Security of a Small State: Case of Kuwait

Shawn Adelwerth
University of Central Florida, shawnadelwerth@gmail.com

Part of the Political Science Commons
Find similar works at: https://stars.library.ucf.edu/honorstheses1990-2015
University of Central Florida Libraries http://library.ucf.edu

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in HIM 1990-2015 by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation
Security of a Small State: Case of Kuwait

by

Shawn M. Adelwerth

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors in the Major Program in Political Science in the College of Arts and Sciences and in The Burnett Honors College at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term
2004

Thesis Chair: Dr. Houman Sadri
Abstract

Kuwait is a small country in terms of size and military might, however, it has an abundance of oil wealth. Kuwaiti rulers have often met their domestic and international security challenges with buying off the problems. This type of policy continued until late 1989, when the tension between Iraq and Kuwait reached a new height. The turning point for Kuwait security was 2 August 1990, when Iraqi military finally invaded Kuwait. Felt betrayal by Saddam, whom they helped during the Iran-Iraq War, Kuwait requested the military power of the United States. This began a new era in the United States-Kuwait relationship.

Since Iraqi forces were discharged from this small Gulf State, Kuwait has enjoyed relatively more external security in its region and with its neighbors. The newly found sense of security is in most part due to the presence of the American forces in this state. Another benefit of the United States presence is to train Kuwaiti military forces, so they can become more effective. In 1991, the United States and Kuwait signed a ten-year agreement, which was renewed in 2001 for another ten years. In the last few years, there is growing concern about the future of Kuwait when the second agreement will expire. The United States-Kuwait relationship depends on many factors, one of which is the domestic political environment of America. As the number of American casualties increases in Iraq, the American voters may decide to decrease United States presence in the Persian Gulf. This will seriously affect the future security of Kuwait.
# Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - Introduction ................................................................. 1
Chapter 2 - History ................................................................. 12
Chapter 3 - Regional Relationships ........................................... 20
Chapter 4 - Relationship with the United States .................... 30
Chapter 5 - Conclusion ........................................................... 38
Bibliography ........................................................................... 43
Endnotes ................................................................................. 45
Chapter 1- Introduction

Kuwait is a country that has gained a great deal of international recognition in the last decade. How did a country with a small population and small size gain the attention of the international world, mainly the United States? What is the importance of this country in terms of Middle East stability?

This thesis research focuses on the nation of Kuwait and examines the history, current leaders and the composition of the population. In addition, this research will also look at the socio-economic aspects as well as the relationship between the political structure and the military. The research project will also look at the relationship with neighbors in regard to foreign relations. This project will show who the current experts are for this nation as well as take a look into what current literature has to say. From a personal aspect I will look at what the future holds for Kuwait, both domestically and abroad.

In response to the questions or goals this research will be broken down accordingly. The beginning will start with an introduction to get into the topic of Kuwait. This opening will also show why this research is important. Chapter two will contain a history of Kuwait. This will go from the mid 17th Century until the present time. Unfortunately, unlike many other nations or areas Kuwait does not have thousands of years of history as it was only discovered by sailors quite recently. History of Kuwait will show the influence the Ottoman Empire had on the Middle East until World War I and the British influence in the area until Kuwait gained independence in 1961. This section will also include the types of people that inhabit Kuwait as well as the workforce. Chapter three will give an idea of how Kuwait has historically and currently interacts
with its neighbors. This will include looking at the Iran-Iraq War, as well as the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. This chapter will also look at the Gulf Cooperation Council, which Kuwait was one of the founding members of. This section will give an idea of where relationships have been and where they are at this present time because many of them have changed. Chapter four will look at the presence of foreign military forces in Kuwait. There are soldiers from many different nations that train there each and every day; however, there is one country that has a heavy concentration of soldiers there, that being the United States. This section will look at how this relationship between the two nations has evolved and grown over the years. Dependence on the United States began from the time when Kuwait would reflag their ships to sail with the United States Navy during the Iran-Iraq War. This relationship evolved further when America led the march towards freeing Kuwait from Iraq. Conditions today are such that the United States military helps train the Kuwaiti Army and supplies them with highly sophisticated weapons. Chapter five will serve as the conclusion. The importance of this area of the world will once again be reiterated.

Finally, I will conclude this research by reemphasizing the importance of Kuwait in the region. In regards to security, I feel security is very important for a small nation with an abundance of a valuable resource be protected from future invasion. This helps to protect the small nation from a bigger, more aggressive nation trying to exploit a valuable, global resource for their own gain. This region has been one of constant turmoil for many years. With a new Iraq in place and hope in that region and a continued relationship with Kuwait the region has a better chance of gaining some much needed stability.
This study will show how Kuwait, a country the size of New Jersey, is important in the Middle East. This topic is important because the Middle East has always been a place of conflict. Kuwait is also important because it gives people more ideas on the relationship between security issues and political stability. Kuwait is also an area of great interest to the Western world because the small Gulf nation contains almost ten percent of the world’s oil reserves. Because of this abundance in oil and its small size, Kuwait is vulnerable to attacks and invasions from its neighbors. The location of Kuwait within the Persian Gulf and the abundance of oil make the nation an area of interest to the United States. The United States has vowed to protect vital interests in the Middle East. An interest in oil as well as stabilizing the region has led the United States to station troops in Kuwait for more than a decade. The United States will continue to have a presence there for years to come. I will argue that as security has increased within this country, stability has also increased. The Kuwaiti military has and is currently receiving the best training in the world by working with the United States armed forces. Training everyday with the United States military has changed Kuwait’s status within the Middle East. Other nations will think twice about invading another sovereign state that has never been known as a military presence in the region because of this alliance with the United States. In fact, this alliance with America has helped improve relationships with other nations in the region as in recent years the relationship between Kuwait and Iran has become better. Another example is in Iraq where a new regime in that nation gives Kuwait a new chance to become allies with Iraq and not have to look over its shoulder.

The presence of the United States has an effect on the security of Kuwait. Many nations in this area are against a US military presence in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.
United States military presence is viewed by many in the Arab community as an American attempt to control the area rather than as an attempt to protect nations that are susceptible to attacks by more powerful nations. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are seen as selling out to Western interests because American soldiers are stationed in these nations. This is a view held by some within these nations’ populations as well as by their neighbors in the region. As the United States presence has increased, so has Kuwaiti society and security. The old policy prior to the invasion by Iraq was to buy weapons from many different sources, which included weapons that were outdated and mostly obsolete. The core of my argument is that Kuwait is better equipped because of an alliance with the United States.

Instead of receiving inefficient weapons from many different nations, Kuwait receives the best weapons from one source. Buying weapons from one supplier makes it easier to track how and where money is being spent which is beneficial to the economy. There also becomes a dependence on that one supplier. It is like putting all your eggs in one basket. The United States and Kuwait both benefit from their relationship. Americans can work in the Persian Gulf region and make money. The United States also gains an ally in the region. Kuwait is able to gain legitimacy in having a better trained military and the added bonus of having the most powerful military in the world on its side in the event another nation tries to invade again. The relationship between Kuwait and the United States also helps the people of Kuwaiti nation because there are not only Americans over there but people from other nations such as Australia and the United Kingdom bringing money into their economy. This is extremely significant because without this alliance Kuwait would be subject to future invasions with a poorly trained military and with no
significant allies in the world. Kuwait has been vulnerable to attacks and pressure from its neighbors. When Kuwait gained independence from Britain in 1961, the small Gulf nation began encountering problems almost immediately. Most of the problems came from Iraq and Iran. Iraq would sporadically make claims that this area belonged to them based on the history of the Ottoman Empire. Kuwait would buy the Iraqi’s off and thus ensure their territory for the time being. Problems with Iran were a result of the Iran and Iraq War where Kuwait supported Iraq. Iran would bomb Kuwait and strike their ships until the United States reflagged Kuwait ships.

In order to study Kuwait I have begun researching authors that have written on the subject. To do a study such as this, starting from the beginning is important and then I will progress into more specific topics such as economics, oil, military, etc. I have looked at works that allow one to gain a sense of what the region was like in the 16th century up until present time. I have begun by focusing on the works of scholars such as Frederick Anscombe, Anthony Cordesman, Gary Donaldson, and Shoshana Klebanoff to name a few. I hope to get different perspectives on the topic of interest and also use my own knowledge of the area to update anything that another author omits from his or her book. The research design will look at Kuwait prior to the Gulf War and Kuwait after the invasion of Iraq and how the country has benefited from its alliance with the United States.

Frederick Anscombe’s book, *The Ottoman Gulf*, is a look into the history of Kuwait. He talks of how it is inaccurate to give credit or blame to the British for the political organization in place in Kuwait today (Anscombe, 1). The book tells of the
history of the Ottoman Empire and the role it played in the Middle East prior to World War I. Britain came to be influential in Kuwait and the Middle East as a whole prior to World War I and after the war because the Ottoman Empire was unable to gain back the influence it once had in Kuwait and the Middle East region. The Ottoman Empire was subsequently defeated in World War I and its empire divided up (Anscombe, 91). This particular work is important because it gives many facts on the background of the area not just Kuwait in particular. Anscombe's work is significant because many of the myths or ideas people think about in relation to the history of the Middle East are disproved. This work also helps explain exactly why Iraq would lay claims to Kuwait particularly during the Gulf War. One reason for Iraq invading Kuwait in 1990 was the fact that the Iraqi leaders and people felt Britain had illegally broken Kuwait's ties to Ottoman Basra (Anscombe, 98).

B.J. Slot's work in *The Origins of Kuwait* is also a look into the historical background of the region. A comparison is drawn between writing about the Gulf States in the 17th and 18th centuries with that of writing about the history of Europe during medieval times (Slot, 7). Slot describes how Europeans began sailing into this region in the 16th Century. Ilha de Aguada, the island of Faylaka is the oldest mention on European maps of the territory that forms modern Kuwait (Slot, 9). Kuwait used to be known as the name Grain and the Utub tribe played a big role in Kuwait becoming a state (Slot, 69). Slot also gives background on how Basra, which is in modern day southern Iraq, was a center for trade where Europeans would go to conduct business. There are also stories from those who sailed there what they saw and what they thought of this region. This work also provides many maps to get an idea how the region was configured in those
Salwa Alghanim’s work in *The Reign of Mubarak Al-Sabah* describes the man who is known as the founder of modern day Kuwait. Shaikh Mubarak al-Sabah came to power in 1896 and ruled until his death in 1915. This work describes Sabah’s relationship with Kuwait and the Ottoman Empire and tells how he came to power (Alghanim, 1). Sabah formed an alliance with the British in 1899 and after the Ottoman Empire was defeated in World War I Kuwait became a protectorate of England until its independence in 1961. The story then describes Sabah’s last years and how he asked the British to control Kuwait’s fate after his death. This work describes how Britain managed its Gulf interest during this period (Alghanim, 42). Mubarek’s reign is also broken down into phases in terms of what he was able to accomplish (Alghanim, 116).

Anthony Cordesman talks about the huge role Kuwait plays in projecting oil supplies in his book entitled, *Kuwait*. He describes how Kuwait can increase oil production in an emergency (Cordesman, 1). Kuwait currently contains about ten percent of the world’s known oil reserves. This was one reason that made Kuwait very attractive to Saddam Hussein in 1990 as he was able to control almost twenty percent of the world’s oil reserves for a short time. Cordesman discusses how prior to the Gulf War Kuwait was receiving weapons from many different sources and now after the War primarily receives weapons from the United States. This particular work is beneficial to my research because Cordesman shows how prior to the Gulf War in 1990-91 Kuwait was receiving weapons from many sources. Currently, the bulk of Kuwaitis weapons and military training needs are being met by the United States. This has lead many in the Arabic community questioning the amount of US presence in the area. Cordesman also gives
many figures on how the invasion by Iraq stalled the economy for years and how oil production is important to this small nation. A breakdown is also given as to how important oil actually is to the Kuwait economy. Oil is responsible for more than eighty percent of the revenues for the Kuwaiti government (Cordesman, 18). Kuwait is spending a lot on the military following the Gulf War. Data indicates that Kuwait is spending $1,907 per capita as opposed to Israel spending $1,335 and the United States spending $1,204 (Cordesman, 76).

Jill Crystal's book is about oil and politics. The book looks at rulers and merchants in Kuwait. Crystal looks at the impact external revenue sources have on ruling coalitions and state institutions. Crystal's work is important to Kuwaitis because she can offer an answer as to whether or not the United States military presence in Kuwait has an affect on domestic politics and policies. This takes Cordesman's work one-step further by going into how oil plays an important role in the policy making of Kuwait. This work also describes life in Kuwait and Qatar prior to the discovery of oil (Crystal, 16). A small section is dedicated to the founding of Kuwait so it serves as another background book; however the main focus is on the oil industry and the effect it has on politics.

Shoshana Klebanoff's hypothesis in his work, *Middle East Oil and U.S. Foreign Policy*, is that oil is important and indispensable in an industrial society. Oil is clearly important in the case of the United States where Americans use the most amount of oil in the world. Klebanoff takes a look at United States foreign policy and how Middle East oil affects policy. This work is important because many Arab nations in the area believe the main reason for American presence in the region is because of oil and how valuable a resource it is. Klebanoff gives background on what was occurring in the Middle East
between World War I and World War II. A table is given showing Middle East oil production in 1938 (Klebanoff, 10). A chapter of this book is dedicated to the Iranian Oil Crisis. This is linked to Kuwait because it is another Gulf State and was responsible for the huge increase in oil prices during the 1970's.

*Kuwait: Trade and Investment* by Ragaei El Mallakh looks into the fact that despite Kuwait’s small size it casts a large shadow in the areas of international finance, energy, and trade. His book looks at the important role oil plays and lists Kuwait as having the second most proven oil reserves behind Saudi Arabia. El Mallakh’s effort is similar to Crystal’s in that it discusses oil. There is a difference, however, in that El Mallakh’s work looks into the effect oil has on the economy and trade in Kuwait. Kuwaiti infrastructure is looked at along with the labor force and economic infrastructure (El Mallakh, 17). This work talks about the role of the central bank (El Mallakh, 129).

The book entitled *America Entangled* by Ted Carpenter takes a look at the Persian Gulf Crisis and its consequences on America. This book also deals with the questions of why the United States supported Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War. Carpenter also asks why now after invading Kuwait Iraq is viewed as bad. This work is significant for the fact that it makes one wonder why do alliances change? Is it more a self-serving purpose or is it based on which is the lesser of two evils? This is an important work because an argument is made that the only reason people care so much about this region is because the Middle East contains the majority of oil reserves in the world. Some argue that the wars in this region are over oil. This issue is addressed in what is called oil, jobs, and the American way of life is not the only things at stake in the Middle East (Carpenter, 53).

Gary Donaldson looks at America’s involvement in wars since 1945. This book
takes a look at politics and diplomacy in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War. Donaldson
gives a background to how the Gulf War got started, describes the actual campaign, and
then concludes by listing lessons learned from the conflict. This is a useful work in that a
whole section is dedicated to the Gulf War. Donaldson sets the stage for the background
that led to Iraq invading Kuwait as well as the response by the rest of the world. There is
a section in this work that describes the air war that was a big part of Desert Storm.
Donaldson concludes by describing the ground war and some lessons learned by this
conflict (Donaldson, 177).

Dilip Hiro’s book looks at what happened in the Middle East after Iraq invaded
Kuwait. The book looks at Operation Desert Shield to Desert Storm. He describes
background information such as asking in one chapter if Iraq and Kuwait are neighbors or
one family (Hiro, 9). This work is similar to Donaldson’s in that Hiro describes the
background before the Gulf War and then describes the actual campaign to get Saddam
Hussein out of Kuwait.

Kevin Hutchinson’s book also looks at Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm.
Hutchinson’s work contains a chronology of events and serves as a fact book. There is
also background information on the area contained in this work. This is a different work
than most of the pieces on the Gulf War in that it goes by a day-by-day analysis of what
was going on in the region after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Important events are listed
and compiled in a chronological order on an almost daily basis as important events
occurred. It also gives a more specific listing of actual equipment that was used to send
Saddam Hussein back to Iraq.

The research will be laid out and designed to answer the questions that were
proposed. The first question is what is the significance of this particular country? The
next question is who the leaders are and what are their policies? What are the main
socioeconomic, political-security, and foreign relations characteristics of this state? How
do you estimate future domestic or foreign developments of this state? Who are the main
experts on this particular state? Finally, what does current literature say? After
conducting this research all of these issues should be addressed. I have been in Kuwait
two times personally as a member of the military so that coupled with the research
conducted should supplement each other in producing a detailed report on the state of
Kuwait. The current leaders of Kuwait are the al-Sabah family and they have a very long
background within the nation. Currently, Kuwait is a constitutional monarchy. The
government is attempting to become more democratic in the sense of giving women more
rights and allowing more people to vote. Political parties at this time are illegal. The
population is 2.42 million Kuwaitis to 1.5 million non-Kuwaitis. The workforce is mainly
made up of foreigners as I saw while I was over there with people coming from Egypt
and India and Southeast Asia. The workforce only contains 19 percent of Kuwaiti
nationals. The sources I use to conduct this research will fall under the category of
quantitative sources. This is because of the impossibility to go to Kuwait at this time,
although having been over before I can incorporate my observations and people I have
talked to with the quantitative sources I research. I will use case studies to conduct my
research.

It is now time to go into the background of Kuwait to get an idea where this small
Gulf nation is coming from.
Chapter 2 - History

To the West and Iran the modern area where Kuwait is located is known as the Persian Gulf. Kuwait is also known as “little fort” in Arabic (Spencer, 115). However, to Arabs this area is known as the Arab Gulf. B.J Slot, who wrote *The Origins of Kuwait*, compares writing about the history of the Gulf States in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to writing about Europe in early medieval times (7). Kuwait does not possess a rich and long history as other countries such as Iran, Iraq, and Egypt do. Kuwait is relatively new and only became discovered largely from the British sailing to India all the time. In fact, Kuwait was not deemed important to many Europeans during these early times and there are only vague secondary references from Arab sources regarding this area. Kuwaiti territory was first referenced by European cartographers in 1570 and the Dutch are credited with the oldest sources of existence of Kuwait (Slot, 7).

Ilha de Aguada, the island of Faylaka, is the oldest mention on European maps of the territory that forms modern Kuwait. Kuwait was a part of the Ottoman Empire for a few decades during the 16th century. The state of Kuwait was known as the “land of tribes” by the Ottomans. However, the Ottoman Empire never made a real attempt to exert control over the territory. Kuwait began as a summer residence of the sheikh of the Banu Khalid during the 17th century. The Portuguese are credited with the first maps to show the territory of Kuwait. They gave two names regarding Kuwait, Ilha de Aguada (Island of the Well) and Dos Porcos (Two Pigs) named for one or two small islands or cliffs (Slot, 12).

The French had a map in 1652 that showed a place called Kadhema which stands for Kazima, which is a locality of Kuwait. This map shows this territory is outside of the
borders of the Ottoman province of Iraq (Slot, 39). The Utub were first mentioned in the first half of the 18th century. This Arab tribe played a big role in Kuwait becoming a state. The Utub began migrating during the second half of the 17 century. First, they went to Qatar, Basra, southern Persia, and finally Kuwait. This has been confirmed by an Ottoman document from 1701 (Slot, 70). This document is from Ali Pasha of Basra to the Ottoman central government and Pasha says that the Utub and Khalifat tribes were dominated by those he called “adjam” which are non-Arab speakers. The word “adjam” has been translated to mean Europeans; however, Europeans were not in Bahrain during this time period this area was under Persian influence until Oman conquered it in 1717. So it seems this word “adjam” actually refers to the Persians.

The Utub and Khalifat were eventually run out of Bahrain by the Huwala with help from the “adjam.” This led the Utub and Khalifat moving to Basra. There they owned ships equipped with light artillery and transported goods for Basra merchants. The Ottoman government chased the Utub from Basra because they were a hindrance to shipping in the Shat al Arab. After this, the Utub found their way to Kuwait. The area of modern day Kuwait was run by the Banu Khalid at the time and they did not get along with the Ottomans. It is estimated that the Utub arrived in Kuwait in 1716 (Slot, 72). Francis Warden, an officer in the British East India Company, also gives the approximate date of arrival in Kuwait as 1716 (Alghanim, 5). This area was able to grow because Kuwait remained outside of the turmoil of Ottoman Iraq.

There are different reports about the early population of Kuwait. Some have it listed at 25,000, 20,000, and 15,000 by mid 19th century (Alghanim, 17). The upper class of early Kuwaiti society was made up of about 14 rich trading families. The early
The economy was based mainly on pearling and fishing. Pearl divers did not make much money, however, as it seemed they were always paying off debts either to the captain of the ship or the merchants in town. Early leading clans of the area included the Al-Sabahs, Al-Ghanims, Al-Khalids, Al-Janaats, and Al-Salihs. These different families all combined to form an oligarchic merchant principality governed by the Al-Sabah family (Long, Reich, 135).

It is inaccurate to give Britain the credit or the blame for the modern political organization of the Arab states in the Persian Gulf. This is because the important role Arab leaders and the Ottoman Empire had on this region prior to World War I are taken away (Anscombe, 1). This is not to say Britain had no influence on the area because it did. Britain mostly influenced the areas of South Arabia and Bahrain, but the Ottomans were the main power from Iraq to Qatar. The Ottomans proved inefficient at governing the Middle East and this led to Britain becoming involved in the territory where present Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia exist today. Internal events within the territory of the Middle East caused Britain to be pulled into the political realm even though the government did not necessarily want to get involved in this part of the world. There is an assumption that before oil was discovered in this region that Europe was not concerned with the Middle East or more specifically eastern Arabia. However, because of tensions in the Middle East, the region had an effect on other parts of the world. This tension between nations or tribes created problems between nations of Europe and the Ottoman Empire prior to World War I.

Anscombe mentions an important theme that is of importance to students studying this region today. It is the question of, "what was to become of the Ottoman Empire
(Anscombe, 2)?" Around the time of the late 1800’s the Ottoman Empire was concerned with British influence in the region and led the Ottomans to poorly govern the area.

Britain was concerned with Ottoman rule in the Gulf because of the relationship Britain shared with India. The easiest way for Britain to gain access to India was through the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers then to the Persian Gulf. The Ottoman threat and growing German, French, and Russian influence in the Middle East caused Britain to become a protector of Kuwait. One reason for Iraq invading Kuwait was the fact that Iraq felt Britain illegally had broken Kuwait’s ties to Ottoman Basra. During the time prior to World War I Arab leaders became good at playing outside powers against one another in order to gain domestic security and independence. This led Britain being the choice over the Ottomans because it was more supportive and demanded less in return. The Ottoman Empire began having the problem of ruling over areas that were internally divided, antagonistic populations and didn’t know the best way to rule an area such as this. The Ottomans were afraid of Britain and often paranoid about British intentions. This led the Ottomans to not govern the area well.

Kuwait is the only good harbor located between Basra and Masqat. Kuwait mostly relied on fishing, pearling, and trade for its livelihood about a century ago. Three areas made up the Arabian Peninsula, the Najd plateau, which was thinly populated, the Hajiz which ran into the Red Sea in the west, and Hasa which went down to the Gulf in the east (Anscombe 9-10). The Wahhabis, located in Riyadh currently, ruled Hasa, Qatar, and Kuwait in the 17th century. This area came to be dominated by the Utub tribe following the mid 18th century. Because Kuwait was mainly ruled by Wahhabi governors, there was not being many leading political families that lasted very long. There was a
great diversity in the region because of the exposure trade caused. Kuwait and Doha contained some of the richest and more influential members of society because they were traders (Anscombe, 11). The main exports were pearls, dates, syrup, camels, donkeys and food, spices, coffee were the main products being brought in. Acts of piracy had an effect on Britain becoming involved in the politics of the Gulf coast because British level of trading increased in the Middle East. Some of the more notable tribes the Ottomans had to deal with were the Muntafiq and the Dhafir located in Basra or present day Iraq, the Mutayr and the Bani Khalid located near Kuwait, the ‘Ajman and the Bani Hajir located between Kuwait and Qatar, and the Al Murra located south of Hufuf (Anscombe, 12).

Climate and diversity played roles in the inability of the Ottoman Empire to rule the Arabian Peninsula well. The Ottomans conquered Baghdad in 1534 and went on to take control of Hasa by 1550. The Bani Khalid tribe ended the Ottoman rule in the area in 1670. The Ottomans came back in the early 19th century to claim this area after the first Sa’ud kingdom was overthrown in 1818 by Egyptian – Ottoman troops (Anscombe, 13). Britain, during the 19th century, negotiated several treaties with the local leaders of this region to prevent acts of piracy so that British growing trade industry would not be compromised. Local leaders were better off because of these treaties and Britain’s influence in the region grew because of them. The leaders in the Middle East would use their relationship with Britain that was gained through these treaties as an advantage to gain and keep control over their area.

The wide range of British interests in the region had a direct effect on the Ottomans. The Turks felt threatened by British presence in the region and when a telegraph line built linking India to Iraq in the 1860’s was built the Ottoman Empire took
steps to retain their influence and control over the southern Gulf and Iraq. However, the measures the Ottomans took did not get rid of British influence in the region because the Ottomans were unable to keep control of this vast area. Midhat Pasha of the Ottoman Empire wanted to bring Kuwait under his control because he was told that Kuwait had held a dependency toward Basra and therefore fell under jurisdiction of the Ottoman Empire. As time went on, Kuwait exerted more independence because their local leaders were left to attend to their own affairs and Europe recognized Kuwait as a separate entity from the Ottoman Empire. Midhat stopped supplying revenues to Kuwait that the leaders had enjoyed for a long time. This led the shaikhs of Kuwait coming to Pasha asking to be under Ottoman rule.

'Abdallah al-Sabah was appointed head shaikh of Kuwait by Midhat in order to establish official control over the territory. Not much was done in conducting day to day activities to signify this control as the Turks allowed Kuwait to conduct business as it had in the past. A fight between what is now Saudi Arabia and Kuwait broke out and the British backed the Sa’ud ruler and this led to Midhat pleading for intervention on behalf of Kuwait. Tribute was paid to the Ottoman sultan by the ruling shaikhs in order to gain protection against the Wahhabi tribe (Spencer, 115). Misunderstanding between the Ottomans and the British of what each other’s intentions were in the region led to much of the tension between the two. The Ottomans for the most part let Arab leaders rule their own territories because Ottoman leaders did not want to use their own resources to keep the British out of this area. Key individuals and groups, especially in Kuwait and Qatar, were the most important people to the Ottomans and not the greater society as a whole (Anscombe, 55).
Mubarek al-Sabah saw how successful the rebellion against the Ottoman Empire was in Qatar in 1893. This led him to successfully accomplish the same. Sabah was able to gain independence for Kuwait in 1896. Al-Sabah began to seek the protection of the British in February of 1897 (Alghanim, 31). There are no Kuwaiti sources that detail Mubarek approaching the British; these sources are all coming from British sources that were kept on file. Kuwait was also responsible for helping Ibn Sa’ud establish a state in Saudi Arabia. The Ottoman Empire was unable during the period of 1896 to 1914 to gain back the influence it once had in Kuwait (Anscombe, 91). Not enough manpower, money, corruption, and communication by the Ottomans were factors and played important roles in Kuwait being able to gain independence. Mubarek was able to play the Ottomans against the British well to get what he wanted and eventually formed an alliance with the British. Other leaders in the region wanted to follow Mubareak’s example because he was able to gain independence from the Ottoman Empire. Sabah gained power in Kuwait by murdering his brothers for reasons that are disputed depending on what perspective one looks at. Some British and Arab historians believe Sabah murdered his brothers because they were about to give the land to someone who was not a rightful ruler (Anscombe, 94).

The treaty that brought Kuwait under British protection in 1899 was kept secret until 1912. The Ottoman Empire had an agreement with Britain in 1901 to honor the status quo even though the Turks did not know what the status quo actually was (Anscombe, 113). Mubarek proved to be a leader who could adapt well for Kuwait and he was also good at getting people to do things for him that he could not do himself (Anscombe, 113).
After Mubarek’s death in 1915, the British negotiated away almost half of Kuwait’s territory to the Saudis and Iraq in the Treaty of Uqair (Long, Reich, 135). At the time of Sabah’s death, Kuwait had about twice the territory it currently holds. Recent history includes the country gaining independence from Britain in 1961. The nation also formed a constitution that was to be ruled as a constitutional monarchy led by the Al-Sabah family. Regional conflict and problems have also played a role in the history. Often, Kuwait would have problems with neighbors after the British left. This included problems with Iraq and Iran. This was usually taken care of through policies of appeasement or payments by the Kuwaiti government. Sometimes, this did not work as was seen in the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980’s and the Gulf War in 1990-91. Given the size of Kuwait and the relatively recent history of the nation it is not surprising that Kuwait has had problems with neighbors. Turning to these neighbors and how Kuwait has interacted with others in the Middle East is the next issue to be looked at.
Chapter 3- Regional Relationships

Throughout this small nation’s history, Kuwait has dealt with outside forces. Whether there was the Ottoman Empire, the British, or more currently Iran and Iraq, Kuwait has had to deal with other nations in a variety of ways. Kuwait is located between Saudi Arabia and Iraq and not far from Iran. Kuwait has a size about the state of New Jersey. Kuwait also contains territory that includes nine islands. The modern history of Kuwait began in the 1700’s. During the 18th Century, Kuwait was characterized by a nomadic agriculture with an emphasis on fishing and trading. Kuwait held ties with the Ottoman Empire from 1871 to 1896 although the Turks did not control the country. Kuwait signed a treaty with Britain in 1899, which gave the English control of Kuwaiti foreign policy in exchange Kuwait received British support.

Iraqi claim to Kuwait as part of Iraqi territory has no support because the Ottoman Empire held little sovereignty over Kuwait and the British negotiated a treaty with them that regulated the relationship between the two. Salim Al-Sabah came to power in 1950 and established the welfare system that Kuwaitis enjoy today. Kuwait became independent from Britain in 1961. Kuwait established its first constitution in November 1962. The nation enjoyed peace while under British protection. When they gained independence, problems with Saudi Arabia and Iraq began to surface. The government of Kuwait used a combination of negotiation and the nation’s oil resources when dealing with threats. Also, during the 1970’s Kuwait had tensions with other Arab states because they did not openly support the Palestinian cause (Spencer, 117).

Kuwait and Iran haven’t agreed on offshore oil and gas rights. The Kuwait government encourages the Gulf Cooperation Council to improve defense of the Upper
Gulf. Kuwait has received strong political support from the GCC, although the GCC is inefficient militarily. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia now enjoy good relations. Kuwait has reduced its number of foreign Arab workers since the end of the Gulf War.

Oil provides over 80% of the Kuwaiti government revenues. Petroleum and petrochemicals make up over 50% of Kuwait's GDP and 90% of its exports and government revenues (Cordesman, 18). Kuwait and the UAE are close in terms of being the wealthiest nation in the Gulf. Estimates say Kuwait has over 100 years worth of reserves at current production rates. The Emir has final say on decisions that relate to oil. Kuwait established the Supreme Petroleum Council in 1974. The Kuwait Petroleum Company (KPC) was created in 1975. The KPC owns a 10% share in the Arabian Oil Company. Iraq damaged or destroyed all 26 of Kuwait's oil gathering centers during the Gulf War. Kuwait spent more than 5 billion dollars to repair the oil infrastructure damaged during 1990-91. According to the Department of Energy, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have approximately 80% of the world’s excess production capacity.

Kuwait contains about 1.1% of the world's gas reserves. The country uses more gas than it produces and relies on outside sources to fill in the gaps. According to Cordesman, Kuwait needs to reduce its level of government spending and restructure its economy (39). Kuwait is a commodity-dependent economy and is experiencing rapid population growth.

Kuwait experienced over 48 billion dollars worth of deficits in the three years following Iraq's invasion. The Kuwaiti government was forced to use 65 billion dollars of its 100 billion dollars invested toward its future generations to help pay for the war with Iraq. The government has been considering increasing taxes, cutting government
subsidies and welfare benefits, privatizing state-owned enterprises, and taking some other measures in order to help their economy. The government controls about 90% of the economy.

Foreign workers make up 83% of the labor market and the number of foreign workers increased from 1.4 million in 1990 to 1.83 million in 1994 despite efforts and talks of reducing this number. Kuwait has been bringing in more people from Asia. Most of the Kuwaitis that do have jobs serve no purpose and actually hurt the economy. It is this dependence on foreigners that has left the country susceptible to foreign influence and corruption. According to Anthony Cordesman, Kuwait should reduce its dependence on foreign labor and encourage a more productive private sector (24). The World Bank issued a report to Kuwait in 1993 that would reduce their deficit, privatize many government owned companies and promote employment of Kuwaitis in the private sector. So far the government has done very little to work towards those recommendations.

The government is moving towards popular participation recently. Islamic law is a main source of legislation according to the Constitution. The Emir holds executive power and shares legislative power with the National Assembly. The Emir, however, does hold the power to rule by decree which means he can dissolve the National Assembly which happened from 1976 to 1981 and then again in 1986 until 1992. Kuwait has had to spend more on military and defense since the Gulf War and has had to change its policy of accommodating its neighbors. Spending on defense was 5-6% of the GDP prior to the Gulf War. Spending rose to 13.24 billion in 1990, 16.03 billion in 1991, 19.09 billion in 1992, and decreased to 3.604 billion in 1993 and 3.086 billion in 1994
Cordesman, 74). Kuwait is spending $1,907 per capita on its military; this is compared to Israel, which is $1,335, and the US at $1,204. The Emir and National Assembly have been at odds on what to spend annually on arms since the end of the Gulf War. Kuwait spends about 300 million for a prepositioning facility for a US mechanized brigade. Before the war during the period of 1985-89 the country spent 1.345 billion on arms. Only 150 million was from the US, 180 million from Russia, 450 million from France, 110 million from the UK. Since the Gulf War Kuwait receives much of its arms from the United States.

There are some who believe problems with Iran increased towards the end of the Iran-Iraq War. Actually, this began in 1979 when the Iranian Revolution took place. There is a large Shia population in Kuwait while the rulers are Sunni Muslim (Spencer, 117). It is also believed that Iran was responsible for terrorist bombings that took place in the early 1980’s as Iran wanted to see more nations in the area turned into Islamic Republics. Kuwait helped Iraq tremendously during Iraq’s war with Iran, loaning Saddam Hussein approximately 22 billion dollars from 1980 to 1988. This aid given to Iraq wasn’t well received by Iran and led Iran to attack Kuwait via air strikes. An article by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report or FBIS, reported on August 3, 1987 that crowds in Tehran stormed the Kuwaiti embassy after reports began circulating of riots in Mecca. Then on September 6, 1987 the Washington Post and New York Times wrote an article saying that Kuwait had ordered the expulsion of five Iranian diplomats and charged Iran with firing three Silkworm missiles into Kuwaiti territory beginning on September 2. It was during this time that the US began to provide naval assistance to the Kuwaiti government. The Washington Post reported on July 23, 1987 that the first two of
eleven US-registered Kuwaiti tankers entered the Persian Gulf and made their way toward Kuwait. They were accompanied by US warships. Problems would continue over the next few years as long as Iran was at war with Iraq.

On December 9, 1987, at a meeting for OPEC in Vienna, Kuwait said they would back Iraq’s request to increase its production quota to equal that of Israel after Iran threatened to double their output and start a new price war if the body ignored its call for higher prices. According to an article put out by the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* on December 11, 1987, the Iranian Oil Minister Ghulam Riza Aqazada accused Saudi Arabia and Kuwait of trying to isolate Iran within OPEC and demanded that Iraq’s quota be kept at 1.5 million barrels per day. This bad relationship continued into 1988 as Iran continued to fire on Kuwaiti territory and accused them of allowing Iraq access to their territory in order to attack Iran. As the war was close to its end, two Kuwaiti diplomats arrived in Tehran to reopen their embassy according to the FBIS.

The relationship between the two nations began to improve following the end of the war. An article by the *Washington Post* on July 10 says that Iranian foreign minister Ali Akbar Velayati began an official visit to Kuwait. The Iranian Foreign Ministry also condemned the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. In fact, the Iranian Foreign Minister said that, “we cannot accept any change in Kuwaiti borders, neither in land nor in water.” The Islamic Republic News Agency or IRNA reported on August 16, 1990 that Iranian President Hasemi Rafsanjani said that Iran’s peace with Iraq was not related in any way to Iraq’s annexation of Kuwait. The Islamic Republic also allowed foreigners fleeing Kuwait and Iraq into their territory. While this support was rising for Kuwait during the occupation by Iraq there was also condemnation on the position the United States took by
Iran’s leaders. An article published by the FBIS, NYT, and WP on September 13, 1990 quoted Ayatollah Ali Khamanei as saying, “confronting the greedy interventionist schemes of the United States to encroach on the Persian Gulf is considered jihad.” He also, however, reiterated condemnation of the Iraqi invasion and its support of UN sanctions. Furthermore, he said the United States would not be allowed to gain a foothold in the area and turn it into its sphere of influence.

After the Gulf War ended, Iran President Rafsanjani returned six Kuwaiti Airways planes that were stolen by Iraq and flown into Iran during the war. Iran also began to resume flights into the country after a period of ten years of not doing so. In 2000, special advisor to the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Shaykh Nasr al-Sabah al-Ahmed, met with Iranian President Khatami to discuss ways of expanding mutual cooperation between the two countries. Over the years as the sting of the Iran-Iraq War ended these two nations have been able to form a more civil and cooperative relationship. This can be seen as a shifting of alliances.

Relations with Iraq have been far more complicated. It is noted that the early relationship between Kuwait, Britain, and the Ottoman Empire were never defined under International Law (Khadduri, Ghareeb, 18). Iraq’s dealings with this nation have had far more implications than any other nation since it gained its independence in 1961. Iraq immediately refused to recognize this newly gained independence (Spencer, 115). This was based on the belief of Iraq that Kuwait had belonged to the old Ottoman Empire portion of Basra. Iraq at the time of Kuwait’s independence was a pro-Western monarchy (Hiro, 12). It should be pointed out that both Iraq and Kuwait have only recently been defined as independent nations (Anderson, Seibert, Wagner, 283). There was also a
motivation to control the small nation’s abundance of oil wealth. This initial confrontation with Iraq, led the emir to ask Britain for help and British soldiers went back to Kuwait. A revolution in Iraq in 1963 brought a new government and recognition of the independence of the tiny Gulf state. Also in that same year, Kuwait became a member of the United Nations (Long, Reich, 135). What hasn’t been said about Iraq’s recognition is the fact that it came on the heels of a generous financial package going from Kuwait to Iraq. This is about the time the policy of appeasement and a form of bribery began to take place. A small nation with no real military capabilities and an abundance of wealth in a booming industry were motivating factors for Kuwait taking this sort of policy with its neighbors.

In 1973, Iraq tried to claim the islands of Warbah and Bubiyan leading to a military clash. Iraq then received massive support from Kuwait in its effort against Iran. Also, the Washington Post reported on September 9, 1987 that Iraq had attacked more than a dozen Iranian oil and industrial installations in a “day of revenge” for recent Iranian missile attacks against Kuwait. Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war brought pressure again on the issue of these islands but Kuwait would not budge. At the end of the war, Iraq had promised not to forget Kuwait for the help they provided during the conflict. However, this promise by Saddam Hussein did not last very long. At the time of the Iraqi invasion their inflation was 40% and they also owed Kuwait billions of dollars in loans that needed to be repaid. A subsequent meeting between the Emir and Hussein brought the issue of disputed waterways out into the open. Iraq also had asked for loans from Kuwait to be voided. According to Shaikh Ali Khalifa Al-Adhbi Al-Sabah, the finance minister, Kuwait had no problem with this. He suggested that Kuwait keep the
loans on its books for the time being; then when negotiations were over they would drop them. Iraq’s revenues dropped as result of a decrease in oil prices and they accused Kuwait and other nations of exceeding their quota. This was looked at aggressive action against Iraq.

Kuwait was having internal problems as well. In April 1990 Kuwaiti elections were criticized for being a sham and it was not clear if any governments in the region would be sympathetic to an Iraqi invasion (Anderson, Seibert, Wagner, 82). Iraqi President Saddam Hussein issued a personal message to Kuwait, according to the FBIS and New York Times on June 28, 1990, that warned them to curb its excess production because it was having a negative impact on Iraq and OPEC’s vital interests. Iraq’s Deputy Prime Minister, Saadun Hammadi, was sent to Kuwait to ask for ten billion dollars. The emir said that in three years their budget could not manage ten billion dollars. The finance ministers from each nation met and the Kuwaiti finance minister offered Iraq a specific sum of money for assistance. However, this arrangement did not solve anything. On July 10, 1990 Iraqi tanks were ordered to move towards the Kuwaiti border. A letter was received from Iraq asking them to lower their oil production and accused them of stealing billions of dollars of oil from the Rumaylah oil fields. Tariq Aziz also accused Kuwait of building military installations on Iraqi soil and reducing their oil income by cooperating in an “imperialist- Zionist plan” to keep prices low through overproduction. The foreign minister of Kuwait said that if Iraq wants to occupy Kuwait then let them; the US would come and make them leave. An Iraqi tank commander said that all meetings in the weeks prior to the invasion were all covers and that the invasion was ready two weeks prior to August 2, 1990.
King Fahd of Saudi Arabia set up a meeting between the Crown Prince and Issadi Rahim of Iraq on July 31, 1990. The Crown Prince felt that Rahim did no want to have a dialogue at the meeting. Furthermore, the Crown Prince felt the Iraqi delegation was only there to have a meeting for the sake of having one and had no power to negotiate. Tariq Aziz, the foreign minister of Iraq, felt the Kuwait behavior was insulting and arrogant toward the Iraqi delegation. On the same day this meeting was going on, the Washington Post reported that Iraq had positioned approximately 100,000 troops on its border with Kuwait. On August 1, 1990 the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council gave the order to invade.

On August 2, 1990 Iraqi tanks penetrated the border of Kuwait. They were ordered to capture all the royal family and if they resisted then they were to kill them. The emir and most of the royal family was able to escape and headed to Saudi Arabia. Initially, Kuwait asked for US assistance, however, they wanted any United States help made non-public. Iraq was now in control of 20% of the world’s oil resources. Kuwaiti bank accounts were frozen worldwide. A meeting between the Arab League called for withdrawal of Iraqi troops and restoration of the Kuwaiti government. However, Arab states were divided over this issue. Those close to Iraq did not support the condemnation but they also did not support the invasion. Immediately oil prices rose as news of the invasion carried across the world. According to the Wall Street Journal on August 2, crude oil prices rose about a dollar to $21.50 a barrel. The Iraqi government also based the invasion on saying it was supporting a group of Kuwaiti revolutionaries opposed to the ruling Sabah family.
On August 6, the New York Times reported that the GCC called on Iraq to withdraw and refused to recognize the Iraqi-installed government. Iraq’s occupation lasted into early 1991 when they were finally forced out by the U.S. led coalition. The impact on Kuwait from the invasion had devastating effects. Approximately 5,000 Kuwaitis were killed and oil production stopped altogether (Spencer, 117). Following the war and the restoration of the Al-Sabah’s to power; many Kuwaitis though they would bring about democratic reforms. At the same time the economy suffered, though it was quick to rebound. Oil began to flow to pre war levels quickly. However, the government announced after the Gulf War that it would reduce its population of 2.2 million by half. This was to be done by limiting the number of foreign nationals allowed in the country (Anderson, Seibert, Wagner, 118). It should be noted though that the political elite has narrowed in the years after the invasion.

The invasion by Iraq showed how vulnerable a small state like Kuwait could be. Kuwait faces a dilemma that all Arab states face and that is an overwhelming dependence for external security on the United States. This is happening at a time when popular resentment of the United States is growing in these states (Long, Reich, 142). This budding, growing relationship needs to be looked into further.
Chapter 4- Relationship with the United States

The close relationship that Kuwait and the United States have shared within the last two decades has been one that has been looked at both in the Middle East region and in the United States. There are some who view Kuwait as nothing more than a 51st state of America. However, the US holds no influence over government operations nor interferes in their domestic affairs. In fact, the relationship between Kuwait and the United States dates back much further than the late 1980's. The United States opened a consulate in October 1951, which became an embassy as soon as Kuwait gained its independence from Britain.

This area, known to the West, as the Persian Gulf region, holds great significance because of the presence of one valuable resource that every nation across the world needs: oil. Kuwait contains almost ten percent of the world’s oil reserves. It is because of the presence of this valuable resource and its small size that it can become susceptible to attacks from within the region. The actual era of oil for Kuwait began in 1911. It was then that the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) was curious to know if Shaikh Mubarek would allow an oil concession. Shaikh Ahmad signed the first oil concession on December 23, 1934 granting this access to the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) (Chisholm, 80). By 1956 Kuwait was the largest oil producer in the region. The government also bought out British Petroleum and Gulf Oil in 1975. This allowed them to become the first Arab oil producing state to gain complete autonomy over its output. Oil currently accounts for about 75 percent of government income.

The important strategic location of this nation as well as the presence of oil has made this area a target of interest to the West, in particular the United States. In all
actuality, the United States began coming to this region during World War II. The United States tried to own a piece of Middle East oil at this time (Klebanoff, 23). This occurred mainly in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Oil was discovered just prior to World War II. Although the country lacked an agricultural base and was poor the nation was not isolated (El Mallakh, 4). Political stability has occurred after the discovery of oil as a result of redistribution of power within the sheikdom (Crystal, 62).

Following the end of World War II, most nations in the region pursued a policy of non-alignment. This meant that these nations did not side with the United States or the Soviet Union during the Cold War. In other words they tried to stay neutral and not get involved in this battle of ideologies. Kuwait gained its independence from Britain in 1961 and drafted its constitution the following year. However, a charter was written in 1938 by a small group of merchants that had appointed themselves to the Kuwaiti parliament (Tetreault, 62). The Iranian oil crisis of the 1970's left many nations, particularly the United States in a bad way. Foreign companies working in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait expanded oil production to meet their demands (Klebanoff, 90).

During the Iran-Iraq war is when the US started providing military assistance to Kuwait. A Washington Post article from July 23, 1987 confirms that the first two of eleven US-registered Kuwaiti tankers entered the Persian Gulf, making their way toward Kuwait. It is in this time period that arms sales increased between the two nations. Some have seen this support by the US as an attempt to curb Soviet influence in the region that was increasing at the time. The Washington Post reported on June 16, 1988 that the Regan administration had informed Congress of its intent to sell $1.9 billion worth of arms to Kuwait. This package included advanced F-18 fighter planes, Maverick air-to-
ground missiles, Sidewinders, and assorted bombs. This deal was finalized on August 27 of the same year, though there were a few changes in the delivery times and the weapons included in the deal. When the Iran-Iraq War ended the US stopped escorting US-flagged tankers and simply began to accompany them. The end of the Iran-Iraq War instead of bringing about peace to the region brought a period of insecurity and suspicion among members of the Gulf States (Khadduri, Ghareeb, 95).

The Iraqi invasion quickly increased the dependence Kuwait had toward America. Just before Iraq’s invasion, military officials from Kuwait had put pressure on the government to call for a military alert. The government believed doing this would give Iraq all the more reason to invade. The United States was interested in protecting its vital interests. This goes back to the days of President Jimmy Carter when he said America would always look to protect its vital interests in the region. According to estimates the West would be dependent on Middle East oil for 40-45% of its petroleum needs by 1995 (Hiro, 431). The US immediately went to work using diplomatic resources following the invasion. The United States and Britain were the first Western countries to protest the invasion of Kuwait because this served as a threat to their interests in the region (Khadduri, Ghareeb, 122). This was different than other campaigns the US had been involved in during the Cold War (Donaldson, 141). In Korea and Vietnam much attention was paid to the thoughts of the Soviet Union and China. This time there were no such concerns. In fact, the US was able to gain widespread support from the international world in rallying to defend Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. By the time Crown Prince Saad had called Washington to tell of the invasion it was too late to respond militarily (Hiro, 103). President Bush stated to the American public from the beginning that he would reverse
On August 4, 1990, according to the *Washington Post*; the US sent special operations and hostage-rescue forces to the Gulf. The United States used the United Nations to pass a resolution condemning the invasion of Kuwait. Joseph Wilson, the Charge d’Affairs of the US Embassy in Baghdad met with Saddam Hussein on August 8, 1990. In that meeting Hussein offered to the US that they accept his taking of Kuwait, not encourage or permit Kuwaitis to destabilize his government from Saudi territory and in return he serve as a policeman in the Gulf for the West and assured steady supply of petroleum at a reasonable price. Of course this offer was immediately rejected. There were many in the region that was against or unsure of US troops being stationed in the region. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were among those apprehensive at first. Finally, a resolution was passed within the Arab League allowing US forces into Saudi Arabia. The US received $2.5 billion from Kuwait toward Operation Desert Shield as reported in the *New York Times* on September 7, 1990.

The Kuwaiti royal family set up a government in exile in Saudi Arabia from the Sheraton hotel in Tajif. Secret operations were conducted from inside Kuwait to get information out of the country. The exiled government asked the resistance leaders to get the country’s identity records in order to keep track of missing Kuwaiti citizens. There were fears in Saudi Arabia of Iraq invading them as well. Prince Khaled was convinced Hussein would invade by the end of August because he followed the Soviet school of tactics. This school said there should be an operational pause of 2-4 weeks before the next attack. As the end of August approached, there were 100,000 American troops in
Saudi Arabia. Kuwait agreed to compensate Turkey for losses it would suffer from closing an Iraq pipeline.

Saddam Hussein was given 45 days to leave Kuwait after Resolution 678 was adopted. The date that was given was January 15, 1991. The Persian Gulf Crisis has often been seen as a collective security effort. However, despite the administration’s propaganda it is not. It is a policy created by Washington and carried out by US military personnel (Carpenter, 27). Article 51 of the UN Charter confirms that this not a declaration of war but it was defined under International Law as a police action (Khadduri, Gareeb, 169). This meant that Iraq was to be held accountable and subject to punishment for its aggression against another state. So, the deadline had come and Iraq had not budged. The US started the liberation of Kuwait on January 17, 1991. At the time of the War, President Bush did not enjoy widespread support for this action (Donaldson, 169). Americans were looking back to Vietnam, thinking it would go wrong at some point. During the war Saddam Hussein ordered his military to bomb Israel. This proved worrisome because there were some, the US included, and who thought Israel would respond and undermine the efforts of the Allies turning it into another Arab-Israeli War. Luckily this did not occur and the coalition remained intact. The actual war did not last long as once the coalition began the ground war; Iraq retreated from Kuwait within a few days. There are some, including high ranking Iraqi military officers, who thought if the coalition had kept the offensive for even a few more days to a week that Saddam Hussein’s regime would have crumbled. There are also some that view the Gulf War as a historical military victory but not a political victory. This is because the Gulf became more dependent upon foreign defense.
The Emir returned to Kuwait in March 1991. There was a backlash against some of the royal elite for having fled Kuwait during the invasion and occupation. In fact, in 1994 Ali Khalifa al-Sabah, a former cabinet minister, was charged in connection with an alleged scheme to siphon between $90 and $200 million from the state-run Kuwaiti Oil Tankers. There was also a report in the *Financial Times* on April 20, 1995 that Kuwait’s assembly received a report of waste and corruption in the military. Some were unwilling to fight for people that would leave them. The people were more concerned with the political realities within their nation, saying there is no political security; it is all based on families and tribes. Kuwait entered into an agreement with the US in 1991 that called for a 10 year contract. An article published by the *New York Times* reported that US Dense Secretary Richard Cheney and Kuwaiti Defense Secretary Ali al-Sabah Al-Salim signed a ten year security pact that was approved by the Kuwaiti cabinet on August 4. This allowed the US to keep military forces and equipment on a base in Kuwait. Estimates report that imports from the US rose from $2.2 billion in 1986-1989 to $3.8 billion in 1990-93 (Cordesman, 81). This primary dependence on US weapons and equipment was a shift in how Kuwait had received weapons in the past. The Gulf war destroyed much of Kuwait’s military capabilities.

Prior to the Gulf War, the country’s total army manpower was less than 16,000 men (Cordesman, 85). This is not an easily solved problem given that most of the population is foreigners. It has been noted that in addition to the rebuilding of the army and equipment that Kuwait lost during the Gulf War that they need to stop politicizing their arms purchases (Cordesman, 123). The *Washington Post* reported on March 11, 1992 that the US department of Defense announced plans to sell Kuwait $2.5 billion in
air defense weapons including Patriot missile systems and Hawk missiles. The equipment sold to Kuwait from the US and the stationing of troops has helped Kuwait tremendously. This had been done in order to at least slow any Iraqi advance long enough for the US and other forces to arrive in their nation. The late summer of 1992 brought the beginning of joint exercises between the Kuwaiti and US forces. This was done to send a message to Iraq but not to provoke it. Since 1994 the United States has prepositioned enough military equipment to support a brigade. The people have also welcomed a more aggressive US policy toward the Iraqi regime.

Following the Gulf War, Kuwait has moved more toward democratizing or becoming freer. The Financial Times reported on My 22, 1995, the government sold 15.5% of the state owned property management company, Kuwait Commercial Markets Complex. The National Assembly also ratified a law establishing free trade zones in 1995. Iraq would continue to pose a threat while this was happening. The New York Times reported on August 18, 1995 that more US troops were sent to the Persian Gulf in response to information from Iraqi defectors about a potential Iraqi invasion and Iraqi troop movement. There were also cooperative efforts by Kuwait and the US to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Meanwhile, Parliamentary elections were held in 1996 and 75% of the 107,000 eligible voters did so. According to the Financial Times article on October 8, 1996 women protested at polling places demanding the right to vote.

Tensions almost resulted in another US led attack on Iraq in early 1998. The New York Times reported on February 2, 1998 that Kuwait’s acting Prime Minister, Shaykh Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, told US Secretary of State Madeline Albright that Kuwait would support the use of military force against Iraq if necessary, in light of stand-offs
between Iraq and the UN over weapons inspections. By mid February, Kuwait had deployed forces near its border with Iraq to defend against a possible attack. There were more US troops sent into the Gulf region during this time period as well in preparation for a possible conflict. Nothing came of this; however, as weapons inspectors resumed their duties. The year 2001 brought about a change in some toward Iraq. The daily *Al-Ra'ī al-Aam* reported on January 22 that Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah had issued his support for the lifting of UN sanctions on Iraq, calling for them to be targeted at the ruling elite.

Support for the United States has not been shared by all in the Gulf state. Islamists in the Kuwaiti Parliament threatened a vote of no confidence in the Al-Sabah family in late 2001, if the ruling family pushed ahead with the US-suggested strict charity regulations and continued to support US bombing raids in Afghanistan. This is a small segment, however, as most have welcomed the United States presence and they generally hold a good attitude toward Americans. In fact, in April 2001, Kuwait and the US agreed to renew their agreement which calls for US forces to be stationed there for another 10 years (Long, Reich, 140). The war on terror and the recently liberated Iraq will call for these two nations to cooperate and have a close relationship throughout the next decade.
Chapter 5- Conclusion

As this research indicates, outside powers have always had an influence on Kuwaiti life. In fact, Kuwait does not contain a rich history like other states in the region such as Iraq and Iran. However, it has had the same ruling family since the 1700s (Gerner and Schwedler, 109). Depending on one’s perspective, the state also has an association or dependence on foreign states throughout its short history. It had a loose affiliation with the Ottoman Empire in its early era. Then in 1899, the Kuwaiti government signed an agreement with Britain, even if some people still considered Kuwait as part of the Ottoman Empire (Alghanim, 80). Following the end of World War I, there was a territory dispute between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Britain settled the dispute, which was known as the Jahrah crisis in 1920, by giving Saudi Arabia almost half of Kuwait territory (Sick and Potter, 135). This arrangement with England lasted until 1961 when Kuwait gained its independence.

When there was no longer a great power to protect them, Kuwait’s neighbors immediately began to have conflict with the small Gulf state. Most of these problems were from Iraq and Iran. However, there were also problems with other Arab states because the Kuwaiti government was not openly supportive of the Palestinian cause (Spencer, 117). Problems with Iran started after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. It was believed that Iran was trying to turn the smaller Gulf States into Islamic Republics as well. This conflict was furthered during the 1980’s when Kuwait financially backed Iraq in its war against Iran.

Relations with Iraq were the most complicated of any relationship for Kuwait.
Iraqi people have historically felt that Kuwait is a part of their territory. They believe that Kuwait was created by British colonialism and is there to serve Western oil interests (Gerner and Schwedler, 74). One reason for Iraq invading Kuwait in 1990 was the fact that it felt Britain had broken Kuwait’s ties to Ottoman Basra illegally (Anscombe 98).

In the contemporary era, the important strategic location of this nation as well as the presence of oil has made this area a target of interest to the Western world, in particular the United States. Location of Kuwait is one of the reasons why the United States military presence remained in Kuwait following the Gulf War. Kuwait’s alliance with the United States serves as a deterrent against aggressive minded leaders within the region looking to gain control of a valuable resource and thus be in a position to dictate terms of distributing this resource to the West as well as its neighbors in the region. In fact, this relationship between the United States and Kuwait has helped the latter’s relationship with other nations in recent years as their relationship with Iran has improved since the time of the Iran-Iraq War that took place in the 1980’s. A more recent example is the new regime that is to take power in Iraq as this will give a chance at a new beginning between the Iraqi people and the Kuwaitis.

The relationship with the United States will also be something to look at in the years ahead. The two nations agreed to renew their agreement of stationing US troops in the state for another 10 years in 2001. One thing to look at is will the two sides want to renew the agreement when it comes time. There is also the consideration of its own population. What if Kuwaitis pressure the government to force the US out of their nation? Recently the government has been cutting its social welfare system. Also of this has been due to the losses sustained during the Gulf War. The people could decide to overthrow
the government one day. Would the US help the government or let it happen? I do not see any of these things taking place, however, as those who are native Kuwaitis still receive nice benefits for people that don’t have to work in order to get them.

Beyond the importance of external powers, population has also been a significant factor in Kuwaiti politics. Following World War II, the number of foreigners in the country began to increase. This was due to the low salary and education they had. It was also attributed to the rise in the oil industry. The government has followed a policy of taking in fewer foreigners since the end of the Gulf War. The total population of Kuwait was estimated at 1,175,000 people just after the Gulf War, 53 percent of that composed of Kuwaitis, compared with an estimated 27 percent Kuwaitis of the 2,155,000 population just prior to Iraq invading. Currently, the population is 2,257,549 with 1,291,354 non-Kuwaitis. The government wanted to reduce the number of foreigners to fewer than 50 percent. It has failed to do this so far.

There are several reasons for the large number of foreign workers in Kuwait. First, Kuwaitis do not make up a large number of the work force. In 1995, it was estimated that 82 percent of the workers in Kuwait were foreigners (Sick and Potter, 18). Figures have not improved very much as it was reported in June 2004 that the total percentage of Kuwaiti in the workforce was 18.7 percent. Also, the government has implemented one of the finest domestic welfare systems in the world. Natives receive many benefits that the government passes to them by using oil revenues. The government’s use of the welfare system has also helped them to suppress anti regime revolutionary tendencies within the state.
Gender politics is another important issue in Kuwait. Women currently do not have the right to vote yet, but this issue has been hotly debated. The Kuwaiti Parliament was set to debate this issue by the end of 2004. The issue narrowly failed in 1999. Generally speaking, women do rank near the top in terms of employment in the public sector within the Middle East (Moghadam, 53). Women have been asking for political and social reform since the end of the Gulf War. It will be interesting to see how and in what ways the government responds to this. As of now it appears they are moving towards democratic ideas.

Another important factor is the economy, which is currently dominated by the oil industry. This dependence on one industry has led the government to try and diversify the economy. The state contains virtually no cultivatable land and no fresh water. Most of its food has to be imported as well as its water. The leaders face many challenges heading into the 21st century regarding bringing about less dependence on oil.

The situation in Iraq is also one that Kuwait has to look at closely. Following the Gulf War, Saddam would periodically make threats or move troops near the border. Now that that regime has been replaced what will the future hold? Will Iraq become a democracy? Will Iraq become a more aggressive state than it was under Saddam? Will the new Iraqi leaders try and reclaim Kuwait as part of their own territory?

As my research indicates, the government has many challenges facing it in the following years. US forces are scheduled to be in Kuwait for another 7 years to help with security concerns. Domestically, women’s right to vote needs to be addressed. Their numbers in the workforce appear strong in the region so voting should follow shortly. Reducing their population of foreigners is also something that needs to be addressed as it
has failed as of this time to make Kuwaitis the majority. This will come from not relying so much on employment from other nations and employing their own. Kuwait’s leaders appear too have a positive and cooperative attitude toward meeting these challenges and managing them. In this regard, the role of the United States is important for Kuwait.
Bibliography


Endnotes

