where economic interests are so enormous could lead to serious American and Soviet miscalculations (State Department 1990a: 3).

The diminished, but continued Russian threat to US objectives in the Gulf is related to the relationships created during the Cold War. The US ‘tilt’ toward Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war and the CCC-program had driven Iraq closer to the West. However, the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries still were Iraq’s major weapon
supplier, although Iraq in recent years had diversified their sources of arm's procurement\(^{21}\) (State Department 1990c: 28). During the Cold War, the US military assistance was dismissed as a mean of influence due to anticipated Congressional opposition and the risk of at a later stage having to disassociate themselves from the political regime of Saddam Hussein (State Department 1983a: 5,7). At that time, the USA assessed that as long as the Soviets continued to link arms' purchases to attractive economic packages and favourable credit terms, this would keep Iraq away from the more expensive Western weapons. The USA still doubted this would translate into political leverage for the Soviets as Iraq’s strict non-alignment line precluded acceding to Soviet pressure on political issues (US Defense Intelligence Agency 1984:1). Another Iraqi grievance against the Soviets still present in 1990 was the Soviet rapprochement toward Iran, even as the Iraq-Iran relation was in a state of ‘no war/no peace’ after the cease-fire in 1988 (State Department 1990c: 28).

Based on the assessment of Saddam Hussein’s aspirations and power, the USA chose to use Kennan’s theory of containment as the base for their policy toward Iraq. As noted in 4.4.2 the theory assumed a totalitarian state like Iraq to substitute real domestic improvements with foreign policy successes and nationalism. The US objective was to counter adverse Iraqi behaviour through limiting Iraq’s options rather than isolate Iraq in the Gulf and risk a return to terrorism and other hostile Iraqi actions, like the Iraqi support for terrorism against Israel and others (State Department 1990a: 4).

As the Bush administration took office, the policy in the Gulf was reviewed as a part of a review of the key areas of US foreign policy. The result was a conclusion that US interests in the Persian Gulf - and in Iraq- were likely to be increasingly important in the decade to come (State Department 1990d: 2). In the regional context, the USA envisioned three main concerns related to Iraq regarding the policy outline for the Gulf:

• In the context of Iran and the northern Gulf
  **Key Objective:** Protect Iraqi security but deny opportunities for grandeur, e.g. an adventurous foreign policy.

• In the context of Intra-Arab relations
  **Key Objective:** Encourage Iraqi inclusion in the new Egyptian-Syrian rapprochement but on terms that are balanced by Egyptian and Syrian strength.

• In the context of bi-lateral relations
  **Key Objective:** Create an international environment of incentives and opportunities for Iraq, but an environment that will force Saddam to make hard choices. We are not interested in subsidizing Saddam’s military aspirations nor his dictatorship. If he cannot unilaterally afford ‘guns and butter’, our objective should be to make him choose ‘butter’ (State Department 1990a: 5-6).

The first point refers to the Gulf stability in that the USA sought to balance the power of the two major regional powers in the Gulf, Iran and Iraq. The US objective was to solve the ‘no war/no peace’ status between Iran and Iraq, preferably by international arbitration (ibid.: 5). The second refers to Iraq’s relations with the remaining Arab states, hence it pertains to the Gulf stability, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Here the US objective was to avoid Iraqi isolation and risk a return to radical behaviour, i.e. terrorism. As much as intra-Arab struggles might weaken the Arab threat to Israel, they also precluded progress in the peace process. For the USA, not appeasing aggressive Iraqi behaviour and encourage Arab states to insist on Iraq abiding by Arab consensus also reflect the US desire to check Iraq’s power against the other actors in the Gulf (ibid.: 5-6). The last point refers to the economic incentives the USA was prepared to offer in order to avoid an Iraqi threat to security, in the Gulf and beyond. The US objective was to instigate real economic reform while avoiding arms’ transfers and military aid as the external threats to Iraq was diminishing; Iran was weaker than Iraq and the Soviet Union were unlikely to challenge (ibid.: 6).

The US grievances toward Iraq in early 1990 were mainly Gulf security, proliferation and human rights (State Department 1990b: 2). In relation to proliferation of non-conventional weapons in the Gulf, this also dates back to the Cold War situation. An implication of the improved bilateral US-Iraqi relationship was that the USA removed Iraq from the list of states sponsoring terrorism in 1982 (Department of Commerce 1991: 1). This eased Iraqi access to so-called dual-use items, that is technology with both a military and a civil function. Previously, export
of these items was prohibited for the fear that it would contribute to terrorist activities. Export of military equipment on the Munitions List still was prohibited (Department of Justice 1994, addendum: 2). Prior to the Gulf crisis, export controls were imposed on chemical precursors (1984,1987), items useful in the development of ballistic missiles (1987) and chemical and biological agents that could be developed into weapons (1989). In addition, exports licensing were reviewed to control items subject to nuclear non-proliferation, foreign policy controls and technologies at risk of diversion to COCOM-proscribed countries, that is the Soviet Union, Eastern European countries or China (Department of Commerce 1991: 2).

Regarding chemical weapons (CW), in a US review of the Iraqi capabilities shortly after the Gulf crisis arose, the USA knew Iraqi had the know-how to produce chemical agents and had substantial quantities at hand already. Iraq had several delivery systems for CW by aircraft or on the ground, including ballistic missiles as the Soviet produced SCUD missiles used against Israel in the Gulf War. The potential for Iraqi CW use was assessed to be determined by two conditions: 1) in initiating an offensive against Saudi-Arabia or 2) if Iraqi forces in the south were attacked and thereby Iraqi military integrity was seriously threatened. The USA suspected Iraq had deployed CW in western and southern Iraq at the start of the Gulf crisis (State Department 1990g: 1-2). Of special interest were the developments of the so-called Iraqi supergun, a massive rocket launcher intended to be used against Israel and Iraq’s immediate neighbours in a regional conflict. UN weapons inspections after the Gulf War discovered two of these superguns in Iraq, but neither had reached operative status before the Gulf crisis and nor were they deployed in the war (US Defense Intelligence Agency 1991: 2, State Department 1991: 12-14).

On the issue of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, Chomsky (1991b: 7) emphasises the role of the West in providing Iraq with weapons. He maintains Western corporations took an active role in building up Iraq’s military strength, notably the weapons of mass destruction. He also proposes a different view than the US one. He points out that in April 1990, when Iraq still was on good footing with the USA, Saddam Hussein proposed to destroy his chemical and biological weapons if
Israel agreed to destroy its non-conventional weapons - including its nuclear weapons Chomsky (1991a: 7-8). According to Chomsky (ibid.: 8) the USA welcomed Iraq’s offer to destroy its own arsenal, but rejected the linkage to Israel as this would raise the question of the legitimacy of US aid to Israel. Congressional legislation in the 1970’s barred aid to countries engaging in clandestine nuclear weapons development. In addition, a December 1990 Soviet proposal to declare the Middle East a nuclear free zone if Iraq withdrew from Kuwait was given qualified US support, but ‘carefully avoided using the words ‘nuclear-free zone’ - for the reasons just noted’ (Chomsky 1991a: 8).

To sum up, the perhaps most important of the three traditional US goals in the Middle East were fulfilled by the time the Gulf crisis arose. To the USA, the vanishing threat to US security of Soviet communism enabled the USA to focus on the Iraqi aggression as a regional crisis without the potential to trigger superpower confrontation. The crisis nevertheless had implications transcending merely regional issues. To the USA, the implications of the Iraqi actions included threats to Iraq’s Arab neighbours as well as Israel. Further it threatened the access to oil and the basis of Bush’ New World Order, that is peaceful co-existence based on international law. The latter emerged as a new US goal, replacing anti-communism as the primary US goal. The USA in their own view had ‘won’ the Cold War and the gains of this victory was US international leadership (Baker 1990b: 6). When challenged by Iraq in the Gulf crisis they had to crack down on the threat to this leadership and the moral base on which the US policy rested (Baker 1991: 9). In the US view then, the threats posed by the Iraqi aggression to the New World Order, the Gulf stability and access to oil instigated the shift in US policy from ‘soft line’ to ‘hard line’.

This view is to some extent supported by Noam Chomsky, a critic of the US policy in the Gulf crisis. He agrees that the end of the Cold War helped the USA assume the role of enforcer under the Gulf crisis, but at the same time it eased the US use of force in the crisis. He purports that the US intentions are unchanged and are not constituted by concern for Gulf security and world order, rather the US policy is guided by their
interest in Gulf oil. Access to oil and preventing the producer states’ independence from the USA and the West are the main US goals.

On the regional level Iraq’s weapons capability was of great concern to the USA. Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction as well as the means to deliver it, posing a threat to its Arab neighbours as well Israel. Critics claim that this threat could have been diminished or avoided by a positive response to Iraq’s offer in the spring of 1990 to mutual destroy non-conventional weapons in Israel and Iraq. Nevertheless, this offer was not pursued and as the Gulf crisis arose, the Iraqi capabilities constituted a serious threat to the Gulf states and Israel. The USA feared Iraq would expand their invasion to Saudi Arabia and Iraq showed the credibility of their threat by deploying SCUD-missiles on Israeli cities.

4.7 Autonomy

The USA as a superpower has the capabilities to withstand influence and coercion from most countries. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union was the only state with capabilities measuring up to the ones of the USA. In this respect the US autonomy was to some extent restricted by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The threat did not so much entail Soviet challenge to the sovereignty of US territory itself. Rather, the US autonomy in Holsti’s (1995:96) terminology - the ability to carry out one's own policies - was restricted by the fear of provoking military confrontation with the Soviets. An example is the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. To the USA, the deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba was considered a potential threat to the USA, as they had the range to reach US territory. The US policy in handling the conflict with Cuba had to consider the Soviet response. To avoid a nuclear superpower confrontation, the USA refrained from using their military capabilities to enforce its policy on Cuba. This is also an example of the potential of regional conflicts to trigger superpower confrontation, as described in the previous section.

In the volatile Gulf region, the USA and the Soviet Union have been careful not to provoke a similar situation. The powers' influence on individual Gulf states also is

\[22\] For an analysis of the Cuban missile crisis, see Allison (1969).
less direct than that of Soviet’s influence on Cuba. In part this is due to the Gulf non-alignment policy. Open conflict, as a mean of dealing with events in the Gulf would involve too great a risk of superpower confrontation. The means chosen to carry out their respective policies toward Iraq during the Cold War, were arm's transfers by the Soviet Union and the USA used their ‘soft line’ of diplomacy and economic incentives.

In the New World Order, there are no state alone left with capabilities equal to those of the USA. With the risk of superpower confrontation gone, conflicts in the Gulf can be met with military force as in the Gulf War. In the Gulf crisis, the US interest in Kuwaiti autonomy and survival was used as the rationale for the ‘hard line’ of sanctions and war. Secretary Baker expressed this rationale for intervention shortly after the initiation of Desert Storm:

“Respect for the sovereignty of the peoples of the Gulf and the Middle East must be uppermost in our minds (Baker 1991: 4).

On the global level, one way to reflect the ability a state has to carry out its desired policies is in the state’s status in the UN. The USA is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, a status rewarded to the world’s most powerful or influential states. As such they have the potential along with the other permanent members to block any decision by using their right to veto a resolution. Chomsky (1991b: 10, 1991a: 6) points to that the USA is the Council’s member, which most frequently have used their veto power in the last two decades. UN statistics on the ranking of the use of veto since 1946 gives a different picture: 1) USSR (120), 2) USA (72), UK (32), 4) France (18) and 5) China (4). The Soviet lead is contributed to their frequent use of the veto in early days of the UN. In the period of 1946-55 they alone vetoed Council resolutions 79 times. In recent years Chomsky’s claim that the USA is the Council’s most vetoing member is correct (UN Security Council 1998). Chomsky (1991a: 6) point to that in the first post-Cold War session (1989-1990) three Security Council resolutions were vetoed, all by the USA. These resolutions regarded two condemnations of the US intervention in Panama and the last condemned Israeli human rights abuses. In the General Assembly the USA vetoed two resolutions calling on all states to observe international law, pertaining to US behaviour against
Nicaragua. Both resolutions were declared ‘unlawful’ by the World Court. All the resolutions relate directly to US policy, except for that on Israeli human rights abuses. These examples go to show that the USA has the power to enforce their policies even at a global level and this indicates that the USA have a rather high degree of autonomy.

In the Middle East, an example of the US power to achieve its policy is reflected in the Arab-Israeli conflict. According to Chomsky (1991c: 15) the USA until 1971 abided by the international consensus on the conflict. Since the consensus shifted to recognise Palestinian right to self-determination, the USA has become increasingly isolated internationally and has been virtually alone in opposing international efforts to initiate a ‘peace process’ on the Middle East. To support this he refers to US veto in the UN as well as the USA barring other initiatives:

“Given US power, its opposition amounts to a veto. Accordingly there has been no international effort to deal with the conflict” (ibid.: 4).

The US opposition relates to UN initiatives for an international conference on the issue, endorsing a Palestinian right to self-determination. The Madrid conference in 1993 was according to Chomsky (1991c: 12) satisfying to the USA because:

“The Baker Plan stipulated that Israel would attend ‘only after a satisfactory list of Palestinians has been worked out’, and that any Palestinians allowed by the US and Israel to attend would be restricted to discussion of the Shamir Plan.”

Chomsky (ibid.: 4) also refer to Kissinger as revealing that his major policy goals in the Middle East was to restrict initiatives to the US peace efforts, ‘to ensure that the Europeans and Japanese did not get involved in the diplomacy.

In the Gulf crisis the international reactions to the Iraqi aggression were legitimated by UN resolutions. As opposed to the Cold War era, none of the permanent Security Council members vetoed any of these. The US interpretation of this abstention of veto was:

“An outstanding achievement of the current crisis has been the ability, I think, of the United Nations to act as the founders intended” (Baker 1991:1).

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23 The basic premises of the plan are, according to Chomsky (1991c: 12): 1) Jordan is regarded by the Israelis as an existing Palestinian state, hence there can be no ‘additional Palestinian state in the Gaza district and in the area between Israel and Jordan, 2) Israel will not conduct negotiations with the PLO and 3) The Israeli government gives the guidelines for the status of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, which render the Palestinian self-determination meaningless.
“And after a long period of stagnation, the United Nations is becoming a more effective organization. The ideals of the UN Charter are becoming realities” (Baker 1990b: 1).

Chomsky’s (1993:2) response is far from this positive. He claims the UN was able to respond to Iraq’s aggression because ‘for once the United States allowed it to’. He further criticises the US handling of the UN sanctions imposed on Iraq in the crisis, especially resolution 678, which authorised the use of force against Iraq:

“With threats and bribery, the US pressured the Security Council to wash its hands of the crisis, authorizing individual states to proceed as they wished, including the use of force (UN resolution 678). The Council thus violated the UN Charter, which bars any use of force until the Council determines that peaceful means have been exhausted …” (Chomsky 1991b: 6)

Among the reasons USA emphasised to use force in the conflict was moral goals, such as stopping the suffering of the occupied Kuwaitis, and the risk of a prolonged occupation giving Iraq time to develop non-conventional weapons, that is nuclear weapons (Quayle 1990: 4). He also claims that the USA did block the diplomatic track by failing to follow up on Iraqi or other initiatives to solve the conflict peacefully. The major US rationale for dismissing the initiatives was that they entailed ‘linkage’ to other issues, notably the Arab-Israeli conflict and weapons of mass destruction (Chomsky 1991b: 10-12). These issues are elaborated in 4.9 and are therefore not discussed further in this section.

Holsti (1995:97) note that a state’s autonomy may erode because of reliance upon external sources, especially if the reliance is asymmetrical. The Iraqi trump card is their oil resources. They are second only to Saudi Arabia as the world’s largest oil producer (State Department 1990b: 1). US dependence on oil has deepened over the years. By 1990 about 50 % of American oil consumption were imported. Middle East oil accounted for the majority of the import, about 25 % (Kubursi and Mansur 1994:317). According to Kubursi and Mansur (1994: 325) US oil dependence vis a vis the Middle East and Iraq still do not influence their ability to perform their policy as they wish:

"... it is abundantly clear, following the Gulf War of 1991, that Saudi Arabia and the rest of the GCC producers will not exercise independent choice or decisions. ... The genie is in the US bottle, indeed, it has been there all along."
In sum, as reflected in their status and voting behaviour in the UN, the USA has a relatively high degree of autonomy. With the end of the Cold War and the potential of regional conflicts implying superpower clashes gone, the US autonomy seems strengthened rather than weakened. In the Gulf the USA obtained support for opposing issue linkage between the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Gulf crisis. This also strengthens the assumption of a strong US autonomy, in the term of the ability to pursue their policy. An area where the USA had less success in achieving their goals is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Iraqi possession of the weapons and the means to deliver them constitute a threat as severe as the Iraqi control over a substantial part of the Gulf’s oil resources in the crisis. Despite the threat to US interest in the Gulf crisis, the Iraqi ‘oil card’ was not strong enough to erode this autonomy and the Iraqi weapons capabilities inflicted limited damage in the Gulf War.

4.8 Welfare

The growth of the welfare state after the World War II in the USA and other capitalist democracies was comprised in the Keynesian welfare state. Fiscal and monetary policies were managed so as to approximate full employment. It provided:

“access to resources alongside or instead of income from employment through social policy, including transfer payments and public services” (Martin 1994: 63).

A shift toward neo-liberalism occurred after the collapse of the Bretton Woods economic system in the 1970’s when US policy-makers recognised that an open, liberal order would preserve America’s hegemonic position in global finance (Helleiner 1994:167).

In 4.5.1 the linking of a strong economic base to US military and political power was explained. Buzan (1994: 89) contend that security and economic issues are interdependent, that there is a linkage between anarchy in the international system

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24 For an account of the Keynesian welfare state see for example Martin (1994).
25 For an account of the Bretton Woods system see for example Helleiner (1994).
26 See 2.4.2 for the definition and implication of international anarchy, p.36
and capitalism and that security analysis must consider the problems that capitalism creates. He contends that:

“Competition for strength in the qualities of survival thus had to be added to competition for wealth in the market. Both types of competition stimulate technological innovation, which in turn continuously redefines the requirements for successful (and unsuccessful) economic and strategic behaviour” (Buzan 1994:90).

The implication of economic security under capitalism is according to Buzan that states require ready access to the means necessary for their survival. If, like Japan and Egypt, they do not encompass sufficient resources, then access to trade becomes an essential part of their national security (Buzan 1994: 91). If the supply is disrupted it threatens the power, welfare and potentially the political stability of the state (ibid.: 91).

During the Cold War, expansion of communism also included Soviet promotion of planned economy as opposed to the economic liberalism of market economy advocated by the USA. Hence, it was a threat to free trade, the base of US prosperity and economic growth. The USA was, and still is, a dominant power in the economical as well as the military sphere. Martin (1994:66) points out that the US economic power has declined since the fall of Bretton Woods in the 1970’s, relatively to that of Germany and Japan. This is supported by Chomsky (1991a: 11) which contend the basic elements of the New World Order were coming into focus in the 1970’s as a ‘tripolar’ world emerged and diffused US economic power. He further contend that the Soviet threat also was used to promote US policy and boost domestic industry:

“In the Old World Order, the Soviet threat was skilfully deployed to mobilize support for intervention abroad and for subsidies to high tech industry at home” (Chomsky 1991b: 4).

He criticises the Reagan-Bush social and economic programs for reflecting ‘a broad elite consensus in favour of a welfare state for the rich’. In his view the policy was designed to transfer the resources to privileged sectors, with the cost to be borne by the general population and future generations (Chomsky 1991/1992:1). He links domestic criticism of the welfare policy to foreign policy and claims foreign policy adventures are used as a diversion of public opposition:

“Decline in the capacity to control the domestic enemy by force has led to reliance on other means. In the South, violence remains a feasible option” (ibid.: 1).
In this respect the Gulf crisis, personified by Saddam Hussein’s actions serves as an example of a foreign enemy which might divert attention from domestic problems (ibid.: 1).

As to the implications of the fall of the Soviet Union and the New World Order Chomsky (1991a: 11) envisions three major consequences: 1) the USA needs new pretexts for Third World intervention, other than the communist threat, 2) the prospects for US ‘Latin-Americanisation’ of former Soviet republics and clients, that is access to cheap labour, markets, investment opportunities, etc. and 3) the USA is freer to use force with the disappearance of the Soviet deterrent.

In the New World Order, the communist threat to market economy has vanished. Market economy has replaced the planned economy of the Cold War, even in the former Soviet republics. The economic position of the USA as the sole remaining superpower is however contested. The hegemonic US position in the world economy since the 1970’s have been challenged by Japan and the EU (Helleiner 1994: 166f). Hence, the view of declining US economic power arose through the 1980’s. According to Webb (1994:186f), the decline however is exaggerated:

“The United States is still by far the most important country in the international economic system, and its economy is still the largest by a wide margin. … Furthermore, … the United States continued to dominate international policy coordination throughout the 1980’s as it had in the 1960’s”.

In sustaining the necessary economic growth to provide the services of the modern welfare state, access to oil is a vital component. Oil is available across the world, but the Gulf oil comes in huge quantities, is easily accessible and has low production costs (Kubursi and Mansur 1994:324). The Cold War threat to US welfare included fear of Soviet leverage in the region, which could restrain the US access to oil. The US response was the ‘soft line’ in which the CCC-program played a prominent role. It intended to counter Soviet influence plus create better bilateral relations between the USA and Iraq. In addition the CCC-program served the purpose of accessing the Iraqi market:

“Iraq represented a significant market for US agricultural products, and was in fact the ninth largest customer for US agricultural commodities” (Karabell 1995:35).
The first commercial agreement between Iraq and the USA was signed in August 1987 (Department of Commerce 1987:3). Although Iraq prohibited non-Arab foreign investments (Department of Commerce 1989:7), trade relations with Iraq were regarded important to the USA:

“We have an interest in access to the Iraqi market for US business” (State Department 1988b: 1).

“Trade is the best key to political influence in Iraq” (State Department 1989a: 5).

As the Gulf crisis arose, Iraq seized control over the Kuwaiti oil resources. All together, Iraq had the potential to control up to 20% of the world’s oil reserves. The US feared the effect this would have on the world economy:

“Saddam would have in his grasp the power to wreak havoc with the world economy” (Kimmit 1991: 3).

Chomsky (1991a: 9) emphasises the US interest in Gulf oil as a pretext for their policy in the Gulf:

“A principle guiding US policy has been that the incomparable energy resources of the Gulf region, and the enormous profits reaped, must remain under the effective control of the US, its corporations, and dependable allies and clients”.

This, he contends, accord with the UK post-war settlement in the region, conducted under US auspices. As an example, in reaction to the 1958 nationalist military coup in Iraq the US shared British concern for the access to the Gulf oil, in which Kuwait was of particular concern:

“the Americans ‘agree that at all costs these oilfields (in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Qatar) must be kept in Western hands’” (Chomsky 1991a: 10).

Control over oil resources, Chomsky (1991a: 10) claims serves as a mean to influence rivals and allies, notably Japan and European states which since the 1970’s have gained market shares at the expense of the USA. As much as Japan was helped to re-industrialise after World War II, the USA kept control over its energy system in order to have ‘veto power’ in the future. Even as the US economic hegemony decline, they still influence oil production, prices and access to oil (Chomsky 1991a: 10). In light of this, the Iraqi seizure of Kuwait’s oil riches in the Gulf crisis would threaten the US access and control of a large portion of the Gulf oil. This in part is substantiated by the USA:
“We want continuing (Western) access to multiple sources of oil through multiple points of export (e.g. through the Strait of Hormuz, Red Sea and Mediterranean) as the best means of reducing the chances that a hostile regional or extraregional state might gain preponderant control or influence over production and pricing decisions” (Eagleburger 1992: 1).

As to stability in the region, the Western and US contribution to armament of the Gulf states enhanced their own welfare:

“One way to direct petrodollars to the US economy has been to encourage arms' sales” (Chomsky (1991b: 2).

He further maintain sales, even below market rates if necessary, benefited major sectors of US industry:

“Military victories by the US and its Israeli client have long been used as an export-promotion device” (ibid.: 2).

The Iraqi build-up to reach the size of the fourth largest army in the world in part then is contributed to the access to Western, specially French arms, in addition to the traditional Soviet supplies. As long as Iraq displayed moderate features, the US wariness and restrictions to arm a major actor in the Gulf yielded for the domestic consideration, to the benefit of US industry.

Chomsky (1991a: 12) claims that one motivation for the US intervention in the Gulf crisis was that the Gulf crisis turned the US military into an internationally financed ‘public good’. In this he refers to the sharing of costs by the international coalition in the Gulf crisis. Chomsky (ibid.: 12) claims the USA in the future will assert a kind of ‘mercenary’ role; as US hegemony decline in the economic sphere, the virtual US monopoly in the security market can be used as a lever to gain funds and economic concessions from their rivals Japan and Europe:

“But though it has a virtual monopoly of military force, the US no longer has the economic base to impose ‘order and stability’...in the Third World. Therefore,..., the US must become a ‘mercenary state’, paid for its services by German-led continental Europe and Japan, and relying on the flow of capital from Gulf oil production, which it will dominate” (Chomsky 1991b: 17).

In this section, the US interests in the Gulf are connected to their welfare state and their status in the world economic system. The threats to US welfare in the Gulf crisis are comprised in the disrupting effect the Iraqi control of up to 20% of the world’s oil resources would have on the world economy, of which the USA is dependent and a
major actor. In the New World Order, the status of the USA as the sole remaining superpower is challenged by the competition from other economically strong actors, mainly Japanese and European.

4.9 Status and Prestige

The large US military capabilities, particularly their nuclear capability, gave them the ability to deter the Soviet Union during the Cold War, contributing to upholding the USA military status and prestige. Kegley and Wittkopf (1996:106) divide the US strategic doctrine relating to the Soviet’s in three: 1) US atomic monopoly over the Soviet Union (1945-1949), 2) US strategic superiority as the Soviet nuclear capability developed (1949-1960), and 3) US deterrence and counterforce (1961-1991).

As the Soviets caught up with the US nuclear capability, the USA sought to deter the Soviets from using force by convincing them that the costs of such actions outweighed the gains (ibid.: 109). The USA have not used atomic weapons since 1945, but:

“sought throughout the Cold War to gain bargaining leverage by relying heavily on nuclear force as an instrument of strategic defense (the defense of its homeland) and as a means to ‘defend its interests wherever they existed’ “ (Kegley and Wittkopf 1996:106)

Nuclear deterrence as a source of status and prestige effected the relations between the superpowers, but did not manifest itself directly in their policy toward their spheres of interest. However, underlying the struggle for influence in the Middle East was the potential of a superpower confrontation. The status and prestige of leadership in science and technology played a more direct role in the US relations with Iraq. The ‘soft line’ policy eased the Iraqi access to certain US technology, but restricted the access to items of military utilisation (Department of Justice 1994, addendum: 2).

Following the end of the Cold War, was a period of nuclear build-down. In the post-Cold War period US status and prestige based on nuclear strength may be contrary to its purpose. According to Kegley and Wittkopf (1996:119):

“the capability of American conventional weapons today (...) is so great that American security interests would be better served without nuclear weapons than with them”.
The credibility of nuclear deterrence also is reduced. Few states possess nuclear capability to threaten the USA, and for the USA it is not feasible to use the nuclear threat to states possessing only conventional weapons.

In the Gulf crisis, the status and prestige of the USA can be examined by observing the rhetoric used by the USA to describe their policy. Chomsky (1991b: 2) implies that the US rhetoric was used to obscure the facts of the crisis, hence enhancing the status and prestige of the USA. As Bush introduced the shift to an offensive option in the Gulf crisis, he described the US rationale for intervention:

“We're in the Gulf because the world must not and cannot reward aggression; we're there because our vital interests are at stake; and we're in the Gulf because of the brutality of Saddam Hussein” (Bush 1990:1).

The reasons for a military intervention entailed moral considerations for the suffering inflicted on the Kuwaitis, Iraq holding Western nationals as hostages in the crisis and the breach of international law by one state occupying another (ibid.: 2).

Chomsky’s (1993:1) main critic of the US policy is that the USA was not upholding high principle in the Gulf crisis. He contend that the reason for intervention was not Iraq’s violation of international law by invading Kuwait, rather the reason was that Saddam Hussein ‘stepped on the wrong toes’, hence the USA had to ensure that:

“…dictators and tyrants everywhere know ‘that what we say goes’ “ (Chomsky 1991b: 1).

He notes that prior to the Gulf crisis, Saddam Hussein was an attractive partner to the US and its allies, although he was a dictator who even prior to the crisis violated international law, for instance with his poor record on human rights (ibid.: 7).

Bush (1991a: 198) stated the reasons for the shift to a ‘hard line’ in US policy a few days after the Iraqi invasion. At this time the policy means were of a defensive character and sanctions were imposed to achieve the objectives. As the US shifted to an offensive option, these reasons were reiterated:

“Our objectives remain what they were since the outset. We seek Iraq’s immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait; we seek the restoration of Kuwait’s legitimate government; we seek the release of all hostages and the free functioning of all embassies; and we seek the stability and security of this critical region of the world” (Bush 1990:1).
Chomsky (1991) implies that the US interest was in upholding the status quo of the region, which is upholding US influence. For this reason the USA rejected other solutions than US initiated initiatives to the crisis. Iraqi as well as Kuwaiti democrats did not receive any support from the USA during the crisis. In the case of Iraqi opposition, Chomsky (1991/1992: 2) maintains the USA refuted support on the grounds that ‘changes in the regime must come from within, from people already in power’. Rejection of Kuwaiti democrats was based on the principle of non-interference in internal affairs (ibid.: 2).

The Gulf crisis may be said to be a test to the strength and resolve of the USA as the sole remaining superpower after the end of the Cold War. Since the Vietnam War US foreign policy have been tainted by the ‘Vietnam syndrome’:

“defined by Reaganite intellectual Norman Podhoretz as ‘the sickly inhibitions against the use of military force’“ (Chomsky 1991b: 5).

Despite the ‘Vietnam syndrome’, the USA has intervened forcefully since the 1970’s, recent examples including Panama and Grenada. In both cases, the operations were limited in time and the loss of US lives relatively low, contrary to the protracted Vietnam War which claimed about 58.000 US lives. When shifting to the offensive option in the Gulf crisis, Bush emphasised the need to ‘get the job done’ as the rationale for increasing the number of troops in the Gulf (Bush 1990: 2-3). As a corollary of the build-up he addressed the fear of the Gulf crisis turning into another Vietnam:

“In our country, I know there are fears about another Vietnam. Let me assure you, should military action be required, this will not be another Vietnam. This will not be a protracted, drawn-out war” (Bush 1990:3)

The lesson learned after the Vietnam War was that in cases where the US confronts much weaker enemies, the challenge will be not simply to defeat them, but to defeat them decisively and rapidly. ‘Any other outcome would be ‘embarrassing’ and might ‘undercut political support’ (Chomsky 1991b: 3). Furthermore, the threat of independence, especially in the oil rich Gulf region, constitutes a threat just as

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intolerable as that of ‘much weaker enemies’. In this respect, Chomsky (1991b: 4) maintains, the US victory in the Gulf War served the purpose of ridding the USA of the ‘Vietnam syndrome’ ‘once and for all’.

With the shift to an offensive option came the possibility for military intervention:

“I want peace. I want peace, not war. But if there must be war, we will not permit our troops to have their hands tied behind their backs” (Bush 1990: 3).

Chomsky (1991a: 5) on the other hand contends that US policy in the Gulf crisis was designed to avoid a solution without the threat or use of force:

“From the outset, then, policy was carefully designed to reduce the likely alternatives to two: war, or Iraqi capitulation to a display of armed might”.

He substantiates this assertion by pointing to US refusal of diplomatic initiatives and refusal of ‘linkage’ to regional issues prior to the Gulf War. To support his assertion he points to the immediate deployment of large forces to the Gulf, even before Iraq’s annexation of Kuwait, which undercut the possibility of a solution without the threat or use of force (ibid.: 4). The formal US decision to deploy forces to the Gulf was announced on 8 August 1990, coinciding with Iraq’s annexation of Kuwait at the same date (Bush 1991a: 197, Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991:239).

As to the refusal of diplomatic initiatives in the Gulf crisis, this relates to Iraqi proposals as well as other efforts prior to the deadline of allied intervention on 15 January 1990. Chomsky (1991a: 5) criticises the USA for upholding high principle selectively, that is when it serves US interests. He claims US rhetoric was intended to:

“...undercut reliance on sanctions and to bar exploration of the diplomatic track, on the grounds that ‘aggressors can not be rewarded’- in this unique case” (ibid.: 5).

The offensive option opened up for the abandonment of sanctions at a time where they had been in effect for less than four months:

“Clearly, the sanctions are having some effect, but I can’t tell you that the sanctions alone will get the job done” (Bush 1990: 1).

Chomsky (1991a: 4) counters the US view that there is no guarantee sanctions would work. He contends that the sanctions had an unusually good chance of working, both because of their harshness and because ‘the usual sanctions-busters - the United States, Britain and France - would abide by them for a change’ (Chomsky 1993: 2).
Chomsky’s view is supported by a study by Elliott et. al. (1991) evaluating the success of sanctions since 1914. In 40 out of 115 cases sanctions were successful, in terms of how well the boycotter’s goals were met and that sanctions at least modestly contributed to the outcome (Elliott et. al. 1991: 255-256). They note that sanctions have worked under less favourable circumstances than against Iraq:

“Moreover, the current UN sanctions are by far the strongest and most complete ever imposed against any country by other nations” (ibid.: 255).

The sanctions cover virtually one hundred percent of Iraq’s trade and financial relations and therefore Iraq, dependent on oil for ninety percent of its export revenue, is far more vulnerable for economic coercion than most other nations. The embargo also was backed by a multinational naval blockade and a ban on air cargo to Iraq, leaving Iraq effectively isolated from the global economy (ibid.: 256-257). They support their assertion by statements from US officials:

“Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney himself said the embargo ‘clearly’ has been effective ‘in closing off the flow of spare parts and military supplies’, and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Coin Powell, conceded that sanctions would have ‘a debilitating effect’ on Iraq’s military capability” (Elliott et. al. 1991: 257).

Bush (1990: 2) maintains the Iraqi invasion inflicted severe economic damage, especially to the nations that can afford it the least - Eastern Europe and the Third World, but the increase in oil prices resulting from the invasion hurt the US economy too. To the argument that it is too costly or too great a risk for break down of the coalition if one delay until the sanctions has effect, Chomsky (1991a: 4) asserts that the real motivation is moral principle:

“it offends our sensibilities to stand by while the aggressor remains unpunished”.

Bush (1990:2) emphasised the need to uphold international law and not to reward aggression in response to the Iraqi invasion:

“What kind of precedent will these actions set for the future if Saddam’s violation of international law goes unchallenged?”.

Chomsky (1991a: 4) points to the sanctions imposed on South Africa for more than 20 years, claiming more than $ 60 billion and 1.5 million lives. In this case the US pursued ‘quiet diplomacy, and ‘constructive engagement’ while insisting upon linkage with other issues. The Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon (1982) also included ‘ample
reward’ for the aggressor in terms of US aid. The economic costs to the sanctioning countries of suspended trade Elliott et. al. (1991:256) maintain, are substantially mitigated. As an example, Saudi Arabia and other oil exporters boosted oil production to offset lost Iraqi and Kuwaiti production (ibid.: 258).

Elliott et. al. (1991: 259) contends that sanctions can not be deemed ineffective less than a year after their imposition. Albeit they admit the more difficult the goals, the less effective the sanctions, they conclude:

“"The sanctions against Iraq were imposed so swiftly, decisively, and comprehensively that together with a credible military threat, there is a high probability they can contribute to an Iraqi withdrawal and the restoration of an independent government in Kuwait" (ibid.: 257)28.

The US barring of diplomatic initiatives Chomsky refers to, relates to Iraqi and other offers prior to the Gulf War on 17 January 1991. Bush (1990:3) emphasised that several diplomatic efforts were made to bring the crisis to a peaceful solution, but that Iraq was responsible for that the efforts had failed:

“All have been frustrated by Iraq’s ironclad insistence that it will not leave Kuwait”.

Bush (1990:3) insisted the USA would not give up on the diplomatic track, what he called ‘going the extra mile for peace’. Chomsky (1991b: 11) points to several Iraqi proposals to retreat from Kuwait in the course of August 1990 to January 1991. On 9 August 1990, the day after the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait and Bush’s announcement of troops deployment to the Gulf, the first Iraqi offer came:

“The proposal, regarded as ‘serious’ and ‘negotiable’ by a State Department Mideast expert, called for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait in exchange for access to the Gulf (...) and Iraqi control of the Rumailah oil field, about 95% in Iraq, extending two miles into Kuwait over an unsettled border” (Chomsky 1991b: 11).

The proposal was rejected by the US government, albeit a congressional summary concluded that a diplomatic solution might have been possible at that time (ibid.: 11). Iraq offered a similar offer on 23 August 1990, which also included negotiations to alleviate Iraq’s economic and financial problems. This proposal also was rejected (Chomsky 1991a: 3). Iraq put forth two more offers; one on 2 January 1991, which

28 The article was published on 9 December, 1990, that is before sanctions were substituted with war to ensure an Iraqi retreat from Kuwait.
did not mention the border issues, but proposed withdrawal in return for a future agreement on the Palestinian issue and weapons of mass destruction. US officials regarded this a ‘serious prenegotiation position’ (Chomsky 1991b: 11). The last Iraqi proposal was presented on 15 January 1991, with a similar content - Iraqi withdrawal in return for Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, in accordance with UN resolutions (ibid.: 11). Other actors also offered proposals for a peaceful solution, like France on 14 January 1991 and the Soviet Union on 22 February 1991. The French proposal entailed withdrawal in return for a Security Council statement on a possible future conference and was rejected by both the USA and Iraq. The Soviet Union presented an agreement with Iraq on the eve of the ground war, which contained Iraqi withdrawal if the UN resolutions were cancelled. Chomsky (1991b: 11) states that the USA insisted an Iraqi withdrawal must precede a cease-fire, refused by the Iraqis because of the risk of further losses.

Chomsky (1991a: 7) maintains the USA blocked the ‘diplomatic track’ because of their stern refusal of any linkage with regional issues, that is mainly the Arab-Israeli conflict and the weapons of mass destruction. In this the USA was:

“…expressing its moral revulsion at the very thought of rewarding an aggressor by considering problems of armaments, security, and others in a regional context”

(Chomsky 1991a: 2). Chomsky (1991a: 2) further contends the US barring of diplomacy is contributed to:

“…its concern that negotiations might ‘defuse the crisis’ at the cost of ‘a few token gains in Kuwait’ for the Iraqi dictator, perhaps a ‘Kuwaiti island or minor border adjustment’ “.

The official reasons for rejecting the proposals, that is not rewarding aggression, were not conveyed credible to the public:

“a surprising number of Europeans believe that the United States is in the gulf not to free Kuwait or punish Saddam Hussein but to bolster its own influence and power...a surprising number of Americans share these delusions, believing that control over oil is the ‘key reason’ for the US troop presence...Such confusions were even more rampant in the Third World...” (Chomsky 1991a: 2).

The building and maintenance of an international coalition against Iraq in the UN and in the Gulf War gave the USA the status they needed to ensure they still was the leading power after the end of the Cold War. The US perception of their role in the
‘New World Order’, which still is in the making, is one of American leadership. As a general policy, Secretary Baker maintained:

“Politically, we must stand for American leadership, not because we seek it, but simply because no one else can do the job” (Baker 1990c: 6).

Relating this to the Gulf crisis, he explained on 29 October 1990 that for the USA to neglect to take the lead in this crisis would be to throw away what they had been fighting for during all of the Cold War:

“This struggle is about what kind of world we want to live in,...Let no nation think it can devour another nation and the United States will turn a blind eye” (Baker 1990c: 6).

In short, the crisis was made the touchstone for what the USA achieved by ‘winning’ the Cold War - the crisis brought up to a moral level.

In sum, the rhetoric used during the Gulf crisis was intended to sustain the US position as the leading power in the world after their decline as a hegemon in recent years. The fall of the Soviet Union was promoted as the USA ‘winning’ the Cold War, and the Gulf crisis was Bush’s first opportunity to enforce the principles of the New World Order. Chomsky on the other hand criticises the USA for promoting principles too rigid in the crisis, thereby failing to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict. His contention is that the stern US attitude precluded the diplomatic track to be explored fully at a time when Iraq put forth negotiable withdrawal proposals. Perhaps the main critic to the US policy lies in the abandonment of economic sanctions before they had time to effect the Iraqi policy. Elliott et.al. (1991) emphasise that the sanctions had unusually good chance of working in the case of the severely oil dependent Iraq, due to their severity and comprehensive imposition.

In explaining the shift to an offensive option the USA stressed that a major threat was the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. Albeit military superior, the US-led coalition risked facing Iraqi use of non-conventional weapons during the Gulf War. A prolonged period of sanctions, including the risk of the coalition breaking up, entailed the risk of Iraq developing and deploying such weapons at a later stage, possibly in a military confrontation with the coalition or regional states.
5. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis set out to explain the American policy in the Gulf crisis; what induced the shift from the ‘soft line’ pursued in the early 1980’s to the ‘hard line’ that abruptly became the policy norm when Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990? The main task of this thesis was to develop a model of possible explanations to this policy shift and thereby improve the understanding of what effected the US foreign policy in this situation.

5.1 Summary

As a starting point to develop this model, what constitute ‘foreign policy’ in general and what was the content of the US ‘soft line’ and ‘hard line’ policies were examined in Chapter 2. The theoretical framework of the thesis then was developed, drawing on the causal models of Kegley and Wittkopf (1996) and Easton (1965).

Foreign policy is a complex area in which a number of factors may contribute to the explanation of the concept. The task was to limit the range of variables in order to make the thesis feasible. The choice of perspective pose the dilemma of choosing between achieving a deep understanding of a few factors or give a general outline of the explanatory factors. The risk is respectively a superficial understanding of the question or to loose important implications of the interrelation with the remaining variables. In this thesis the latter approach was selected from the consideration of gaining an overview of a complex situation, in line with the realist ‘lens’ of the thesis. The main contention of the thesis is that external factors caused the change in US policy. In the thesis four issues are considered; 1) The structure of the international system, 2) The Arab-Israeli conflict, 3) The Gulf stability and 4) The Access to oil. Together these elements constitute the dynamic causal model analysed to answer the question of the thesis.

The main problem of the thesis is methodological and pertains to the sources of information. Information on the Gulf crisis is abundant, but problems arise when the
data is biased, like in this case where the perspective is predominantly American. In this respect Yin’s (1994) recommended method of data comparison in case studies, triangulation, is not satisfactorily met. That is the thesis can not fulfil the requirement of comparing data from multiple sources in order to obtain a converging line of inquiry. The collected data also are flawed in that information regarding foreign policy often is classified and the data accessible do not convey the whole picture. As an example documents from the Iraqgate series in this thesis consist of declassified material, but as large portions still are classified and there is no telling whether the released material are representative for the US policy or not. It is the contention of this thesis that the awareness of these problems and a critical review of the available data enable an analysis that still is of interest.

The analysis itself is divided into two parts. First, the thesis gives an account for the four variables prior to and during the Gulf crisis. In line with the dynamic feature of the model, they are all dichotomised to show the change in policy as a process of continuous mutual influence. Through a feedback mechanism, the outcome of the model, the policy means, effect the input, the context variables, which again influence the outcome. The second part analyses how threats to a state’s general goals; security, autonomy, welfare and status and prestige, cause the US policy means to change in the Gulf crisis. The findings of the analysis are summed up in the sections below, relating the findings to the hypothesis deduced from the causal model. In this way, the hypotheses are weakened or substantiated, hence the explanatory strength of the variables are determined.

5.2 The Findings of the Analysis

5.2.1 The Structure of the International System
This issue relates to the two concepts that have influenced the behaviour of the international system of states in the last half century; the Cold War from the end of World War II and the New World Order launched by Bush in the mid-1990’s as the Cold War was coming to an end.
The contention of the thesis on this issue is that *the absence of super power rivalry opened up to the US ‘hard line’ in the Gulf crisis.*

During the Cold War, the focus of US policy was directed at a global level. The USA had to consider the superpower contest with the Soviet Union for influence in the ‘spheres of interest’ and adjust their behaviour as to avoid superpower confrontation in carrying out regional US policy. As a result the restraining policy of the superpowers on their regional ‘clients’ helped subdue regional crisis. The main effect of the end of the Cold War is the shift of focus to a regional context. In the Middle East, the non-alignment line of the Gulf states had, until the Gulf crisis, precluded armed conflicts in an intra-Arab context. The major conflicts in the region, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Iran-Iraq War, were both conflicts between Arabs and non-Arabs.

The absence of superpower rivalry opened up to new methods of solving regional conflicts. The US ‘hard line’ is comprehensible in the context that the New World Order eased the use of force in the Gulf crisis, because the risk of superpower confrontation had declined. The USA nonetheless emphasised their desire for peace in the region in order to achieve their remaining goals – a security system of the Gulf and access to oil. The USA as the sole remaining superpower still needed legitimacy for its policy. In the UN the USA succeeded in gaining support for an international coalition to take action against Iraq. The Gulf crisis was the first major crisis to be dealt with in the New World Order and as such may said to be the ‘touchstone’ of US resolve and future behaviour. In this respect status and prestige play a part in the shaping of US policy. Co-operation in Bush’ New World Order are based on international law as the policy norm. The Gulf crisis was a clear example of breach of this order and may have rendered possible the US insistence on a ‘hard line’ in the crisis. The rationale for military intervention frequently used by the USA was the restoration of international law and moral considerations for the affected people, the Kuwaitis and the hostages.

In sum, the analysis strengthens the contention that the transition to a New World Order opened up to the US ‘hard line’ in the Gulf crisis. In favour of this is the shift
of focus from superpower contest to a regional frame with the implications of more
cooperation between the former adversaries. The picture is not unequivocal. The
clear-cut aggression in the Gulf case and US status and prestige considerations, like
moral and amending the Vietnam-syndrome, may have eased and motivated the
promotion of the US ‘hard line’.

5.2.2 The Arab-Israeli Conflict
In this longstanding conflict the Iraqi role has been that of one of the most vocal
opponents of the Israelis. The strong Iraqi opposition, departing from mainline Arab
policy, was based on pan-Arabic concern for the non-Arab Israel. During the US ‘soft
line’ policy, Iraq gradually moderated its stance until its reversion to the hostile
position shortly before the Gulf crisis.

The thesis then contended that the Iraqi threat to Israeli security explained the US
‘hard line’ in the Gulf crisis.

The US interest in the conflict is in Israel’s security. The traditional Iraqi hostility
included support for terrorism against Israel and constituted a severe threat even
before the Gulf crisis. Iraqi moderation apparently reduced this threat and the USA
even went as far as to envision a constructive Iraqi role in the conflict and the
forthcoming peace process. As Iraq reverted to hostility, the threat they posed had
become more credible. During the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq had increased their military
capabilities to match those of the West (UK and France). Iraq had replaced Iran as the
leading military power in the region and upgraded the quality of their weapons. Of
special concern was Iraqi procurement of non-conventional capability (chemical and
biological, possibly nuclear) and the means to deliver it (long-range ballistic missiles).
The Iraqi will to deploy these weapons had been demonstrated through CW attacks on
Iran during the Iran-Iraq war and CW had been used domestically, on Kurds.

In this context, the US refusal of the attempted Iraqi linking of a solution of the
Gulf crisis to the Arab-Israeli conflict may seem hard to comprehend. Knowing that
the Iraqi threat was credible, the Iraqi offer to mutually destroy Iraqi and Israeli
arsenals of non-conventional weapons seem a good opportunity to reduce the
proliferation problems of the region. US insistence on Iraqi observance of
international law and not rewarding aggression, hence turning the crisis into a bargaining chip for Iraq, precluded this path to be explored further. On the other hand, critics have suggested issue-linkage were refused because the USA risked embarrassment over their aid policy toward Israel. If Israel admitted to nuclear capability, the USA had violated its own legislation, which bar aid to countries engaged in clandestine nuclear weapons development. Another point is that the USA in accepting issue-linkage in this case, as it has in several other cases, might weaken their position in the peace process. The USA departed from the international consensus on the Palestinian right to self-determination in 1971 and has since opposed efforts other than US to solve the conflict. International arbitration on the Arab-Israeli issue, not sole US efforts, coupled with defending abidance by international law in the Gulf crisis, had the potential to undermine the US position as the sole remaining superpower, which set the example of behaviour in the New World Order.

5.2.3 The Gulf Stability
The strategic importance of the Gulf, primarily due to its oil resources, is the basis of the US interest in promoting stability in the region. Prior to the ‘soft line’ policy, the Soviet Union directed attention to Iraq, albeit Iraq’s non-alignment line, while the USA pursued the ‘twin-pillar’ strategy with Iran and Saudi Arabia. During the Iran-Iraq War the USA gradually ‘tilted’ toward Iraq at the expense of the Soviets’ influence. During the war the common interests shared by the USA and Iraq provided a bulwark to contain Iranian superiority in the Gulf. The basis of this alliance faded as Iraq faced the severe economic consequences of the war. Iraq’s status as the new military power of the region, upholding a defence of wartime proportions even after the war, collided with the US desire to check the power of the Gulf states.

In this situation the thesis purports that the *Iraqi threat to Gulf stability explained the US ‘hard line’ in the Gulf crisis.*

The military capability of Iraq was established in the previous section. Iraq in addition to threaten the security of Israel possessed the ability to gain preponderance over its Gulf neighbours. In the past Iraq’s strict pan-Arabism precluded a leading
Iraqi role in the Arab world. The war against Iran had demonstrated Iraq’s military strength and as the only Arab state in the Gulf with the capability to defend the interests of the oil producers, Iraq’s status in the Arab world increased. The deteriorating Iraqi economy after the war and their upholding a wartime defence was viewed by the USA as a mean to extract economic concessions from the remaining Gulf states. This would counter the US efforts to check the balance of power in the Gulf. In this view the Iraqi invasion may be considered an Iraqi bargaining chip to relieve their economic situation.

Considerations of maintaining the Gulf stability may help explain US refusal to support Kuwaiti and Iraqi democratic opposition in the crisis. Referring to the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, these alternatives were not discussed. Likewise, Iraqi diplomatic proposals were unsuccessful in bringing the crisis to a peaceful solution. Critics have accused the USA of blocking the diplomatic track, while the USA maintains every possibility of a peaceful solution was exhausted. The major disparity lay in the Iraqi attempts of issue-linkage to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the terms of an Iraqi capitulation, before or after a cease-fire.

5.2.4 The Access to Oil
The last issue considers the economic aspect of the crisis, as opposed to the security and structural aspects discussed above. A prerequisite for securing the stable access to oil is stability in the region. The ‘tanker war’ of the Iran-Iraq War clearly demonstrated this connection when the Iranian attacks on the oil transport in the Persian Gulf strained the export of oil to the world market. The behaviour of Iraq as the second largest oil producer in the world exerts considerable influence on the access to Gulf oil.

The last contention of the thesis therefore is that the Iraqi threat to stable oil production explained the US ‘hard line’ in the Gulf crisis.

The ‘oil revolution’ of the 1970’s markedly changed the structure of the oil market. In addition to raising the oil prices, the market power shifted from the oil companies to the oil producers, mainly the Gulf states. US dependence on oil has increased in recent years, as domestic production not has been able to keep up with the increase in
consumption. Stockpiling and energy efficiency measures have decreased the vulnerability of the USA and other oil dependent economies. Still, the increase in US oil import mainly come from the Gulf and Saudi Arabia, hence the situation in the Gulf is of vital interest to the USA.

In the Gulf crisis, apart from the act of aggression the Iraqi invasion represented, Iraq gained control of about 20% of the world’s oil resources. The economic power Iraq immediately gained had the potential to ‘wreak havoc’ with the world economy. In the early days after the invasion the Iraqi forces moved against the Saudi border, initiating speculations of an Iraqi attack on the world’s largest oil producer.

The comprehensive sanctions imposed on Iraq were designed to promote an immediate retreat from Kuwait. Given Iraq’s extreme oil dependence (90% of its export revenues), sanctions had a very good chance of succeeding. Sanctions however were terminated as the single measure of obtaining Iraqi compliance after five months. Albeit the USA saw some effect of the sanctions, the USA assessed the toll on the sanctioning countries was too high. Critics note that the economic costs was substantially mitigated by Saudi Arabia boosting their oil production. Sanctions should not be deemed ineffective less than a year after they are imposed. Another point is that the Gulf crisis may have served as a way of diverting attention from domestic economic problems and contributing to boost US technology industries.

5.3 Concluding Remarks
At the end of this thesis the findings of the analysis are summed up. In sum, all of the four possible hypothesises have merit, albeit the picture is not unequivocal.

The transition from the Cold War to a New World Order provided an important change in structure that rendered the US ‘hard line’ possible. The major factor is that the USA was able to deal with the Gulf crisis in a regional context, rather than considering the risk of triggering a confrontation with the Soviet Union over their common ‘sphere of interest’.

The credible Iraqi threat to Israel’s security may also explain the ‘hard line’. Iraqi had the means and the will to deploy non-conventional weapons to its enemy of many
years. This picture is tainted by the Iraqi proposal for a mutual destruction of the weapons of mass destruction shortly before the crisis.

Along the same lines Iraq also constituted a military threat to its Gulf neighbours and the Gulf stability. Considering Iraq’s desperate economic situation on the eve of the Gulf crisis, the Iraqi invasion may have been Saddam Hussein’s trump card for extracting the economic concessions he did not achieve in negotiations with the Gulf states.

Iraq’s seizure of the Kuwaiti oil reserves in the crisis seriously threatened the access to oil. Albeit Saudi Arabia had the capacity to relieve the immediate supply, in the long haul Iraq possessed enormous economic power.

In conclusion, all of the explanations contribute to the answer of the question of this thesis. However, through the analysis several objections are revealed and the explanations do not give a clear-cut answer. Without investigating further into the motives of the US policy the whole picture can not be conveyed. For the question to be answered satisfactorily additional sources of information should be accessed. In the current situation when a number of the primary sources still are classified, this task is difficult. To alleviate this flaw it would be preferable to access sources of an opposing nature, like Iraqi or other sources.

The main question that still remained to be answered is that even if the USA was dedicated to restoring international law as a part of the shaping of the New World Order, why did they oppose issue-linkage with regional issues like the Arab-Israeli conflict and the weapons of mass destruction? By softening their moral revulsion to reward the Iraqi aggression the USA may have negotiated a peaceful solution to the conflict. Instead the repercussion of the conflict is still exerting influence today, almost eight years after the Gulf War. The latest development is the joint UK and US air raid on Baghdad. The USA succeeded in forcing Iraq to retreat from Kuwait, reinstate the legitimate Kuwaiti government and free the hostages. Despite the effort the USA exerted, they did not succeed in achieving a major goal with the ‘hard line’ policy – the Iraqi non-compliance with the UN resolutions continues, hence the security system of the Gulf still is vulnerable.
APPENDICES

Appendix I: List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

**ACC**: Arab Co-operation Council
**AMF**: Arab Monetary Fund
**BNL**: Banca Nationale del Lavorno
**CCC**: Agriculture Department’s Commodity Credit Corporation
**CENTCOM**: Central Command
**COCOM**: Co-ordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls
**CIS**: Commonwealth of Independent States
**CW**: Chemical Weapons
**EC**: European Community
**GCC**: Gulf Co-operation Council
**NATO**: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
**NSA**: National Security Archive
**NSD**: National Security Directive
**OAS**: Organisation of American States
**OPEC**: Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
**PLO**: Palestine Liberation Organisation
**RDF**: Rapid Deployment Force
**UAE**: United Arab Emirates
**UK**: United Kingdom
**UN**: United Nations
**USA**: United States of America
Appendix II: Dramatis Personae

**The United States:**

*The Bush Administration (1989-1993):*

George Bush, President
Dan Quayle, Vice President
James Baker, Secretary of State (1989-92)
Lawrence S. Eagleburger, Under Secretary of State (1989-92), Secretary of State (1992-93)
John H. Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State
Robert M. Kimmit, Under Secretary of State for Political affairs
April Glaspie, Ambassador to Baghdad *

*The Clinton Administration (1993-):*

Bill Clinton, President
Al Gore, Vice President*
Warren M. Christopher, Secretary of State (1993-1997)
Edward P. Djerejian, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs
Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President for National Security

**Iraq:**

Saddam Hussein, President*
Tarig Aziz, Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister*

* Referred to in the thesis, but not represented in the List of References

Appendix III: Maps

Map of the Middle East

(Source: Ehteshami and Nonneman 1991: 275)
Map of Iraq and Kuwait
(Source: Freedman and Karsh 1993)
List of References

*Number in brackets [ ] indicates the microfiche number of the documents in the Irqagate series.*


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