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Chapter 1  Historical Background on the Persian Gulf War

1. An Overview of the War and Its Causes 13
   Anthony H. Cordesman
   Set off by Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, the Persian Gulf War united several Arab nations with military forces led by the United States in an extraordinary coalition. The allies’ superior airpower, technology, strategy, training, and coordination overwhelmed Iraqi troops.

2. How Saddam Hussein Prepared for the War 28
   Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh
   Rather than lose status by pulling back from Kuwait under international diplomatic pressure, Iraq’s leader decided to risk war with the United States. He figured that Americans would be reluctant to fight and accept the casualties of military action.

3. The US President Takes Action to Oppose Iraq 42
   George H.W. Bush
In a then-secret document preceding Operation Desert Storm, President George H.W. Bush outlines US interests in the Persian Gulf region and what the United States is doing in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The response includes deployment of US forces to the area.

4. Baghdad Celebrates a New Year While on the Brink of War

*Elaine Sciolino*

A *New York Times* foreign correspondent living in Iraq's capital finds officials trying to maintain normalcy while ordinary Iraqis are either confident that military action will be averted or assume a catastrophic conflict is likely at any moment.

5. Why the United States Decided to Attack

*George H.W. Bush*

Two hours after allied air attacks begin in Iraq and Kuwait, the US president tells the public why the war is taking place. He explains that attacking was the only remaining way to counter the atrocities committed by and the dangers posed by Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

6. The Persian Gulf Region Was Highly Unstable and Militarized

*Abdulkhaleq Abdulla*

Two of the main factors leading to Operation Desert Storm were that the Persian Gulf region had been historically and constantly oriented toward conflict and that the area had been dominated by foreign powers.
CHAPTER 2

Controversies Surrounding the Persian Gulf War

1. The War Was Absolutely Justifiable
   James Turner Johnson
   The decision to launch Operation Desert Storm was fully justified and met all criteria for a just war. The amount of force used was appropriate and the military action was motivated by the goal of making peace possible in the region.

2. The War Was an Unjustifiable Exercise of Arrogance
   Alan Geyer and Barbara G. Green
   It is dangerous and perverse to assume that the US-led military success makes the resort to war acceptable. Instead of whipping up a rush-to-war emotion, the allies should have persisted with economic sanctions against the Iraqi leadership.

3. Israel Played a Vital Role in Helping the US Effort
   Mitchell Bard
   The United States asked Israel not to participate in the war, even though Israel was attacked by Iraqi Scud missiles. Nevertheless, Israel was able to support the military effort in more than a dozen ways, and thus deter Arab extremism.

4. The United States Can Preserve a Structure for Mideast Peace
   William J. Perry
   The extraordinary military capability
demonstrated by the United States now should be used for deterrence, rather than more fighting. The US “force multipliers” are so strong that other countries should avoid starting regional warfare.

5. The Region’s Power Structure Changed Considerably

*Saul B. Cohen*

Iraq’s defeat left its neighbors safer, opened the door for Egypt to become more dominant, and moved resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict closer. The war also demonstrated the establishment of the United States as a preeminent force in the Middle East.

6. Desert Storm Was a Criminal Assault on Defenseless People

*Ramsey Clark*

Children, elderly people, and other civilians died by the tens of thousands while US forces perpetuated a myth of precision military action. And after Desert Storm ended, the American-led embargo was in effect a genocidal policy.

7. Arab Leaders Could Have Prevented the War

*Majid Khadduri and Edmund Ghareeb*

A greater understanding of Islamic culture helps show that this war did not have to happen. An Arab summit just before Kuwait was invaded missed an opportunity to avert conflict. And the West—led by the United States—acted impatiently.
8. The War Sickened More Than One Fourth of US Troops

Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans’ Illnesses

A federal study group concluded that the evidence strongly suggests that pills taken by US troops and pesticides unleashed during the war brought a complex of afflictions to more than 170,000 veterans.

9. The Bush Administration Kept the Public from Learning the Whole Truth

Jacqueline Sharkley

The United States won big and handily in the fight with Iraq, right? That’s the picture most Americans received—because the press was tightly restricted by the military. The Bush administration spun the images to its advantage.

CHAPTER 3

Personal Narratives

1. A US Army Officer Sees the First Invaders Enter Kuwait City

Martin Stanton

While on a weekend break on his own in a hotel in Kuwait, a US major is awakened by gunfire. Looking out his window, he sees the first wave of Iraqi troops rolling into the capital—on what look like school buses.

2. The War Is Fragments of Bravery, Death, and Confusion

Buzz Williams

A young Marine Corps reservist, rushed into combat, tells of the gritty existence and helter-

3. For Women in Combat, the Greatest Challenge Is Control

_Rhonda Cornum, as told to Peter Copeland_

Shot down while flying to the aid of an injured pilot, an American woman/Army major/medical doctor is injured and held captive. She tells how Operation Desert Storm changed her—and women in the military in general.

4. The Lives of Iraqi Teenagers Changed Drastically Because of the War

_Nadje Al-Ali and Yasmin Hussein_

After the war, a typical teenager’s day was no longer predictable or even safe. Despite strong family ties, the main desire expressed by many Iraqi young people was to leave their homeland as soon as possible. Getting a good education remained a priority for some.