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Historical Profile Of Dawlat Al-Kuwait: Emergence, Occupation And Re-Emergence

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to study the historical profile of Kuwait and especially how it was emerged as an independent state, invasion of Iraqi forces which took control of Kuwait city and its resurgence, reemergence or revival as an independent state. Both states already had conflicts on different issues included oil and territories. This research further analysis the efforts of multilateral forces and UN to liberated Kuwait from Iraq's occupation. It examines the status of Kuwait, how the conflict emerged between Iraq and Kuwait, UN noticed and formed a mission. The study employed a concurrent mixed methods of qualitative research; descriptive and narrative and research design drawn from pragmatic paradigm. Data was collected from primary and secondary sources; UN Reports, articles and books. The research suggests that UN efforts should be acknowledged. In a short span of time they with the help of multilateral forces liberated Kuwait. At the end the researcher should hope that UN and other powers should continue to perform positive role for global peace and they try to remove the root causes of any conflict.

Key Words: Kuwait, Formation, Iraqi Occupation, Independence

Introduction

Dawlat al-Kuwait or State of Kuwait commonly known as Kuwait is an Arab country of Western Asia situated at the Northern edge of Eastern Arabia at the tip of Persian Gulf. Kuwait is the liberal state among the Arab world with the most free press and civil liberties. She is the smallest country of the world in terms of land area of 24,280 sq km; it depended on nine islands.¹ The word 'Kuwait' is the Arabic diminutive of kut, which means a castle or fort and is a common place-name in the region. Normally a kut lies near the sea or a river. "Kut al-Amara on the Euphrates was the site of a painful British surrender to the Turks in the World War I".² The town of Kuwait, "which is the capital, a port and commercial centre of the present state, lies on the Southern shore of a great sweeping bay which is situated at the north-western end of the Arabian Gulf".³ The other cities are Hawali and Ahmadi. Population is good nature, mixed and vicious.

In 1961 at the end of British protectorate, "it became as an independent state established herself as Constitutional Monarch, parliamentary democracy with the unitary state. The economy of the state depends on oil reliant and 80 % of crude oil is exported".⁴ The discoveries of oil had been changing the lives of Kuwait for

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no more than a single generation.⁵ Yet the change had been far more than superficial. "It is not only that real poverty has been eliminated and affluence had become the norm, to the extent that a Kuwait millionaire is someone of modest means; despite the vigorous survival of traditional social values the Kuwait outlook on the rest of the world is taken for granted by its people".⁶ From 1968 onwards, however, Kuwait was aiming to secure reasonable participation in the ownership of the Kuwait Oil Company. Oil was discovered in 1938 at Burgan, the world's largest oil field but full exploitation began only in 1945, after the war, export started only in 1964 when production was about 6 million barrels a year. It rose to 1,200 million in 1972.⁷ Its production further extended over the time.

Historical Profile of Kuwait

Kuwait had a long history. The emergence of the first civilized communities in the region of Mesopotamia is no matter for conjecture for 3,000 years and more, had been excavated and examined (through several thousand had yet to be translated), and made to divulge legends and historical facts from which a vast body of knowledge has been derived.⁸ It took place in comparatively recent times between 130 million and 70 million years ago. That era embraced the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods.⁹ Kuwait's political foundation dates from 1710 when the Al Sabah family, descendants of the Beduin Atib or Utub clan, who were of the Dahamshah branch of the Amarat tribe, left their homeland in the inner Najd and settled in this relatively hospitable coastal strip. The first act of government was in 1956 when Sheikh Sabah I negotiated with Turkish Governor at Basra for the independence of the territory.¹⁰ Several other families later to become prominent merchants of Kuwait such as Al Ghanium, the Shemlan and Al Saleh also trace their origin to those early settlers.¹¹

In the crucial years when the Kuwait's, under the leadership of the Al Sabah family, "were establishing themselves as an independent entity, they were helped by the lack of any stable centralizing power in the region".¹² As all the nomadic tribesmen who settled on the coast, "the Utab found that they had not to learn a new life in trading, seafaring, fishing and pearling, but also to adapt their political organization. Kuwait began to prosper under its new ruler, Sheikh Sabah (1952-64). A mud wall around the town for protection, and authority was extended into the interior and over Failaka and other offshore islands".¹³ Early visitors noted evidence of the Kuwaitis success as traders and pearlers. Carstin Niebuhr of the 1760 Danish expedition reported that Kuwait had a fleet of 800 small ships. When Sheikh Sabah died in 1764 his youngest son, Abdallah was elected by the other most suitable member of the Sabah family. Under Sheikh Abdallah the separation of powers in the Kuwaiti community had reached a new stage of development as the Sabah family gave up sharing in the merchants profits in order to devote themselves entirely to the affairs of government.¹⁴ British acknowledged that the Sheikh and his heirs had sole control of the internal administration of the state, including the collection of customs dues. Britain retained the right to relinquish the lease at any time and in fact gave it up in 1922 when the danger from Turkey was past. In 1913 an Anglo-Turkish agreement defined the boundaries of Kuwait.¹⁵ At that time Kuwait become noticeable for world.

Kuwait's wealth, its rise to affluence is much like a dream, the stuff Arabian Nights is made of and its strategic location at the head of the Persian Gulf attracted British. In the 1890, Kaiser Wilhelm II sought to use Kuwait as a terminus in his Middle Eastern railroad scheme.¹⁶ Britain stepped in and established its protectorate over the Kingdom. Sheikh Mubarak-ibn-Sabah was made the governor of Kuwait. He signed a pact with Britain who was building a system of subsidiary co-operation with small Arab principalities.¹⁷ The World War I ended in favor of Britain. Kuwait was not handed over to Iraq, the Sheikh of Kuwait was given the status of a Saudi Arabia was marked.¹⁸ Britain was never interested in solving the claim of Iraq on this small principality. From 1921-1950, Sheikh Ahmed-ibn-Jabir ruled over Kuwait.¹⁹ With the defeat of Turkey and Germany in 1918, Britain was left in an unchallenged position in the Gulf. Britain and France had already made plans to partition the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire between them but France's concerns in the Arab world were concentrated on the Maghreb and the Levant states.²⁰ Their US ally, after playing a leading role in the Paris Peace Conference following the war, withdrew into isolation. The Russian had already abandoned their imperial interests in the Middle East after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.²¹

That was early in 1958, when the little desert emirate was only just beginning to attract international attention as the first of the kind to become vastly wealthy state.²² The old mud walls of the city had recently been pulled down and the first and only modern multi-storied building had been constructed opposite the Jahra Gate, which had been left standing as a symbol of the past.²³ Sometime before Kuwait achieved full independence and membership of the Arab League and UN, it had begun to shape a role for itself in the international community. It had already joined the economic institutions of the League.²⁴ According to the economic intelligence unit, in 1985, Kuwait had financial resources of \$ 90 billion. Out of this, \$30 billion were general reserves mostly in liquid Arab assets and \$60 billion were invested in the west.²⁵ In 1989, Kuwait earned more from its investments than the revenue due to oil. It is the largest investor in the UK, Japan and Spain, and it was a major purchaser of US treasury bonds and stocks in top seventy firms of New York stock exchange.²⁶ Kuwait's investments bring in an income of \$ 20 million a day. The Kuwait petroleum corporation is the 12th largest oil company with its offices in London and other major cities of the world.²⁷ Kuwait is now known as one of richest state of the world.

Kuwait-Iraq Conflict

Kuwait lies between two powerful neighbors Iraq and Saudi Arabia. There was dispute between Kuwait and Iraq over two islands under Kuwait's sovereignty.²⁸

"The territorial disputes between Iraq and Kuwait had its origins in the history of the two entities during the Ottoman Empire. The land which was to become modern Iraq was conquered by the Ottoman Empire in 1535 and was governed thereafter as three provinces except for an interval of Persian rule in the seventeenth century. In 1914, the Ottoman Empire entered the World War I as one of the Central Powers, all of which were defeated in 1918. As part of the post-war arrangements the Allies stipulated at the Conference of San Remo on 25th October 1920 that Iraq be administered by the UK as a Mandate Territory under the League

of Nations. Although Iraq subsequently obtained a degree of self-government with respect to its international affairs, it remained a Mandate Territory until it became independent on 3rd October 1932 and joined the League of Nations. On 21st December 1945, Iraq became an original member of the United Nations".²⁹

Kuwait was a sheikhdom during the time of the Ottoman Empire and the degree to which it was integrated with the Empire fluctuated, based in part on shifting trade patterns in the Gulf region. Thus at times there did exist a link between Ottoman authorities in the city of Basrah (now part of Iraq) and Kuwait.³⁰ However, in 1899, under the threat of nomadic warlords and of increasing Ottoman domination, the Sheikh of Kuwait had sufficient independence to be able to seek defensive arrangements with the British Government.³¹ As part of the great wave of decolonization in the early 1960s, Kuwait and the United Kingdom re-examined their relationship. Although under the 1899 treaty, the UK had maintained nominal control over Kuwait's external relations in practice Kuwait had for some time exercised most functions of state. On 19th June 1961, Kuwait and the UK agreed to terminate the 1899 arrangements which had permitted a British military presence in Kuwait, thus formally establishing Kuwait's independence. On 20th April 1963 Kuwait wrote to the UN to apply for membership and on 14th May 1963, Kuwait was 111th member state of UN.³²

On 2nd August 1990, Iraq moved its tanks into Kuwait. The tiny oil rich kingdom was annexed. The world was stunned that an independent country, a member of the UN had been gobbled up. The three Iraqi Republican Guard Divisions invaded Kuwait. The first division proceeded down a coastal road to Kuwait City, second seized the inland oil fields, and the third to the Saudi Arabian border.³³ Kuwait the A-4 Aircraft and Chieftain tanks of Kuwait fought for three days until their fuel and ammunition were exhausted and the small Kuwaiti Navy also made the last two fast attack while firing at pursuing Iraqi tanks.³⁴ Iraqi forces quickly captured Kuwait city and the Emir's palace, while the Kuwait ruler, Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah fled to Saudi Arabia and established a government in exile. On August 3rd the remainder of Kuwait was captured and by the 4th, Iraqi forces were amassed along the Kuwait-Saudi border for a possible invasion of Saudi Arabia.³⁵ If Iraq occupied Saudi Arabia, it would not only establish itself as the secular leader of the Arab world, but also would control 45 per cent of world's oil. On August 6th the UN Security Council; imposed economic sanctions against Iraq. On August 7th the US President Mr. George Bush ordered deployment of US Troops in the Gulf. While the world condemned this naked act of aggression, the man who ordered his troops into Emirates stood defiant of world opinion and on August 18th he even declared Kuwait as Iraq's 19th province, renaming Kuwait city as Kadhima.³⁶ The man who made it possible was Saddam Hussein who became the President of Iraq in 1979.³⁷

Saddam's failure to justify the invasion

The reasons for the invasion dated back to the creation of present-day Kuwait. In 1899, UK and Kuwait signed treaty in which Britain assumed control of Kuwait's foreign policy. This was done in order to thwart German imperialist designs in the region, and World War I began, London established a protectorate over Kuwait.³⁸ World War I also led to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the creation by

the European powers of Iraq and a number of other countries. These events and decisions, reflections of the European balance of power that did not consider the region's culture or politics still reverberate and the finding of oil and later in the 1970s, its greatly enhanced value aggravated troubled, at times tribal, situations.³⁹ Kuwait was an artificial creation imposed by the West and it both denied that Iraq a considerable amount of oil and restricted its access to the seas and these arrangements were not accepted by Iraq at the time of Kuwait's independence.⁴⁰ Baghdad almost immediately claimed it: "basing this on the facts that Kuwait had been a part of the Ottoman Empire that it was an artificial British creation and it threatened Iraq's access to the sea". Kuwait appealed to the British against this invasion of Iraq and Kuwait was admitted to this to UN and the Arab League, but Iraq did not renounce its claim and always justify its invasions of Kuwait.⁴¹

When asked to withdraw from Kuwait, "Saddam immediately linked his withdrawal from the kingdom with the Palestine issue. He had a keen desire to appear as a leader of the Arab world. He made it seem like an Arab cause whose sole aim was to liberate Palestine and his only enemy was Israel".⁴² In truth, however, his aims were far from noble. A year after he had assumed power, he had precipitated war with his neighbor Iran. The dispute was over the Shatt-Al Arab waterway.⁴³ The eight-year long war which followed had bled its economy dry. He was saddled with a foreign debt of \$ 60 billion. Out of this, he owed \$ 40 billion to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia alone. Prior to the war, Iraq had been the largest producer in OPEC, now struggling how to feed its 14 million mouths (population).⁴⁴ Iraq was in a critical situation now.

Saddam attacked the oil policies of Kuwait and United Arab Emirates. He declared "that though it conceded Kuwait's right to exist as an independent and sovereign nation, he had to send the army because Kuwait was deliberately following a policy to impoverish Iraq. His complaint was that Kuwait was overproducing oil which led to a fall in prices".⁴⁵ Saddam made a "historical claim declaring that Kuwait was a part of Iraq. Baghdad had recognized Kuwait's independence after reluctance. It was only the presence of British troops which prohibited Iraq from taking over Kuwait earlier". Moreover, none of the Arab states supported Iraq's claim. Iraq has always dreamt that Kuwait would one day be a part of its motherland. Both in the year 1973 and 1976, it had put forward its claim. The claim was obviously dismissed and in the end, Iraqi government had to swallow this fact.⁴⁶

Bush froze Iraqi assets in the US soon after the invasion. Twelve European states froze Iraqi and Kuwaiti assets and embargoed Iraqi oil, where the EC supported the UN Resolutions vowing to maintain its embassies in Kuwait for as long as possible.⁴⁷ However, even the EC's greatest supporters had to admit that in terms of a military commitment, the crisis had deflated the Community's image as a forceful actor on the world stage. The "West European Union (WEU) could coordinate a European military response because the obstacles to a NATO role "out-of-area" did not apply to it. Established to strengthen the European defense identity, it acted as the linchpin of a European mine hunting operation in the gulf during the Iran-Iraq war, when WEU Navel forces protected their own nation maritime traffic and acted jointly against the mine threat".⁴⁸

UN Involvement

In the history of UN, this was the major step by an organization to perform a powerful role for international peace in response to Iraqi invasions of Kuwait.⁴⁹ The Security Council subsequently adopted a number of resolutions on various aspects of the situation and on 29th November 1990, it decided to give Iraq until 15th January 1991 to implement those resolutions; if not Member States cooperating to use 'all necessary means' to uphold and implement the Security Council's Resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area.⁵⁰ The breadth of actions taken by the UN in more than five years of work-from the immediate, intense worldwide diplomatic activity aimed at ensuring universal support for the restoration of Kuwaiti sovereignty, to the ongoing challenge long-term peace and stability in the region have confirmed the extraordinary relevance of the UN in addressing the most complex political issues facing the international community.⁵¹ A principal concern for the Organization throughout its involvement has been to alleviate the hardships the conflict has visited upon the Iraqi civilian population.⁵²

The UN central role began at the very of the crisis. Within hours of the invasion on, the Security Council met to demand Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. Acting incrementally in addressing Iraq's aggression and its aftermath, the Security Council by had adopted 12 resolutions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter covering various aspects of the situation.⁵³ UN Security Council voted 12:2 to give Iraq six weeks to pull out of Kuwait before the UN and its allies are free to launch a military strike. Yemen and Cuba opposed while China abstained. Later US declared war and launched air attacks against Iraq.⁵⁴

Establishment of UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) (1991-2003)

By Security Council Resolution (SCR) 687 (1991) the Security Council established this mission, among other things a Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) along the boundary between Iraq and Kuwait, to be monitored by a UN Observer Unit and requested the Security-General to submit to the Council for approval a plan for the unit's immediate deployment.⁵⁵ The Secretary-General reported back on 5th April 1991 and on 9th April, by its resolution 689 (1991), the Security Council, acting under VII of the UN Charter, approved his plan for the setting up of the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM).⁵⁶

Functions of UNIKOM

UNIKOM was set up initially as an unarmed observation mission was to monitor a Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) along the boundary between Iraq and Kuwait and the Khawr Abd Allah waterway, to deter violations of the boundary and to observe any hostile action mounted from the territory of one state against the other.⁵⁷ In February 1993, following a serious of incidents on the border, the Security Council decided to increase UNIKOM's strength and to extend its terms of reference to include the capacity to take physical action to prevent violations of the DMZ and of the newly demarcated boundary between Iraq and Kuwait.⁵⁸

UNIKOM's concept of operations is based on a combination of patrol and observation bases, observation points, ground and air patrols, investigation teams and liaison with the parties at all levels. This mission enjoys full freedom of movement throughout the DMZ and observes the length and breadth of the zone. It verifies that no military personnel and equipment are within the zone and that no military fortifications and installations are maintained in it.⁵⁹ For operational purposes UNIKOM had divided the DMZ into three sectors. Each sector has a headquarters and six observation posts/patrol bases, from which the observers patrol their assigned sectors and visit temporary observation points established in areas of particular activity or where roads and tracks enter the DMZ in fact, all movements, including supply runs, are used for observation.⁶⁰ It was originally established as an unarmed observation mission with the mandate to monitor the major following tasks:⁶¹

- “To monitor the demilitarized zone (DMZ, 200 kilometers long) along the Iraq-Kuwait border
- To monitor the 40 km long waterway of Khawr Abd Allah (A 40 kilometers long water way)
- To observe Al Faw peninsula
- To monitor border violation
- To monitor any hostile action
- To monitor withdrawal of the armed forces
- Demarcation of boundary between Iraq and Kuwait
- Forced withdrawal of Iraqi forces”.

Umm Qasr in Iraq was headquarter of the UN mission which was barren and uninhabited land. The only fatalities were 6; 1 military observer, 4 military personnel and 1 international civilian staff.⁶² The Annual cost of UN mission was approximately \$ 65 million.⁶³ UN's other missions are: “Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission (IKBDC)”, “United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM)”, “United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC)” and “Compensation Fund (CF)” were also working in Kuwait.

Loses of Kuwait and Iraq

Kuwait: An unknown number, estimated to be between 500 and 1000 of civilians and some military were killed and many injured during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.⁶⁴

Iraq: 60,000 to 100,000 military personnel are estimated to have been killed or wounded in action. 2,000 to 3000 civilians are estimated to have been killed and from 5,000 to 7,700 injured.⁶⁵

The nation Kuwait weathered an invasion, aerial bombardment and looting a lot. “Iraqis looted \$ 20 billion worth of goods which included \$ 1 billion gold or \$ 1 billion foreign currency from Kuwait's Central Bank and \$ 2 billion in gold and precious stones held by Kuwaiti artisans for jewels-making, one of the leading

industry of Kuwait”.⁶⁶ Iraqis also dealt a blow to Kuwait’s private industry like Shoreline Maintenance Work, a contracting company, a track building materials and oil drilling firms. In September 1990, Iraqi soldiers took a fleet of 1000 trailers and trucks.⁶⁷ A cement factory was dismantled and taken to Iraq. It wrecked the highways of Kuwait by making deep trenches into it for defensive positions for combat units. Iraqi mines damaged two of Kuwait’s desalination plants. Iraqis also set fire to its luxury hotels.⁶⁸

Conclusion

On June 8th 1991, the US held a victory day parade in Washington DC, and a similar although smaller parade was held in London on June 21st, 1991. “The troops were welcomed home and commended for their deeds, as both nations looked to the future. However, many are still attempting to grasp the war’s significance”.⁶⁹ US President Bush address to the nation on the Gulf War. He said: “Kuwait is liberated. Iraq’s army is defeated. Our military objectives are met. Kuwait is once more in the hands of Kuwaitis in control of their own destiny. We share in their joy, a joy tempered only by our compassion for their ordeal”.⁷⁰ “Tonight, the Kuwaiti flag once again flies above the capital of a free and sovereign nation and the American flag flies above our embassy”.⁷¹

What was this war and what lessons does it provide? The answer is that “it helped to begin by putting it in perspective while comparison to history’s earlier conflicts, the war was rather small in that it was not a very long one, lasting only weeks instead of months or years and it was not an extremely violent one”. Likewise, culturally, the results of this war will not be substantial.⁷² The significance of war and its relevance during the period of bi-polar world especially during 1946-1987 the global peace was maintained and overriding the rivalry of US and Soviet.⁷³ Although it was a limited war but it contained several wars and a fear that it can be converted in to the global war. However, that balance was broken with the rapprochement and emergence of America as the world’s only superpower. The Persian Gulf War changed America as much as it changed the map of Middle East politics.⁷⁴ A new American image resulted one that may endure long after the last rusted hulks of tanks and artillery are cleared from the deserts of Iraq and Kuwait.⁷⁵

Systematic analysis of the lessons learned and strategic policy planning will require high quality current and estimative intelligence. Central to this the indisputable need for more sophisticated intelligence analysis and analytical pluralism.⁷⁶ Theoretical perspectives and policy assumptions can easily become analytical straitjackets. “The hope (and expectation) is that warning (and other forms of) intelligence inputs to the policy process can be analytically grounded and sensitive to underlying causal forces in the Gulf region and to nuances and subtleties operating below the surface”.⁷⁷

The final march into Kuwait City on February 26th came without air support because the smoke from 550 burning oil fields was too thick to fly through. On the ground, 6 million barrels of oil were ablaze each day. The fumes made it difficult to breathe.⁷⁸ The roar of the infernos said: “Capt Ed Ray as the First Marine Division crossed the last 30 miles to Kuwait international Airport. The troops met only scattered resistance. Kuwaiti troops entered first to retake their capital city”.

Americans and other allies soon followed. Kuwaitis took to the streets in a celebration of freedom that lasted all day and into the night; “Thank you. Thanks you. Thanks you Americans”.⁷⁹ After the liberation from Iraq, Kuwait again become an independent state and performing the leading role in Middle East. Men lose a lot in wars either victory or defeat. It’s a sad demise that both states are Muslim and during war both lose a lot. It hoped that it will never happen again not for Kuwait but any other state.

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