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**POSITIONS OF THE ATLANTIC STATES IN THE FIRST IRAQ CRISIS**

*The aim of this article is to examine the foreign policy pursued by the United States against the backdrop of the Iraqi crisis, studying this policy in order to demonstrate that there is a new international system in which the United States is at the center. The end of the Cold War not only led to a softening of relations between the West and the socialist bloc, but also opened the door to a new reality, which led to the complete disappearance of this bloc as an ideological structure. The United States of America has been the state that has taken the most responsibility in the modern bipolar system. Given the positive energy of the end of the Cold War and the approaching end of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States used the Iraq crisis as the first opportunity to demonstrate its potential in solving this crisis.*

*Methodology and methods.* The study used several research and information methods of historical science, such as induction, historicity, comparative analysis and analogy. For this purpose, scientific works, documents, decisions of international organizations and statements of states were used.

*The novelty of the article* lies in the fact that for the first time in Russian literature the specifics of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait are considered, where the United States used the efficiency of using force to resolve this crisis.

*Main result:* The Iraq crisis has gone down in history as the deepest international conflict in the world since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This conflict showed that, under the guise of socialist ideology, some countries were getting rich from profits from oil and gas, inhumane actions were carried out, which disrupted the world order and created a nuclear threat to all humanity. The role of the United States and the European Union, which took responsibility for protecting humanism and democracy, maintaining the balance of power in international relations.

**Key words:** Iraq crisis, Cold War, Atlantic relations, unipolar international system.

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**ПОЗИЦІЇ АТЛАНТИЧНИХ ДЕРЖАВ У ПЕРШОМУ ІРАКСЬКОМУ КРИЗИ**

*Метою цієї статті є розгляд зовнішньої політики, що проводиться США на тлі іракської кризи, вивчення даної політики з метою демонстрації її, що нова міжнародна система, в центрі якої знаходиться США. Закінчення «холодної війни» не тільки призвело до пом'якшення відносин між Заходом та соціалістичним блоком, а й відчинило двері в нову реальність, яка призвела до повного зникнення цього блоку як ідеологічної структури. Сеодинні Штати Америки був державою, яка найбільше взяла на себе відповідальність у сучасній біполярній системі. Враховуючи позитивну енергію закінчення Холодної війни і наближення кінця розпаду Радянського Союзу, Сеодинні Штативикористали іракську кризу як першу можливість демонстрації свій потенціал у вирішенні даної кризи.*

*Методологія та методи.* У дослідженні використано кілька дослідницьких та інформаційних методів історичної науки, такі як індукція, історичність, порівняльний аналіз та аналогія. Для цього використовувалися наукові праці, документи, рішення міжнародних організацій та заяви держав.

*Новизна в статті* полягає в тому, що вперше у вітчизняній літературі розглядається особливість вторгнення Іраку в Кувейт, де Сеодинні Штати використовували оперативність використання сили для вирішення цієї кризи.

*Основний результат:* Іракська криза увійшла в історію як найглибший міжнародний конфлікт у світі після розпаду Радянського Союзу. Цей конфлікт показав, що під прикриттям соціалістичної ідеології відбувалися антигуманні дії деякі країни, що багатіли через прибутки від нафти і газу, які арушували світовий порядок, створювали ядерну загрозу всьому людству. Роль США і Євросоюзу, який взяв на себе відповідальність у захисті гуманізму і демократії, збереженню балансу сил у міжнародних відносинах.

**Ключові слова:** Іракська криза, холодна війна, атлантичні відносини, міжнародна однополярна система.

**Introduction (problem statement).** During the Cold War, the balance of power within the international system changed in 1985 when Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev took over the leadership of the Soviet Union, ending the rivalry between the two poles. The phase of relative détente between the two superpowers, which began with discussions on disarmament (reduction of nuclear-tipped missiles), continued until the collapse of the existing regimes in the socialist states of Eastern Europe in 1989 and the Soviet Union in 1991.

The 1990s were when the bipolar international system called the “Cold War” changed. Those years are when questions such as what characteristics and dynamism the “New World Order” will have and where the NATO-US wing will be located, which remains a kind of rival in the new reality, will be answered. The Iraq crisis is the first sign that the US-controlled international system and NATO strategy will be redesigned.

With the help of scientific works published in recent years, let’s review the events leading to the Iraq crisis chronologically. Historically, the problems between Iraq and Kuwait go back to the time of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. From a historical point of view, Iraq occupied a part of the Kuwaiti territories, which are extremely rich in oil resources (the Rumaila area on the Iraq-Kuwait border and the small islands of Kuwait called Bubiyan and Warba, which prevent Iraq from accessing the Basra Gulf), during the period under the control of the British. When Kuwait gained independence, it claimed that it belonged to them.

During the Ottoman Empire, Kuwait was part of Basra province. As a result of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, Iraq was given the mandate of Great Britain by the League of Nations’ decision. The borders of Iraq were determined entirely on his initiative by Sir Percy Cox, the British High Commissioner during the Ukair Conference in 1922 (Gözen, 2000: p. 90).

According to that borderline, the state of Iraq took its place among the world’s countries as a land-locked country with only 17–18 km of coastline. The two areas that give Iraq access to the Persian Gulf are the Shatt al-Arab waterway, the border region with Iran, and the Umm-Qasr port, which includes the islands of Bubiyan and Warba, on the coast of the Kuwaiti border. In 1981, the Kuwaiti authorities gave a negative response to the proposal of the official Baghdad, which was the proposal of official recognition of Kuwait’s borders in exchange for leasing those islands to Iraq for 99 years (Armaoğlu, 1999: p. 879).

In addition, with the discovery of oil in Kuwait in the late 1930s, the Rumayla region, formerly part of Basra Province, became more critical to Iraq. Iraq often claimed that the Rumeyla region inherited from the Ottoman Empire. This border dispute is at the heart of historical conflicts between Iraq and its border neighbours Iran and Kuwait.

In the early 1990s, the declining economy after the war with Iran played a large part in the resurgence of these historical claims. Because Iraq had come out of a long period of war and its economy had been seriously shaken. Not only did Iraq fail to achieve the successes it had expected at the beginning of the war, its economy was burdened with a debt of 80–100 billion dollars (Ari, 1999: p. 224). Iraq’s easy access to military and commercial loans during the war against Iran, a common enemy of the Western world, was cut off with the end of the war.

From the perspective of Baath, Saddam Hussein saw Iraq as the leading country that had defeated Iran, the enemy of the Arabs. Saddam Hussein believed that the entire Arab world owed Iraq a debt in this respect and that they should compensate Iraq for its losses in the war. One of the facts confirming this claim is that in the early 1990s, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq wrote a letter to the Secretary General of the Arab League. In that letter, the Iraqi state was characterised as a heroic country that fought against Iran for many years for the security of the Arab and Muslim world, and it was noted that the countries of the Persian Gulf were especially indebted to Iraq in this regard (Gozen, 2000: p. 64).

Acting from that position, Saddam Hussein sent his representatives to the meeting of the Arab League in May 1990 and demanded that the Persian Gulf countries, especially Kuwait, reduce oil supply and increase the current oil prices. Saddam Hussein believed that Iraq could get out of the economic crisis in this way. However, unlike Iraq, Kuwait directed its oil revenues to more Western-based investment. In this case, when the price of crude oil fell, western industry made more money, which increased Kuwait’s investment returns. In other words, Kuwait was interested in crude oil prices falling, not rising. Despite Iraq’s demands, in line with its own goal, Kuwait produced crude oil in excess of the quota set by OPEC and opposed the increase in the price of crude oil.

In addition, at the meeting of the Arab League, the Kuwaiti representatives demanded the return of the money that Kuwait had lent to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war. The authorised representatives of Iraq demand 2.4 billion dollars in exchange for the crude oil produced by Kuwait in the Rumaila region,

which they claim belongs to Iraq. After these mutual demands, which were already openly expressed between the two states, S. Hussein came to the idea that instead of sharing the costs of the Iran-Iraq war as a debt of gratitude, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia started an economic war against Iraq.

All these processes of Saddam Hussein, for example, being interpreted as his leadership of the Arab world and blocked by the Atlantic countries, and under the influence of these facts, Iraq, which invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, annexed Kuwait on August 8, and on August 28 announced that it is the 19th province (Young, T. & Crawford, P., 2004: p. 559–560).

**Atlantic position before the invasion.** A week before the invasion, April Glaspy, the US ambassador to Baghdad, met with S. Husayn. During this meeting, the diplomat stated that “Iraq’s border problems with Kuwait are of no concern to us”. Glaspy left Iraq a week after that meeting. In addition, the United States, fifteen days ago, determined through satellite images that Iraq was concentrating military forces on the border with Kuwait. Nevertheless, he did not issue any diplomatic warning to the former. At the same time, in those days, the Secretary General of the United Nations did not request the Security Council to adopt appropriate decisions for taking preventive measures (Gozen, 2000: p. 102). However, in the face of the fact that Iraq concentrated its army on the border of Kuwait twice in 1939 and 1961, the United Kingdom and the Arab League states gave the necessary warning by taking diplomatic and military measures. S. Huseyn, based on this cautious position of the USA and the UN, concluded that the reaction of the international world to the intervention of the Iraqi army in Kuwait would be weak and ineffective (Young, T. & Crawford, P., 2004: p. 90).

On August 2, the day of Iraq’s invasion, the UN Security Council held a meeting at the request of the United States and Kuwait and unanimously condemned the invasion and adopted Resolution No. 660 condemning the invasion. The Council, freed from years of Cold War tradition, made decisions quickly for the first time and, most importantly, adopted a common position without any vetoes or votes against by all members.

In a second statement on August 4 1990, the EU announced that it would impose an embargo on Iraq and Kuwait “to protect assets belonging directly or indirectly to Kuwait”. In this context, many vital measures were implemented. The first was the suspension of oil imports from Iraq and Kuwait. Second, Iraq’s assets within the European Union were frozen. In addition, it was decided to suspend

the sale of weapons and military equipment to Iraq and military-technical cooperation. Finally, the advantages granted to this state over other states in trade with the Iraqi state were cancelled.

In the UN Resolution No. 662 of August 10, 1990, the decision to declare the annexation of Kuwait invalid due to the violation of international law was also adopted by the European Union, and the Union announced that it rejected the annexation of Kuwait. At the same time, the UN’s leading role in solving the crisis was welcomed by the European Union, which announced that it would increase efforts for solidarity. European leaders even declared that they could meet and discuss with Arab leaders to solve the problem. In addition, due to the crisis, a decision was made to establish a fund within the European Union to be spent on refugees fleeing Iraq and Kuwait (Starr, 1992: p. 444–445).

Faced with these events in the region, the Arab League states called an extraordinary meeting to discuss the conflict on August 5, but this meeting did not occur. S. Hussain later noted that “... the Arab Summit was to take place on August 5, perhaps the Kuwaiti problem would be resolved peacefully, but we learned that Saudi Arabia and Egypt refused to participate in the meeting. In 1976, when Syria launched military force into Lebanon, the international powers did not make a hasty decision to intervene militarily against Syria. Still, discussions began with the mediation of several Arab states” (Sazak, 2001: p. 12). The United States has taken a number of steps to resolve this conflict, which is of great importance to itself at the regional and initial stage within the framework of international law. On August 6, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 661 and initiated an economic embargo against Iraq.

Despite these decisions taken by the UN Security Council, Saddam Hussein announced on August 12 that Iraq could withdraw from Kuwait only on the condition that Israel must withdraw from the Palestinian and Lebanese-occupied territories. One of the most worried countries about these events was undoubtedly Israel. At that time, Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens warned US officials that what happened in Europe in the 1930s could be repeated if the situation was not immediately intervened. According to the US administration, S. Huseyn wants to break the international coalition in front of him by getting the support of other Arab countries with such a statement. However, S. Hussein could not get support from any Arab state except Yemen and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Even the leader of Libya, Muammar Gaddafi, sensed this goal and did not support Iraq (Rubin, 2000: p. 164).

Official Baghdad, trying to get different countries' support, launched specific initiatives in line with this goal in September. Foreign Minister Tarik Aziz met with Soviet leader M.S. Gorbachev on September 6. Adhering to Cold War traditions, Aziz stated that Iraq was still friendly with Moscow, but he did not get the Soviet support he hoped for. Aziz, who later met with Iranian officials, declared that Saddam Hussein had accepted the 1975 Algerian agreement and that Iraqi soldiers would withdraw from the Iranian border as soon as possible.

**Before the decision of military intervention in Iraq, the last initiatives of the United States.** On September 9, 1990, at the end of the seven-hour summit between US President Bush and the leader of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev, in Helsinki, the capital of Finland, the joint statement signed by the two leaders stated that Iraq's aggression against Kuwait was unacceptable and that Iraqi troops must be unconditionally withdrawn from Kuwait. All solutions other than full implementation of UN Security Council resolutions are unacceptable. This declaration, in the form of a memorandum, is actually the first sign of the transformation of the bipolar international system into a new system led by the United States and under the control of the Western world. In addition, at that meeting, it was decided to create an institution that would ensure peace in the Middle East.

The Council passed nine more resolutions condemning Iraq's aggression and calling for its withdrawal from Kuwait during the short period until November. These resolutions provided for the blockade of Iraq by sea and air, thus restricting the country's transport and trade relations. To monitor the imposed sanctions, a military force named "Marine Monitoring Force" was created in the Persian Gulf (Ozkan, 2003: p. 546). Despite these sanctions, no progress has been made towards peace. In this case, on November 29, 1990, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 678, which provides for using military force against Iraq, with 12 votes in favour, resulting from Yemen and Cuba against and China abstaining. Iraq withdrew its military forces from Kuwait, which was postponed until January of the following year.

Entering 1991 with the hope of peace, France and the Soviet Union submitted a proposal to the UN to end the crisis, including the Arab-Israeli problem. At the same time, the Arab countries expressed their desire to resolve the problem among themselves, but Iraq's reluctance to step back made the issue unresolved (Chomsky, 1992: p. 29). Hoping that the conflict would end in Iraq's favour, S. Hussein declared that

they would not only keep Kuwait in their hands but also free the Golan Heights from Israel, using the phrase "we are close to meeting with victory."

On January 9, US Secretary of State James Baker met with Tariq Aziz in Geneva. At that meeting, the firm position of the United States attracted attention, as Baker gave a message to his Iraqi counterpart that military intervention in Iraq would be inevitable if they did not withdraw unconditionally, and at the same time, noted that he must convey the position of the United States to S. Hussein. He presented the letter he brought with him to Aziz. Still, the Iraqi Foreign Minister did not accept this letter because it was out of diplomatic style (Baker-Aziz, 1991).

The fact that the US side did not accept any option other than Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait, and the harshness of the negotiation procedure indicated that the path to a peaceful resolution of the conflict was blocked. The fact that the two ministers made separate statements to the press at the end of the meeting indicated that no agreement was reached between the parties. No peace agreement was reached during this meeting. Baker said, "... there is no time left for another meeting." Tarik Aziz said that "... we are ready against attack, we are a brave nation, and we will defend ourselves" and expressed that the diplomatic means are exhausted (Baker-Aziz, 1991).

In the hope of achieving peace for the last time, UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuellar visited Baghdad on January 12, 1991, and stated in his statement after he met with S. Hussein that "... We could not make any progress in Baghdad" (Sazak, 2001: 9). Thus, the last step towards peacefully resolving the conflict was unsuccessful.

US President George Bush used a variety of tactics based on the "reward-pressure" balance to prevent the disintegration of the international coalition against Iraq. For example, for Egypt to remain in the alliance, he cancelled the debt of this state for 7 billion dollars, ensured the allocation of 3 billion dollars from Saudi Arabia to the Soviet Union, and cancelled the sanction decision he took earlier to impose on China (Chomsky, 1992: p. 14). In order to keep the other countries of the region in the coalition, the US used harsh diplomatic language against them and felt their support behind them until the end (Ari, 2017: p. 235). By preventing the collapse of the coalition, President Bush set himself the goal of gaining international legitimacy for his future regional plans. Thus, after the Cold War, by making the necessary decisions to establish the "New World Order" under this legitimacy, he was not deprived of political support but also avoided bearing the costs of the conflict on his own. President Bush, who decided to use military

force before the UN Security Council, approved this decision from the Congress on January 12, 1991, by a vote of 35% against, 23% abstentions, and 42% in favour, and declared war on Iraq (United Nations Security Council, 1990). The Congress noted that it took this decision based on UN Security Council Resolution No. 678.

If viewed from today's perspective, it can be noted that Saddam Hussein made wrong decisions due to wrong political analysis. In his view, if the United States took a neutral position after the invasion of Kuwait, as in the Iran-Iraq war, or if the Soviet Union prevented the use of force by the United States after the invasion, Iraq's oil reserves would rise to a level equal to the oil reserves of Saudi Arabia. In this case, Iraq would change the balance of power in the Middle East in its favour. However, the process showed that Saddam Hussein did not conduct a proper analysis and overlooked that after the Cold War, all international actors could make different political moves to adapt to the new era.

**Conclusion.** The Iraq crisis has gone down in history as the deepest international conflict in the world, occurring a year before the collapse of the

Soviet Union. This conflict was important from the point of view of observing the position of the leading powers that will take part in restoring the world order in the post-Soviet period, especially the United States and the European Union, and understanding the role they will play in international politics. communications. The Iraq crisis and its aftermath not only took its place in history as a disaster for Iraq, but also became a clear example that the Atlantic states would act as an alliance in the face of threats against the interests of all humanity.

During the Iraq crisis, in relation to the United States, which saw itself as the author of the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet bloc, and also after the collapse of the second international pole centered around the Soviet Union, which saw in him the democratic leader of the world community. Thus, with the knowledge that the only powerful power of the new era so far is the United States, they have increased confidence in the peaceful resolution of conflicts, making it clear that they will use the option of military intervention when the world community's interests in peace and security are in danger.

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