

The countdown to Gulf war has started. But the catastrophe can still be averted if Iraq meets the UN deadline - which is tomorrow-for pulling out of Kuwait. Another hope lies in the outcome of the mission of the UN Secretary-General to Baghdad. Here, on this page, The Daily Star looks at the Gulf crisis and at probable consequences of a war.

# PEACE OR WAR IN THE GULF?

## War will Give Bangladesh Economy a Heavier Jolt

By Moazzem Hossain

**With a rise in the oil import bill, remittances falling and exports to Kuwait and Iraq lost, the fragile economy of Bangladesh is in for a harder time should the war break out in the Gulf.**

The immediate tail-out of the Gulf crisis has been quite severe for the fragile Bangladesh economy. Oil import bill has gone up. Remittances are falling. Exports to Kuwait and Iraq are lost. Most of the returns from the troubled Gulf are unemployed, an additional blow to the country with its chronic unemployment problems.

Beyond the short-term effects, the crisis could prove crippling over a longer term. The uncertainties are of a wider nature. If the global economy contracts, exports will suffer more. Imports will be costlier while cost, insurance and freight go up. Development dollar will be more scarce and more so at a time when the Eastern Europe also makes efforts to move completely to a market economy and thus attract foreign capital. And if war breaks out in the Gulf, jitters and jolts will be felt more heavily. Uncertainties also persist about remittance flows from Saudi Arabia, the major source of income earnings for the overseas Bangladeshi workforce.

Over 70,000 Bangladeshis are already back home from Kuwait and Iraq. This has meant income loss for more people because the dependents of the returnees are now deprived of their means for

sustenance. Rehabilitation or creation of employment opportunities for such a large number of skilled and semi-skilled returnees presents yet another formidable challenge, and more so when investments are pluming.

On wider international level, the Gulf crisis has led to many unsettling effects on the global economy. But its burden has fallen more inequitably on the developing countries, particularly the least developed ones among them. The weak suffer more than the strong because they have little room for any flexibility to adjust and survive.

There is already a severe contraction in demand in the economy. The counterpart funds, generated by remittances from Kuwait and Iraq, are there no more. Such demands, over 100 million US dollars, helped generate demand by the beneficiaries at home. With remittance sources in Kuwait and Iraq closed now, receipts in lower quantum are thus having contractionary effects on domestic demand. Depressed demand has slowed down industrial production, particularly those catering to domestic market. With industries operating at low levels of production, trade and business on a wider level face more uncertainties.

Bangladesh has put its losses because of the Gulf crisis at 1.5 billion US dollar. It submitted in early October a memorandum to the United Nations Secretary General on economic and financial impact

upon the country, resulting from restrictions on economic relations with Iraq and Kuwait. The Memorandum was submitted with a request for urgent consultations with the Security Council in accordance with the Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations with a view to overcoming the problems faced by Bangladesh. Under the UN charter, countries can seek compensation from the international community for losses incurred in complying with sanctions.

The list of aid applicants with the UN Committee includes India, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Yemen, Mauritania, the Philippines, Sudan, Tunisia, Uruguay, and Jordan. East European applicants are Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia.

In its Memorandum, Bangladesh noted that it would be forced to curtail its imports drastically and cut its development programmes heavily.

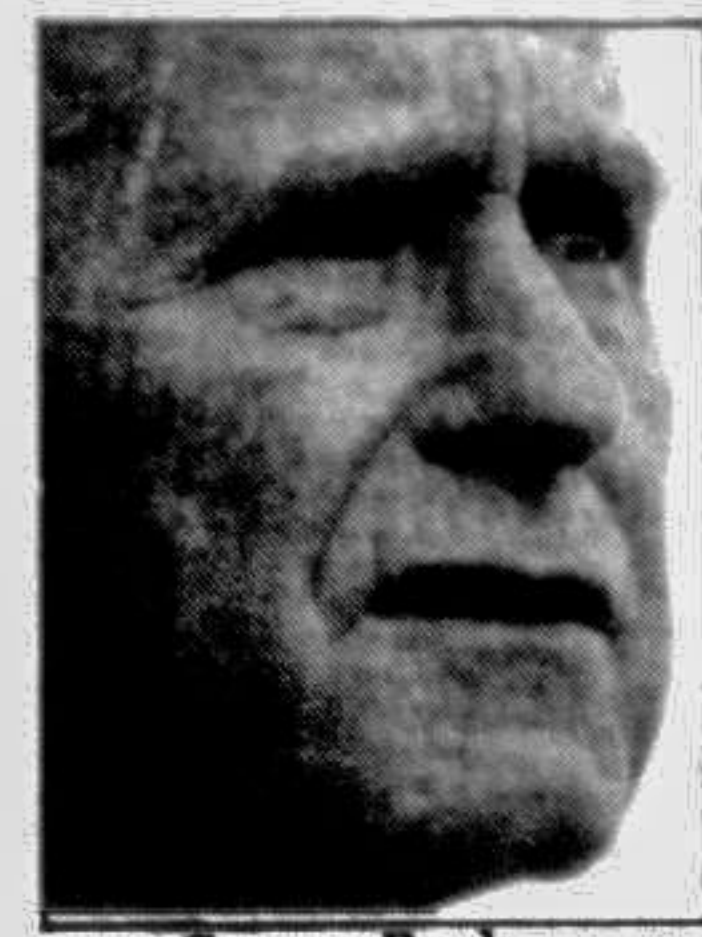
An earlier official assessment about the immediate impact of the Gulf crisis on Bangladesh put the loss in terms of trade, shipping, oil import, remittances etc at 600 million US dollars in 1990-91. Of this amount, 200 million dollar loss was estimated to meet the enhanced bill for oil import. The remittance loss was projected at 160 million dollars. The cost for evacuating the stranded Bangladeshis from Kuwait and Iraq was 36 million dollars. Another 120 million dollars were estimated as export and trade loss.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in a report prepared by its staff mission in early November estimated the adverse balance of payments impact of the Gulf crisis at 410 million US dollar for Bangladesh in 1990-91, assuming an oil price of 27 US dollar a barrel and no change in the volume of oil imports. The direct impact would rise to 482 million US dollars if the price of imported oil is 31 US dollar a barrel.

The Fund estimated the adverse direct budgetary impact of the crisis in 1990-91 at Taka 7.65 billion, assuming an oil price of 27 US dollar a barrel. Two-thirds of the budgetary impact represents a decrease in revenue primarily because of lower import duty collections and the rest one-third reflects the costs of repatriation and resettlement of Bangladesh workers from Iraq and Kuwait, a higher import bill and, participation in the multinational forces in the Gulf.

The IMF report which placed before the mid-term Review meeting of Bangladesh Aid Group, held in Dhaka in early November.

Moazzem Hossain is the Economic Editor of the Daily Star.



George Bush

### 'We'll Stop Them Here'

The lethality of the battlefield in a single day here will overshadow the whole Vietnam war.

Forward-based U.S. marines would probably be the first troops to engage an invading Iraqi Army Ray Wilkinson, a former Marine in Vietnam, spent two days on the front lines and filed this report:

The Marine infantry unit I dug into an abandoned rock quarry. Camouflaged M1 Abrams tank and noisy troop carriers storm a hillock in a mock attack. Mortar and tank units hold nighttime exercises to familiarize themselves with the terrain. Combat units outfitted in cumbersome chemical-warfare suits struggle up and down sand dunes in 120-degree daylight temperatures. Inside the suits the temperature is 10 to 20 degrees hotter. "You see that highway over there," says marine Col. Carl Fulford. "That's the main highway from Kuwait. If the Iraqis attack it will be down that road and we will stop them here." Colonel Fulford predicts it would be bloody. "The lethality of the battlefield in single day here will overshadow the whole Vietnam War."

The Marines, renowned in Vietnam for their almost perverse pleasure in making do with the most obsolete military equipment, are equipped in this campaign with the latest high-tech weaponry. TPQ radar locks onto incoming shells and missiles and instantly plots their origin and target. Marine LAVs (light armored vehicles) play hide-and-seek in the sand dunes, from behind which they can raise a "spotting platform," locate attacking tanks and fire a battery of lethal antitank TOW missiles. New "smart" shells called Copperheads are guided to enemy tanks by laser beams. None of this comes cheaply. Each Copperhead costs \$34,000.

The Marines are supremely confident. "Iraqi tanks will die when they come up against us," says tank commander Lt. Col. Buster Diggs. Colonel Fulford says his greatest weapon is the individual Marine: "As long as you pour water down their throats, they are formidable fighting weapons." The Marines themselves are more laconic. "Man, that Saddam Hussein, he's messing up my life," one lance corporal groans. "We want to get this over with. We want to help Saddam Hussein make up his mind. And if we don't go after him now, we'll have to go after him later."

The Marines and other grunts are backed up by a formidable logistics network. At an air base in eastern Saudi Arabia, giant C-5 and C-141 transport planes and commandeer civilian aircraft land around the clock. American F-15 and Saudi Tornado fighter jets scream over head. While lines of Black Hawk troop-carrier helicopters and Apache attack choppers dance in the distance, columns of camouflaged Marine M-60 tanks, armored personnel carriers and double-deck-erbusos clog the airstrip.

Servicemen who just two weeks ago arrived tired and jittery now sound primed for action. Air crews flying reconnaissance missions sound jaunty, almost cocky. "If the Iraqis start shooting," says one crew chief of an F-15 fighter squadron, "then the sky is going to be full of Iraqi bodies." Commanders work hard to keep the deployment businesslike. "There's no rah, rah here," says Col. Ron Rokosz, commander of the 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment. "We have a job to do. And we will do it."

Initial fears of friction with the Saudis have receded. Chaplains who were instructed not to wear crosses in an Army pamphlet of "do's and don'ts" pin them back on and hold discreet religious services.



Preparing for chemical warfare, US soldiers get accustomed to their gas masks.

## Iraq on the Verge of War: A Family View

Five years is a long time not to see one's father, especially if one is only 11 years old. Izdahar can't really be expected to remember her father. He's Yusuf, the third son of Grandfather Abu Mohammed. He was a soldier in the Iraqi army.

This little Iraqi girl knew what a soldier was, mainly because she saw two other uncles come home each weekend. They were wearing their soldier's uniforms when they arrived, and on Saturday morning, then they went back to work they had put them on again.

I met Izdahar's family last year. For over 18 months, there had been no fighting; the war with Iraq had finally ended and I thought life in Iraq had returned to normal, even in a village like El-Najoom.

Villages like this, families like Izdahar's - hundreds of thousands of them - had sent their men into battle, men like Izdahar's father, and his three brothers Ahmed, the shy Ibrahim, and Younis, the youngest.

Being a woman visitor in this Iraqi village, I spent most of the time with Izdahar's grandmother and Fatima, her mother and other wives of

Amid the massive media coverage of the Gulf crisis, there have been few reports from the Iraqi villages, the homes of thousands of Saddam Hussein's soldiers. Just as families in the West are suffering the loss of their menfolk to the Gulf front, so are families in Iraq, particularly so because of the dominant role of men within traditional society. The pain is greater for Iraqis in some ways for they have already endured ten years of war with Iran. Now, reports Gemini News Service, the young men are back at the front. By BARBARA NIMZI ZAIS

those soldiers sons.

Embraced inside the sphere of women, I did not notice, at first, how few men were around the place. Izdahar's grandfather, Abu Mohammed, wandered in an out through the day, I thought his long absences were customary for old men in the village.

In the market the spacious tea shop was crowded with old men like him.

That's where Abu Mohammed prefers to be," I thought. I also assumed Um Mohammed wore a black dress because this was the custom for an Iraqi grandmother.

I don't know how often Izdahar asked about her father and if she knew what a P.P.W. was. The first time the absent father came to my attention was during a conversation about school.

I had taken a liking for this pig-tailed child who never wanted to be far from the adults in the house. She was so keen to read her Arabic lesson to anyone who cared to listen; and she helped her older brother with his reading as if this was perfectly reasonable thing for a little sister to do.

And how proudly she announced - "I'm ten and I'm in class five." And how she giggled when we went through the family album and came across the photo of little brother Omar's circumcision ceremony.

Izdahar's local school, just at the end of the fields, had only five classes, so when children

finish here, if their parents agree, they move to the "big school. That is in town, five miles away.

"She can't go," said grandfather Abu Mohammed. He was firm. I could see from the child's mother's face that he had been through this before. Izdahar held her mouth firm, not so differently from her grandfather. "She can't go," repeated the old man, "not until her father comes home. I can't take the responsibility of her leaving the house."

It was only then I realized how lonely the old man was. Four of his sons were in the military. Yusuf and his younger brother were both in Iran, in a prisoner-of-war camp. Iraq and Iran had not yet agreed to exchange the soldiers each had captured from the other side.

Abu Mohammed clearly missed those boys. He resented their absence; this was plain from the way he declared his decision on Izdahar's schooling. He was weary of being the patriarch here, a man his age should not be responsible for his son's children, should not be in a house filled with women.

Occasionally the old man's brother came to visit him from Baghdad, but that was not often. When his two other sons came home on weekend leave, he did not see much of them. They meet with their young cousins, other men in the village. Abu Mohammed likes them to assemble at his house; it didn't matter if 20 of them talked until three in the morning.

He stayed up with them, sprawled across the carpet near the circle of younger men. So did the children stay up, crawling onto an uncle's lap and falling asleep there on the floor, while the men talked on and laughed loudly. Izdahar and the other children each have their favorite uncle.

Seeing this child stretched sleeping over Ahmed's legs, I felt: "She must think this is her own father. She melts into his body so trustingly." And he too lays his hands on her back as if she is his own.

After all, this was an Arab family. The single dwelling still houses all the sons. Only the married daughters have moved away. It seems it doesn't matter whose children are with whom. They move freely among the houses. Izdahar can stop at her aunt's across the path any time at that there.

### 'US troops will not be ready by January 15'

A SENIOR commander in the Gulf said that US troops would not be ready to mount an offensive by January 15, when the United Nations says Iraq must be out of Kuwait or face possible military action.

Lt. Gen. Calvin A.H. Walker, the Deputy Commander of all US Forces in the Gulf, voiced that assessment after a meeting with Defence Secretary Dick Cheney, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Col. in Powell and Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Field commander of the American deployment.

Walker told reporters the full American deployment would reach about 430,000 troops by mid-January but that late arriving armoured units would not be combat-ready for some time, perhaps not until a month past the January 15 deadline.

Asked how he would respond if Bush wanted to order a strike on Iraqi forces before the full complement of American ground forces was ready, Walker said, "I'd tell him, no, I'm not ready to do the job."

In Washington, White House Press Secretary Marlin

Fitzwater was asked about Walker's remarks. "What he really said is they might not be as ready as they would like to be ... For all the contingencies," he said.

"But we are assured they will be ready to do whatever they are called upon to do," Fitzwater added.

Cheney and Powell told reporters travelling with them that the United States will be ready to go to war by the January 15 deadline regardless of whether all reinforcements have arrived and reached combat-readiness.

Cheney acknowledged some ground forces on the way to Saudi Arabia from Kansas and Germany probably would not be combat-ready by mid-January. "We have an offensive capability should that be required," Cheney said.

"Most of the forces will be there by then (January 15), but obviously there is additional work to be done before you would identify them as combat-ready." Walker said he did not anticipate Bush ordering an attack immediately if Saddam Hussein ignores the United Nations deadline to withdraw his army from Kuwait.

What the U.S. might do	What Saddam might do
<p>1. If Iraq has not withdrawn from Kuwait by Jan. 15, allied aircraft might strike selected military or infrastructure targets in Iraq.</p> <p>Possible cost: minimal loss of life; perhaps loss of a dozen aircraft, most with two-man crews</p>	<p>A. Launch missiles carrying poison gas against Saudi oil fields</p>
<p>2. If Saddam still does not budge, the U.S. would launch a two-phase air attack against his forces in Kuwait and southern Iraq. In the first stage, U.S. aircraft would challenge the Iraqi air force. With air supremacy achieved, U.S. aircraft would then attack Iraqi ground installations, carpet bombing roads and other targets.</p> <p>Possible cost: substantially more lives; perhaps 100 aircraft</p>	<p>B. Shake the alliance by attacking Israel</p>
<p>3. After several days of intense aerial attacks, allied tanks and infantry could invade Iraq from Kuwait through a flankish maneuver into southern Iraq. They might also stage an amphibious landing from the Persian Gulf. Some U.S. units might stage a frontal assault on Iraqi forces in Kuwait.</p> <p>Possible cost: 200 aircraft and as many tanks and armored personnel carriers; an estimated 3,000 dead and 15,000 wounded in a 10-day war</p>	<p>C. Start terrorist attacks outside the Middle East to frighten U.S. allies</p> <p>D. Parade captured U.S. airmen through Baghdad streets or execute foreign hostages</p>

## Husband Runs Household While Wife Goes to War

ROBERT Buffham had to send his children to live with friends. Felix Dean had to learn mothering skills. Other men lament that they can't even to neighbours for consolation.

They are spouses of soldiers, and their wives have been sent to the Gulf for Operation Desert Shield.

In a reversal of roles from the nation's previous military deployments, many a man has been left behind to raise the children, run the household and deal with the possibility that his wife could be killed in war.

"Their greatest fear has been that mommy won't come home, that mommy's already dead," said Robert Buffham, husband of Spec. Lona Buffham of the 3rd Armoured Cavalry at Fort Bliss.

Buffham, 38, was left to care for children ages 5, 2 and a

1/2, 1 and a 1/2 and a seven-week-old newborn.

"She had her maternity leave, but two days after her maternity leave, they said: 'Hey let's go. Time to pack up and leave,'" Buffham said on Monday.

Although Buffham, a Vietnam veteran, was accustomed to caring for the children and home while his wife pursued her army career, this latest separation has been difficult, especially for his oldest son.

"When all this happened all the kids -- Aaron mostly -- started asking, 'Where's momma?' and Aaron knew that momm went away. I said, 'Momma's going to Saudi Arabia.'"



US Sergeant First Class Brenda Langlois says goodbye to daughter Celine before shipping off for the Gulf.

"Then he said: I know what's going on there. Mommy won't come back alive."

On the advice of a doctor, Buffham sent his children to live with friends who had raised seven children.

"Ic (Aaron) needed to be with someone with mothering skills. I did not have that much mothering skills," Buffham said. Buffham attends support group meetings on post to discuss problems and exchange suggestions with other husbands. Fort Bliss' Army Community Services started the group in September to cater to make dependents.

"No matter what happens

she knows I'm there. My wife knows my kids are well taken care of, because she knows that No. 1 in my household," said Felix Dean, 33 whose wife, Spec. Beverly Dean is with the 11th Air Defence Artillery.

Dean's poor vision and other disabilities forced him out of the army, so for years he has been staying at home with his five daughters.

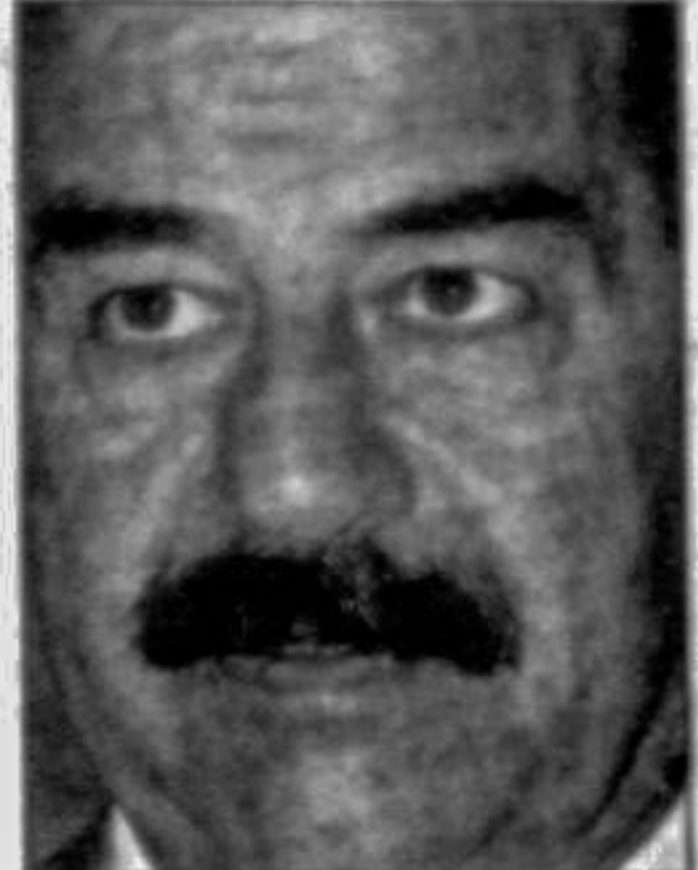
"My friends ask me, did your dad go to Saudi Arabia?" said Felicia, 8. "And I say, my dad didn't go, my mom did."

Mrs. Dean's deployment helped Dean heal a strained relationship with his oldest daughter who now lives in Georgia.

"She called me and talked to me and she talked to me about boys ... since my wife's been gone, we have grown a bond. We can talk and laugh. I'm there for her because her mom isn't" Dean said.

Nov 28 : The Council voted 15-0 to condemn Iraq's attempt to alter the demographic character of Kuwait, and asked Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar to take possession of Kuwait's census and citizenship records for safekeeping, in Resolution 677.

Nov 29 : The Council voted 12-2, with one abstention, to give Baghdad "one final opportunity" until Jan 15, 1991, to comply with all previous resolutions. After that date, nations allied with Kuwait are authorized "to use all necessary means" to force Iraq to withdraw and honour the resolutions, a phrase that all Council members agree would permit a military strike. China abstained on Resolution 678; Cuba and Yemen voted against it.



Saddam Hussein

### Chronology of UN Resolutions

Since Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait on Aug 2, the UN Security Council has adopted 12 resolutions condemning Iraq, reports AP.

Aug 3 : The Security Council voted 14-0 to condemn the invasion and demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraq's troops. Yemen, the only Arab member of the Council, did not vote on Resolution 660.

Aug 6 : The Council voted 13-0 to order a trade and financial embargo of Iraq and occupied Kuwait. Cuba and Yemen abstained on Resolution 661.

Aug 9 : The Council voted 15-0 to declare Iraq's annexation of Kuwait null and void in international law, in Resolution 662.

Aug 18 : The Council voted 15-0 to demand that Iraq free all detained foreigners, in Resolution 664.

Aug 25 : The Council voted 13-0 to give the United States and other naval powers the right to enforce the economic embargo against Iraq and Kuwait by halting shipping to those countries. Cuba and Yemen abstained on Resolution 665.

Sept 13 : The Council voted 13-2 to allow humanitarian food aid into Iraq of Kuwait only "to relieve human suffering," and said only the Council could decide when those circumstances exist. Cuba and Yemen voted against Resolution 666.

Sept 16 : The Council voted 15-0 to condemn Iraq's aggressive acts against diplomatic missions in Kuwait, including the abduction of foreigners who were in the buildings, in adopting Resolution 667.

Sept 24 : The Council voted 15-0 to stress that only its Sanctions Committee has the power to permit food, medicine or other humanitarian aid to be sent into Iraq or occupied Kuwait, in adopting Resolution 669.

Sept 25 : The Council voted 14-1 to explicitly expand its economic embargo to include all air cargo traffic in or out of Iraq and Kuwait, except for cargoes of humanitarian aid specifically authorized by its Sanctions Committee. It also called on UN member nations to detain any Iraqi ships that may be used to break the naval embargo. Cuba voted against Resolution 670.

Oct 29 : The Council voted 13-0 to hold Iraq liable for war damages and economic losses, to ask nations to collect evidence of grave human rights abuses by the occupying forces, to demand that the Western embassies in Kuwait City be restocked with food and water, and to demand that all hostages be released. Cuba and Yemen abstained on Resolution 674.

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