

Forum: Historical Security Council

Issue: Invasion of Kuwait

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Introduction

Invasion of Kuwait can be understood as a long-term geopolitical struggle that has been incited more and more with the economic situations of Iraq in recent years. Economical gains have always been more important than the human toll.

“On July 17, 1990 In televised speech, Saddam Hussein warns he will attack Kuwait if his demands are not met regarding (1) old border dispute, (2) decrease in Kuwaiti oil production, (3) reduction in Kuwait’s share of oil from Rumaila oil field, which extends under Iraqi territory” (“The Gulf War: A Chronology”).

The Iraqi Government justifies their invasion by historical alignment of Kuwait within the ‘vilayet’ (a state structure used by the Ottoman Empire) of Iraq, and the conflict between two nations has been rising since the start of the Iran-Iraq war that ended in 1988.

On August 2, 1990 around 2 a.m. Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait, Emir of Kuwait fled the country and during August 2 nearly total control of Kuwait was under Iraqi rule (*Iraq Invades Kuwait - History*). The Security Council has been called for an emergency meeting upon the receipt of these news from the Persian Gulf.

Definition of Key Terms

Vilayet: A state structure specific to the Ottomans, includes some provinces within the administrative body, not as small as a province but also not large as a state. For example the Vilayet of Baghdad included one thirds of current day Iraq.

Ba’th: Ba’ath Party, Ba’ath also spelled Ba’th, in full Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party, or Arab Socialist Renaissance Party, Arabic Ḥizb al-Ba’ath al-‘Arabī al-Ishtirākī, Pan-Arabist political party advocating the formation of a single Arab socialist nation (“Ba’ath Party”).

OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries): “OPEC is a permanent intergovernmental organization of 13 oil-exporting developing nations that coordinates and unifies the petroleum policies of its Member Countries” (“About Us”).

General Overview

After the end of the WWI by a decree from the League of Nations, the United Kingdom was allowed to form a mandate over Iraq, merging the Vilayets of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul. “From its very creation, Iraq was an artificial entity with no clear source of national identity” (“Before the Invasion of Kuwait”).

Lacking a national identity Iraq suffered through internal conflicts. As WWII came to an end and in 1958 Abd al-Nasser carried out a coup in Egypt, public opinion against the pro-British monarchy soared, monarchy was abolished and Abd al-Karim Qassem came to power as the first president of Iraq . “Over the next ten years, Iraq appeared on the point of disintegration as there were ten attempted coups, two armed rebellions and a semi-continuous war against the Kurds. It was in this atmosphere of political unrest that Saddam Hussein first rose to power” (“Before the Invasion of Kuwait.”).

The rule of the military over the country was fortified. “The president of the new regime was a Ba’thist army general named Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr. But very quickly, by the mid-1970’s, a civilian party official named Saddam Hussein, who was responsible for internal security affairs, emerged as the real power in the regime. In 1979, al-Bakr, whose health had been in decline for some years, resigned as president and Saddam succeeded him. After coming to power, Saddam ordered the execution of 22 high-ranking Ba’th Party officials accused of plotting against him” (Iraq and Gulf War).

Saddam Hussain gathered loyal followers around him from the Ba’thist clique and replaced various other officials with people from his hometown Takrit. Furthermore, he created three different secret services and extensively adopted torture practices, he was step by step forming a terror regime counting on the survival of only himself (“Before the Invasion of Kuwait.”).

Iran-Iraq war came at a great cost to the Saddam Hussein Regime, also pouring economical sources to military expansion, it is estimated that Iraq had \$65-80bn debt of which \$25bn was to western governments and firms. Saddam Hussein prioritized the military above all long-term economic sustainability, focusing on privatization and debt-taking only for short-term military processes. Western governments started to be concerned about Iraq circumventing its debt to find more resources for the military.“ In September 1989 this erupted into the Banco Nazionale di Lavoro scandal, when an Iraqi agent in the Atlanta branch of the bank managed to secure \$3 billion of unsecured loans” (“Before the Invasion of Kuwait”).

With external threats surmounting around him, Saddam Hussein had two choices: to disarm and focus on long-term reconstruction in the aftermath of the Iran-Iraq war or to gather these resources from other suppliers. “On 7 December 1989, Iraq announced that it had launched a rocket, called the al-Abid, which was said to be capable of putting a satellite into space”. This update was announced during a Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) meeting in London, which increased the concern of Western powers on the question of the stability of the Middle East, (“Before the Invasion of Kuwait”).

“In a speech in January 1990, Saddam explicitly warned that 'any attempt by the Zionist entity to strike against our scientific or military installations will be confronted by us with a precise reaction, using the means available to us according to the legitimate right to self-defense” (“Before the Invasion of Kuwait”).

Saddam Hussein, using the overproduction of oil by Kuwait, denial of Kuwait for the Iraqi request to access the Gulf Sea, and stating that Kuwait had stolen oil from the sources of Iraq on July 21 Iraq invaded Kuwait with little to no resistance in the early hours of August 2 (“Before the Invasion of Kuwait”).

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Iraq:

“The decision to attack was based on the need to erase Iraq’s massive debt: Iraq had largely financed its 1980-1988 war with Iran through loans and owed some \$37 billion to Gulf creditors by 1990. It argued that Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates should consider the loans as payments to Iraq for protecting the Arabian Peninsula from Iranian expansionism, but they refused to forgive the debt” (“Igniting Iraq’s Invasion of Kuwait – Loans, Land, Oil and Access”).

Even though practical reasons or economic justifications seem the most probable reason, Iraq has cultural and historical justifications for their invasion, if not for the British protection and the Operation Vantage Kuwait could have been Iraqi soil since 1961.

Kuwait:

Kuwait supported the Iraqi side in the Iran-Iraq War politically and financially nearly amounting up to \$30 billions of aid. They were scared of the possibility of Iranian Revolution spreading to nearby countries and especially to Kuwait. Kuwait wanted their debts repaid, but the Iraqi government refused to do so (“Kuwait’s Approach to the Gulf Crisis”).

The King of Kuwait and his family fled the city. Kuwait could not put up formidable resistance against its Iraqi foes, the country was capitulated in a day.

The United States:

During the Iran-Iraq War the United States supplied Iraq with bonds and military equipment. After the war, as the Iraqi Government was not paying their debts but further increasing them and also as it was in stages of development of various weapons of mass destruction, the US's position towards Iraq changed to a stable but defensive position. The US did not impose any sanctions on the Iraqi Government however, even though Congress was trying to pass a bill the Bush Administration stood against it, although they were also not providing further bonds for Iraq.

Soviet Union:

"In the seven years since the Iran-Iraq war began, Soviet policy toward the conflict has been quite constant. Moscow regards the war as "senseless" and has repeatedly called for an immediate ceasefire and return to the status quo ante, as outlined in the 1975 Algiers Agreement between Iran and Iraq. Moscow considers the war as dangerous not only because of its destructiveness to both combatant states, but also because, by alarming the Arab states of the Peninsula, it has provided a justification for greater US military deployment in the region" (Halliday).

The Soviet Union's policy on the Middle Eastern Problem can be regarded as a containment policy. Their main goal is to not let any further US aggression in the area, and also to prevent any border changes. USSR tried a balanced approach while the Iran-Iraq war was happening, their concern was both the fall of Baghdad and Tehran, they eventually wanted stability in the region. Even though historically the Ba'athist party and the Soviets had agreements, the USSR tried to contain the Iraqi aggression and even stopped the export of long range ground-to-ground ballistic missiles. (Halliday).

Timeline of Events

1920	"Iraq is created out of Mesopotamia by Britain and becomes a protectorate of the British Empire" (Horner).
1932	"League of Nations abolishes 1920 mandate and Iraq becomes a member of the League." (Horner).
1939	Iraq proposes a union with Kuwait. Britain and the Sabbah family object. Kuwaiti General Assembly is dissolved.

	Riots ensue In Kuwait City as a result and Iraq threatens to invade and liberate" Kuwait. British troops are deployed to Kuwait. King Khazi dies in car accident and Iraq does not invade" (Horner).
1954	"Treaty attempted to provide Kuwait with fresh water from the Shatt alArab and to provide Iraq with deep anchorage sites near Um-Qasr. General Nuri is loathe to accept Kuwaiti borders and Kuwaiti leaders are suspicious of Iraqis. Treaty Is never consummated" (Horner).
1960	"Another treaty fails and Kuwait advances Its desalinization capabilities" (Horner).
1961	"Britain grants independence to Kuwait. Iraq attempts another union with Kuwait. Kuwait soundly rejects the offer as the kingdom has developed Its oil producing capabilities and distrusts Iraqi regime. Kamm threatens to invade Kuwait and the British send military forces which are quickly replaced with a multinational Arab peace-keeping force" (Horner).
1963	"Kassem is overthrown in a coup and executed. Kuwait is admitted as a member of the United Nations. Kassem's successors agree to acknowledge the sovereignty of Kuwait and Kuwait grants 83 million dollar loan" to Iraq" (Horner).
1973	"Iraq invades Kuwait and occupies border outposts in an attempt to gain control of Bubiyan and Warba. A multinational Arab force and Iran negotiate the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait" (Horner).
1980	"Iraq goes to war with Iran. Kuwait supports Iraq as do other Gulf nations" (Horner).
1987	"Iran attacks Kuwait with surface to surface missiles. Iraq claims that Kuwait's destiny is Iraq's destiny and there will be revenge for the attack" (Horner).

1988	"Iran-Iraq war ends leaving Iraq's economy in shambles" (Horner).
1989	"Kuwait breaks OPEC output quotas and is angle drilling from Rumania oil field" (Horner).

UN Involvement

At this point the Security Council has not yet passed any resolutions on the question of Invasion of Kuwait, taking into account the fast capitulation of the Kuwaiti forces, the UNSC has to take decisive and urgent action.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

There were unilateral trials of solution such as the independence granted by the United Kingdom, however, there were not any big trials of solution.

Possible Solutions

Iraq's position in world geopolitics is important due to the fact that Iraq is one of the prominent factors in the Middle East. Furthermore, Iraq seems to be fierce about their rights over Kuwaiti lands, if a diplomatic approach is taken some concession must be made.

The border dispute regarding the oiling rights of both nations can be solved which is one of the main reasons for the Iraqi invasion.

Iraq's debts can be revisited for the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. A semi-autonomous state can be implemented by the guarantee of major powers in the region.

As a last-resort option the UNSC can create a combined force for the reclamation of Kuwait, however, it must be taken into consideration that this would be deadly for all nations.

Notes from the Chair

The dissolution of the Iron Curtain and the influence war between the United States and the United Soviet Socialist Republics must be taken into consideration. Iraq-Kuwait dispute must not be looked over, however, US-USSR influence war is also a prominent factor.

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