

June 2021 (0470)

Events in the Gulf region were important to the West.

(a) Describe Saddam Hussein's rule in Iraq. [4]

- 'He was a dictator.'
- 'He carried out purges against anyone opposing him, including his own party.'
- 'He carried out a vicious campaign against the Kurds.'
- 'He used a personality cult to win popularity.'
- 'He brutally attacked the Shiites.'
- 'He gave his relations positions of power.'
- 'He had televised show trials of political opponents.'
- 'He attacked the Marsh Arabs with chemical weapons.'
- 'He nationalised the Iraqi oil industry.'
- 'He tried to modernise Iraq.'
- 'He provided electric power across the country.'
- 'He built new schools, houses and hospitals.'
- 'New roads were built across the country.'
- 'He greatly increased Iraq's armed forces.'

(b) Why was the Iranian Revolution of 1979 important to the West? [6]

(Four marks for one explanation, five marks for full explanation, 6 marks for two explanations)

The Iranian Revolution was important to the West mainly for economic reasons. Britain and the USA had been the main supporters of the Shah. They helped him take over in a coup in 1953 and as part of this the West were able to have access to 40% of Iran's oil supplies. When the Shah was overthrown in the Revolution the West lost access to this oil.

It also mattered because it resulted in a decline in relations between the USA and the West with Iran. The Shah had been an important Cold War ally of the USA and the Ayatollah was very anti-Western which weakened the West's influence in the Middle East. Relations were very tense after protesters stormed the US Embassy in Iran and took 52 US citizens as hostages for 444 days. The West lost a great deal of influence in the Middle East

(c) Are you surprised that Saddam Hussein was willing to fight the First Gulf War? Explain your answer. [10]

In some respects it is surprising that he made this decision. Saddam should have known that the USA and the West relied heavily on oil supplies from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and anything that upset this would have been confronted. The US had even held naval manoeuvres in the Gulf region in July which should really have been a warning to Iraq that the USA would not stand idly by.

However, in many respects it was not at all surprising that Saddam wanted to invade Kuwait as a successful invasion may well have improved his reputation within Iraq. Iraq had come out of the war against Iran very badly and Saddam's reputation had been hit and there had been attempts within Iraq to overthrow him. A successful invasion of Kuwait could have made him more popular amongst the armed forces and the people of Iraq. Furthermore, the war with Iran had left Iraq with debts of \$80 billion and these could be wiped out as Iraq would have been able to take control of Kuwait's oil

fields which accounted for 20% of the world's oil reserves, making up for the losses from the war with Iran.

Furthermore, it was not surprising given that he was under the impression that the US would not stop him! This was because months before the US ambassador April Glasby had given the impression that the USA was not that interested in what was going on over Kuwait. He had told Saddam, 'the US had no interest in the Iraq / Kuwait dispute', so Sandam thought he had a 'green light to invade!

Therefore, on balance, because of the confusion created by the US and the definite gains for Saddam, it is not surprising that he invaded Kuwait, especially as he saw himself as the regions leading Arab Nationalist.

November 2021 (0470)

Tension between Iran and Iraq led to war in 1980.

(a) Describe Western involvement in the Iran–Iraq War. [4]

- e.g. 'The USA supported Iraq with intelligence and finance.'
- 'The USA did not want an Iranian victory and the installation of an Islamic revolutionary government in Baghdad.'
- 'The USA sent warships to the Gulf to guarantee oil supplies.'
- 'The USA warships attacked Iranian oil installations and Iranian gunboats.'
- 'Western powers supplied military equipment to Iraq.'

(b) Why was the Shatt al-Arab waterway a cause of tension between Iran and Iraq? [6]

The waterway was strategically important. 'The Shatt al-Arab waterway caused tension between Iran and Iraq because it was important for the transportation of the oil industry in both countries. Both were dependent on their income from oil and if one or the other of them gained control of the waterway, it meant they could disrupt the oil industry of the other and inflict economic harm.'

The waterway was also politically and culturally important as it served as a border between Iraq and Iran symbolising the division between the Arab world (Iraq) and the Persians (Iran).

Other relevant information:

- e.g. 'It was important to their oil industries.'
- 'It was Iraq's only access to the sea.'
- 'There were long running arguments about where the boundary between the two countries lay.'
- 'The Shah of Iran broke a longstanding treaty and refused to pay shipping dues to Iraq.'
- 'Saddam Hussein claimed the right to territory which lay on the Iranian side of the waterway.'

(c) 'Damage to the economies of Iran and Iraq was the most important consequence of the Iran–Iraq War.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

There is no doubting that the Iran Iraq war had devastating outcomes on the economies of both Iraq and Ira. Economic damage was very severe on both sides. Having been one of the wealthiest countries in the region, Iraq was reduced to bankruptcy by eight years of war. It owed over \$80 billion in loans and its revenues from oil had drastically reduced. Iran had less foreign debt, but its oil industry had also plummeted by about 50%. In both countries, the standard of living of the population was

dramatically reduced.’ Iraq’s ‘war on the cities’ was especially devastating destroying homes, businesses, roads and other infrastructure all of which would need to be rebuilt.

However, arguably it was the terrible human loss of life was most significant as economies can be rebuilt but you can’t bring back life. Approximately 1 million Iraqis were killed. In Iraq (which had a smaller population), up to half a million people died. This represented around 2 per cent of each country’s population. There was also psychological damage, and many soldiers and civilians were seriously wounded on both sides.’ All for a war that ended in a stalemate in which neither side gained anything.

Moreover, Saddam Hussein might have believed the political consequences of the war could be considered as more significant as the War had not been good for his reputation. He had predicted a ‘whirlwind victory’ in the war against Iran and this was certainly not the case. So after the war finished he needed to enhance his reputation, especially as there has been attempts to overthrow him. So, only 2 years after the war with Iran ended he invaded Kuwait in August 1990 taking Iraq into another disastrous war!

November 2020 (0470)

a. What was the impact of the Iran-Iraq war on Iraqi civilians? [4]

Level 1 One mark for each relevant point; additional mark for supporting detail 1–4

- ‘Thousands were killed in air raids.’ - The war on the Cities
- ‘The Kurds were attacked with chemical weapons.’
- ‘The infrastructure in the cities was severely damaged.’
- ‘There were food shortages.’
- ‘There was a lack of medical care.’
- ‘Sanctions had a damaging impact on civilians.’

b. Why did Saddam Hussein’s regime survive the First Gulf War? [6]

Saddam Hussein’s regime was able to survive the First Gulf War largely for political reasons. The Americans thought that allowing him to stay in power was less dangerous for their own interests in the Middle East than removing him. They were concerned that if he was overthrown, then an Islamic Revolution might take place. If this happened the whole region could become very unstable.

Furthermore, at the time the US president, Bush, was not prepared to commit the USA to regime change which would have needed the US military to fight a bloody ground war with Iraq in a country larger than Vietnam. Also, the UN resolution was only to get Iraq out of Kuwait, there was no authorisation to invade Iraq. Had the US done this they would have been the aggressor.

c. ‘Oil was the most important cause of the dispute between Iraq and Kuwait.’ How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

Economic factors such as oil would certainly play an important role in the dispute between Iraq and Kuwait. Saddam Hussein was angry that Kuwait had increased its oil production as this meant the international price of oil had fallen. This meant Iraq was making less money from the sale of its own oil. Saddam also claimed that Kuwait was stealing oil from Iraq by ‘slant drilling’ oil from the Ramallah oil field which was close to the border with Iraq. He claimed the value of this oil was over \$2 billion. Therefore, oil was a major cause of the dispute.’

However, Saddam's regime was all about glorification, of himself! He wanted to present himself as the greatest Arab nationalist in the region and he would also be enhancing his reputation within his own country after the terrible legacy (consequences) of the war with Iran between 1980 and 1988. After this there had been attempts to overthrow him and even the military were less reliable. A victorious war might help restore his reputation too.

Moreover, Saddam could claim that Kuwait was historically part of Iraq and should never have been given independence. He referred to Kuwait as Iraq's 19th province. Until the end of the First World War, Kuwait was part of the province of Basra. After the war, Basra became part of Iraq while Kuwait was established as an independent country. Iraqi rulers, such as President Qassem in the 1960s, claimed Kuwait was part of Iraq. Saddam Hussein revived these claims.'

On balance, the slant drilling was just an excuse. Saddam's real motivation was all about Iraqi Arab nationalism as voiced by the Baath Party and he wanted to promote himself as the Middle east's greatest Arab nationalist.

June 2020 (0470)

Both Iran and Iraq faced many problems.

(a) Describe Saddam Hussein's modernisation programme in Iraq. [4]

- 'Universal free schooling.'
- 'Increased the literacy rate.'
- 'Free hospital treatment for everyone.'
- 'Modernised the public health system.'
- 'Gave subsidies to farmers.'
- 'Modernised farming with the introduction of mechanisation.'
- 'Introduced welfare programmes for the Iraqi people.'

(b) Why did Ayatollah Khomeini become the 'supreme leader' of Iran in 1979? [6]

In short, he became leader because there was a successful revolution which overthrew the Shah. This was able to happen because the Shah was becoming more and more unpopular because of his repressive rule, for example using the SAVAK to oppress his people.

Also, although the Shah had attempted to improve people's lives through the 'White Revolution', and although there were lots of reforms some thought these as too liberal and against Islamic values. Ayatollah Khomeini was a major critic of the Shah and tapes of his denouncing the Shah were smuggled into Iran raising his profile amongst Iranians.

Therefore, Khomeini became the obvious person to replace him because while in exile he became the figurehead of opposition to the Shah. While he was in Paris he led the protests in Iran urging Iranians not to compromise and ordering work stoppages. This meant that when the Shah fled, he was the natural person to become leader especially as he was seen as the leading 'Mullah' at the time.

(c) 'Iraq's economic problems explain why it invaded Kuwait in 1990.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10] A similar question to November 2020

There is no doubt that 'Iraq's economy was in a bad state on the eve of war with Kuwait. The war against Iran had been very expensive and had destroyed much of Iraq's economy. Iraq owed billions,

(\$80 billions) of dollars to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and its industrial production had gone right down. It was also put under an international embargo which made matters worse. This meant that Iraq could not repay the loans from Kuwait during the war with Iran. Saddam Hussein believed that he could raise millions of dollars by invading Kuwait and taking over its oil as they had 20% of the world's oil reserves.

Moreover, Saddam's invasion was also linked to suspicions that Kuwait was using a new method of drilling called slant-drilling to unlawfully drill for oil in Iraq's Rumelia oilfield. Iraq claimed that by doing this Kuwait had stolen oil worth billions of dollars making Iraq's economic situation even worse than it was.

However, he also invaded Kuwait because he thought the USA and the West would do nothing to stop him. This was because months before the US ambassador April Glasby had given the impression that the USA was not that interested in what was going on over Kuwait. He had told Saddam, 'the US had no interest in the Iraq / Kuwait dispute', so Saddam thought he had a 'green light to invade! So if he thought the USA would not intervene he there was nothing to stop him!

March 2020 ()470)

Relations between Iran and Iraq were poor.

(a) Describe the Shah's programme to modernise Iran. [4]

- e.g. 'He introduced the White Revolution to reform the country.'
- 'He was trying to westernise the country.'
- 'He introduced land reforms to redistribute land to the peasants.'
- 'Feudalism was abolished.'
- 'Forests and pasture land were nationalised.'
- 'Peasants were taught modern methods of farming to increase production.'
- 'Health reforms were introduced increasing the number of doctors, nurses and hospitals.'
- 'Health Corps took health care out to rural villages.'
- 'Literacy Corps went out to villages to bring down the illiteracy rate.'
- 'Free and compulsory education was introduced for all children under 14.'
- 'These reforms included the road, rail and air networks across the country.'
- 'Irrigation projects were set up and dams were built.'
- 'Diseases like malaria were eradicated.'
- 'Women were given the vote.'
- 'Public facilities like public baths, schools and libraries were built.'
- 'Industry was developed.'
- 'A National Insurance system was introduced.'
- 'Profit sharing for workers was introduced in some industries.'
- 'Free food was available for mothers living in poverty and for all babies under the age of two.'
- 'Theatres and Western films were encouraged.'

(b) Why did several Western Powers support Iraq in the Iran–Iraq War? [6] **Note - Why not How**

Ultimately the Western powers supported Iraq for economic self-interest. The Middle East oil was vital to the West and if Iran succeeded this would give them more control over the Middle East's oil reserves and they would be able to influence oil prices more easily.

Also, politically, the West saw a threat because of the obvious anti-western revolutionary regime in Iran. They did not want governments like this being set up in countries like Iraq and even Saudi Arabia as this would destabilise the area even further
other information:

- e.g. 'They supported Iraq because Iran had a revolutionary anti-western government.'
- 'They thought that an Iranian victory would threaten the Gulf States.'
- 'A victory for Iran would have caused instability in the region by becoming too powerful.'
- 'They wanted to protect oil supplies to the West.'
- 'They could get on with Iraq much better than the anti-western Islamic regime in Iran.'
- 'Iraq was regarded by the West as a counterbalance to revolutionary and Islamic Iran.'
- 'By supplying Iraq with arms, the USA hoped to reduce Soviet influence over the country.'

(c) Was Saddam Hussein right when he declared a victory for Iraq in the Iran–Iraq War? Explain your answer. [10]

Saddam Hussein may have thought he was right to claim a victory. He remained in power and with Western support with arms and money ensured that by the end of the war Iraq was much stronger in terms of tanks and aircraft and Iran was glad to agree a ceasefire. In 1988 Iraq launched a series of devastating attacks which seriously damaged Iranian morale and caused many casualties. Also, the Iraq air force was attacking Iranian oil tankers while their own tankers were protected by US warships. Saddam Hussein threatened massive chemical attacks. At this point, the Iranians agreed to a ceasefire. Iran was on its last legs. Iran had failed to topple Saddam Hussein from power **and most importantly the Islamic revolution had not spread from Iraq.**

However, Saddam could hardly claim a victory in economic terms. The War drained Iraq's resources and it was left with a debt of \$80 billion. In addition, oil exports were down too and this is where most of Iraq's revenue came from. It was largely because of this massive debt that Saddam would commit Iraq to another disastrous war just 2 years later when he invaded Kuwait.

Moreover, politically the war left Saddam with a difficult legacy. Within his own country his reputation had been damaged and there were riots and strikes within Iraq which had been unheard of. There were even attempts to topple him. The military, on which he relied, also lost faith in him. He had claimed he would win a 'whirlwind victory' and this had not been the case. Instead Iraq was faced with 8 years of bloody war in which some 500,000 Iraqis died all for no reason, in that the borders were exactly the same as when they started!