**The Gulf War**

Preface:

In August 1990, after a rapid conquering of Kuwait and a substantial threat to its neighbor Saudi Arabia, Saddam Hussein threatened to take control over most of the world’s natural oil reserves and challenged the real world order!

The coalition states, led by the United States, do not stand by idly. They gather forces and in an impressive, military operation, they manage to stop the Iraqi dictator and his megalomaniacal aspirations and maintain world order.

But could a clear victory at the tactical level necessarily also be considered a victory at the strategic level? And what will be the long-term consequences of the decision not to overthrow Saddam's regime for the United States?

Introduction:

Victory in a military battle between two opponents is very difficult to define clearly and unequivocally. This is certainly the case when you put more aspects into the equation beyond the tactical aspect. Simplistically, victory can be defined when one of the following two situations holds –

When your opponent is physically and mentally harmed in such a way that he ceases to exist effectively or when you force on your opponent your desires in such a way that he agrees to accept them as long as you stop your actions that threaten his existence.

A victory in a campaign can be measured by the goals and objectives set by the statesmen before the start of the campaign or may have been added and updated during it and achieving it will bring about a change in reality in a way that will serve the interest that led to the campaign in the first place. The goals set by US President George W. Bush, as the leader of the coalition against Iraq, in the operation known as "Storm in the Desert" are:

1. The removal of all Iraqi military forces from the land of Kuwait and the restoration of freedom to the state.  
2. Preventing Iraq from invading Saudi Arabia and taking over the country's oil fields.  
3. Dismantling Iraq from all projects related to the construction of weapons of mass destruction.  
4. Destruction of mobile launchers and prevention of the firing of Scud missiles at the State of Israel and Saudi Arabia.  
5. Payment of compensation by the Iraqi nation to Kuwait for the economic damage caused as a result of the invasion and military takeover of the country.

The Tactical Military Campaign:

In this respect the United States Army and the Coalition performed their job excellently, met almost all the objectives of the operation optimally (except the destruction of the Scud launchers) and gave the political echelon a very strong backing to continue the confrontation with political tools.

It can be seen absolutely that the number of casualties (30,000 thousand vs. 379), the number of prisoners (6,000 vs. 80) and the number of military tools destroyed in the operation are clearly in favor of coalition forces. Meanwhile, the United States military has demonstrated tremendous technological superiority and the use of advanced and groundbreaking weapons. In this matter it is undisputed, the coalition forces led by General Schwarzkopf were undoubtedly strong and defeated the Iraqi army in any military tactical confrontation.

Coalition forces met almost all the tactical targets set for them by the political echelon. Military takeover of Kuwait and expulsion of Iraqi forces from the country and prevention of raids on Saudi Arabia due to significant military deployment within the country's borders. Regarding the prevention of Scud shooting and the destruction of the launchers, the army failed completely. One of the most important strategic objectives in the operation was to maintain the unity of the coalition with the Arab states and as a result, to preserve the State of Israel, which was a clear target for Saddam to attack in order to break the coalition, by shooting Scud missiles. This is a classic example of the close connection between the tactical level that serves the strategic level. In my opinion, General Schwarzkopf did not understand the importance of the matter well enough, apparently he did not devote enough resources to it with an emphasis on battle missions to locate and destroy the Scud launchers, and when it rose sharply from the political echelon at the end of the war, it was too little and too late.

The Consciousness Campaign:

The United States military has come to Iraq with "Vietnam Syndrome" threatening like a giant shadow. The American people are fed up with bringing the boys home in coffins as a result of entanglement and fighting thousands of miles from home. The Iraq war has made a tremendous change in this regard and restored the public's trust in leaders in the military in an unprecedented way. In post-war polls, the military was ranked first of all state institutions in public trust, with President Bush and General Schwarzkopf respectively gaining very high popularity and providing the American people with moments of satisfaction and relief after years of difficulty in Vietnam.

Before embarking on the operation, President Bush and his team managed to mobilize the US House of Representatives and Congress to receive the blessing of a military operation and ground operation in Iraq. This is not a trivial success, since the trauma of Vietnam hovered like a heavy shadow and there were many opponents (Democrats, of course, but also Republicans), yet Bush managed with exceptional leadership and political work to positively produce consensus, in what is engraved in consciousness as a necessary offensive not only for the U.S. but for the freedom of the whole world!

The Strategic Campaign:

Broadly speaking, the coalition led by George W. Bush has managed to stop the Iraqi dictator from his megalomaniacal aspirations, restore freedom to the Kuwaiti state, and even compensate it for the damage done to it by the Iraqi government. Most importantly, it managed to maintain world order as the United States continues to be the only superpower in the world, even stronger after the operation.

One of Bush's most significant successes is his ability to form a very broad coalition of 32 different countries that have joined together for a common goal: to stop the Iraqi dictator. Within the coalition there were many Arab states that participated for personal motives (Saudi Arabia) or those that were convinced by diplomatic and economic means (Egypt) and formed a very strong strategic alliance led by the United States. Saddam understood this and tried to break the coalition with the Arab states, among other things, by attacking the State of Israel with the Scud missiles and bringing it into the fighting circle, which would almost certainly create tension and break the strategic alliance with the Arab states. But in strategic cooperation between the State of Israel and the United States, this was avoided and the coalition remained united until the end of the campaign.

One of the most significant decisions of the President of the United States was not to occupy Baghdad with the coalition army, to refrain from overthrowing the regime and the Iraqi dictator, and in fact to move from this point of violence to the negotiating table. This is a critical decision because alongside the clear understanding of preventing harm to human life and using a lever of military and economic pressure on the Iraqi dictator on his doorstep, in the long-term strategic vision, this will have great costs.

In Saddam's personal view, as long as Baghdad is not occupied and he continues to function, he has not lost the battle. This is a deep cultural, personality and consciousness issue that coalition leaders, led by President Bush, did not fully understand in my opinion. Evidence after the ceasefire shows that Saddam continues to challenge the system by failing to cooperate with the UN to dismantle the unconventional weapons, violently suppressing the revolt of Shiites and Kurds who missed a tremendous opportunity to establish independent autonomy and historically continues to challenge the Americans another 20 years after Operation Bush. The alliance completes its father's mission and overthrows the Iraqi dictator and his regime.

Summary:

Coalition forces and the United States in particular, in my opinion, won the battle in Iraq in the Gulf War but failed to defeat it. There is a clear and strategic tactical victory here, mainly in light of the fact that Saddam's attempt to take over world oil reserves was halted and world order was maintained. Despite the use of great force and impressive tactical performance, the Iraqi dictator remained in power. I think the political achievements in the Gulf War are relatively small compared to the tactical success of the operation. The decision not to overthrow Saddam's rule, and leave it perhaps to an unsuccessful internal coup that only strengthened Saddam, will cost the United States in the long run at a very heavy economic and military cost.