

# International Scenario: Gulf War I (1991)

The Gulf War, also known as the First Iraq War, took place in early 1991 between Iraq and a coalition of 32 nations led by the United States including Britain, Egypt, France, and Saudi Arabia.

## Background

In late 1990 Iraq invaded the smaller neighboring country of Kuwait. Iraqi president Saddam Hussein stated that the invasion was in response to Kuwait overproduction of oil, which in turn cost Iraq billions of dollars a year due to the resulting fall in oil prices. In addition, Hussein accused Kuwait of illegally pumping oil from a neighboring Iraqi oil field. Due to these accusations, Iraq invaded Kuwait.

## The International Response

Following the invasion, the United Nations Security Council called for Iraq to immediately withdraw from Kuwait. The U.S. also responded by stopping most trade with Iraq. Within days, U.S. troops were stationed in Saudi Arabia, which neighbors both Iraq and Kuwait, to protect Saudi oil fields in case of further Iraqi aggression. The UN then set a January 15 (1991) deadline for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

## The War

Despite the deadline, Saddam Hussein refused to withdraw from Kuwait. With the deadline passed, the United States, which had built an international coalition of nations to support the liberation of Kuwait, launched Operation Desert Storm. The U.S.-led coalition began with massive aerial attacks to destroy Iraq's military. The coalition forces then invaded Kuwait and southern Iraq on Feb. 24 and, in just four days, defeated the Iraqis to free Kuwait. U.S. President George H.W. Bush declared a cease-fire on Feb. 28, by which time most Iraqi forces in Kuwait had either surrendered or fled.

*“Tonight in Iraq, Saddam walks amidst ruin. His war machine is crushed. His ability to threaten mass destruction is itself destroyed”.*

*-President George H.W. Bush*



Source: U.S. Air Force

## Results

Although the U.S.-led international coalition achieved a military victory in liberating Kuwait, both Kuwait and Iraq suffered enormous property damage, and Saddam Hussein remained in power. Iraq agreed to peace terms but spent the ensuing years making every effort to disobey them, in particular the required weapons inspections by the United Nations. This set the stage for a future confrontation.