

Kuwait in Perspective

An Orientation Guide



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Chapter 1 Geography

Introduction

Kuwait is a small, oil-rich desert country on the northeast coast of the Arabian Peninsula, at the head of the Persian Gulf. Roughly the size of New Jersey, it's area of 17,820 sq km (6,880 sq mi) includes nine islands and 499 km (310 mi) of shoreline.^{1, 2} The country is bordered by Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are negotiating a maritime boundary dispute with Iran.³ People were first drawn to the Kuwait Bay region because of the marine resources, and most of the population still lives within a short distance of the early coastal settlements. The oil beneath the desert and bay makes this country a leader of petroleum exports today.



© A.Al-m3oosherji / flickr.com
View of Kuwait City Skyline

Physical Terrain and Topographic Features

Kuwait's flat landscape covers ancient rock formations that contain nearly a tenth of the world's oil reserves. Elevation rises gradually from sea level at the eastern coast to 300 m (980 ft) in the west, across a distance of about 160 km (100 mi).⁴ *Wadi* systems of dry valleys and depressions experience infrequent rainfall and may quickly channel sudden heavy rainstorms into the desert. The Wadi al-Batin makes up 75 km (45 mi) of Kuwait's western border with Iraq.⁵ Kuwait's other noticeable land feature is the Jal al-Zor escarpment, a ridge of 145 m (475 ft) extending 129 km (80 mi) along the north side of Kuwait Bay.⁶ The escarpment contains the Mutla Ridge, the site of Iraq's disastrous retreat at the end of the 1990–1991 Gulf War.



© eutrophication&hypoxia / flickr.com
Kuwait Bay and Harbor

¹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Kuwait," in *The World Factbook*, 25 January 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ku.html>

² Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Kuwait,"

7 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm>

³ Central Intelligence Agency, "Disputes—International," in *The World Factbook*, 25 January 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2070.html?countryCode=ku&rankAnchorRow=#ku>

⁴ George J. Carman, "Structural Elements of Onshore Kuwait," *GeoArabia* 1 no. 2 (Gulf Petrolink, Bahrain, 1996): 239–266,

http://www.q8geologist.com/koko/StructuralElementsofOnshoreKuwait_small.pdf

⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Wadi Al-Batin (river, Asia)," 2 May 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/56020/Wadi-Al-Batin>

⁶ Derek A. Scott (compiler), "A Directory of Middle East Wetlands—Kuwait," Wetlands International, Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS), 1995, ramsar.wetlands.org/Portals/15/KUWAIT.pdf

Along the coast, sandy beaches in the south give way to mud flats in the north. The mud flats, called *sabkha*, also cover Bubiyan and Warbah Islands. These uninhabited islands make up 5% of Kuwait's land surface, and they form a natural defensive buffer against Iraq's short coastline on the Persian Gulf. Kuwait Bay, south of Bubiyan, is considered one of the finest natural deepwater harbors in the Persian Gulf. Failaka Island "guards" the east entrance to the bay, and three tiny islands off the southern coast serve as commercial or security outposts and wildlife sanctuaries.

Climate

Kuwait has extremely hot, dry summers. Cooler short winters bring occasional rain. Annual rainfall varies from 2.5 cm (1 in) to 25 cm (10 in). Seasonal temperatures range from summer average highs of 47°C (116°F) to winter average lows of 8°C (47°F). Summertime *shamal* winds blow from the northwest across the deserts of Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. The southeast spring winds can reach speeds of 30 meters per second (m/s), bringing severe dust storms.^{7,8}



© Zaldz Cayanan
Kuwait Sand storm

Water Resources

Kuwait has no permanent freshwater rivers or lakes. In the early 20th century, traders brought fresh water by boat from southern Iraq's Shatt al-Arab River, which is formed by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Since the 1950s, most water for human consumption comes from Kuwait's many desalination plants. In 1960 Kuwait found an underground aquifer in the north, west of al-Rawdatayn; another in the south at al-Shuaybah is brackish, containing salt from Persian Gulf seepage.



© Mink / flickr.com
Water Towers in Kuwait

⁷ N. Bhat Samira Omar and Adel Asem, "Critical Assessment of the Environmental Consequences of the Invasion of Kuwait, the Gulf War, and the Aftermath," in *The Handbook of Environmental Chemistry*, eds. Tarek Kassim and Damia Barcelo (Berlin: Springer, 2009), 141–170.

⁸ Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, Kuwait National Meteorological Network, "The Meteorological Conditions in the State of Kuwait," 2000–2008, <http://www.kisr.edu.kw/default.aspx?pageid=503>

Major Cities

City	Population 2005 ^{9,10}	Governate
al-Kuwayt (Kuwait City—capital)	31,574	al-Asimah
Qalib al-Shuyukh (Jaleeb)	179,425	al-Farwaniyah
al-Salimiyah (Salmiya)	145,314	Hawalli
Hawalli (Hawalli)	104,901	Hawalli
Janub Khitan (South Kheetan)	92,475	al-Farwaniyah
al-Farwaniyah (Farwaniya)	83,478	al-Farwaniyah
Salwa' (Salwa)	62,852	Hawalli
Abraq Khitan (Abraq Kheetan)	56,914	al-Farwaniyah
Sabah al-Salim (Subbah al Salem)	55,927	Mubarak al-Kabir
al-Sulaybiyah (Sulaibiah)	54,693	al-Jahrah
al-Sabahiyah (Subahiya)	50,607	al-Ahmadi
al-Fuhayhil (Fahaheel)	50,283	al-Ahmadi

Kuwait is often described as a modern city-state. Most of the population are urban dwellers living a short distance from the original city settlement. Four of Kuwait's six governates administer an area of 500 sq km (193 sq mi) surrounding the old city.¹¹ Al-Asimah, the capital governate, also governs all islands. Al-Jahrah and al-Ahmadi governates administer the sparsely populated north and south desert regions.

Kuwait City

The country's capital, Kuwait City, was established in the 17th century on the southern tip of Kuwait Bay. It was a nomadic port city of tents and mud structures until the discovery of oil in the 1930s. Today it houses the palace of the Emir, the country's hereditary ruler, and the chambers of the elected National Assembly, as well as most of the commercial, financial, educational, and religious organizations in the country. The suq, a traditional bazaar, coexists with modern shopping malls.

Recreational opportunities include ice-skating rinks, water parks, and the artificial Green Island. The Gulf War damaged much of the city, and the National Museum remains unrepaired as a memorial. The distinctive Kuwait Towers meld Islamic style with urban functions: the design evokes the minarets of a mosque while the towers house water storage facilities and serve as tourist attractions.



© hamad M / flickr.com
Kuwait City at Night

⁹ Kuwait Government Online, "Population of Kuwait, Population by Residential Complex, Nationality, and Gender According to the Preliminary Results of the Census 2005" (in Arabic), http://www.e.gov.kw/Documents/english/Forms/MOP/5byPopulation_Nationaliy_Gender.pdf

¹⁰ The next Census is set to take place in 2011.

¹¹ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Kuwait," 7 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm>

Official census figures for Kuwait City count only residents within the old settlement boundaries. Remains of the old walls line al-Soor Street in the city center (*soor* means “wall” in Arabic).¹² In the 1950s, Kuwait hired a British firm to plan urban development beyond the old walls, including residential areas with modern houses for Kuwaiti citizens. The densely populated centers of Hawalli, Salmiya, and Jaleeb are filled with apartments for expatriate workers.^{13, 14} Hawalli was home to an earlier generation of Arab immigrants, many of whom were expelled after the Gulf War. Jaleeb, near the international airport, is home to more recent immigrants from south Asia. Salmiya is also a popular shopping district.¹⁵

Other Cities

Smaller cities of interest are al-Jahra (pop. 28,406) and al-Ahmadi (pop. 18,516). Al-Jahra, a short distance west of Kuwait City, began as an oasis village and dates back to pre-Islamic times. The city is known for the Red Fort where Sheikh Salim bin Mubarak held off the Saudi-backed Ikhwan warriors in 1920. Al-Ahmadi, south of Kuwait City, stands on the giant Burgan oil field and was built in the 1950s to house oil workers.¹⁶

Natural Hazards

Weather hazards include dust and sand storms year round, and flash flooding from sudden rainstorms in winter and spring. Biological hazards include poisonous snakes, as well as diseases transmitted by insects and animals, such as malaria from mosquitoes, leishmaniasis from sand flies, tapeworm from dogs, typhus from fleas, and toxoplasmosis from cats.^{17, 18, 19} The most threatening hazards are those that damage water supplies. Red tides are increasingly affecting Kuwait Bay and killing fish and other marine life.²⁰



© Mink / flickr.com
Flooded Streets of Aydalia

¹² Gordon Robison and Paul Greenway, *Lonely Planet Bahrain, Kuwait & Qatar* (Hawthorn, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2000), 146.

¹³ Malcolm C. Peck, *Historical Dictionary of the Gulf Arab States* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 61–62, 184–185.

¹⁴ Yasser Mahgoub, “Socio-Cultural Sustainability of Housing Environments in Kuwait (presentation, XXIIInd UIA World Congress of Architecture, Istanbul, July 2005),” slide 32, <http://www.slideshare.net/ymahgoub/sociocultural-sustainability-of-housing-environments-in-kuwait>

¹⁵ Debra A. Miller, *Kuwait: Modern Nations of the World* (Thomson Gale, 2005), 16–17.

¹⁶ Francesca Davis DiPiazza, *Kuwait in Pictures* (Minneapolis, Twenty-First Century Books (Lerner), 2007), 17.

¹⁷ Kuwait News Agency, “GCC Launches Anti-Malaria Initiative,” 24 April 2011, <http://www.kuna.net.kw/NewsAgenciesPublicSite/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2161914&Language=en>

¹⁸ Center for Disease Control, “Cutaneous Leishmaniasis in U.S. Military Personnel—Southwest/Central Asia, 2002–2003,” *MMWR Weekly* 52(42), 24 October 2003, 1009–1012, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5242a1.htm>

¹⁹ “AFMIC Weekly Wire (0143pgv.00d),” 1 September 1995, http://www.gulfink.osd.mil/declassdocs/dia/19950901/950901_0143pgv_00d.html

²⁰ Kuwait Times, “Red Tide Threatens GCC Coasts,” 22 March 2009, http://www.kuwaittimes.net/read_news.php?newsid=NTkwNTAyMTE0

Environmental Concerns

Kuwait is still recovering from the largest oil disaster in the world to date. During the 1990–1991 Gulf War, millions of barrels of oil were deliberately spilled into the desert and Gulf, and hundreds of oil wells burned for months.^{21, 22} The long-term consequences of the resulting land, sea, and air pollution are still being assessed.^{23, 24} Other war-related environmental damage in Kuwait is from military vehicles, land mines, ammunitions dumps, abandoned bunkers and foxholes.²⁵



© Mink / flickr.com
Oil fire during Desert Storm

Water remains the key environmental issue for Kuwait. Oil wealth has paid for engineering feats such as desalinated water for more than 3 million people, along with irrigated farms at al-Wafrah in the south and Abdali in the north. However, whether such efforts are sustainable is unknown. Hazards such as the toxic red tides appear to be partly caused by too much human impact on the environment. For example, Kuwait Bay is affected by two commercial ports, several marinas, three power stations, a commercial fish farm, and sewage draining from an artificial river in Iraq.²⁶

²¹ United Nations Environment Programme, “Disasters,” in *State of the Environment and Policy Retrospective: 1972–2002*, n.d., 292, www.unep.org/geo/geo3/english/pdfs/chapter2-9_disasters.pdf

²² John Pickrell, “The Worst Eco-Catastrophes of All Time,” Australian Broadcasting Corp. (ABC), 15 February 2011, <http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2011/02/15/3135546.htm>

²³ Special Assistant for Gulf War Illnesses, United States Department of Defense, “Oil Well Fires Environmental Exposure Report,” 2000, http://www.gulflink.osd.mil/owf_ii/index.htm

²⁴ BBC News, “Pollution Legacy Lives on in Kuwait,” 4 August 2000, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/865247.stm

²⁵ N. Bhat Samira Omar and Adel Asem, “Critical Assessment of the Environmental Consequences of the Invasion of Kuwait, the Gulf War, and the Aftermath,” in *The Handbook of Environmental Chemistry*, Vol. 3U, eds. Tarek Kassim and Damia Barcelo (Berlin: Springer, 2009), 141–170.

²⁶ H. A. Cynthia et al, “First Record of a Fish-Killing *Gymnodium* sp. Bloom in Kuwait Bay, Arabian Sea: Chronology and Potential Causes,” *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 214, 15–23.

Chapter 1 Assessment

1. Kuwait is on the southeast coast of the Arabian Peninsula at the mouth of the Persian Gulf.
False
Kuwait is on the northeast coast of the peninsula, at the head of the Persian Gulf.
2. The desert in Kuwait is always hot.
False
In winter the desert cools to average lows of 8°C (47°F).
3. Most Kuwaitis live near the capital city.
True
The majority of the population lives within 500 sq km (193 sq mi) of Kuwait City.
4. Kuwaitis get most of their fresh water from desalination plants.
True
Kuwait has no permanent freshwater rivers or lakes. Most water for human consumption comes from Kuwait's many desalination plants.
5. Settlers initially migrated to the Kuwait Bay region because of its mineral resources.
False
People were first drawn to the Kuwait Bay region because of the marine resources.

Chapter 2 History

Introduction

Kuwait sits at the crossroads of ancient Arabia and Mesopotamia, on one of the main Asia to Europe and northern Africa trade and travel routes. Humans have inhabited the area for 7,000 years. Predecessors of modern Iraq and Iran have struggled for control of the region since at least the sixth century B.C.E. The spread of Islam from Arabia in the seventh century C.E. shaped much of the region's later history.



© Mohammad Abdullah / flickr.com
Ikaros, off the coast of Kuwait

The story of modern Kuwait begins in the 17th century with the settlement of Arab peoples around Kuwait Bay. The early settlers combined a nomadic desert way of life with sea-based activities—boatbuilding, fishing, and pearling—and developed a trading center and economy that became increasingly attractive to other powers, including major regional and foreign players. The discovery of oil in the 20th century intensified Kuwait's vulnerability as a nation of great wealth but with little security.

Ancient Civilizations

The region surrounding the head of the Persian Gulf has been continuously occupied for 7,000 years.²⁷ At that time, Gulf waters may have reached farther north some 100 km (60 mi) to prehistoric cities such as Eridu and Ur.²⁸ Recent archeological finds on the north shore of Kuwait Bay demonstrate interaction between Neolithic peoples of Arabia and Mesopotamia, the “land between the rivers” of the Tigris and Euphrates, as well as boat construction or repair with materials from Kuwait.^{29, 30}

²⁷ Rebecca L. Torstrick and Elizabeth Faier, *Culture and Customs of the Arab Gulf States* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press [ABC-CLIO], 2009), 17.

²⁸ Juris Zarins, “The Early Settlement of Southern Mesopotamia: A Review of Recent Historical, Geological and Archeological Research,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112, no. 1 (January–March 1992): 55–77.

²⁹ British Archaeological Expedition to Kuwait, “Excavations at H3: A Summary,” n.d., <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/kuwait/sitefind.htm>

³⁰ British Archaeological Expedition to Kuwait, “Excavations at H3: A Summary: Boats,” n.d., <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/kuwait/boats.htm>

Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq)

With the invention of writing around 3500 B.C.E., the Sumerians began the historical record of Mesopotamian peoples and civilizations.³¹ The region of present-day Kuwait was part of a succession of empires, valued primarily for its location as a site for trade. References to the Gulf coast's Dilmun civilization of the third and second millennia B.C.E. appear in Sumerian records.^{32, 33} In the first millennium B.C.E., the empires of Assyria and Chaldea extended their influence through Mesopotamia to Babylonia (now southern Iraq) and the Gulf.

Arabia

Two ways of life that shaped Kuwait developed in ancient Arabia. Along the eastern shore of the Arabian Peninsula, the coastal Dilmun civilization traded goods, most famously pearls, from the islands of present-day Bahrain into Mesopotamia.³⁴ Archeological evidence of Dilmun activity on Failaka Island at the entrance to Kuwait Bay dates to about 2300 B.C.E.³⁵ Inland, at about the same time, people who would come to be known as Bedouin were domesticating the dromedary camel, inventing the saddle, and developing a nomadic desert culture.³⁶



© nbahan / flickr.com
Bedouin Man

Persia (present-day Iran)

Cyrus the Great claimed the coast of present-day Kuwait for the first Persian empire in the 6th century B.C.E., defeating the Chaldean dynasty of Babylonia in 539 B.C.E.^{37, 38, 39} His dynasty ruled until Alexander the Great of Macedon came from the west to conquer Persia two centuries later. Although Alexander died in Mesopotamia in 323 before he reached the Gulf, his successors went on to colonize Failaka Island. Persian Parthians regained control of Mesopotamia and the northern Gulf

³¹ Teacher Resource Center, Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, "Ancient Mesopotamia: the Invention of Writing," n.d., <http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/ED/TRC/MESO/writing.html>

³² Harriet E. W. Crawford, *Dilmun and Its Gulf Neighbours* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

³³ C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, "Dilmun: Gateway to Immortality," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 41, no. 1 (Jan 1982): 45-50, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/544617>

³⁴ Rosemarie Said Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States* (London, Unwin Hyman, 1989), 1.

³⁵ Kuwaiti-Slovak Archaeological Mission, "History of Archaeological Research on Failaka," 2010, <http://www.kuwaitarchaeology.org/history.html>

³⁶ Malcolm C. Peck, "Chronology," *Historical Dictionary of the Gulf Arab States*, 2nd ed. (Scarecrow Press, 2008).

³⁷ Columbia Encyclopedia, "Cyrus the Great," <http://education.yahoo.com/reference/encyclopedia/entry/CyrusGre>, <http://www.answers.com/topic/cyrus-ii-of-persia>

³⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Cyrus II (King of Persia)," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/148758/Cyrus-II>

³⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Chaldea," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/104666/Chaldea>

in the first century B.C.E. The Parthians were followed by the Sassanids, who defended the region against Roman and Byzantine expansion through the seventh century C.E.⁴⁰

Islam

The Prophet Muhammad converted most of the Arabian Peninsula to Islam before his death in 632. His successors spread Islam rapidly, establishing caliphates that ruled from Damascus and later Baghdad. Early conflicts within the Muslim community of believers led a group, referred to as Shi'ites (from *shiat Ali*, "party of Ali"), to separate from the majority of the community, who came to be known as Sunnis.⁴¹ The split between Sunni and Shi'a Islam grew and delineates social, cultural, and political differences among Muslims around the world to the present day.



© A.AL-m3oosherji / flickr.com
Al Bisher Mosque at sunset

The Sassanids in Persia fell to the Islamic Caliphate in the seventh century, and the Persian population underwent a slow conversion to Islam over the next few centuries. The Persian Buyids who took control of Arab Baghdad in 945 established the first Shi'ite Muslim dynasty of Iran.⁴² A hundred years later, Seljuq Turks conquered the Buyids, portraying themselves as the restorers of Sunni Islam.⁴³

In the 13th century, the Mongols briefly disrupted Muslim control in the Gulf region. Hulagu Khan, a grandson of Ghengis Khan, took Persia in 1256 and sacked Baghdad in 1258.⁴⁴ However, by the end of the century Mongol rulers began to convert to Islam. Not long after, Turkish Muslim rule returned to the area with the rise of the Ottomans, who extended their empire to the Gulf in the 17th century. The Ottoman Turks met resistance from both Persian Safavids and Arabian tribes. As Ottoman forces weakened, the Turks tried to control their empire by negotiating indirect rule through local leaders.

In the 18th century, a movement to reform Sunni Islam developed in Arabia. This movement, led by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, stressed the importance of returning to religious fundamentals.^{45, 46} Arabian groups professing Wahhabi ideas (including the Al Saud family, rulers of modern Saudi Arabia) repeatedly attacked the settlement of Kuwait from the 18th through the 20th centuries.

⁴⁰ William Douglas Burgess, Jr., "Persian Empire," in *Colonialism: An International Social, Cultural, and Political Encyclopedia*, ed. Melvin E. Page (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 463–464.

⁴¹ John. L. Esposito, ed., *The Oxford History of Islam* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 14–18.

⁴² John. L. Esposito, ed., *The Oxford History of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 42–43.

⁴³ John. L. Esposito, ed., *The Oxford History of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 54.

⁴⁴ John. L. Esposito, ed., *The Oxford History of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 692.

⁴⁵ John. L. Esposito, ed., *The Oxford History of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 517.

⁴⁶ Malcolm C. Peck, *Historical Dictionary of the Gulf Arab States*, 2nd ed. (Landham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 313–314.

Arab Settlement, Expansion, and Rivalry

In the 17th century, the Arabian Peninsula was populated by related and rival extended families loosely organized into tribes (*banu, bani*) and larger tribal confederations.⁴⁷ The Bani Khalid took control of the northeastern peninsular coast from the Ottomans in mid-century, and around 1680 they built a small structure—the “little fort” (*al-kuwayt*)—on Kuwait Bay.⁴⁸ At this time, drought caused some of the tribes of the Anaiza confederation to leave the Bedouin heartland and migrate toward the coast. In the early 1700s, a number of families arrived at the southern tip of the bay, where they eventually settled near the “little fort” and became known as the Bani Utub.⁴⁹ Protected by the Bani Khalid, the Bani Utub distributed administrative and trade responsibilities among the various families, and by mid-century the Sabah family had become the governing family of the settlement. Not long after Sheikh Sabah I bin Jabir was chosen to rule by *shura* (consultation), other leading families left the settlement (and later became rulers of Qatar and Bahrain); the Sabah family has ruled Kuwait ever since.^{50, 51}



Courtesy of Wikimedia.org
Kuwaiti Tribesmen with camels

Rival Arab tribes challenged the Bani Utub settlement over the next three hundred years. The first defensive wall around the settlement was built in 1760 against the Bani Kaab.⁵² Sea battles with the Bani Kaab occurred during the 1770s and 1780s.^{53, 54}

From the 1790s onward the settlement also endured periodic attacks by Wahhabi-inspired tribes: in 1812, the Qawasim from the southern Gulf, and in 1920 the Saudi-backed Ikhwan. In response to these attacks, additional walls were built around the growing trade town and port.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Malcolm C. Peck, *Historical Dictionary of the Gulf Arab States*, 2nd ed. (Landham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 49.

⁴⁸ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), xi.

⁴⁹ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 18.

⁵⁰ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 29.

⁵¹ Paul Salem, “Kuwait: Politics in a Participatory Emirate” (Carnegie Papers no. 3, Carnegie Middle East Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2007), 2–3,

http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec3_salem_kuwait_final1.pdf

⁵² Kuwait News Agency, “Kuwait Walls a Symbol of Solidarity Through History,” 18 January 2011, <http://www.kuna.net.kw/NewsAgenciesPublicSite/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2138787&Language=en>

⁵³ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 18.

⁵⁴ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 32–33.

⁵⁵ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

British Protection

European ships appeared in the Gulf as early as 1507. By the end of the 18th century England's East India Company had established trading posts in the Gulf, including one at Basrah on the Shatt al-Arab delta of southern Iraq, some 120 km (75 mi) north of the Kuwait settlement. When Basrah suffered from plague and was attacked by Persians and Arabs in the 1770s, the Company temporarily moved operations to Kuwait.^{56, 57} During the next century, Britain's interest in protecting communication and trade between India and Europe made its presence in the Gulf a factor in local political maneuverings of Arab clans and tribes. By the beginning of the 20th century, Kuwait would use Britain to declare autonomy from both surrounding Arab tribes and the Ottoman Empire. From 1794 to 1961 the presence of British military forces discouraged attacks on Kuwait on many occasions.⁵⁸

Mubarak the Great

Mubarak al-Sabah (1837–1915), the seventh sheikh of Kuwait, is remembered today for his rise to power and his subsequent establishment of autonomy for Kuwait within the British sphere. In 1896 he killed his half-brother, the sixth sheikh, in the only violent succession in Kuwait's history. Within three years of taking power, he engineered an agreement with Britain that made Kuwait independent of the Ottoman Empire and provided British protection from attacks by other powers. In exchange, he gave Britain the right to oversee Kuwait's foreign policy and veto any agreements Kuwait might make with other foreign powers. This eventually led to British monopolies on railway and oil rights in Kuwait territory. Mubarak is credited with introducing modern social institutions of education, healthcare, and government administration, and scientific technologies including the telegraph and water desalination.^{59, 60} However, he is criticized for using Britain to act as an authoritarian ruler, in contrast to other al-Sabah sheikhs who led within the "spirit of cooperative *shura*" (consultation).⁶¹



Courtesy of Wikimedia.org
Sheikh Salem Al Mubarak
Al Sabah of Kuwait

⁵⁶ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 22.

⁵⁷ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 36.

⁵⁸ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 37–68.

⁵⁹ Ministry of Information, State of Kuwait, "The State of Kuwait: Originality and Giving (Special Edition in the 50th Anniversary of the Independence of the State of Kuwait)," n.d., www.kuwait-fest.com/english/images/English.pdf

⁶⁰ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 44–45, 49–53.

⁶¹ Paul Salem, "Kuwait: Politics in a Participatory Emirate" (Carnegie Papers no. 3, Carnegie Middle East Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2007), 3, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec3_salem_kuwait_final1.pdf

The Battle of “Red Fort” at al-Jahra

Not long after Mubarak’s death, the British commitment to protect Kuwait was tested by Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, the founder of the modern kingdom of Saudi Arabia.^{62, 63} Ibn Saud sought to rule a kingdom that would bring Wahhabi Islam to the entire Arabian Peninsula, and in 1920 he sent his Ikhwan warriors to Kuwait. Sheikh Salim al-Mubarak mounted a defense at the “Red Fort” (*Qasr Al-Ahmar*) near the oasis of al-Jahra outside the city walls. His advisors then persuaded the sheikh to approach Britain for help, and the appearance of British planes, ships, and armored cars ended the attacks.⁶⁴



Courtesy of Wikimedia.org
Abd Al-Aziz ibn Saud, 1927

Oil

In 1922, the British exercised their right to make foreign policy for Kuwait. At the Uqair Conference, where Kuwait was represented by the British Political Resident, new borders for Kuwait, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia gave Saudi land to Iraq, and Kuwaiti land to Saudi Arabia. The conference also defined two “neutral zones” for Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to administer jointly, including the sharing of any future proceeds from potential oil development.^{65, 66, 67}

In the 1930s Britain, still in debt to the United States for World War I, shared its exclusive oil rights with American interests.⁶⁸ In 1934, Gulf Oil and Anglo-Persian Oil formed the Kuwait Oil Company, which discovered the Burgan oil field in 1938. When the first legislative assembly of Kuwait began to question the British oil concessions, Britain reversed its position on the importance of democratic participation in government and supported al-Sabah’s dissolution of the assembly just a year after its initiation.⁶⁹

At the end of World War II, commercial exploitation of oil began. Oil revenues soon funded infrastructure development and a welfare state for Kuwaiti nationals, who received free healthcare, education, housing, and guaranteed employment in the public sector. Foreign workers arrived to take professional and management positions that

⁶² Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Saudi Arabia,” 6 May 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3584.htm#history>

⁶³ Ministry of Culture and Information, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, “Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: History,” n.d., <http://www.info.gov.sa/portals/Kingdom/KingdomHistory.html#Third>

⁶⁴ Rosemarie Said Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 24–25.

⁶⁵ H. R. P. Dickson, *Kuwait and Her Neighbors* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956), 148–155, 250–257.

⁶⁶ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 42–43.

⁶⁷ Tetreault [573] also makes the point that Britain defended these borders against Saudi Arabia and Iraq for the next 70 years, citing Dickson, 270–76 and 301–2. See note 47.

⁶⁸ Fiona Venn, “A Struggle for Supremacy? Great Britain, the United States and Kuwait Oil in the 1930s” (Working Paper Series no. 2, Department of History, University of Essex, 2000), http://www.essex.ac.uk/history/Staff_Research/working-papers/fvenn-paper.pdf

⁶⁹ Paul Salem, “Kuwait: Politics in a Participatory Emirate” (Carnegie Papers no. 3, Carnegie Middle East Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2007), 3, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec3_salem_kuwait_final1.pdf

Kuwaitis were untrained to fill, and unskilled work that Kuwaitis were unwilling to do. From 1949 to 1957 Kuwait's total population doubled and became 45% foreign.⁷⁰

The State of Kuwait

In the late 1950s, Britain found itself on the losing side of a conflict with Egypt over the Suez Canal. In a climate of rising nationalism and pan-Arabism in the Middle East,⁷¹ Britain offered independence to Kuwait, and once again encouraged its rulers to invite wider public participation in governance. Kuwait became independent in June 1961, elected an assembly in December, and promulgated a constitution the following November.⁷² When Iraq threatened to annex Kuwait in June 1961, Britain sent armed forces to counter the threat, and continued to provide military security in the Gulf for another decade.⁷³



© Steve & Jemma Copley
Kuwaiti Youth celebrates
National Day

Nation-State

Defining nationality (and limiting citizenship) grew in importance as the government distributed oil benefits to “the people.” The pre-independence requirement to document family residence in Kuwait since 1898 (later 1920) was difficult to meet, and contributed to a population of internal stateless known as *bidoon* (“without”).⁷⁴ The path to citizenship also remained difficult.⁷⁵ In the years following independence, Kuwaitis became a minority population in their own country. In 1961, the population was closely split between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis; by 1985, foreigners outnumbered Kuwaitis 60% to 40%.⁷⁶

Even with a limited citizenry, the rulers found it difficult to share governance. The elected National Assembly was dissolved and the constitution suspended for four years in 1976 and again in 1986.⁷⁷

⁷⁰ Sharon Stanton Russell, “Politics and Ideology in Migration,” *International Migration Review* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 27, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/1973761>

⁷¹ Raymond Hinnebusch, “Introduction: the Analytical Framework,” in *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, eds. Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 5.

⁷² Paul Salem, “Kuwait: Politics in a Participatory Emirate” (Carnegie Papers no. 3, Carnegie Middle East Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2007), 3–4, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec3_salem_kuwait_finall.pdf

⁷³ Mary Ann Tetreault, “Autonomy, Necessity, and the Small State: Ruling Kuwait in the Twentieth Century,” *International Organization* 45, no. 4 (Autumn 1991): 582, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706948>

⁷⁴ Paul Salem, “Kuwait: Politics in a Participatory Emirate” (Carnegie Papers no. 3, Carnegie Middle East Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2007), 7, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec3_salem_kuwait_finall.pdf

⁷⁵ Sharon Stanton Russell, “Politics and Ideology in Migration,” *International Migration Review* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 28, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/1973761>

⁷⁶ Sharon Stanton Russell, “Politics and Ideology in Migration,” *International Migration Review* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 29, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/1973761>

⁷⁷ Paul Salem, “Kuwait: Politics in a Participatory Emirate” (Carnegie Papers no. 3, Carnegie Middle East Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2007), 4, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec3_salem_kuwait_finall.pdf

Arab State

Kuwait's Arab identity grew from the tribal memberships of its founding families, who share common ancestries and consider themselves to be related to other tribes throughout Arabia such as the Saud family. With independence in 1961, Kuwait became eligible to join the League of Arab States and almost immediately received League military support against Iraq's claims.^{78, 79} In the earlier years of oil development, Arabs from outside the Gulf (e.g., Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine) were the most common expatriate workers in Kuwait, among them young Yasser Arafat.^{80, 81} Kuwait contributed financial and political support to Arab causes, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). In response to the 1973 October War between Egypt, Syria, and Israel, Kuwait participated in the oil embargo of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) against countries "unfriendly" to Arab interests.⁸²



Shared Arab identity was not always desirable. In the early years of statehood, Kuwait's rulers promoted nationality-based privileges to Kuwaitis in order to defuse the possibility of a pan-Arab uprising among Kuwaitis and Arab expatriate workers.⁸³ Neither was Arab solidarity always dependable. Only 12 Arab League members (of the 20 who came to an emergency summit) condemned Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Gulf State

The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980 focused the attention of the other Gulf States on their shared needs for regional security and cooperation and led to the creation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in May 1981. Although the Council established the Peninsula Shield security force, it failed to protect ships from Iranian attack in the Gulf. (Kuwait approached both the Soviet Union and the United States for protection of its tankers through reflagging.)⁸⁴ The GCC observed that effective security would have to come from much larger non-regional powers. Thus, on occasion the Council has acted against Arab interests, as in lifting embargoes against Israel.

⁷⁸ Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Kuwait—Independence," in *Country Studies: Persian Gulf States*, 1993, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/kwtoc.html>

⁷⁹ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 84.

⁸⁰ Sharon Stanton Russell, "International Migration and Political Turmoil in the Middle East," *Population and Development Review* 18, no. 4 (December 1992), 719–720, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1973761>

⁸¹ Alex Vatanka, "Kuwait at 50," *uMiddle East Institute*, 17 February 2011, <http://www.mei.edu/Publications/WebPublications/PolicyInsights/PolicyInsightsArchive/tabid/876/ctl/Detail/mid/2844/xmid/1672/xmfid/36/Default.aspx>

⁸² Document 38 (U.S. Embassy Kuwait cable 3801 Cable to State Department, "Atiqi Comment on OAPEC Meeting," 18 October 1973), in *The October War and U.S. Policy*, ed. William Burr, The National Security Archive, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB98/index.htm#docs>

⁸³ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 81.

⁸⁴ Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Kuwait—Developments Since Independence," in *Country Studies: Persian Gulf States*, 1993, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/kwtoc.html>

Oil State

Even before political independence, Kuwait moved to establish economic independence through greater control of oil. It joined OPEC in 1960 and the same year organized the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) as a government majority-owned company. In 1962, a year after independence, the foreign-owned Kuwait Oil Company “was made to relinquish 60% of the areas included in its concession to KNPC.”⁸⁵ The nationalization of Kuwait Oil Company was finalized in 1975.⁸⁶



© Javier Blas
Burgan Oil pipeline

In 1960, Kuwait also began to lay the groundwork for the formal discussion in 1965–1969 that established permanent borders and determined oil revenue sharing from the “neutral zone” with Saudi Arabia. Kuwait expanded into oil refining, distribution, and other peripheral industries, becoming the first Middle Eastern oil country to retail oil in Europe (through purchase of a Danish subsidiary) in 1966.⁸⁷

As Kuwait developed its expertise as an oil state, oil became a tool of foreign policy. For example, Kuwait countered criticism of the 1973 oil embargo by expanding its foreign aid to include non-Arab, non-Islamic countries.⁸⁸ Oil helped Kuwait remain nonaligned during the Cold War.⁸⁹ Oil also made Kuwait a target, “too wealthy and too weak to be ignored by other states.”⁹⁰

The Gulf War

Precipitants

Iraq had claimed Kuwait as soon as Kuwait declared independence in 1961 and continued those claims through 1963, when it agreed to demarcate the border for USD 80 million from Kuwait.⁹¹ Iraq again claimed Kuwait’s Bubiyan and Warbah Islands in 1972, and briefly occupied part of northern Kuwait in 1973–1974.⁹² During the Iran-Iraq War of

⁸⁵ Fundinguniverse.com, “Kuwait Petroleum Corporation,” n.d., <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Kuwait-Petroleum-Corporation-Company-History.html>

⁸⁶ Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, “Kuwait Oil History,” 2009, <http://www.kpc.com.kw/AboutKPC/KuwaitOilHistory/default.aspx>

⁸⁷ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 90.

⁸⁸ Mary Ann Tetreault, “Autonomy, Necessity, and the Small State: Ruling Kuwait in the Twentieth Century,” *International Organization* 45, no. 4 (Autumn 1991): 583, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/2706948>

⁸⁹ Mary Ann Tetreault, “Autonomy, Necessity, and the Small State: Ruling Kuwait in the Twentieth Century,” *International Organization* 45, no. 4 (Autumn 1991): 567, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/2706948>

⁹⁰ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 84.

⁹¹ Mary Ann Tetreault, “Autonomy, Necessity, and the Small State: Ruling Kuwait in the Twentieth Century,” *International Organization* 45, no. 4 (Autumn 1991): 582, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/2706948>

⁹² Anne M. Kelly, “The Soviet Naval Presence During the Iraq-Kuwaiti Border Dispute: March-April 1973” (Professional Paper 122, Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, VA, June 1974), www.cna.org/documents/5500012200.pdf

1980–1988, Kuwait joined other Arab states in support of Iraq, and provided USD 13 billion. After the war, Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein sought additional funds from Kuwait.⁹³

In 1991, Hussein yet again claimed Kuwait as a province of Iraq. Hussein also claimed that Kuwait had invaded Iraqi territory with underground slant drilling to steal oil and that Kuwait was conspiring to reduce oil prices by producing beyond its OPEC cap.⁹⁴ An estimated 100,000 troops gathered along the Iraq-Kuwait border, about a third of the estimated 350,000 ultimately involved.



© Amir Farshad Ebrahimi
Saddam Hussein

Iraq Invades

Iraqi forces crossed into Kuwaiti territory on 2 August 1990 and took control of Kuwait City that same day. The emir escaped to arrange a government in exile in Saudi Arabia, but his youngest brother was killed at the royal residence.⁹⁵ By the end of the day, 2 August, the United Nations (UN) demanded Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. On August 6, the UN called for the first of a series of economic sanctions against Iraq, and the United States quickly implemented a naval blockade. International support for Kuwait was widespread but not unanimous: Yemen and Cuba abstained from the UN economic sanctions vote; in the Arab League, Jordan, the PLO, Sudan, and Yemen opposed the condemnation of Iraq.⁹⁶ For the next seven months Iraqi General Ali Hassan as-Majid, "Chemical Ali," and later Aziz Salih Numan governed from Kuwait City, and residents who could not flee endured the occupation or deportation to Iraq.

The United States facilitated the request of Saudi Arabia to organize defensive international forces in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf in Operation Desert Shield. Kuwait pledged USD 16 billion to the U.S. for the war effort.⁹⁷

⁹³ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 87.

⁹⁴ Mary Ann Tetreault, "Autonomy, Necessity, and the Small State: Ruling Kuwait in the Twentieth Century," *International Organization* 45, no. 4 (Autumn 1991): 587, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/2706948>; Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 87.

⁹⁵ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 89, 93.

⁹⁶ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Kuwait," 7 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm>

⁹⁷ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 93.

Operation Desert Storm

On 17 January 1991 coalition forces (eventually numbering 600,000) began air attacks against Iraqi military installations.⁹⁸ Hussein's attempt to draw Israel into the war with Scud missile attacks failed. Coalition ground troops joined the war on 24 February, and the Kuwaiti "Martyrs' Brigade" liberated Kuwait City on 26 February. Retreating Iraqi forces destroyed most of Kuwait's oil industry infrastructure. News media broadcast the final Iraqi retreat along the "Highway of Death" at Al-Jahra Mutla Ridge on 26–28 February.⁹⁹ A formal ceasefire agreement was signed at Safwan in southern Iraq.



DoD Image / Jose Lopez Jr.
General Powell and General Schwarzkopf

Consequences of War

Among the dead and missing were 1,200 Kuwaitis, hundreds of coalition troops, and tens of thousands of Iraqis.^{100, 101, 102, 103} Kuwaiti and Iraqi civilians were left in the aftermath with no water, food, healthcare, or shelter.¹⁰⁴ Increases in respiratory illnesses and cancers have since been observed among Kuwait residents, and Gulf War Syndrome is reported among coalition troops.¹⁰⁵

Environmental and physical damage was enormous. In addition to the effects of the destroyed oil infrastructure, Iraq had planted 2 million land mines and thousands of drifting naval mines that had to be cleared.¹⁰⁶ Most of Kuwait's and much of Iraq's telecommunications and transportation infrastructure was destroyed.

⁹⁸ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 103.

⁹⁹ Max Boot, "Precision and Professionalism (Chap. 10)," in *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History 1500 to Today* (New York: Gotham Books (Penguin), 2006), 345–346.

¹⁰⁰ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 110–111.

¹⁰¹ Defense Manpower Data Center, "Persian Gulf War—Casualty Summary," 29 January 2010.

¹⁰² Anne Leland and Mari-Jana Oborceanu, Congressional Research Service, "American War and Military Occupations Casualties: Lists and Statistics," 26 February 2010, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL32492.pdf>

¹⁰³ Naseer Aruri, "Human Rights and the Gulf Crisis: The Verbal Strategy of George Bush," in *Beyond the Storm: A Gulf Crisis Reader*, eds. Phyllis Bennis and Michel Moushabeck (Brooklyn, NY: Olive Branch Press, 1991), 374.

¹⁰⁴ Naseer Aruri, "Human Rights and the Gulf Crisis: The Verbal Strategy of George Bush," in *Beyond the Storm: A Gulf Crisis Reader*, eds. Phyllis Bennis and Michel Moushabeck (Brooklyn, NY: Olive Branch Press, 1991), 373.

¹⁰⁵ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 108.

¹⁰⁶ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 109.

The war caused population movements of some five million people.¹⁰⁷ Kuwaiti residents of Failaka Island were forced out by Iraqi soldiers during the war. The island has remained a military zone since the war and was used by U.S. military trainers to prepare for the 2003 invasion of Iraq.¹⁰⁸ Hundreds of thousands fled Kuwait during the occupation. After the war, Kuwait expelled hundreds of thousands more foreign residents suspected of having sympathized with Iraq.^{109, 110, 111}



© Dosia Dosev
Construction in Kuwait City

Recent History

Since the end of the Gulf War, Kuwait has repaired its infrastructure and economy. Income from Kuwait's investments abroad financed the rebuilding of the oil industry and continuing expansion into related businesses. Worldwide recession in 2008 led to protests against high prices and low wages. The government responded in 2009 with a stimulus plan of USD 17.9 billion, followed in 2010 by a national development plan to spend USD 131 billion on dozens of major projects within five years.^{112, 113}

Postwar government in Kuwait has become more democratic and, by some accounts, less effective. The emirate approved the election of a new National Assembly in 1992, as a kind of apology to the people for the war, and at the urging of the United States.¹¹⁴ Assembly representation has since diversified to include a range of opposing viewpoints, significantly Islamist as opposed to secularist, and Shi'ite as opposed to Sunni. Women received the right to vote in 2005 and now serve in both the assembly and the emirate-appointed cabinet. In December 2009 the assembly conducted the first no-confidence vote ever held in a Gulf Arab state. The prime minister survived this vote and another in January 2011.^{115, 116}

¹⁰⁷ Sharon Stanton Russell, "International Migration and Political Turmoil in the Middle East," *Population and Development Review* 18, no. 4 (December 1992): 721–722, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1973761>

¹⁰⁸ Rebecca L. Torstrick and Elizabeth Faier, *Culture and Customs of the Arab Gulf States* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press (ABC-CLIO), 2009), 3.

¹⁰⁹ Peter Ford, "Kuwait Squeezes Out Palestinians," *Christian Science Monitor*, 2 August, 1991, <http://www.csmonitor.com/1991/0802/02041.html>

¹¹⁰ Samih K. Farsoun, "Palestinian Diaspora," in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures around the World*, eds. Melvin Ember, Carol R. Ember, and Ian Skoggard (Springer, 2005), 240–242.

¹¹¹ Nora Colton, "Social Stratification in the Gulf Cooperation Council States" (paper no. 14, Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, Center for Study of Global Governance, London School of Economics, January 2011), 14–15, <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/research/papers/socialstratification.aspx>

¹¹² Jack Reerink and Ulf Laessing, "Kuwait Okays \$5.2 Billion Stimulus Plan," Reuters, 26 March 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/03/26/kuwait-stimulus-idUSLQ65562120090326>

¹¹³ Faisal Hasan and Talal S. AlGharaballi, "Kuwait Economic Overview," Global Investment House Research, April 2011.

¹¹⁴ Paul Salem, "Kuwait: Politics in a Participatory Emirate" (Carnegie Papers no. 3, Carnegie Middle East Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2007), 1, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec3_salem_kuwait_finall.pdf

¹¹⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Kuwait: Year in Review 2010," <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1733745/Kuwait-Year-In-Review-2010?anchor=ref1093159>

Nationality continues to be an issue. In spite of postwar calls to limit foreign residents and “Kuwait-ize” the workforce, the non-Kuwaiti population has once again become the majority, this time led by immigrants from Asia.¹¹⁷ Approximately 100,000 *bidoon* continue to reside in Kuwait without government recognition or benefits.¹¹⁸ In 2000, Kuwait began to charge non-citizens for healthcare.

With regard to international relations, Kuwait continues to be concerned about Gulf neighbors Iraq and Iran, and to depend on more distant powers for military security. Kuwait supported Operation Iraqi Freedom against Saddam Hussein in 2003. Diplomatic relations between Iraq and Kuwait were fully restored in 2010 with Iraq’s appointment of an ambassador to Kuwait, although some Kuwaiti perceptions of the new Iraqi government as pro-Shi’a and under the influence of Iran complicate the relationship. Kuwait and other GCC members are also concerned about potential reactions from the United States and others to Iran’s nuclear ambitions. While expressing concern over Iran’s Russian-engineered nuclear reactor just across the Gulf at Bushehr, Kuwait entered into an agreement with Russia to develop four nuclear plants on Kuwaiti soil by 2022.¹¹⁹

¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Alex Vatanka, “Kuwait at 50,” Middle East Institute, 17 February 2011, <http://www.mei.edu/Publications/WebPublications/PolicyInsights/PolicyInsightsArchive/tabid/876/ctl/Detail/mid/2844/xmid/1672/xmfid/36/Default.aspx>

¹¹⁷ Nora Colton, “Social Stratification in the Gulf Cooperation Council States” (paper no. 14, Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, Center for Study of Global Governance, London School of Economics, January 2011), 9–17, <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/research/papers/socialstratification.aspx>

¹¹⁸ Paul Salem, “Kuwait: Politics in a Participatory Emirate” (Carnegie Papers no. 3, Carnegie Middle East Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2007), 7, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec3_salem_kuwait_final1.pdf

¹¹⁹ Alex Vatanka, “Kuwait at 50,” Middle East Institute, 17 February 2011, <http://www.mei.edu/Publications/WebPublications/PolicyInsights/PolicyInsightsArchive/tabid/876/ctl/Detail/mid/2844/xmid/1672/xmfid/36/Default.aspx>

¹²⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Kuwait: Year in Review 2010,” <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1733745/Kuwait-Year-In-Review-2010?anchor=ref1093159>

Chapter 2 Assessment

1. Kuwait was first occupied by Persian peoples, ancestors of present-day Iranians.
False
Kuwait was first occupied by Neolithic peoples of Arabia and Mesopotamia.
2. The founders of modern Kuwait were seafaring pirates.
False
The founders of modern Kuwait were Arab Bedouins, driven to the coast by drought.
3. Oil revenues have made it possible for Kuwait to provide benefits to its citizens.
True
The ruling emirate used oil income to give Kuwaiti nationals free healthcare, education, housing, and guaranteed jobs.
4. Kuwait has been able to rely on solidarity among Arab peoples for safety and support.
False
Arab neighbors Iraq and Saudi Arabia have both attacked Kuwait, and the Arab League did not unanimously support Kuwait in the Gulf War.
5. Naturalized citizens originally from other countries are the majority of Kuwait's population.
False
Foreign workers who do not receive the benefits given to Kuwaiti citizens are the majority of Kuwait's population.

Chapter 3 Economy

Introduction

Kuwait's economy has been based on oil since World War II. The requirements of finding, extracting, refining, and transporting oil have shaped Kuwait's industrial development, trade balances, financial activities, and employment demographics. The resulting oil revenues created a *rentier* economy, a welfare society in which Kuwait's leaders have tried to avoid the "curse" of being resource-rich, but development-poor.^{121, 122}



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Oil refinery in Kuwait

Agriculture and Food Production

Desert oasis and Gulf waters fed Kuwait for most of its history. During the protectorate period, the ruling al-Sabah family sought British protection for their date palm orchards in southern Iraq. Kuwaitis still breed camels, grow dates, and own traditional fishing boats known as *dhow*s, but the population has grown far beyond self-sufficiency in food production. Food production now accounts for less than 1% of land use, labor, and revenue.^{123, 124} The government subsidizes desert farming at al-Wafrah in the south and Abdali in the north (major crops include tomatoes, cucumbers, potatoes, eggplants, and dates), and fin fishing in the Gulf.

Commercial shrimping from the early 1960s reduced stocks quickly and limits were imposed, especially on the main shrimp nursery in Kuwait Bay.¹²⁵ Kuwait joined the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization to deal with Gulf-wide problems that include dwindling fish counts and pollution caused by reduced freshwater flow from the Tigris and Euphrates.¹²⁶



© Abdus Samad
Dhow in the sunset

¹²¹ Aurèlia Mañé Estrada and Carmen de la Cámara Arilla, "Is Russia Drifting toward an Oil-Rentier Economy?," *Eastern European Economics* 43, no. 5 (September – October 2005): 46–73, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4380437>

¹²² Robert Looney, "Development Strategies for Saudi Arabia: Escaping the Rentier State Syndrome," *Strategic Insights* 3, no.3 (March 2004), <http://www.nps.edu/Academics/centers/ccp/publications/OnlineJournal/2004/mar/looneyMar04.html#references>

¹²³ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note—Kuwait," 7 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm>

¹²⁴ Central Statistical Office, State of Kuwait, "Statistical Review, 2010 (33rd ed.)," n.d., 10, <http://mopweb4.mop.gov.kw/portal/pls/portal/mop.pdf?no=1257#>

¹²⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Fishery and Aquaculture Country Profiles—Kuwait," 2011, http://www.fao.org/fishery/countrysector/FI-CP_KW/en

¹²⁶ Regional Commission for Fisheries, "Regional Fishery Bodies Summary Descriptions," 15 July 2010, <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/recofi/en#Org-EIMS>

Industry

Oil is currently Kuwait's most abundant and valued natural resource. Proven reserves of over 100 billion barrels, 8%–10% of the world's known reserves, could last for 100 years at the current extraction rate of 2.5 million barrels a day. However, the government is aiming for 4 million barrels a day by 2020, though the emir and the National Assembly have not yet agreed on implementation.¹²⁷ Not surprisingly, Kuwait's main industrial development to date has been in oil-related activities—oil and gas extraction and refining, petrochemicals, shipbuilding and repair, cement, and construction materials.^{128, 129} In 2009, oil brought in almost USD 50 billion in revenues, accounting for close to half the gross domestic product (GDP), or roughly USD 17,000 for each Kuwaiti man, woman, and child.^{130, 131, 132}



© Dennis S. Hurd
Kuwaiti filling up with gas

In the decades since receiving the first oil royalties of three Indian rupees per ton, Kuwait has fully nationalized the ownership, control, and strategic management of its oil.^{133, 134,}

¹³⁵ A Supreme Petroleum Council sets policy, and the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation manages several companies in a complete “upstream to downstream” vertical integration, from the original Kuwait Oil Company (upstream in exploration and production) through companies devoted to refining, tankers and shipping, marketing, petrochemicals, and foreign exploration, all the way downstream to international distributors in Europe. Kuwait is now seeking ownership opportunities in China and other Asian states.

¹²⁷ U.S. Energy Information Administration, “Kuwait: Analysis,” May 2010, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=KU>

¹²⁸ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note—Kuwait,” 7 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm>

¹²⁹ “Country Profile: Kuwait,” *World News Digest* (Facts on File News Services, n.d.), <http://www.2facts.com/article/c00097>

¹³⁰ Faisal Hasan and Talal S. AlGharaballi, Global Research, “Kuwait Economic Overview” (Global Investment House, Safat, Kuwait, April 2011), 3, http://www.arabbankers.org/download/123321_U127360_747260/Global%20-%20Kuwait%20Economic%20Overview%20April%202011

¹³¹ U.S. Energy Information Administration, “OPEC Revenues Fact Sheet,” December 2010, http://www.eia.gov/emeu/cabs/OPEC_Revenues/Factsheet.html

¹³² In 2010 world rankings, Kuwait was 10th in GDP per capita; the U.S. was 11th.

¹³³ Yaw Yeboah, “The Arabian Concession—The World That Frank Holmes Made” (EGEE 120, Oil: International Evolution, Penn State University, 2011), <https://www.e-education.psu.edu/egee120/node/241>

¹³⁴ The first year's revenues in 1946 were USD 760,000. Laura El-Katiri, Bassam Fattouh, and Paul Segal, “Anatomy of an Oil-Based Welfare State: Rent Distribution in Kuwait”

(Research Paper No. 13, Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, London School of Economics, January 2011),” 4, <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/documents/Fattouh.pdf>

¹³⁵ Rasoul Sorkhabi, “The Emergence of the Arabian Oil Industry,” *GeoExPro*, 24 April 2009, http://www.geoexpro.com/history/the_emerge/

International oil companies now contract with the state to earn per barrel fees, capital recovery, and incentive fees as service providers.¹³⁶

Other industrial activities include water desalination, electricity generation, and food processing.¹³⁷

Energy

The recent consolidation of the Ministries of Oil and of Electricity and Water into the Ministry of Energy highlights the interdependence of fuel, water, and power production in Kuwait. The desalination plants that supply drinking water for the entire population require a large and steady supply of electricity that is produced by oil and natural gas. Water and power plants are responsible for more than half of Kuwait's annual energy consumption.^{138, 139} Until recently Kuwait met its own energy needs, but in 2009 it began to import natural gas in order to boost electricity production to satisfy growing residential water and power demand.^{140, 141, 142}



© Ryan Lackey
Kuwait power station

Kuwait's small solar and wind energy projects in the 1970s and 1980s were neither efficient nor cost effective, and these energy sources may not become common until the 2030s.^{143, 144} Kuwait

¹³⁶ U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Kuwait: Analysis," May 2010, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=KU>

¹³⁷ Central Statistical Office, State of Kuwait, "Statistical Review, 2010," 33rd ed., n.d., 10, <http://mopweb4.mop.gov.kw/portal/pls/portal/mop.pdf?no=1257#>

¹³⁸ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations, "Role of Desalination in Addressing Water Scarcity" (ESCWA Water Development Report 3, 10 November 2009), <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/publications/edit/upload/sdpd-09-4.pdf>

¹³⁹ Ali Ebraheem Hajiah, "Sustainable Energy in Kuwait—Challenges and Opportunities" (UNDP Regional Consultation Meeting: Climate Change Impacts in the Arab Region, Manama, Bahrain, 6 October 2010), http://arabclimateinitiative.org/knowledge/sustainable_energy/ALi%20Ebraheem%20Hajiah-Energy%20Efficient%20Building.pdf

¹⁴⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "Kuwait," in *The World Factbook*, 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ku.html>

¹⁴¹ Malini Hariharan, "The Middle East Gulf Nations Are Wrestling with Persistent Natural Gas Shortages," ICIS.com, 7 October 2009, <http://www.icis.com/Articles/2009/10/12/9253206/The-Middle-East-is-feeling-effects-of-persistent-natural-gas.html>

¹⁴² Sorour Alotaibi, "Energy Consumption in Kuwait: Prospects and Future Approaches," *Energy Policy* 39, no. 2 (2011): 637–643, http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=MIimg&_imagekey=B6V2W-51MCPHW-1-9&_cdi=5713&_user=3326500&_pii=S0301421510007871&_origin=&_coverDate=02%2F28%2F2011&_sk=999609997&view=c&wchp=dGLbVzz-zSkzS&md5=ef892fb9395c8fe2aaca72b00f713528&ie=/sdarticle.pdf

¹⁴³ Ali Ebraheem Hajiah, "Sustainable Energy in Kuwait—Challenges and Opportunities" (UNDP Regional Consultation Meeting: Climate Change Impacts in the Arab Region, Manama, Bahrain, 6 October 2010), http://arabclimateinitiative.org/knowledge/sustainable_energy/ALi%20Ebraheem%20Hajiah-Energy%20Efficient%20Building.pdf

has approached France, the United States, Japan, Russia, and the United Kingdom for assistance with the development of nuclear energy, and formed an internationally mandated nuclear oversight committee in 2009.^{145, 146}

Trade

Exports and Imports

Kuwait's trade-based economy rested on pearl harvesting into the 1930s, when the Japanese introduced cultured pearls to the world market. At the same time, oil was being discovered in Kuwait, and a decade later had become the primary export. Today oil accounts for over 90% of the value of annual total exports. In 2009,

Japan imported the largest amount of Kuwaiti oil, followed by South Korea, India, the 27-member European Union, the United States, and China.^{147, 148} Kuwait also exports chemical fertilizers (oil processing by-products), shrimp, and fish.¹⁴⁹



© Molly Spessert
Pearl Divers

Virtually everything that supports contemporary urban Kuwaiti life must be imported, including food and clothing, cars, machinery, iron, and steel. Yet Kuwait's balance of trade is typically favorable—the value of its oil exports far exceeds the value of its total imports each year. The United States is Kuwait's largest supplier of goods and services, followed by China, Japan, Germany, and Saudi Arabia.^{150, 151}

Trade Organizations

Kuwait belongs to many global and regional trade groups, perhaps most famously the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its subgroup the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC). Venezuela first suggested such a group in 1949, and when U.S. actions reduced world oil prices 10 years later, the Gulf oil-producing countries of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran joined with Venezuela in a formal organization to seek better national control of their natural

¹⁴⁴ Anthony Dipaola, "Renewable Energy Won't Be 'Major' Factor in Kuwait Energy for 20 Years," *Bloomberg*, 3 April 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-04-04/renewable-energy-won-t-be-major-factor-in-kuwait-energy-for-20-years.html>

¹⁴⁵ Zawya Projects, "KNNEC—Kuwait Nuclear Power Plants," 30 March 2011, <http://www.zawya.com/projects/project.cfm/pid230910092833?cc>

¹⁴⁶ Kuwait National Nuclear Energy Committee (KNNEC), 2010, <http://www.knnec.gov.kw/index-a.html>

¹⁴⁷ DG Trade, European Commission, "Kuwait: EU Bilateral Trade and Trade with the World," 8 June 2011, http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113408.pdf

¹⁴⁸ Faisal Hasan and Talal S. AlGharaballi, Global Research, "Kuwait Economic Overview" (Global Investment House, Safat, Kuwait, April 2011), 15, http://www.arabbankers.org/shared/files/files.jsp?_event=view&_id=530000_U127360_152775

¹⁴⁹ Central Statistical Office, State of Kuwait, "Statistical Review, 2010," 33rd ed., 14, <http://mopweb4.mop.gov.kw/portal/pls/portal/mop.pdf?no=1257#>

¹⁵⁰ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Kuwait," 7 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm#travel>

¹⁵¹ Faisal Hasan and Talal S. AlGharaballi, Global Research, "Kuwait Economic Overview" (Global Investment House, Safat, Kuwait, April 2011), 15, http://www.arabbankers.org/shared/files/files.jsp?_event=view&_id=530000_U127360_152775

resources.^{152, 153} However, the U.S. views OPEC as a price-fixing cartel.¹⁵⁴ OAPEC, according to some accounts, was established after the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict in order to consolidate Arab oil power, which was used during the 1973 conflict with Israel.^{155, 156} More recently OPEC and OAPEC are finding it difficult to negotiate economic or political positions agreeable to all members.

Regionally, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is working toward free trade among its members via a customs union and a common market.¹⁵⁷

Transportation

Industrial seaports, international airports, and heliports connect with almost 5,000 km (3,107 mi) of well-paved roads and have replaced the dhows and caravans of Kuwait's early trade economy. Reliable international transportation is essential in a country that imports practically everything. Five seaports and oil terminals in Kuwait Bay and along the southern coast currently serve a merchant marine of 80 national and foreign-flagged ships (including 20 oil or gas tankers), as well as commercial shrimpers and small fishing boats. In May 2011, Hyundai started the second phase of construction on Kuwait's new Mubarak Port on Bubiyan Island, near Iraq's only deepwater port at Umm Qasr.^{158, 159, 160} Slated for privatization since 2008, Kuwait International Airport is home to Kuwait Airways, two private passenger airlines and one



© Dmitry Klimenko
Kuwait Airways

¹⁵² Nora Colton, "Social Stratification in the Gulf Cooperation Council States" (paper no. 14, Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, Center for Study of Global Governance, London School of Economics, January 2011), 1,

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/research/papers/socialstratification.aspx>

¹⁵³ Benjamin Zycher, "OPEC," in *Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*, 2nd ed., ed. David R. Henderson (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007), <http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/OPEC.html>

¹⁵⁴ "Brief History," Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, 2011,

http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/24.htm

¹⁵⁵ Michael S. Casey, *The History of Kuwait* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 87.

¹⁵⁶ U.S. Department of State, "268. Airgram from the Embassy of Lebanon to the Department of State, A-605 (Beirut, 17 January 1968)," in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1964–1968, Vol. XXXIV, Energy, Diplomacy, and Global Issues*, http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/history/vol_XXXIV/za.html

¹⁵⁷ Yezid Sayigh, "The Gulf Crisis: Why the Arab Regional Order Failed," *International Affairs* 67, no. 3 (July 1991): 490–492, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2621948>

¹⁵⁸ Mohsin S. Khan, "The GCC Monetary Union: Choice of Exchange Rate Regime" (working paper 09-1, Peterson Institute for International Economics, April 2009), <http://www.iie.com/publications/wp/wp09-1.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ DredgingToday.com, "New Kuwait Port to Cut Iraq's Main Port Traffic by 60 Pct, Say Economists," 16 May 2011, <http://www.dredgingtoday.com/2011/05/16/new-kuwait-port-to-cut-iraqs-main-port-traffic-by-60-pct-say-economists/>

¹⁶⁰ Christopher V. Unger, "Minister of Transport Warns Kuwait and Offers Resignation in Port Conflict," AKNews (Kurdistan News Agency), 25 May 2011, <http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/8/242537/>

¹⁶⁰ Elvis Noronha, Trade and Investment Advisor, British Embassy, "Sector Report: Ports Sector—Kuwait," UK Trade & Investment, February 2010, <http://static.globaltrade.net/files/pdf/20101005120216.pdf>

cargo airline.¹⁶¹ Kuwait Airways continues to press Iraq for USD 1.2 billion in reparations for the 10 aircraft Iraq seized during the Gulf War. Unable (or unwilling) to make payment, Iraq's state airline declared bankruptcy and closed in 2010.^{162, 163}

Automobiles are the main form of local transportation in Kuwait; large imported cars are popular. Two-thirds of the government-owned gas stations were privatized in 2004–2005, but the government still subsidizes pricing (in August 2010 gas was 85 cents a gallon).^{164,}

¹⁶⁵ Car accidents are a major public hazard in Kuwait and the number one cause of death among youths.¹⁶⁶

Tourism

Throughout the British protectorate period and in the first years of independence, the Gulf Arab states did not admit tourists.¹⁶⁷ The cushion of large oil reserves and the Gulf War delayed Kuwait's economic diversification into tourism, putting the country well behind such Gulf innovators as Dubai.¹⁶⁸ The hot climate and a culture of physical modesty have also slowed the development of outdoor, public activities.¹⁶⁹ Kuwait's hotel capacity, geared to business tourism, is growing. Shopping malls function as tourist destinations.¹⁷⁰ Megaprojects for the north shore of Kuwait Bay, Failaka Island, and the southern coast are in the planning stages.¹⁷¹



© Abdullah Almaasharji
Al-Kout mall's waterfront

¹⁶¹ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2011 Investment Climate Statement: Kuwait," March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157305.htm>

¹⁶² Patrick Cockburn, "Legacy of Gulf War and Border Dispute Continue to Dog Relations with Kuwait," 28 May 2010, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/legacy-of-gulf-war-and-border-dispute-continue-to-dog-relations-with-kuwait-1985072.html>

¹⁶³ Reuters, "Kuwait Seizes Iraq Airline Assets in Jordan," 28 May 2011, <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/05/28/150889.html>

¹⁶⁴ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2011 Investment Climate Statement: Kuwait," March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157305.htm>

¹⁶⁵ Charles Welch, "Gasoline," Solcomhouse.com, n.d., <http://www.solcomhouse.com/gasoline.htm>

¹⁶⁶ UN Development Programme, "Toward Safer Roads in the State of Kuwait," April 2008, [http://www.undp-](http://www.undp-kuwait.org/download/Road%20Safety%20Strategy%20and%20New%20UN%20Resolution.pdf)

[kuwait.org/download/Road%20Safety%20Strategy%20and%20New%20UN%20Resolution.pdf](http://www.undp-kuwait.org/download/Road%20Safety%20Strategy%20and%20New%20UN%20Resolution.pdf)

¹⁶⁷ Malcolm C. Peck, "Tourism," in *Historical Dictionary of the Gulf Arab States*, 2nd ed. (Scarecrow Press, 2008), 281–282.

¹⁶⁸ Sharon Shochat, "The Gulf Cooperation Council Economies: Diversification and Reform: An Introduction" (report, Kuwait Research Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, London School of Economics and Political Science, February 2008), 22, <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/research/background.aspx>

¹⁶⁹ Obaid Al Otaibi, "Public-Private Partnerships in Tourism Development: an Analysis of the Kuwait Experience (study, Department of Geography, College of Social Sciences, Kuwait University and Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences, 25 July 2004), 30–31, <http://www.gammathetaupsilon.org/the-geographical-bulletin/2000s/volume46-1/article3.pdf>

¹⁷⁰ Khaled al-Shamari, "Kuwait Seeks Methods to Boost Tourism," Al-Shorfa.com, 22 April 2011, http://al-shorfa.com/cocoon/meii/xhtml/en_GB/features/meii/features/business/2011/04/22/feature-03

¹⁷¹ Euromonitor International, "Executive Summary—Travel and Tourism in Kuwait," September 2009, <http://www.euromonitor.com/travel-and-tourism-in-kuwait/report>

Banking and Finance

Banking and Currency

The British introduced Western banking in Kuwait in 1941. In 1952, the first Kuwaiti bank was established; as with oil, banking was soon nationalized and foreign ownership of banks largely prohibited.¹⁷² Since 1968, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) has been authorized to issue the national currency, set national credit policy, and supervise the banking system.¹⁷³ Today Kuwait has 21 banks, including single branches of 10 foreign banks (permitted since 2001).¹⁷⁴ Five Islamic banks operate under a distinct set of rules in compliance with shari'a (Islamic law). Shari'a prohibits *riba* (interest), *gharar* (uncertainty or deceit), *maysir* (speculation), and investment in *haram* (illicit) activities involving tobacco, casinos, alcoholic beverages, pork, or arms trade, and requires *musharaka* (sharing of profit or loss) in financial partnerships.¹⁷⁵ The CBK prohibits institutions from operating as both conventional and Islamic banks. Unlike supervisory bodies in other Islamic states, Kuwait's CBK applies the same regulations (such as rules of disclosure and required amounts of reserves) to both conventional and shari'a-compliant banks.¹⁷⁶



© Mohammed Mustafa
A 100 Fils coin

The Indian rupee was the common currency of the Gulf region under the British. Upon independence, Kuwait established its national currency, the Kuwaiti dinar (KWD, locally KD). As of June 2011, the exchange rate was USD 1.00 to KWD 0.27. In 2007, the CBK expanded the international exchange rate “peg” for the KWD from the USD to a “basket” of currencies that included the Euro, British pound, and Japanese yen.^{177, 178} Other Gulf Cooperation Council member states remain committed to the USD, and Oman and the United Arab Emirates pulled out of plans for a GCC monetary union, in the works since the 1980s.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷² “Kuwait—Banking and Finance,” in *Persian Gulf States: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1993), <http://countrystudies.us/persian-gulf-states/24.htm>

¹⁷³ Central Bank of Kuwait, “CBK Functions,” n.d., <http://www.cbk.gov.kw/WWW/index.html>

¹⁷⁴ Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “2011 Investment Climate Statement—Kuwait,” March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157305.htm>

¹⁷⁵ Oxford Business Group, “Islamic Financial Services,” in *The Report: Kuwait 2011*, 2010, 79, http://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/full_content/islamic-financial-services-29

¹⁷⁶ Oxford Business Group, “Islamic Financial Services (chapter),” in *The Report: Kuwait 2011*, 2010, 74–75, http://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/full_content/islamic-financial-services-29

¹⁷⁷ Sharon Shochat, “The Gulf Cooperation Council Economies: Diversification and Reform” (report, Kuwait Research Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, London School of Economics and Political Science, February 2008),” 43, <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/research/background.aspx>

¹⁷⁸ Faisal Hasan and Talal S. AlGharaballi, Global Research, “Kuwait Economic Overview” (report, Global Investment House, Safat, Kuwait, April 2011), 19,

http://www.arabbankers.org/shared/files/files.jsp?_event=view&_id=530000_U127360_152775

¹⁷⁹ Samir Salama and Zaher Bitar, “GCC Monetary Union Plan Will Not Fly,” Gulfnews.com, 7 December 2010, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/gcc-monetary-union-plan-will-not-fly-1.724443>

Finance and Investment

Kuwait's Ministry of Finance prepares the national budget and supervises the treasury and the state's investments. Unlike other Gulf states in which oil income goes directly to the rulers, Kuwait's oil revenues are paid into the national treasury and then redistributed. The ruling family receives an allowance set by the National Assembly. Kuwaiti citizens occasionally receive payments by royal decree, and Kuwait has one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds, a state portfolio of investments built from annual contributions of oil revenues.¹⁸⁰ Kuwait has been investing internationally since the 1970s. The Kuwait Investment Authority was created in 1982 to administer the state's General Reserve Fund and the Reserve Fund for Future Generations (RFFG), the latter of which receives about 10% of the annual oil revenues.¹⁸¹ When early investments in developing countries did not provide good returns, the RFFG turned to investing in developed countries.¹⁸² Recently, annual returns on the government's foreign investments have been as high as 20% of annual oil income.¹⁸³



© miskan / flickr.com
Kuwait Stock Exchange

The government also invests in foreign aid through the Kuwait Fund for Arab and Economic Development, which has financed development projects in Arab countries since 1961, and more recently throughout the developing world. Kuwait participates in many other regional and global finance organizations.

Opportunities for private investors include the Kuwait Stock Exchange (the oldest in the region) and the many investment companies that now account for more than 90% of the total assets of Kuwait's banking system.¹⁸⁴ As in banking, both conventional and Islamic investment firms operate in Kuwait. The government assisted investors who lost in local market crashes in 1977 and 1982, but has since warned that it will not guarantee future losses.¹⁸⁵ A new Capital Markets Law to regulate the stock exchange and investment companies was passed in 2010.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁰ Sharon Shochat, "The Gulf Cooperation Council Economies: Diversification and Reform" (report, Kuwait Research Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, London School of Economics and Political Science, February 2008), 50,

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/research/background.aspx>

¹⁸¹ Energy Information Authority, "Country Analysis Briefs: Kuwait," May 2010,

<http://www.eia.gov/cabs/Kuwait/Full.html>

¹⁸² Mary Ann Tetreault, "Autonomy, Necessity, and the Small State: Ruling Kuwait in the Twentieth Century," *International Organization* 45, no. 4 (Autumn 1991): 584, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706948>

¹⁸³ Alex Vatanka, "Kuwait at 50," Middle East Institute, 17 February 2011, <http://www.mei.edu/Publications/WebPublications/PolicyInsights/PolicyInsightsArchive/tabid/876/ctl/Detail/mid/2844/xmid/1672/xmfid/36/Default.aspx>

¹⁸⁴ International Monetary Fund, "Kuwait: Financial System Stability Assessment Update," 1 July 2010, 5–6, www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2010/cr10239.pdf

¹⁸⁵ "Kuwait—Banking and Finance," in *Persian Gulf States: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress), 1993, <http://countrystudies.us/persian-gulf-states/24.htm>

¹⁸⁶ Linklaters, "Impact of the new Kuwait Capital Markets Law and regulations," 12 May 2011,

Standard of Living

From the 1950s, Kuwaitis experienced a rapid rise in economic living standards financed by oil revenues. For a time before the Gulf War, Kuwait City had the world's highest number of cars and air conditioners per capita, as well as the highest per capita income.¹⁸⁷ Postwar standards are returning to prewar heights. In 2010, the UN ranked Kuwait 47th (of 169 countries) on its Human Development Index, with an average life expectancy of 77.9 years and a literacy rate of 94.5%. Kuwait also exhibits other demographic trends of developed nations, including decreasing birth- rates (from 7.3 annual births per woman in 1962 to 2.86 in 2007) and increasing rates of heart disease and diabetes.¹⁸⁸ In 2011, to mark Kuwait's 50th anniversary of independence and 20th anniversary of liberation from Iraq, the emir gave every Kuwaiti citizen 1,000 dinars (USD 3,559) and a year's supply of food.¹⁸⁹



© Mink / flickr.com
Kuwaiti residential homes

Kuwait's high living standards do not extend to either the majority population of foreign workers or to the *bidoon jinsiya* (those "without nationality"), an underclass of longtime residents of Kuwait who have yet to be granted citizenship. In 2008, a three-day strike led to the deportation of hundreds of Bengalis and other workers.¹⁹⁰ In 2010, the government passed a new private sector labor law establishing a minimum wage and other improvements for national and foreign employees. The new law does not cover domestic workers.¹⁹¹ Female domestic servants, typically from South Asia, Indonesia, or the Philippines, are especially susceptible to serious human rights violations including kidnapping, indentured servitude, and rape.¹⁹² (In 2009, the government of Indonesia banned migration of domestic workers to Kuwait.¹⁹³)

http://www.linklaters.com/Publications/GCC/May/Pages/Impact_New_Kuwait_Capital_Markets_Law_And_Regulations.aspx

¹⁸⁷ William Ochsenwald and Sydney Nettleton Fisher, *The Middle East: A History*, 6th ed. (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 672.

¹⁸⁸ Sharon Shochat, "The Gulf Cooperation Council Economies: Diversification and Reform" (report, Kuwait Research Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, London School of Economics and Political Science, February 2008), 34,

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/research/background.aspx>

¹⁸⁹ Kuwait News Agency, "Kuwait Amir Grants KD 1,000 for Every Citizen on Nat'l Celebrations Occasion," 17 January 2011,

<http://www.kuna.net.kw/NewsAgencyPublicSite/ArticleDetails.aspx?Language=en&id=2138386>

¹⁹⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Kuwait Year in Review 2008," 2011,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1488713/Kuwait-Year-in-Review-2008?anchor=ref1017031>

¹⁹¹ Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2011: Kuwait," 2010, <http://www.hrw.org/en/world-report-2011/kuwait>

¹⁹² Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "2010 Human Rights Report: Kuwait," 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/nea/154465.htm>

¹⁹³ Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report 2010: Kuwait," 14 June 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/142760.htm>

Employment Trends

Kuwait guarantees employment to its citizens. For decades, analysts have described the public employment sector as bloated with unnecessary positions and unqualified workers.^{194, 195}

Currently over 90% of the Kuwaiti workforce of 150,000 work for the government, and the public sector cannot continue to absorb the 19,000 new college graduates who enter the job market each year.^{196, 197} Unemployment has risen to

measurable rates, from 2% in 2005 to 4.5% in 2008.^{198, 199} In 2009, the Kuwait Central Statistical Office reported 16,304 unemployed Kuwaitis.²⁰⁰



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Helping Hands, housemaids and foreign workers

Kuwaiti women have joined the workforce in increasing numbers since the 1960s, when they were only 1% of the national workforce.²⁰¹ By 2008, Kuwaiti women outnumbered Kuwaiti men in the public sector.²⁰²

Currently almost all of the non-Kuwaiti labor force is in the private sector, which provides roughly 80% of the total employment in the country.²⁰³ Historically, expatriates have filled most high-skill positions, especially positions in oil management. Kuwaitis have resented this fact. However, the Kuwaiti education system has yet to prepare

¹⁹⁴ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 79.

¹⁹⁵ Nora Colton, "Social Stratification in the Gulf Cooperation Council States" (paper no. 14, Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, Center for Study of Global Governance, London School of Economics, January 2011), 5,

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/research/papers/socialstratification.aspx>

¹⁹⁶ Oxford Business Group, "Health and Education," in *The Report: Kuwait 2011*, 2010, 175,

http://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/full_content/health-and-education-39

¹⁹⁷ Sharon Shochat, "The Gulf Cooperation Council Economies: Diversification and Reform" (paper, Kuwait Research Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, London School of Economics and Political Science, February 2008), 34,

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/research/background.aspx>

¹⁹⁸ World Bank, "Data by Country: Kuwait," 2011, <http://data.worldbank.org/country/kuwait>

¹⁹⁹ Sharon Shochat, "The Gulf Cooperation Council Economies: Diversification and Reform" (paper, Kuwait Research Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, London School of Economics and Political Science, February 2008), 36,

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/research/background.aspx>

²⁰⁰ Central Statistical Office, State of Kuwait, "Statistical Review for 2010," 9,

<http://www.e.gov.kw/sites/kg0English/portal/Pages/BusinessSec.aspx>

²⁰¹ Sharon Shochat, "The Gulf Cooperation Council Economies: Diversification and Reform" (paper, Kuwait Research Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, London School of Economics and Political Science, February 2008), 34,

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/research/background.aspx>

²⁰² Central Statistical Office, State of Kuwait, "Statistical Review for 2010," 9,

<http://www.e.gov.kw/sites/kg0English/portal/Pages/BusinessSec.aspx>

²⁰³ Sharon Shochat, "The Gulf Cooperation Council Economies: Diversification and Reform" (paper, Kuwait Research Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, London School of Economics and Political Science, February 2008), 34,

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/research/background.aspx>

graduates qualified for these private sector positions. Foreign workers also fill hundreds of thousands of undesirable, unskilled labor positions. Foreign workers must register with the state and are prohibited from voting in unions and participating in political, religious, or ideological activities.²⁰⁴ In 2011, plans were announced to reduce the number of foreign workers to a more manageable minority of the total population.²⁰⁵

Public vs. Private Sector and Outlook

Kuwait's early actions as an independent state aimed to nationalize major sectors of the economy (such as oil and banking), and to promote local ownership and control of businesses.²⁰⁶ In later decades, Kuwait's leaders have planned for economic diversification, in part to relieve the state of some of the burden of funding the public sector. A tendency to favor "family, clan, and tribal ties throughout the business community and government" often conflicts with plans to admit foreigners into the economy through privatization schemes.²⁰⁷ Among the Gulf countries, Kuwait has attracted the lowest amount of foreign investment.²⁰⁸



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Kuwaiti shopkeeper selling dates

Outlook

In the short term—the multinational energy corporations' forecasts through 2030—Kuwait's oil-dependent economy appears stable. In the more distant, post-oil future, Kuwait will need an alternative economic engine to water and cool the desert and provide goods and services for its urban lifestyle.

²⁰⁴ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 80.

²⁰⁵ Reuters, "Kuwait Eyes Residency Caps to Limit Expats," 13 June 2011, http://www.daijiworld.com/news/news_disp.asp?n_id=105253&n_tit=Kuwait+Eyes+Residency+Cap+to+Limit+Expats

²⁰⁶ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 90.

²⁰⁷ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2011 Investment Climate Statement: Kuwait," March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157305.htm>

²⁰⁸ Sharon Shochat, "The Gulf Cooperation Council Economies: Diversification and Reform" (paper, Kuwait Research Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, London School of Economics and Political Science, February 2008), 25–27, 31, <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/research/background.aspx>

Chapter 3 Assessments

1. Kuwaitis produce most of their own food.
False
Kuwait imports most of its food.
2. Kuwait imports natural gas to run its electricity plants.
True
Starting in 2009, rising residential demand forced Kuwait to import gas to power electricity production.
3. Kuwait requires all banks to conform to sharia (Islamic law).
False
Kuwait permits both conventional and Islamic banks to operate in the country.
4. The state's foreign investments are a growing stream of government revenue.
True
Kuwait's sovereign wealth funds are some of the largest in the world. Annual returns on the government's foreign investments have reached 20% of annual oil income.
5. All of Kuwait's residents enjoy a high standard of living.
False
The majority of Kuwait's population are foreign workers who do not receive the benefits given to Kuwaiti citizens.

Chapter 4 Society

Introduction

Kuwait is an Arab Muslim country where extended family relationships determine one's social identity, nationality, educational and occupational opportunities, and ultimately one's place in society.²⁰⁹ The value of family is evident throughout society—in hereditary rule, in preferential business arrangements, in the many hours spent at home compared to the few hours at work.^{210, 211, 212} Important social



DoD Image / Eric Guzman
Kuwaiti Independence Day celebration

distinctions in Kuwaiti life, such as religious affiliation (Sunni or Shi'a), residence style and location (*hadari*, settled urban, or *qabali*, tribal rural), and economic level (rich or less rich) derive from family membership.^{213, 214, 215} Paternal descent also determines nationality and level of citizenship. First-class citizenship entitles Kuwaitis to their share of oil revenues, which the state distributes as free healthcare, education, housing, and guaranteed employment.^{216, 217} Extended family relationships are the basis of *wasta*, the social connectedness which is essential and also prone to abuse in Kuwaiti society.^{218, 219} Throughout the wider Arab world, Kuwait is considered a conservative country, but among the Arab Gulf states, it is considered modern and somewhat maverick.

²⁰⁹ Nasra M. Shah, Makhdoom A. Shah, and Zoran Radovanovic, "Social Class and Morbidity Differences among Kuwaiti Children," *Journal of Health & Population in Developing Countries* 2, no. 1 (1999): 58–69, <http://www.longwoods.com/content/17502>

²¹⁰ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2011 Investment Climate Statement: Kuwait," March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2011/157305.htm>

²¹¹ Obaid Al Otaibi, "Public-Private Partnerships in Tourism Development: An Analysis of the Kuwait Experience (study, Department of Geography, College of Social Sciences, Kuwait University and Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences, 25 July 2004), 31, <http://www.gammathetaupsilon.org/the-geographical-bulletin/2000s/volume46-1/article3.pdf>

²¹² Maria O'Shea and Michael Spilling, *Cultures of the World*, 2nd ed. (Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 17: 73.

²¹³ Mary Ann Tétreault, "Autonomy, Necessity, and the Small State: Ruling Kuwait in the Twentieth Century," *International Organization* 45, no. 4 (Autumn 1991): 565–591, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706948>

²¹⁴ Nasra M. Shah, "Migration to Kuwait: Trends, Patterns and Policies" (paper, Migration and Refugee Movements in the Middle East and North Africa, The Forced Migration & Refugee Studies Program, American University in Cairo, 23–25 October 2007), http://www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/reports/Documents/Nasra_Shah.pdf

²¹⁵ Maria O'Shea and Michael Spilling, *Cultures of the World*, 2nd ed. (Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 17: 66.

²¹⁶ Nasra M. Shah, "Migration to Kuwait: Trends, Patterns and Policies" (paper, Migration and Refugee Movements in the Middle East and North Africa, The Forced Migration & Refugee Studies Program, American University in Cairo, 23–25 October 2007), http://www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/reports/Documents/Nasra_Shah.pdf

²¹⁷ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 79.

²¹⁸ Nasra M. Shah, Makhdoom A. Shah, and Zoran Radovanovic, "Social Class and Morbidity Differences among Kuwaiti Children," *Journal of Health & Population in Developing Countries* 2, no. 1 (1999): 59–60, www.longwoods.com/product/download/code/17502

²¹⁹ Steffen Hertog, "The Sociology of the Gulf Rentier Systems: Societies of Intermediaries," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52, no. 2 (2010): 282–318.

As a trade settlement, Kuwait received an influx of resident workers from Asia to the east, Africa to the west, and the Arab regions in between. From time to time, the ruling family also invited Bedouin and other Arab mercenaries to protect Kuwait from temporary threats.²²⁰ In the early years of independence, some of these people, mostly Bedouins, received first-class citizenship, in response to their bravery and loyalty. Others, who could not prove their families' continuous residence in Kuwait from 1920 onward, received second-class citizenship and saw their access to healthcare, education, and other state benefits erode over time. A third group became *bidoon jinsiya* ("without nationality"), a stateless underclass that continues to be a problem in Kuwaiti society.^{221, 222} Oil accelerated the influx of foreign workers at both ends of the skill spectrum until foreigners came to outnumber nationals in the late 1960s. Kuwaiti society is now struggling to improve the poor housing, health, and safety conditions that were allowed to develop among foreign workers.

Ethnic Groups and Languages

Arabs

Most of today's Kuwaitis descend from Arab ancestors. For these people, "Arabness" is hereditary, linguistic, and religious. Kuwaiti Arabness also references the traditional nomadic life of the Bedouin; for example, camping in the desert is a major recreational activity, for which many urban families keep (otherwise unused) camels. Kuwaiti Arabs distinguish the Bedouin, *qabali* ("tribal") latecomer from the original *hadari* ("urban") settler who traces his lineage to the merchant families of the original Bani Utub. This ethnic distinction has taken on political overtones. The *hadari*, who make up some 35% of the Kuwaiti national population, are the minority "loyal opposition"; the majority *qabali* support the ruling family.^{223, 224}



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Going for a ride, Arab men and camels

Bedouin influence may have contributed to the development of large foreign worker populations in Kuwait. Bedouins (and other pastoral peoples) often use slaves, or employ minorities or other social outcasts, to do low-prestige or technical work for them (and keep the high-prestige activities of herding and arms bearing for themselves).²²⁵ Non-Kuwaiti Arabs also came to Kuwait in response to regional turmoil; for example, many

²²⁰ Helen Rizzo, Katherine Meyer, and Yousef Ali, "Extending Political Rights in the Middle East: The Case of Kuwait," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 35, no. 2 (Winter 2007): 179–182.

²²¹ Helen Rizzo, Katherine Meyer, and Yousef Ali, "Extending Political Rights in the Middle East: The Case of Kuwait," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 35, no. 2 (Winter 2007), 179–182.

²²² Maria O'Shea and Michael Spilling, *Cultures of the World*, 2nd ed. (Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 17: 65.

²²³ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 40, 89.

²²⁴ Paul Salem, "Kuwait: Politics in a Participatory Emirate" (Carnegie Papers no. 3, Carnegie Middle East Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2007), 7, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec3_salem_kuwait_finall.pdf

²²⁵ Nazih Ayubi, "Arab Bureaucracies," in *The Arab State*, ed. Giacomo Luciani (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 138.

Palestinians immigrated after the creation of the state of Israel.²²⁶ Egyptians, Iraqis, Syrians, Lebanese, and other Gulf Arabs have brought their families and contributed their labor, cuisines, and cultures to Kuwait. The Gulf War fractured pan-Arab solidarity among these groups, and Kuwait revoked residence rights for Palestinians, Jordanians, Sudanese, Yemenis, and Iraqis.²²⁷ Recent population estimates are that non-Kuwaiti Arabs make up 35% of the total population in Kuwait.^{228, 229}

Asians

A minority of Kuwaiti nationals descend from Persian ancestors. The term *ajam* (“non-Arab”) was first used to describe these people.²³⁰ They speak Arabic with a distinct accent, and are typically Shi’ite, rather than Sunni Muslims.²³¹ An estimated 4% of the current non-Kuwaiti population is Iranian.



© Molly Spessert
Hospital workers in Kuwait

In recent years the majority of Kuwait’s foreign workers have come from South Asia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.²³² Unlike the previous generations of Arab foreign workers, they tend to come as individuals, without families or other local support and with low levels of education; they do not speak Arabic dialects and have few opportunities to integrate into Kuwaiti society. Men may share crowded quarters in residential areas that are gaining reputations for crime; women may be isolated as domestic servants with nowhere to turn when mistreated.^{233, 234}

²²⁶ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 79.

²²⁷ Nasra M. Shah, “Migration to Kuwait: Trends, Patterns and Policies” (paper, Migration and Refugee Movements in the Middle East and North Africa, The Forced Migration & Refugee Studies Program, American University in Cairo, 23–25 October 2007), 4, http://www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/reports/Documents/Nasra_Shah.pdf

²²⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, “Kuwait,” in *The World Factbook*, 19 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ku.html>

²²⁹ Nasra M. Shah, “Migration to Kuwait: Trends, Patterns and Policies” (paper, Migration and Refugee Movements in the Middle East and North Africa, The Forced Migration & Refugee Studies Program, American University in Cairo, 23–25 October 2007), 15, http://www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/reports/Documents/Nasra_Shah.pdf

²³⁰ Maria O’Shea and Michael Spilling, *Cultures of the World*, 2nd ed. (Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 17: 64.

²³¹ A. Dashti, “Language Maintenance or Shift? An Ethnographic Investigation of the Use of Farsi among Kuwaiti Ajmans: A Case Study,” *Arab Journal for the Humanities* 22, no. 87 (2004): 229–237.

²³² Nasra M. Shah, “Migration to Kuwait: Trends, Patterns and Policies” (paper, Migration and Refugee Movements in the Middle East and North Africa, The Forced Migration & Refugee Studies Program, American University in Cairo, 23–25 October 2007),” http://www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/reports/Documents/Nasra_Shah.pdf

²³³ Ricky Laxa, “Poverty, Overcrowding Driving Factors behind Crime,” *Al Watan Daily*, 17 February 2010, 4, <http://alwatanadaily.kuwait.tt/resources/pdf/635/4.pdf>

²³⁴ “Shelter for expats to be built soon in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh,” *KuwaitSamachar.com*, 14 May 2011, <http://kuwaitssamachar.com/index/news/shelter-expats-be-built-soon-jleeb-al-shuyoukh>

Bidoon

The *bidoon* (“without”) are not a single ethnic group, but in Kuwait they have developed a single social identity based on shared experiences of exclusion and discrimination. They are “third-class” noncitizens who lack identity papers. They cannot claim state benefits, and they cannot leave Kuwait on their own accord. Some *bidoon* are Bedouin nomads who did not recognize the need to establish Kuwaiti nationality or citizenship; others are mercenaries (mostly Iraqi, Syrian, and Lebanese) who worked with the Kuwaiti armed forces into the 1980s; some may be both. Their numbers have declined from an estimated 250,000 in the 1990s to between 70,000 and 100,000 today.^{235, 236} The state continues to try to reduce the size of this group, granting some individuals citizenship and encouraging others to leave. Some Kuwaitis believe the *bidoon* are undeservedly trying to take advantage of Kuwait’s generous welfare system; others view them as victims of an unjust state. *Bidoon* who succeed in becoming citizens tend to be Sunni, although the majority of the group are believed to be Shi’ite.²³⁷



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Bidoon Shepard

Languages

The constitution states that Arabic is the official language. The state recognizes this designation as a promotion of Islam as the state religion, and of Arab identity.²³⁸ Linguists distinguish Modern Standard Arabic—the shared written language of education, media, and law—from the varieties of colloquial Arabic spoken (but rarely written) throughout the Arab world. Kuwaitis speak a form of Gulf (*khaliji*) Arabic known as the Hadari Arabic dialect, which is distinguished from other Gulf dialects by certain pronunciation patterns and Persian loanwords.^{239, 240} Kuwaitis hear differences among speakers of Sharg (east) and Jibla (west) Hadari, as well as differences in Zubair (Iraqi), Persian, and several Bedouin dialects.^{241, 242, 243}

²³⁵ Paul Salem, “Kuwait: Politics in a Participatory Emirate” (Carnegie Papers no. 3, Carnegie Middle East Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2007), 7,

http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec3_salem_kuwait_final1.pdf

²³⁶ Helen Rizzo, Katherine Meyer, and Yousef Ali, “Extending Political Rights in the Middle East: The Case of Kuwait,” *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 35, no. 2 (Winter 2007): 177–197.

²³⁷ Helen Rizzo, Katherine Meyer, and Yousef Ali, “Extending Political Rights in the Middle East: The Case of Kuwait,” *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 35, no. 2 (Winter 2007): 177–197.

²³⁸ Kuwait Government Online, “Official Language of Kuwait,” n.d., http://www.e.gov.kw/sites/kgoenglish/portal/Pages/Visitors/AboutKuwait/CultureAndHeritage_Language.aspx#

²³⁹ M. Paul Lewis, “Languages of Kuwait,” in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed., online version (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2009),

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=KW

²⁴⁰ Madeline Haggan, “Text Messaging in Kuwait: Is the Medium the Message?” *Multilingua* 26, no. 4 (2007): 427–449, <http://related.springerprotocols.com/lp/de-gruyter/text-messaging-in-kuwait-is-the-medium-the-message-0RoE0h2X0J>

²⁴¹ Bruce Ingham, *Arabian Diversions: Studies on the Dialects of Arabia* (Berkshire: Ithica Press, 1997).

²⁴² A. Dashti, “Language Maintenance or Shift? An Ethnographic Investigation of the Use of Farsi among Kuwaiti Ajmans: A Case Study,” *Arab Journal for the Humanities* 22, no. 87 (2004): 229–237.

English is widespread as a second language. Formal schooling in English begins in the 5th grade. At Kuwait University, science and engineering courses are taught in English, but arts, humanities, and social sciences in Arabic.²⁴⁴ Foreign workers also bring their languages with them, including other forms of spoken Arabic and Asian languages such as Farsi, Hindi, and Urdu.

Religion

Islam

The Kuwaiti constitution names Islam as the official religion of the state.²⁴⁵ The majority of the population, both national and foreign, are Muslim, with roughly 70% Sunni and 30% Shi'ite.²⁴⁶ Kuwaiti Sunnis include the ruling family, and most follow the Maliki school of Islamic jurisprudence. The versatility of the Maliki tradition distinguishes Kuwaitis from the conservative Hanbali legal traditions of Wahhabi Saudis.^{247, 248} Muslims in neighboring Iran and Iraq are mostly Shi'ite, and Kuwaiti Shi'ites may be of Persian or various Arab ancestries. In Kuwait Sunni and Shi'a do not often mix in marriage or in business. Kuwaiti Shi'ites are not a heavily repressed minority, but they do struggle for representation in the government.^{249, 250, 251}



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Grand Mosque in Kuwait

An equally significant religious rift exists between Islamists and secularists. Islamists are increasingly filing suit against those who “defame” Islam, and cases against journalists and television stations more than tripled from fewer than 200 in 2009 to 678 in 2010.²⁵²

²⁴³ T. M. Johnstone, “Some Characteristics of the Dōsiri Dialect of Arabic as Spoken in Kuwait,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 24, no. 2 (1961): 249–297,

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/610168>

²⁴⁴ Maria O’Shea and Michael Spilling, *Cultures of the World*, 2nd ed. (Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 17: 83–84.

²⁴⁵ Kuwait Government Online, “Official Religion of Kuwait,” n.d., http://www.e.gov.kw/sites/kgenglish/portal/Pages/Visitors/AboutKuwait/CultureAndHeritage_ReligiousPractices.aspx#

²⁴⁶ Christopher M. Blanchard, Congressional Research Service, “Islam: Sunnis and Shiites (RS21745),” 11 December 2006, CRS–6, <http://opencrs.com/document/RS21745/2006-12-11/download/1005/>

²⁴⁷ John. L. Esposito, ed., *The Oxford History of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 113–115.

²⁴⁸ J. Gordon Melton, “Kuwait,” in *Religions of the World: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices*, Vol. Four, 2nd edition, eds. J. Gordon Melton and Martin Baumann (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 1668–1670, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/alltitles/docDetail.action?docID=10437112>

²⁴⁹ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 40.

²⁵⁰ Maria O’Shea and Michael Spilling, *Kuwait, Cultures of the World*, 2nd ed. (Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 17: 67–68.

²⁵¹ Alex Vatanka, “Kuwait at 50,” Middle East Institute, 17 February 2011, <http://www.mei.edu/Publications/WebPublications/PolicyInsights/PolicyInsightsArchive/tabid/876/ctl/Detail/mid/2844/xmid/1672/xmfid/36/Default.aspx>

²⁵² Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Human Rights Report: Kuwait,” 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/nea/154465.htm>

Plans for education reform to minimize the development of religious fanaticism among youth are countered by warnings of the weakening of “traditional Kuwaiti values.”²⁵³

Other Religions

Kuwait tolerates the practice of other religions. Christian missionaries have been in Kuwait since the time of Mubarak the Great, and Christianity accounts for the largest number of non-Muslim (and mostly non-Kuwaiti) believers, some 10% of the total population. Hinduism arrived in the southern Gulf even earlier, and now accounts for about 3% of believers in Kuwait. Smaller numbers of Buddhists, Sikhs, Baha’i, and Jews also live in Kuwait.^{254, 255, 256}

Actions seen as against Islam are forbidden, such as attempting to convert Muslims to other religions. Kuwait permits the establishment of public places of worship for religions that are sanctioned in the Quran (i.e., Christianity). Other religions may be practiced only privately in the home.^{257, 258, 259}

The Diwaniya

The *diwaniya* is an important social institution that many Kuwaitis consider unique to their society. A *diwan* was (and still is) the place where a common person could meet with his ruler.²⁶⁰ *Diwaniya* means both place and process, a large hospitality room where men are invited to discuss current issues. An extension of the private home sponsored by wealthy men, *diwaniya* become especially important in critical times such as when the emir dissolves the National Assembly and the state censors the media.²⁶¹ Today, it is said that all Kuwaiti men belong to one of the many *diwaniya* that can be found on every



© Steve & Jem Copley
At the Diwaniya

²⁵³ Alex Vatanka, “Kuwait at 50,” Middle East Institute, 17 February 2011, <http://www.mei.edu/Publications/WebPublications/PolicyInsights/PolicyInsightsArchive/tabid/876/ctl/Detail/mid/2844/xmid/1672/xmfd/36/Default.aspx>

²⁵⁴ Rebecca L. Torstrick and Elizabeth Faier, *Culture and Customs of the Arab Gulf States* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 36.

²⁵⁵ J. Gordon Melton, “Kuwait,” in *Religions of the World: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices*, Vol. Four, 2nd edition, eds. J. Gordon Melton and Martin Baumann (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 1668–1670, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/alltitles/docDetail.action?docID=10437112>

²⁵⁶ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. State Department, “Kuwait: International Religious Freedom Report 2010,” 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148828.htm>

²⁵⁷ Kenneth Katzman, “Kuwait: Security, Reform and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS21513, 8 February 2011, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21513.pdf>

²⁵⁸ Maria O’Shea and Michael Spilling, *Cultures of the World*, 2nd ed. (Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 17: 67–68.

²⁵⁹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. State Department, “Kuwait: International Religious Freedom Report 2010,” 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148828.htm>

²⁶⁰ By some accounts, the word term comes from Hindi *diwan* or Persian *devan*, “bundle of written sheets” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/diwan>); cf. the Dewan of the Prime Minister of India.

²⁶¹ Mary Ann Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 70.

street.^{262, 263} Kuwaiti women have participated in *diwaniya* at least since the early 1990s, and with increasing effect since they received the right to vote in 2005.^{264, 265} Some analysts have blamed the *diwaniya* for the National Assembly's ineffectiveness in recent years.

Gender Issues

Kuwaiti women have more freedoms than many of their Arab sisters, especially in neighboring Gulf states. They have recently received the right to vote. They have access to modern contraception.^{266, 267} They study science, law, and engineering at university, make up the majority of Kuwaiti nationals in the workforce, mostly in teaching, clerical, and social services positions,²⁶⁸ and are beginning to take on traditionally male positions such as police officer, oil business executive, and government cabinet minister.^{269, 270, 271} In fundamental ways, however, Kuwait's Arab Muslim society favors men over women. Women receive many citizenship rights and welfare benefits only through their fathers and husbands, and these men may prevent women from leaving the home for school or work.²⁷² The Islamic shari'a law that governs personal and family matters in Kuwait gives a woman's legal



© nibaq / flickr.com
Kuwaiti Women's Rights protest

²⁶² Media Information Department, Ministry of Information, Government of Kuwait, "Culture: Heritage: Diwaniya," n.d., http://www.kuwait-info.com/a_culture/culture_heritage.asp

²⁶³ Kuwait Government Online, "Customs and Traditions in Kuwait: Al-Diwaniya," n.d., http://www.e.gov.kw/sites/kgenglish/portal/Pages/Visitors/AboutKuwait/CultureAndHeritage_CustomsAndTraditions.aspx#

²⁶⁴ Mary Ann Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 117–118.

²⁶⁵ Andrew Masloski and Tamara Cofman Wittes, "Elections in the Arab World: Progress or Peril?" (Middle East Memo No. 11, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, 12 February 2007), http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2007/0212middleeast_wittes.aspx

²⁶⁶ Statistics Division, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), "Health and Millennium Development Goals in the ESCWA Region," 2008, 21–26, <http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/scu/healthMDG/Goal6.pdf>

²⁶⁷ "Population Planning and Policies," in *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality and Health*, Vol. 3, eds. Suad Joseph and Afsaneh-Najmabadi (Boston: Brill, 2005), 287.

²⁶⁸ Maria O'Shea and Michael Spilling, *Cultures of the World*, 2nd ed. (Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 17: 78.

²⁶⁹ Sharon Shochat, "The Gulf Cooperation Council Economies: Diversification and Reform: An Introduction," (background paper, Kuwait Research Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, London School of Economics and Political Science, February 2008), 35–36, <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/regions/kuwait/documents/Diversification%20and%20Reform%20-%20Sharon%20Shochat.pdf>

²⁷⁰ Oxford Business Group, "Health and Education," in *The Report: Kuwait 2011*, c. 2010, 39, http://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/full_content/health-and-education-39

²⁷¹ Mary Ann Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 161.

²⁷² Helen Rizzo, Katherine Meyer, and Yousef Ali, "Extending Political Rights in the Middle East: the Case of Kuwait" *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 35, no. 2 (Winter 2007), 178–179.

testimony only half the value of a man's, and grants a woman only half the inheritance of a man.²⁷³

The place of women in the public sector is still contested in Kuwaiti society. Women are schooled only in gender-segregated classrooms. In fact, in 2008 a National Assembly member received death threats for proposing a legal amendment to allow college coeducation.²⁷⁴ Women's participation at the stock exchange and in many *diwaniya* is also gender-segregated, as are sports and recreation facilities.^{275, 276, 277} A 2007 law bans women from working after 8 p.m.

Cuisine

Oasis water, dates, meat and dairy products from camels, goats, and sheep are traditional Bedouin foods. Meat might be stewed in a pot with vegetables, grains, and spices, stuffed and baked, or roasted. Freshly caught fish and shrimp are grilled or fried (at your table in fine-dining establishments). *Umm Ali*, a kind of bread pudding, is a local dessert. Other Middle Eastern, Persian, Indian, and Asian foods have become common in Kuwait, such as falafel, hummus, *tabbouleh* (a Levantine salad), and *aish* (Arabic flatbread). Spices include *baharat* (a mixture of cardamom, cinnamon, clove, coriander, cumin, ginger, nutmeg, black pepper, and paprika), turmeric, and dried lime. Arabic coffee in Kuwait may be "blond" (unroasted) or only lightly roasted, spiced with cardamom, and served with milk, but never sugar. Drinking coffee is an important and frequent social ritual, whether at home, in traditional coffee-houses where men may also share a flavored *shisha* ("water pipe"), or at Starbucks in the mall.^{278, 279, 280}



© Mink / flickr.com
Lamb Dinner (Machbus Laham)

Western foods, especially fast foods, that have entered the country in recent decades are contributing to a rise in obesity.^{281, 282} In upscale urban Kuwait, most international

²⁷³ Debra A. Miller, *Kuwait*, Modern Nations of the World series (Farmington Hills, MI: Lucent Books, 2005), 54–56.

²⁷⁴ Oxford Business Group, "Health and Education," in *The Report: Kuwait 2011*, c. 2010, 39, http://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/full_content/health-and-education-39

²⁷⁵ Kuwait Stock Exchange, "About KSE–Ladies Trading Hall," 2008, <http://www.kuwaitse.com/PORTAL/KSE/About.aspx>

²⁷⁶ May Mary Ann Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 117–118.

²⁷⁷ Jenny Walker et al., "Kuwait," in *Oman, UAE & Arabian Peninsula* (London: Lonely Planet, 2007), 165–166.

²⁷⁸ Debra A. Miller, *Kuwait*, Modern Nations of the World series (Farmington Hills, MI: Lucent Books, 2005), 66.

²⁷⁹ Rebecca L. Torstrick and Elizabeth Faier, *Culture and Customs of the Arab Gulf States* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 90–93.

²⁸⁰ Ahmad Al-Khaled, "The Tradition of Arabic Coffee," *Kuwait Times* 25 July 2008.

²⁸¹ Abdulwahhab Al-Isa, Abayomi O. Akanji, and Lukman Thalib, "Prevalence of the Metabolic Syndrome Among Female Kuwaiti Adolescents Using Two Different Criteria," *British Journal of Nutrition* 103, no. 1 (2010), 77–81.

cuisines are available, but they are served without wine. Kuwait observes the Muslim prohibitions against alcohol and pork in all venues, public and private, and customs officials will confiscate any contraband.

Traditional Dress

Kuwaiti traditional dress follows Muslim prescriptions for modesty. Wearing traditional dress is common, and in recent decades has been politicized for both men and women.^{283, 284}

Men wear a *dishdasha*, a long robe (white in summer, darker in winter), over *sirwal*, long trousers, and leather sandals. Covering men's heads is a *gatra*, a folded cloth (again white in summer, or red-and-white checked in winter) bound with an *agal* of leather or decorative rope. In winter men might wear a traditional *bisht* coat or a Bedouin fur-lined *farwah*. This 19th-century merchant style of dress distinguishes the Kuwaiti national from non-Kuwaitis, who typically wear European-style clothing in public.^{285, 286} Kuwaiti men also carry prayer beads known as *masabah*.²⁸⁷



© Mink / flickr.com
Different styles of clothing

Women traditionally wear a long, loose dress. Styles for home are called *dara'a*, and for public, *thob*. When going out, many Kuwaiti women will also wear a full-length black *abaya*. Bedouin and older women may veil with a black *bushiya*, or even wear the *burka*. However, women's face coverings are legally banned while driving, for safety reasons.²⁸⁸ Some Kuwaiti women go out in European-style clothing (usually with long skirts and sleeves) and a *hijab* (scarf) to cover the head and neck. Traditional clothing is tailored to the individual rather than purchased off the rack, while high-fashion houses produce accessories for the Gulf luxury market. Kuwaiti women favor elaborate makeup (especially kohl-lined eyes), hairdos, jewelry, and perfume.^{289, 290, 291}

²⁸² "Nutrition and Dietary Practices," in *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality and Health*, Vol. 3, eds. Suad Joseph and Afsaneh Najmabadi (Boston: Brill, 2005), 283.

²⁸³ May Mary Ann Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 27.

²⁸⁴ Maria O'Shea and Michael Spilling, *Cultures of the World*, 2nd ed. (Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 17: 69–70.

²⁸⁵ Debra A. Miller, *Kuwait*, Modern Nations of the World series (Farmington Hills, MI: Lucent Books, 2005), 72–73.

²⁸⁶ Rebecca L. Torstrick and Elizabeth Faier, *Culture and Customs of the Arab Gulf States* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 95–108.

²⁸⁷ Maria O'Shea and Michael Spilling, *Cultures of the World*, 2nd ed. (Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 17: 70.

²⁸⁸ Maria O'Shea and Michael Spilling, *Kuwait*, *Cultures of the World*, 2nd ed. (Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 17: 69–70.

²⁸⁹ Debra A. Miller, *Kuwait*, Modern Nations of the World series (Farmington Hills, MI: Lucent Books, 2005), 72–73.

²⁹⁰ Rebecca L. Torstrick and Elizabeth Faier, *Culture and Customs of the Arab Gulf States* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 95–108.

²⁹¹ Maria O'Shea and Michael Spilling, *Kuwait*, *Cultures of the World*, 2nd ed. (Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 17: 69–70.

Arts

Folk Traditions

Kuwaitis have a long tradition of performing arts inspired by family celebrations, religious festivals, and work activities. Men and women recite poetry, sing and dance at weddings and religious rituals, at sea and at war. Bedouin men may sway with swords, while women dance more modestly, moving their heads rather than their bodies.^{292, 293}



© Mink / flickr.com
Salman Al-Amari on an Oud

Traditional material craftsmanship is preserved in museums. Bedouin weaving courses and woven products are available at the Sadu House of the National Museum, and *dhow*s, traditional ships, can be seen at the Al-Hashemi Marine Museum. Gold jewelry is a traditional gift for special occasions, especially for brides. Kuwait is famous for its gold *suqs* (markets).^{294, 295}

Contemporary Arts

Among Gulf countries, Kuwait is unique in its support of live theater since 1922.²⁹⁶ Popular modern productions have included *Bye Bye London*, a comedy about Kuwaiti men's trips to London to escape their wives, and *The Hamlet Summit*, Shakespeare's tale set within the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which also played in Cairo (2002) and London (2004).²⁹⁷

It is hard to miss the monumental modern architecture in Kuwait. The Liberation Tower is one of the tallest telecommunications structures in the world. Many newer buildings integrate traditional and Islamic themes. The National Assembly building was designed to evoke a Bedouin tent or a *dhow*'s sail, and the Sharq Suq, a shopping mall, incorporates the design of traditional desert air conditioning, the *barjeel* wind tower.²⁹⁸

²⁹² Andrew Hammond, *Pop Culture Arab World! Media, Arts, and Lifestyle* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 247.

²⁹³ Debra A. Miller, *Kuwait*, Modern Nations of the World series (Farmington Hills, MI: Lucent Books, 2005), 75.

²⁹⁴ Maria O'Shea and Michael Spilling, *Cultures of the World*, 2nd ed. (Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 17: 107–108.

²⁹⁵ Debra A. Miller, *Kuwait*, Modern Nations of the World series (Farmington Hills, MI: Lucent Books, 2005), 73.

²⁹⁶ Media Information Department, Ministry of Information, Government of Kuwait, "Theatres and Musical Societies," n.d., http://www.kuwait-info.com/a_tourism/tourism_place_interest_more3.asp

²⁹⁷ Andrew Hammond, *Pop Culture Arab World! Media, Arts, and Lifestyle* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 185–187.

²⁹⁸ Jenny Walker et al., "Kuwait," in *Oman, UAE & Arabian Peninsula* (London: Lonely Planet, 2007), 160.

Sports and Recreation

Bedouin-influenced sports and recreational activities include camel racing, falconry, and desert camping.^{299, 300} Robots are replacing young foreign boys as camel jockeys (an effort to reduce exploitation of children and foreign workers).^{301,}

³⁰² Water sports (in full-body swimsuits) are popular along the coasts, though expatriates are advised to avoid swimming near Kuwait City because of the dangers of untreated sewage in the water.³⁰³ Soccer is a popular professional sport, and Kuwait's Olympic size ice-skating rink hosts the Kuwaiti Falcons, the only Arab member of the International Ice Hockey Federation. In 2000, Kuwaiti army officer Fehaid al-Dihani won Kuwait's only Olympic medal to date, a bronze in men's shooting.³⁰⁴



© Mink / flickr.com
Camel racing

Restaurants, coffee shops, and shopping malls are leisure destinations of choice. Kuwaitis are some of the world's most avid consumers of luxury goods.³⁰⁵ Kuwait City presents the Hala shopping festival each February, which coincides with National Day (celebrating independence from Britain in 1961) on 25 February, and Liberation Day (from Iraq in 1991) on 26 February.^{306, 307} According to the government, "most Kuwaitis spend their vacations abroad."³⁰⁸

²⁹⁹ Andrew Hammond, *Pop Culture Arab World! Media, Arts, and Lifestyle* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 299–300.

³⁰⁰ Rebecca L. Torstrick and Elizabeth Faier, *Culture and Customs of the Arab Gulf States* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 138–142.

³⁰¹ Rebecca L. Torstrick and Elizabeth Faier, *Culture and Customs of the Arab Gulf States* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 140.

³⁰² Reuters, "Kuwait Holds First Camel Race with Robot Jockeys," *Khaleej Times*, 13 October 2005, http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2005/October/middleeast_October_319.xml§ion=middleeast

³⁰³ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom, "Travel and Living Abroad–Kuwait," 2011, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/middle-east-north-africa/kuwait>

³⁰⁴ Andrew Hammond, *Pop Culture Arab World! Media, Arts, and Lifestyle* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005, Scribd 288), <http://www.scribd.com/doc/47983525/Pop-Culture-Arab-World>

³⁰⁵ Andrew Hammond, *Pop Culture Arab World! Media, Arts, and Lifestyle* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005 Scribd 288), <http://www.scribd.com/doc/47983525/Pop-Culture-Arab-World>

³⁰⁶ Media Information Department, Ministry of Information, Government of Kuwait, "Hala February Festival," n.d., http://www.kuwait-info.com/a_culture/culture_events_halafeb.asp

³⁰⁷ Jenny Walker et al., "Kuwait," in *Oman, UAE & Arabian Peninsula* (London: Lonely Planet, 2007), 166.

³⁰⁸ Kuwait Government Online, "Customs and Traditions in Kuwait," n.d., http://www.e.gov.kw/sites/kgenglish/portal/Pages/Visitors/AboutKuwait/CultureAndHeritage_CustomsAndTraditions.aspx#

Chapter 4 Assessment

1. A majority of the Kuwaiti population are *hadari*, who trace their lineage to the original merchant settlers of Kuwait.

False

Hadari are the minority among Kuwaiti nationals. The majority are *qabali*, typically Bedouin nomads who settled in the area later.

2. *Bidoon* is the Kuwaiti word for Bedouin.

False

Bidoon means “without,” and refers to an underclass of stateless residents in Kuwait. However, some *bidoon* are of Bedouin ancestry.

3. Kuwaitis of Persian ancestry tend to be Shi’ite Muslims.

True

The majority of Kuwaitis are Sunni, but a significant minority are Shi’ites. Muslims in neighboring Iran and Iraq are also majority Shi’ite.

4. Kuwaitis speak Modern Standard Arabic.

False

Kuwaitis speak several forms of *khaliji* (also known as Gulf Arabic). Modern Standard Arabic is the shared written language of education, media, and law.

5. Although Kuwait tolerates believers of different religions, attempts to convert Kuwaiti Muslims to other religions are forbidden.

True

Followers of other religions, such as Hindus, Buddhists, and Sikhs, do live in Kuwait, but actions seen as against Islam, such as attempting to convert Kuwaiti Muslims, are forbidden.

Chapter 5 Security

Introduction

Kuwait is a new and fragile state. Geography contributed to Kuwait's people becoming traders and merchants; their most important asset and greatest liability was Kuwait's accessible and vulnerable location. Geology gave Kuwait's people the wealth of oil and consequent anxiety. The State of Kuwait has tried to find security by sharing its wealth among Arab neighbors and developing nations by giving foreign aid.^{309, 310}



DoD image / Chad J. McNeeley
Kuwaiti soldiers

Kuwait participates in regional security arrangements, particularly the Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsula Shield security forces. Finally, it has allied itself with global powers (with whom it shares global economic interests), both through direct bilateral agreements and through international organizations such as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations Security Council.

During the Cold War, Kuwait sought security from all sides. It supported Arab/Soviet interests to counter Israeli/Allied interests, and turned to the Soviets for arms after the United States refused to provide them.^{311, 312} To counter Iraqi threats, Kuwait turned to Britain in the 1960s and to the Soviet Union in the 1970s.^{313, 314} Toward the end of the era, Kuwait became a site of cooperation between the superpowers. During the Iran-Iraq war, both the United States and the Soviet Union participated in the reflagging operations for Kuwaiti ships, even while the Soviet Union supplied arms to Iraq at the same time the U.S. facilitated arms shipments to Iran.³¹⁵ Since the end of the Cold War and the Gulf War, Kuwait has largely relied on Western security support, but has also purchased arms from Russia and China.^{316, 317} Kuwait's current security strategy is geared toward control

³⁰⁹ Fakhri Shehab, "Kuwait: A Super-Affluent Society," *Foreign Affairs* 42, no. 3 (April 1964): 461–474, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20029703>

³¹⁰ Keith Crane et al., *Imported Oil and U.S. National Security* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), 37, <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG838.html>

³¹¹ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 108.

³¹² Helen Chapin Metz, ed., "Regional and National Security Considerations: Kuwait," in *Persian Gulf States: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1993), <http://countrystudies.us/persian-gulf-states/98.htm>

³¹³ Mary Ann Tétreault, "Autonomy, Necessity, and the Small State: Ruling Kuwait in the Twentieth Century," *International Organization* 45, no. 4 (Autumn 1991): 582, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706948>

³¹⁴ Anne M. Kelly, "The Soviet Naval Presence during the Iraq-Kuwaiti Border Dispute: March-April 1973" (Professional Paper 122, Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, VA, June 1974), <http://www.cna.org/documents/5500014500.pdf>

³¹⁵ Global Security, "Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988)," 2011, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/iran-iraq.htm>

³¹⁶ Glenn E. Curtis, ed., "Russia—The Middle East," in *Russia: A Country Study*, (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress), 1996, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/88.htm>

³¹⁷ "Arms Deliveries to Middle East and North Africa, by Supplier (Chapter Ten: Country Comparisons – Commitments, Force Levels and Economics)," *The Military Balance* 111, no. 1 (2011): 479.

of internal threats and temporary defense against external attacks, with the assumption that conflict-ending assistance will arrive from friendly powers.³¹⁸

U.S.-Kuwait Relations

Americans have been in Kuwait since Mubarak the Great invited the Reformed Church of America to build the American Missionary Hospital in 1910.³¹⁹ Gulf Oil Company representatives arrived in the 1930s, the first of thousands of American workers (and billions of American dollars) that continue to have a business presence. The U.S. State Department opened a consulate in Kuwait in 1951.³²⁰ With Britain's withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971, the United States became Kuwait's de facto protector, a role that grew from the defense of Kuwaiti shipping in the 1980s, through the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 action against Iraq, to the current prepositioning of forces for regional action.^{321, 322}



© Coast Guard News / flickr.com
U.S. Coast Guard in Kuwait

In 2001, Kuwait and the United States renewed a security agreement for a second 10 years, and in 2004, the United States named Kuwait a “major non-NATO ally.”³²³ Cooperation ensures the U.S. military presence in Kuwait (estimated to be some 20,000 personnel), joint exercises, and U.S. military and commercial arms sales to Kuwait.^{324, 325} Kuwait served as a logistical hub for the movement of U.S. military personnel and equipment in and out of Iraq, and now hosts U.S. Central Command's (CENTCOM) forward headquarters.^{326, 327} In 2010, CENTCOM reportedly deployed “extra” Patriot

³¹⁸ Jane's, “Armed Forces (Kuwait),” *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 12 July 2011.

³¹⁹ Embassy of the United States, Kuwait City, Kuwait, “American Ambassador Tours Historic American Hospital,” 22 May 2007, http://kuwait.usembassy.gov/pr_05222007.html

³²⁰ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Kuwait,” 7 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm#relations>

³²¹ Sami G. Hajjar, “U.S. Military Presence in the Gulf: Challenges and Prospects,” Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, March 2002, 20–22, <http://www.hsdl.org/?view&doc=53864&coll=limited>

³²² Kenneth Katzman, “Kuwait: Security, Reform, and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS21513, 19 May 2011, 9–10, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21513.pdf>

³²³ Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, “Foreign Military Training and DoD Engagement Activities of Interest, 2009–2010,” (Volume I, Section III-IV, Near East, Kuwait), U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Department of State Joint Report to Congress, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rpt/fmtrpt/2010/index.htm>

³²⁴ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Kuwait,” 7 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm#relations>

³²⁵ Kenneth Katzman, “Kuwait: Security, Reform, and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS21513, 19 May 2011, 10, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21513.pdf>

³²⁶ Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, “Foreign Military Training and DoD Engagement Activities of Interest, 2009–2010,” (Volume I, Section III-IV, Near East, Kuwait), U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Department of State Joint Report to Congress, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rpt/fmtrpt/2010/index.htm>

³²⁷ Jane's, “Armed Forces (Kuwait),” *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 12 July 2011, <http://articles.janes.com/articles/Janes-Sentinel-Security-Assessment-The-Gulf-States/Armed-forces-Kuwait.html>

missile batteries in Kuwait and other small Gulf states for antimissile defense.³²⁸ Arms sales are a major part of the U.S. role as the U.S. is the number one exporter of arms to Kuwait. In 2011, the American Embassy's Office of Military Cooperation in Kuwait reported 140 open cases of foreign military sales with a total estimated value of USD 9.6 billion.

Kuwait also works with the United States to counter international terrorists through military, diplomatic, intelligence, and finance channels. In 2008, Kuwait froze the assets of Kuwaitis suspected of financing terrorists.³²⁹ In 2009, CENTCOM credited Kuwaiti security services with stopping an al-Qaeda attack on U.S. facilities at Camp Arifjan.³³⁰

Kuwait will continue to be a needed ally of the United States as long as the security of Persian Gulf oil is a major tenet of U.S. national defense policy.^{331, 332}

Relations with Neighboring Countries

Iraq

Iraq's ancient territorial claims on Kuwait have been negated by modern international agreements. Although Iraq's pursuit of Kuwait's wealth for "all Arabs" is condoned by many other, poorer Arab states, Iraq's methods of pursuing its claims became increasingly violent throughout the 20th century, and resulted in the Gulf War.^{333, 334} Kuwait continues to pursue

resolution of matters related to the war, including finding missing people and seeking reparations for destroyed material, which hinders improved relations between the countries.³³⁵ Iraq's acceptance of the postwar, UN-demarcated border is sometimes doubtful.^{336, 337}



DoD image / Andrew P. Roufs
Kuwait-Iraq police border post

³²⁸ Jane's, "Armed Forces (Kuwait)," *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 12 July 2011.

³²⁹ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Kuwait," 7 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm#relations>

³³⁰ Donna Miles, "Kuwaitis Foil Attack on U.S. Logistical Hub," American Forces Press Service, United States Central Command, 11 August 2009, <http://www.centcom.mil/news/kuwaitis-foil-attack-on-u-s-logistical-hub>

³³¹ Keith Crane et al., *Imported Oil and U.S. National Security* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG838.html>

³³² Council on Foreign Relations, "National Security Consequences of U.S. Oil Dependency (Independent Task Force Report No. 58, 2006)," www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/EnergyTFR.pdf

³³³ Susan E. Waltz, *Human Rights and Reform: Changing the Face of North African Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 169, 177, <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft2t1nb1vf/>

³³⁴ Anthony B. Toth, "Tribes and Tribulations: Bedouin Losses in the Saudi and Iraqi Struggles over Kuwait's Frontiers, 1921–1943," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 32, no. 2 (November 2005): 160–166, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30037690>

³³⁵ Kenneth Katzman, "Kuwait: Security, Reform, and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS21513, 19 May 2011, 12–13, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21513.pdf>

³³⁶ Richard Schofield, "The United Nations' Settlement of the Iraq-Kuwaiti Border, 1991–1993," *IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin* July 1993, 70–81, <http://www.dur.ac.uk/ibru/publications/download/?id=15>

According to the Congressional Research Service, Iraq's internal stability is Kuwait's "key external concern." Kuwait acknowledged the political ascendance of a Shi'ite majority in Iraq by appointing Ali al-Momen, a Kuwaiti Shi'ite, as ambassador to Iraq, but concerns remain about Iraq's ties to extremists in Iran.^{338, 339} The border between the two countries continues to be a dangerous place. In January 2011, a Kuwaiti Coast Guard officer was killed in a confrontation with a group of Iraqi fishermen in disputed maritime waters.³⁴⁰ Kuwait's development of Bubiyan Island, especially a port near Umm Qasr, is causing tension.³⁴¹ Nevertheless, Kuwait sees investment opportunities in postwar Iraq, including the construction of the new U.S. embassy.^{342, 343}

Saudi Arabia

Arabia's historical designs on Kuwait led to economic blockades and outright attacks through the 1920s.^{344, 345} Solidarity among royals led to improved relations from the late 1930s, when the new king of Saudi Arabia supported his relatives, the al-Sabah, against the opposition of Kuwait's first parliament.³⁴⁶ After Kuwait's independence, the two countries peacefully divided the land and oil rights to the Neutral Zone that had been set by the British in 1922.³⁴⁷ However, Saudi Arabia continues to dispute ownership of the offshore Dorra natural gas field with both Kuwait and Iran.³⁴⁸

³³⁷ "Rumors Swirl over Border Security Breach between Kuwait, Iraq," *Al Watan Daily*, 16 July 2011, <http://alwatandaily.kuwait.tt/resources/pdf/786/2.pdf>

³³⁸ Kenneth Katzman, "Kuwait: Security, Reform, and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS21513, 19 May 2011, 10–13, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21513.pdf>

³³⁹ Alex Vatanka, "Kuwait at 50," Middle East Institute, 17 February 2011, <http://www.mei.edu/Publications/WebPublications/PolicyInsights/PolicyInsightsArchive/tabid/876/ctl/Detail/mid/2844/xmid/1672/xmfid/36/Default.aspx>

³⁴⁰ Reuters, "Border Disputes Wreck Iraq Fishermen's Livelihoods," *The National (UAE)*, 25 March 2011, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/worldwide/border-disputes-wreck-iraq-fishermens-livelihoods>

³⁴¹ Aref Mohammad, "Tale of Two Ports Strains Iraq-Kuwait Ties," Reuters, 29 June 2011, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2011/06/29/uk-iraq-kuwait-ports-idUKTRE75S47K20110629>

³⁴² Kuwait News Agency, "Iraqi Delegation Mulls Investment Cooperation with Kuwait," 13 April 2011, <http://www.kuna.net.kw/NewsAgenciesPublicSite/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2159733&Language=en>

³⁴³ Kenneth Katzman, "Kuwait: Security, Reform, and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS21513, 19 May 2011, 12, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21513.pdf>

³⁴⁴ Rosemarie Said Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 117–119.

³⁴⁵ Anthony B. Toth, "Tribes and Tribulations: Bedouin Losses in the Saudi and Iraqi Struggles over Kuwait's Frontiers, 1921–1943," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 32, no. 2 (November 2005): 146–160, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30037690>

³⁴⁶ Rosemarie Said Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 119–120.

³⁴⁷ Office of the Geographer, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, U.S. State Department, "International Boundary Study No. 103, Kuwait-Saudi Arabia Boundary," 15 September 1970, 4, www.law.fsu.edu/library/collection/limitsinseas/ibs103.pdf

³⁴⁸ U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Kuwait: Analysis," May 2010, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=KU>

Kuwait's relationship with Saudi Arabia is sometimes complicated by the relationship each has with the United States.³⁴⁹ In 2003, Kuwait actively supported the U.S. action in Iraq, while Saudi Arabia would not permit U.S. strikes on Iraq from a Saudi air base, and the United States withdrew troops from the kingdom.^{350, 351} In 2011, Kuwait supported the Gulf Cooperation Council's forceful intervention in Bahrain, executed primarily by Saudi and United Arab Emirate forces, while the United States would have preferred a dialog.³⁵²

Iran

Persia's long relationship with Kuwait has contributed greatly to Kuwaiti society, but since the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran and the Iran-Iraq war, Iran has been a difficult neighbor. The success of Iran's Shi'ite revolutionaries raised fears of a similar Shi'ite bid for power in Kuwait. Since the 1980s, numerous acts of violence have been attributed to Iran-influenced extremists—building bombings, plane hijackings, airplane bombings, attacks on oil installations, and even an attempt on the life of Kuwait's Emir. Iran also took hostile military action against Kuwait as a supporter of Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war, particularly through attacks on shipping. These actions led to the dismissal and deportation of Kuwaiti Shi'ites in the 1980s, and Kuwaiti Shi'a protests against the government in response.^{353, 354} Iran is still suspected of fomenting action against the Kuwait government. In 2010, media reports of the arrest of alleged Iranian spies were suppressed by the government for national security purposes.^{355, 356, 357} Most threatening to Kuwait may be the possible consequences of a nuclear Iran.³⁵⁸



© NNSANews / flickr.com
Meeting for nuclear safeguards

³⁴⁹ Rosemarie Said Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 119–120.

³⁵⁰ Kenneth Katzman, “Kuwait: Security, Reform, and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS21513, 19 May 2011, 9–10, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21513.pdf>

³⁵¹ Time.com, “Why the U.S. Is Pulling Out of Saudi Arabia,” 29 April 2003, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,447940,00.html>

³⁵² Kenneth Katzman, “Kuwait: Security, Reform, and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS21513, 19 May 2011, 14, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21513.pdf>

³⁵³ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 106–107.

³⁵⁴ Nora Bensahel and Daniel L. Byman, eds., “Introduction (Chapter 1),” in *The Future Security Environment in the Middle East: Conflict, Stability, and Political Change* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation for the United States Air Force, 2004), 8, http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/2005/MR1640.sum.pdf

³⁵⁵ Alex Vatanka, “Kuwait at 50,” Middle East Institute, 17 February 2011, <http://www.mei.edu/Publications/WebPublications/PolicyInsights/PolicyInsightsArchive/tabid/876/ctl/Detail/mid/2844/xmid/1672/xmfid/36/Default.aspx>

³⁵⁶ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Human Rights Report: Kuwait,” 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/nea/154465.htm>

³⁵⁷ Kenneth Katzman, “Kuwait: Security, Reform, and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS21513, 19 May 2011, 12–13, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21513.pdf>

³⁵⁸ Jane's, “Armed Forces (Kuwait),” *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 12 July 2011.

Yet Kuwait cannot move away from its neighbor, and so has engaged with Iran on many occasions, in order to counter the threat of Iraq, to gain access to desired resources, or to pursue similar policies.³⁵⁹ The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding to improve security communications in 2006.³⁶⁰ In 2005, they signed a memorandum of understanding for natural gas sales, pending resolution of the maritime border conflict involving the Dorra offshore field.³⁶¹ Kuwait endorsed Iran's pursuit of "purely peaceful" nuclear energy as it pursued its own plans for the development of nuclear energy.^{362, 363}

Interior Security and Law Enforcement

The Ministry of the Interior administers several forces charged with internal law enforcement and border and national security—the National Police, the Civil Defense, the General Directorate of Border Security, and Kuwait State Security (KSS). The *National Police* number some 4,000 and operate stations in every district and governate, as well as units devoted to crime, traffic, emergency rescue, nationality and immigration, and special forces devoted to airport and infrastructure security.³⁶⁴ Most department heads in the Ministry of the Interior are police officers.³⁶⁵ Vehicle and personal identification records are computerized.³⁶⁶ In recent years, the Police Academy has graduated women and citizens of other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.^{367, 368} *Civil Defense* members reportedly number 2,000 and are prepared to protect critical facilities in the event of attacks via biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons. *Border Security* forces include a 500-member Coast Guard (sometimes reported as part of the Navy) and focus on the



© miskan / flickr.com
Kuwait police officer

³⁵⁹ W. Andrew Terrill, "Kuwaiti National Security and the U.S.-Kuwaiti Strategic Relationship after Saddam," Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, September 2007, 58–68, 83,

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=788>

³⁶⁰ Jane's, "Armed Forces (Kuwait)," *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 12 July 2011.

³⁶¹ U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Kuwait: Analysis," May 2010,

<http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=KU>

³⁶² Kenneth Katzman, "Kuwait: Security, Reform, and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS21513, 19 May 2011, 13–14, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21513.pdf>

³⁶³ "KNNEC—Kuwait National Nuclear Energy Committee," 2010, <http://www.knnec.gov.kw/index-a.html>

³⁶⁴ Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, "Kuwait 2011 OSAC Crime and Safety Report," 28 February 2011, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=10520>

³⁶⁵ Jane's, "Kuwait: Security and Foreign Forces," *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 11 April 2011.

³⁶⁶ Kuwait Government Online, n.d., <http://www.e.gov.kw/sites/KGoEnglish/Portal/Pages/PortalMain.aspx>

³⁶⁷ Nihal Sharaf, "Kuwaiti Women Make It in Police Force," *Arab Times*, 19 July 2011,

<http://www.arabtimesonline.com/NewsDetails/tabid/96/smId/414/ArticleID/150098/t/Kuwaiti-women-make-it-in-police-force/Default.aspx>

³⁶⁸ Jane's, "Kuwait: Security and Foreign Forces," *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 11 April 2011, <http://articles.janes.com/articles/Janes-Sentinel-Security-Assessment-The-Gulf-States/Security-and-foreign-forces-Kuwait.html>

border with Iraq.^{369, 370} (In January 2011 a Coast Guard member was killed in an altercation with Iraqi fishermen.³⁷¹) The KSS is responsible for national security via intelligence and counterintelligence.³⁷² While the police have been credited with restraint in the past, the KSS has recently been criticized for using unnecessary force; for example, in 2010 a university professor at a *diwaniya* was arrested.^{373, 374}

Under the Ministry of Finance, authorities in the Public Department of Customs combat drug trafficking (Kuwait reportedly has a heroin problem), terrorist weapons imports, and financial crime, as well as enforce Islamic prohibitions against alcohol, pork, and pornography.^{375, 376}

The paramilitary Kuwait National Guard (KNG) reports directly to the Higher Defense Council headed by the Prime Minister (for the Emir). It protects the royal family and performs “any assignment entrusted to it by the Higher Defense Council” from border patrols and counter-terrorism operations to security for diplomatic missions and riot control.^{377, 378} Unlike the police or army, the KNG is force entirely comprised of Kuwaitis who retain the right to vote in elections. (Bedouins were recruited into the new state’s military in exchange for citizenship, and given the right to vote in hopes of creating a majority bloc supporting the royal family.³⁷⁹) Manpower estimates range between 6,600 and 8,500.^{380, 381} Since 2003 the KNG has contracted with U.S. entities, including the Virginia National Guard in 2008, to build and operate training facilities.³⁸²

³⁶⁹ Jane’s, “Kuwait: Security and Foreign Forces,” *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 11 April 2011.

³⁷⁰ “Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa,” *The Military Balance* 111, no. 1 (2011): 293–342.

³⁷¹ Reuters/The National (UAE), “Border Disputes Wreck Iraq Fishermen’s Livelihoods,” 25 March 2011, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/worldwide/border-disputes-wreck-iraq-fishermens-livelihoods>

³⁷² Jane’s, “Kuwait: Security and Foreign Forces,” *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 11 April 2011.

³⁷³ In the 1960s the police chief and officers resigned rather than use force against protestors. Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 106.

³⁷⁴ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Human Rights Report: Kuwait,” 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/nea/154465.htm>

³⁷⁵ Kuwait-info.com, “Economy: Customs,” n.d., http://www.kuwait-info.com/a_economy/agriculture_customs.asp

³⁷⁶ Jane’s, “Kuwait: Security and Foreign Forces,” *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 11 April 2011.

³⁷⁷ Jane’s, “Special Forces (Government) (Kuwait), Amphibious and Special Forces,” *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 24 November 2010, <http://articles.janes.com/articles/Janes-Amphibious-and-Special-Forces/Special-Forces-Government-Kuwait.html>

³⁷⁸ “Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa,” *The Military Balance* 111, no. 1 (7 March 2011): 317–318.

³⁷⁹ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 88–89.

³⁸⁰ “Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa,” *The Military Balance* 111, no. 1 (7 March 2011): 318.

³⁸¹ Jane’s, “Kuwait: Security and Foreign Forces,” *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 11 April 2011.

³⁸² Jane’s, “Kuwait: Security and Foreign Forces,” *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 11 April 2011.

Military

Kuwait's modern military developed with British assistance after World War II. Under the Emir as Supreme Commander, top military posts typically go to members of the royal family. The Ministry of Defense is responsible for more than 15,000 active service members—11,000 Army, 2,000 Navy (including the Coast Guard), and 2,500 Air Force—and joint reserve forces of 23,000.



DoD image / Michael T. Knight
Air Marshal Fahad Al-Amir

Kuwait was unusual among Gulf states in its official requirement for military service but suspended conscription in 2001.^{383, 384} Reserves are obliged to train one month per year up to age 40. In 2010, plans to reinstate mandatory service as a social leveling mechanism ended, countered by the need to fund and train career professionals able to operate the sophisticated military equipment Kuwait has been purchasing.³⁸⁵ (Islamists in the National Assembly also passed a draft law to permit military personnel to wear beards, but the government rejected the law in early 2011.³⁸⁶)

The armed forces have been rebuilt with U.S. assistance since the 1990 Iraqi invasion decimated Kuwaiti forces and military equipment. Since the end of Saddam Hussein as a security threat in 2003, defense has turned to improving border security and preparing for possible retaliatory attacks.^{387, 388} The air force was recently funded to buy strategic transport and refueling aircraft.³⁸⁹ The navy still awaits the rebuilding of its main base at an estimated cost of USD 300 million.³⁹⁰

Kuwait regularly ranks among the top ten countries in the world on various measures of military spending.^{391, 392} Annual per capita defense expenditures dropped after the

³⁸³ Nazih Ayubi, "Arab Bureaucracies," in *The Arab State*, Giacomo Luciani, ed., University of California Press, 1990, 138.

³⁸⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, "Kuwait," in *The World Factbook*, 5 July 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ku.html>

³⁸⁵ Arie O'Sullivan, "Kuwait Drops Plan to Re-Introduce Mandatory Draft," *Gulf Times*, 24 October 2010, [http://www.gulf-](http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=393893&version=1&template_id=46&parent_id=26)

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³⁸⁶ Habib Toumi, "Kuwait Government Rejects Draft Law to Allow Military Men to Have Beards," *Gulf News*, 1 February 2011, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/kuwait-government-rejects-draft-law-to-allow-military-men-to-have-beards-1.755535>

³⁸⁷ W. Andrew Terrill, "The Arab Upheavals and the Future of the U.S. Military Policies and Presence in the Middle East and the Gulf," Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 27 June 2011, [http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/index.cfm/articles/Arab-Upheavals-and-the-US-Military-Policies-and-Presence-in-the-Middle-East-and-the-Gulf/2011/6/27](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/index.cfm/articles/Arab-Upheavals-and-the-Future-of-the-US-Military-Policies-and-Presence-in-the-Middle-East-and-the-Gulf/2011/6/27)

³⁸⁸ Jane's, "Armed Forces: Kuwait," *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 10 November 2010, <http://articles.janes.com/articles/Janes-Sentinel-Security-Assessment-The-Gulf-States/Armed-forces-Kuwait.html>

³⁸⁹ Jane's, "Armed Forces: Kuwait," *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 12 July 2011.

³⁹⁰ "Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa," *The Military Balance* 111, no. 1 (7 March 2011): 317–318.

³⁹¹ Bureau of Verification, Compliance, and Implementation, United States Department of State, "World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers," n.d., <http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/rpt/wmeat/index.htm#>

removal of Saddam Hussein in 2003 and the economic recession in 2008.³⁹³ Spending is still significant, as indicated by the 140 open contracts for foreign military sales reported by the State Department's Office of Military Cooperation in Kuwait in 2011.³⁹⁴ Kuwait's 2011 defense budget was projected at KWD 1.21 billion (USD 4.41 billion).³⁹⁵

Issues Affecting Stability

Oil

Arab states that supported Iraq's invasion of Kuwait were motivated in part by the opinion that Kuwait (as well as other Gulf states) should share its oil riches more equally with the wider Arab world.³⁹⁶ Some religious extremists also believe that Kuwait should redirect oil revenues toward becoming a better Islamic state in an Islamic world. The United States' determination to keep Persian Gulf oil available to the world market (at least to meet its own imported energy needs through 2035) could make Kuwait vulnerable to attacks by those who wish to restrict access to Gulf oil, or those who are enemies of the United States.³⁹⁷



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Kuwait Oil Fires 1991

As long as oil remains a strategic world commodity, Kuwait's oil production industries and related financial activities are likely to remain attractive targets for extremists, terrorists, and energy resource-deficient states with future development needs.

Water

Access to water was the primary limitation on Kuwait's population growth until natural gas extraction and oil revenues benefited desalination technologies. Desalination plants were probably the most heavily guarded installations in Kuwait during the Gulf War.³⁹⁸ Kuwait's current desalination levels can be maintained only with input of oil energy and

³⁹² "Chapter Ten: Country Comparisons—Commitments, Force Levels and Economics," *The Military Balance* 111 no. 1 (7 March 2011): 478.

³⁹³ Jane's, "Defence Budget (Kuwait)," *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 3 March 2011, <http://articles.janes.com/articles/Janes-Sentinel-Security-Assessment-The-Gulf-States/Defence-budget-Kuwait.html>

³⁹⁴ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Kuwait," 7 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm#relations>

³⁹⁵ "Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa," *The Military Balance* 111 No. 1 (7 March 2011): 317–318.

³⁹⁶ Susan E. Waltz, *Human Rights and Reform: Changing the Face of North African Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 169, 177, <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft2t1nb1vf/http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft2t1nb1vf.brand=eschol>

³⁹⁷ Keith Crane et al., *Imported Oil and U.S. National Security* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG838.html>

³⁹⁸ Mary Ann Tétreault, "Autonomy, Necessity, and the Small State: Ruling Kuwait in the Twentieth Century," *International Organization* 45, no. 4 (Autumn 1991): 583, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706948>

income.³⁹⁹ (While transportation, primarily private vehicles, accounts for the greatest energy consumption in the U.S., energy consumption in Kuwait is topped by electricity and desalination plants.^{400, 401}) Attacks on Kuwait's oil industry could easily disrupt the supply of desalinated water. If Kuwait does not change its desalination technologies in the future, the water will run out when the oil wells run dry. Before the oil runs out, water pollution in the Gulf could also prevent Kuwait from providing enough water for its people.

Nuclear

Kuwait sits uncomfortably between the suspected nuclear power of Israel and the aspiring nuclear power of Iran. The nuclear intentions of neighboring Saudi Arabia are also unsettled; they range from advocacy for a nuclear-free Middle East, through defense of a shared "civilian" program for Gulf states, to rumored investments in Iraqi and Pakistani nuclear programs.^{402, 403, 404} Kuwait recently moved to slow its entry into nuclear energy development, and is even more concerned about becoming a retaliatory target in a larger conflict among nuclear powers.^{405, 406}

Terrorism

Kuwait remains at risk for terrorist attack.^{407, 408} In 2005, Kuwaiti security forces died in gun battles with local extremists for the first time in Kuwait's history.⁴⁰⁹ Because terrorists operate from all the countries neighboring Kuwait, international and Kuwaiti security forces are focusing on land borders, air and sea port security, as well as on the

³⁹⁹ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, UN, "Role of Desalination in Addressing Water Scarcity (ESCWA Water Development Report 3), 10 November 2009,

<http://www.escwa.un.org/information/publications/edit/upload/sdpd-09-4.pdf>

⁴⁰⁰ Peter Lehner, "Big Oil, 'Small People' (Chap. 3)," in *In Deep Water: The Anatomy of a Disaster, the Fate of the Gulf, and Ending Our Oil Addiction* (New York: The Experiment Publishing, 2010), 45–61.

⁴⁰¹ Ali Ebraheem Hajiah, "Sustainable Energy in Kuwait—Challenges and Opportunities (UNDP Regional Consultation Meeting: Climate Change Impacts in the Arab Region, Manama, Bahrain, 6 October 2010), http://arabclimateinitiative.org/knowledge/sustainable_energy/ALi%20Ebraheem%20Hajiah-Energy%20Efficient%20Building.pdf

⁴⁰² Souhail Karam, "Saudi Defends Gulf Arab Atom Plans, Criticizes Iran," Reuters, 5 March 2007, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/03/05/us-gulf-nuclear-meeting-idUSL0521283720070305>

⁴⁰³ Mark Hibbs, "Saudi Arabia's Nuclear Ambitions," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Q&A, 20 July 2010, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/2010/07/20/saudi-arabia-s-nuclear-ambitions/58v>

⁴⁰⁴ Jason Burke, "Riyadh Will Build Nuclear Weapons if Iran Gets Them, Saudi Prince Warns," [guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/29/saudi-build-nuclear-weapons-iran), 29 June 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/29/saudi-build-nuclear-weapons-iran>

⁴⁰⁵ "Kuwait No Longer Interested in Pursuing Nuclear Energy," Kuwait Times, 12 July 2011, http://www.kuwaittimes.net/read_news.php?newsid=NzI3MzU0ODM5OQ

⁴⁰⁶ Nuclear Energy Insider, "Kuwait Shies Away from Nuclear Plans" (Weekly Intelligence Brief 7–14 July 2011), 14 July 2011, <http://analysis.nuclearenergyinsider.com/weekly-brief/weekly-intelligence-brief-7-%E2%80%9314-july-2011>

⁴⁰⁷ Kenneth Katzman, "Kuwait: Security, Reform, and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS21513, 19 May 2011, 9, 13–14, <http://www.fas.org/spp/crs/mideast/RS21513.pdf>

⁴⁰⁸ Jane's, "Defence Budget (Kuwait)," *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 3 March 2011, <http://articles.janes.com/articles/Janes-Sentinel-Security-Assessment-The-Gulf-States/Defence-budget-Kuwait.html>

⁴⁰⁹ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Kuwait," 7 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm#relations>

security of vital installations and transportation routes.^{410, 411, 412} Few Kuwaitis have joined al-Qaeda, which is not considered to have an organizational presence in Kuwait.⁴¹³ Attempts to counter terrorism include strengthening laws to prosecute terrorist financing as a crime, and revamping educational curricula so as to produce moderate, rather than extremist, youth.^{414, 415}

Internal Relations

A number of relationships between antagonistic social groups could deteriorate into violent unrest. The relationship of the ruling royals with the National Assembly has become more contentious, leading to less effective government. Relationships between Sunni and Shi'a have been made more difficult by their overlap with differences between Islamists and secularists, and between citizens and foreigners.⁴¹⁶ The growing population of Kuwaiti citizens is less and less satisfied with the shrinking welfare benefits of the state; the resident majority of foreign workers are more and more unhappy with their hard life and few protections; the disenfranchised *bidoon* clashed with authorities in the first part of 2011.^{417, 418, 419} Government actions such as forcibly disbanding meetings or censoring media may exacerbate problems rather than eliminate them.⁴²⁰



© nibaq / flickr.com
Polling station on election day

⁴¹⁰ W. Andrew Terrill, "Kuwaiti National Security and the U.S.-Kuwaiti Strategic Relationship after Saddam," Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, September 2007,

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=788>

⁴¹¹ Jane's, "Armed Forces (Kuwait)," *Sentinel Security Assessment—The Gulf States*, 12 July 2011.

⁴¹² Kenneth Katzman, "Kuwait: Security, Reform, and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS21513, 19 May 2011, 9, 13, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21513.pdf>

⁴¹³ W. Andrew Terrill, "Kuwaiti National Security and the U.S.-Kuwaiti Strategic Relationship after Saddam," Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, September 2007, 69–70,

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⁴¹⁴ Rachel Walsh, "Education Systems and Islamic Radicalism in the Arabian Peninsula: Background Brief" (honors thesis, Project on International Peace and Security, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 2009),

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⁴¹⁵ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009: Kuwait," 5 August 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2009/140886.htm>

⁴¹⁶ W. Andrew Terrill, "Kuwaiti National Security and the U.S.-Kuwaiti Strategic Relationship after Saddam," Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, September 2007,

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=788>

⁴¹⁷ Nazih Ayubi, "Arab Bureaucracies," in *The Arab State*, ed. Giacomo Luciani, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 132–133.

⁴¹⁸ Melani Cammett and Marsha Pripstein Posusney, "Labor Standards and Labor Market Flexibility in the Middle East: Free Trade and Freer Unions?" *St Comp Int Dev* 45 (13 May 2010): 250–279.

⁴¹⁹ Reuters, "30 Wounded in Kuwait Protests on Friday," 19 February 2011,

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/19/us-kuwait-protest-casualties-idUSTRE7110VS20110219>

⁴²⁰ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "2010 Human Rights Report: Kuwait," 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/nea/154465.htm>

Outlook

Kuwait is a young state, still evolving as a democratic nation. It is to be hoped that the people of Kuwait will solve internal problems with steps toward social inclusion and equality, political democracy, religious moderation, and economic diversification.

Kuwait suffered a painful failure of diplomacy in the Gulf War. There is concern that lingering fear and mistrust of others among the people of Kuwait may negatively affect the country's external affairs and international relationships, leading even to a regional arms race. It is to be hoped that Kuwait's neighbors and international partners will moderate pursuit of their own goals in consideration of wider regional and global needs.

As long as Persian Gulf oil retains global strategic importance, major energy consumers are likely to guarantee Kuwait's security. Kuwait's challenge is to find ways to transform its present, finite oil assets into a secure future.

Chapter 5 Assessment

1. Twenty years after the end of the Gulf War, all issues between Kuwait and Iraq have finally been settled.
False
Kuwait continues to press Iraq for information about missing people and for payment of reparations for economic loss.
2. Saudi Arabia is currently Kuwait's most reliable [or least difficult] neighbor.
True
Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have a strong relationship based on lineage, trade, and shared oil interests.
3. Kuwait wants to develop nuclear power for weapons to counter potential attacks by its neighbors, especially Iran.
False
Kuwait has endorsed Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy, and is slowing its own development of nuclear energy.
4. A significant amount of trade between Kuwait and the U.S. is in military equipment and services.
True
The U.S. regularly sells billions of dollars worth of arms and services to Kuwait.
5. The security of Persian Gulf oil is a major tenet of U.S. national defense policy.
True
The U.S. is determined to keep Persian Gulf oil available to the world market.

Final Assessment

1. There are no freshwater rivers or lakes in Kuwait, so floods never happen.
2. Iraq's Shatt al-Arab River has been a source of freshwater for Kuwait.
3. Military equipment is an environmental problem in Kuwait.
4. Kuwait City was established in the 1930s when oil was first discovered in the region.
5. Kuwait has almost one-fourth of the world's oil reserves.
6. Cyrus the Great claimed the region of present-day Kuwait for Persia over 2,500 years ago.
7. The Prophet Muhammad converted most of Persia to Islam by his death in 632.
8. The British came to the Gulf to find oil to fuel their Industrial Revolution.
9. The first oil company in Kuwait was a British monopoly.
10. Kuwait's hereditary emirate rules with absolute power.
11. American and British oil companies own most of Kuwait's oil industry.
12. Kuwait plans to develop nuclear energy.
13. Kuwait exports most of its oil to the United States.
14. Kuwait's stock exchange has been a high-risk investment opportunity.
15. There is no unemployment in Kuwait, because all Kuwaiti citizens are guaranteed employment.
16. Most people who live in Kuwait are Kuwaiti.
17. Young women study science and engineering together with young men at Kuwait University.
18. The *diwaniya* is an important means of social communication in Kuwait.
19. In Kuwait, a relatively cosmopolitan Gulf society, one may have a glass of wine with a fine French dinner.
20. Kuwaitis enjoy camping in the desert.
21. With the drawdown of U.S. troops in Iraq, the U.S. will soon end its military presence in Kuwait.
22. Only Kuwaitis may serve in the National Guard.

23. Kuwait's military forces are prepared to counter a sustained attack against their country.
24. Water pollution in the Gulf is one of several threats to Kuwait's water supply.
25. Terrorists from neighboring countries are the primary source of violent unrest inside Kuwait.

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