

Kuwait

-- Kuwait has played an large roll in the war with Iraq. Find out how and why. --

BACKGROUND:

Kuwait's modern history began in the early 18th century, when several clans from the Al Aniza tribe migrated to the northern shore of the



Gulf from the Najd, their famine-stricken homeland in central Arabia. These settlers combined to create an oligarchic merchant

principality, whose economic prosperity was based on fishing, pearling, and trade. Eventually the Al Sabah emerged as the dominant clan, and were formally established as rulers in 1756.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Al Sabah proved adept at the kind of maneuvering that was necessary for a small state to survive next to powerful Saudi, Rashidi, and Ottoman neighbors. By the late nineteenth century, however, fears of growing Ottoman influence led Sheikh Mubarak Al Sabah or "Mubarak the Great" (r.1896-1915) to enter into an agreement with Great Britain, which effectively established Kuwait as an autonomous British protectorate.

Under the 1899 agreement, Kuwait maintained control over its internal affairs, while Great Britain assumed responsibility for the country's security and foreign relations. The British also provided advisers to staff the country's nascent modern bureaucracy. Another British legacy is Kuwait's borders, which were established in 1922 and 1923. Iraq affirmed its border with Kuwait in its 1932 application to the League of Nations for membership as an independent state.

In the mid-1930s work began on the development of Kuwait's petroleum industry, the basis of the country's modern prosperity. Oil was first discovered in Kuwait in 1938, but the development of the industry was interrupted by World War II. By 1945, drilling had resumed on a large scale, and the commercial export of crude oil began in June 1946. Oil production and revenues grew rapidly, fueling a dramatic expansion of the entire economy. By the 1960s Kuwait enjoyed a level of economic development that made it one of the richest states in the world on a per capita basis.

On June 19, 1961 Kuwait gained full independence from Britain. Iraq initially refused to accept Kuwait's independence and threatened to annex its neighbor, falsely alleging that Kuwait had once been part of Iraq. Iraq's military threats resulted in a deployment of British troops, which were soon replaced by an Arab League force, and the crisis subsided. In 1963 Kuwait became a member of the United Nations, and later that year Iraq agreed to abandon its threats and recognize Kuwait's independence and borders in a treaty signed by both governments (although there were border clashes in 1973).

In the 1980s Kuwait's stability was shaken by the Iran-Iraq War, terrorist attacks in Kuwait City, and economic difficulties caused by a worldwide oil glut and the 1982 collapse of the country's unofficial stock market, the Suq Al-Manakh. Kuwait's sovereignty and continued existence were critically threatened when Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait on August 2, 1990, claiming that Kuwait was harming Iraq economically by refusing to reduce its oil production. Many Kuwaitis were forced to flee to Saudi Arabia and other countries. In Saudi Arabia, Kuwait set up a government in exile. As an international coalition of 30 states, led by the United States, prepared to reverse the occupation,

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Iraq announced it had annexed Kuwait, claiming again that Kuwait had historically been part of Iraq. The Iraqis were forcibly ejected at the conclusion of Operation Desert Storm on February 26, 1991. Departing Iraqi troops looted homes and businesses, and inflicted serious damage on Kuwait's oil industry and environment by setting ablaze 742 of its 1,080 oil wells and allowing crude oil to flow into the desert and the sea. They also took thousands of Kuwaiti POW's with them.

In November 1994, Iraq formally accepted Kuwaiti sovereignty as well as an UN-demarcated border. Nevertheless, Iraq has provided only partial compensation for property and environmental damage sustained during the occupation and has refused to comply with U.N. resolutions stipulating that Iraq repatriate all prisoners of war. Eight years after Kuwait's liberation, Iraq continued to hold 605 prisoners of war (of whom 570 are Kuwaiti citizens), many of whom were kidnapped from their homes or were arrested at random on the streets during the Iraqi occupation.

Names in Kuwait Arab names reveal individual ancestry as well as information about his family standing. In Kuwait, a person's given name is generally followed by the names of his father and grandfather and then the family name. Take, for example, the name of the current Amir:

Jabir Al-Ahmed Al-Jabir Al-Sabah
Jabir son of Ahmed grandson of Jabir of the Sabah family

Women's names follow the same pattern of tracing their lineage through the father's family. Arab women also maintain their given and family names throughout their lives regardless of marital status (i.e. an Arab woman does not take her husband's name upon marriage).

In Kuwait, members of the ruling Sabah family also take the title Sheikh (feminine: Sheikha) before their name to indicate their status.

STORY:

A dark haze clouded the Kuwaiti capital after Saddam Hussein's troops set fire to their own

oil wells as Iraq launched a missile attack on its southern neighbor. In London, the chief of British armed forces Admiral Sir Michael Boyce said only seven oil wells in southern Iraq had been deliberately torched by Iraqi forces, and not around 30 as previously announced. "Specialist civilian contractors" would be in the area "in a day or two" to snuff out the fires.

Kuwait Airways said it is suspending service to the United States and Europe because of the war on Iraq and will only fly in and out of the emirate during daylight hours. An official told the state KUNA news agency that all US and Europe flights are temporarily on hold. The airline last week had announced flights to Beirut, Damascus and Iran would stop on Sunday.

The U.S. army has confirmed that an American soldier is being detained as a suspect in a grenade attack on a U.S. camp in Kuwait. Army officials say 14 American soldiers were wounded, four seriously, in the grenade and small arms attack early Sunday at Camp Pennsylvania, near Kuwait's border with Iraq. Grenades were thrown into the command tent of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division, followed by small arms fire. Reports say all the victims had fragmentation wounds and two of them were shot

Kuwaiti defense forces fired Patriot missiles to intercept an incoming Iraqi missile targeted at an air base in the north of the emirate, triggering explosions which could be clearly heard in the capital. The latest missile attack, which came after 10 Iraqi missiles crashed into the emirate in the opening 24 hours of the war, added to the sense of unease of Kuwaitis who awoke to dark skies. Iraq has launched at least 12 missiles on Kuwait since the war began on Thursday.

The Kuwaiti government, meanwhile, announced that it was donating two million US dollars to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to assist Iraqi refugees. Kuwait's ambassador to the UN, Dharar Abdul Razzak

Razzuqi, made the pledge during a meeting with UNHCR chief Ruud Lubbers at a meeting in Geneva on Thursday.

SIGNIFICANCE:

For weeks, Kuwaitis have been asking each other when the war to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein would begin. As President Bush went on television to announce the beginning of the war, streets here were nearly deserted except for the "guest workers" from the Philippines and Egypt, the low-paid employees who sweep Kuwait's streets, clean its houses and wash its cars of the desert dust.

There were few signs anywhere that many Kuwaitis knew their world might be changing dramatically again, this time in a way that they had long hoped. At daybreak, radio and television broadcasts announced the news of the war, interrupted with emergency instructions on what to do should Iraq aim a missile this way. Slowly, a dribble of cars appeared on the roads and the markets began to see their first customers as businesses played news reports over loudspeakers. People stopped and chatted with one another but in hushed tones, not in jubilation, though clearly they were glad to hear that the United States was again working for their good.

"This is our revenge, of course," said Fuad Al-Hageri, 40, an investment broker plucking bread from the aisles of the Dahiat Abdullah Al-Asalem grocery store.

Thousands of Kuwaitis were killed or are still missing from the 1990 Iraqi invasion, and the bitterness toward Hussein runs as deep as the oil reserves that made this country so wealthy. Kuwait did not offer troops for the war against Hussein but has been the major staging ground for U.S. and British troops.

"We have been waiting a long time for this," said Assam Al-Otaibi, 50, who said he could count at least a dozen people who were killed by Hussein's forces, are still missing or were brutalized during the days of occupation. "Maybe now we can be friends with the Iraqi people."

And The Oscar Goes To...

BACKGROUND:

War with Iraq put the Academy Awards in a more solemn state, with much of the revelry of Hollywood's biggest bash purged and organizers hoping the hostilities would not pre-empt the show.

Barring extraordinary news in the U.S.-led assault on Iraq, Oscar planners expected to carry out the show as scheduled. Depending on the warfront news, ABC was prepared to run text updates across the bottom of the screen, cut to Iraq coverage between awards or interrupt the broadcast for war updates if events merit it. If the show were interrupted, Oscar producers held out the option to stop the ceremony and pick up again where it left off when the awards broadcast resumed.

Planners scrapped the glitzy red-carpet arrival festivities, where nominees and other celebrities strut before rows of clamoring reporters and photographers and a bleacher section of cheering fans.

STORY:

Many stars were toning the fashion down, with more black gowns and fewer jewels expected. Some celebrities opposed to the war planned to wear peace pins, and a few intended to show up in fuel-efficient gasoline-electric hybrid vehicles instead of limousines as a statement against U.S. dependence on overseas oil.

A few stars and filmmakers backed out of the 75th annual Oscars, either in protest of the war or because they felt uncomfortable making merry when people were dying in Iraq. Frank Pierson, president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts

& Sciences, said it was especially important to carry on with a cultural event such as the Oscars at a time when American values were being questioned around the world.

And the Oscar goes to:

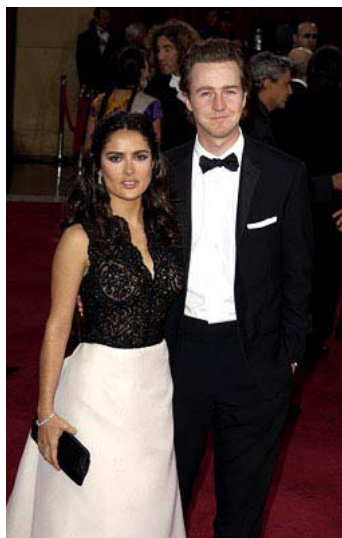
- Best Picture: Chicago
- Director: Roman Polanski (The Pianist)
- Original Screenplay: Talk to Her
- Adapted Screenplay: The Pianist
- Actress: Nicole Kidman (The Hours)
- Honorary Award: Peter O'Toole
- Original Song: Lose Yourself (8 Mile)
- Actor: Adrien Brody (The Pianist)
- Film Editing: Martin Walsh (Chicago)
- Cinematography: Conrad Hall (Road to Perdition)
- Documentary Short Subject: Twin Towers
- Documentary: Michael Moore (Bowling for Columbine)
- Sound Editing: The Two Towers
- Sound: Chicago
- Foreign Language Film: Nowhere in Africa
- Original Score: Eliot Goldenthal (Frida)
- Supporting Actress: Catherine Zeta-Jones (Chicago)
- Make-up: Frida
- Costume Design: Colleen Atwood (Chicago)
- Animated Short Film: The Chubbchubbs!
- Art Direction: Chicago
- Supporting Actor: Chris Cooper (Adaptation)
- Visual Effects: The Two Towers
- Animated Film: Spirited Away

SIGNIFICANCE:

With a leading 13 nominations and a solid run of honors at earlier film awards, "Chicago" was the first musical since 1968's "Oliver!" to win best picture.

Once a Hollywood staple, musicals gradually fell out of favor since the 1960s as moviegoers grew more sophisticated and studios became convinced that audiences would no longer abide characters who burst into song. "Moulin Rouge," a best-picture nominee a year ago, whetted the public's appetite for musicals, and "Chicago" has packed theaters, with its domestic haul at \$130 million and climbing.

From top to bottom, left to right:
Selma Hayek, Edward Norton, Jennifer Lopez, Ben Affleck, Nicole Kidman, Julianne Moore, Peter O'Toole, and Michael Moore.



WHO YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Amir Sheikh Jabir al-Ahmad Al Sabah

Sheikh Jabir al-Ahmad Al Sabah succeeded to the throne of Kuwait on December 31, 1977, on the death of Sheikh Sabah al-Salim Al Sabah. Sheikh Jabir is in the Jabir line of descent from Mubarak the Great (1896-1915).



Sheikh Jabir was born, by most accounts, in 1929, when his father Sheikh Ahmad was ruler of Kuwait. His mother, Sheikha Bibi Salim Al Sabah, was a royal cousin. After education in local private schools and from palace tutors, he became Chief of Public Security in the al-Ahmadi oilfields in 1949. In the late 1950s he dealt with the oil companies in various capacities, and in 1959 became head of the Department of Finance. In 1963-65 he also became a Deputy Prime Minister.

He survived an assassination attempt in 1985 and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. He fled to Saudi Arabia, where he established a government, returning home in 1991 after Iraq's withdrawal. During his exile he gained the support of Kuwait's opposition leaders in return for his agreement to restore the National Assembly.

As Minister of Finance and Crown Prince, Sheikh Jabir had a reputation as a vigorous, dynamic figure in politics and was also active as a swimmer and horseback rider. Today his age (about 71) and health have made him something of a frail, retiring figure. His official portrait (above) was taken when he was Crown Prince, prior to 1977. Sheikh Jabir has a reputation as one of the most-married Gulf rulers (a fact used against him by the Iraqis in 1990-1991): he has followed the old Gulf tradition of keeping up to four wives at a time and divorcing and remarrying, in order to cement key tribal alliances. He is understood to have a large number of children.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY:

March 24, 1999

NATO BOMBS YUGOSLAVIA:

On March 24, 1999, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) commences air



strikes against Yugoslavia with the bombing of Serbian military positions in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo. The NATO offensive

came in response to a new wave of ethnic cleansing launched by Serbian forces against the Kosovar Albanians on March 20.

The Kosovo region lay at the heart of the Serbian empire in the late Middle Ages but was lost to the Ottoman Turks in 1389 following Serbia's defeat in the Battle of Kosovo. By the time Serbia regained control of Kosovo from Turkey in 1913, there were few Serbs left in a region that had come to be dominated by ethnic Albanians. In 1918, Kosovo formally became a province of Serbia, and it continued as such after communist leader Josip Broz Tito established the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945, comprising the Balkan states of Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovenia, and Macedonia. However, Tito eventually gave in to Kosovar demands for greater autonomy, and after 1974 Kosovo existed as independent state in all but name.

Serbs came to resent Kosovo's autonomy, which allowed it to act against Serbian interests, and in 1987 Slobodan Milosevic was elected leader of Serbia's Communist Party with a promise of restoring Serbian rule to Kosovo. In 1989, Milosevic became president of Serbia and moved quickly to suppress Kosovo, stripping its autonomy and in 1990 sending troops to disband its government. Meanwhile, Serbian nationalism led to the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation in

1991, and in 1992 the Balkan crisis deteriorated into civil war. A new Yugoslav state, consisting only of Serbia and the small state of Montenegro, was created, and Kosovo began four years of nonviolent resistance to Serbian rule.

The militant Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) emerged in 1996 and began attacking Serbian police in Kosovo. With arms obtained in Albania, the KLA stepped up its attacks in 1997, prompting a major offensive by Serbian troops against the rebel-held Drenica region in February-March 1998. Dozens of civilians were killed, and enlistment in the KLA increased dramatically. In July, the KLA launched an offensive across Kosovo, seizing control of nearly half the province before being routed in a Serbian counteroffensive later that summer. The Serbian troops drove thousands of ethnic Albanians from their homes and were accused of massacring Kosovo civilians.

In October, NATO threatened Serbia with air strikes, and Milosevic agreed to allow the return of tens of thousands of refugees. Fighting soon resumed, however, and talks between Kosovar Albanians and Serbs in Rambouillet, France, in February 1999 ended in failure. On March 18, further peace talks in Paris collapsed after the Serbian delegation refused to sign a deal calling for Kosovo autonomy and the deployment of NATO troops to enforce the agreement. Two days later, the Serbian army launched a new offensive in Kosovo. On March 24, NATO air strikes began.

In addition to Serbian military positions, the NATO air campaign targeted Serbian government buildings and the country's infrastructure in an effort to destabilize the Milosevic regime. The bombing and continued Serbian offensives drove hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians into neighboring Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro. Many of these refugees were airlifted to safety in the United States and other NATO nations. On June 10, the NATO bombardment ended when Serbia agreed to a peace agreement calling for the withdrawal of

Serb forces from Kosovo and their replacement by NATO peacekeeping troops.

With the exception of two U.S. pilots killed in a training mission in Albania, no NATO personnel lost their lives in the 78-day operation. There were some mishaps, however, such as miscalculated bombings that led to the deaths of Kosovar Albanian refugees, KLA members, and Serbian civilians. The most controversial incident was the May 7 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, which killed three Chinese journalists and caused a crisis in U.S.-Chinese relations.

On June 12, NATO forces moved into Kosovo from Macedonia. The same day, Russian troops arrived in the Kosovo capital of Pristina and forced NATO into agreeing to a joint occupation. Under the NATO occupation, Kosovar autonomy was restored, but the province remained officially part of Serbia.

SPORTS:

NCAA TOURNEY

Teams still in the NCAA playoffs:

Women		Men	
Midwest Region:		Midwest Region:	
8	Utah	2	Pittsburg
1	Duke	1	Kentucky
2	Texas Tech	3	Marquette
7	UCSB	5	Wisconsin
West Region:		West Region:	
2	Texas	1	Arizona
7	Arkansas	3	Duke
4	Ohio State	5	Notre Dame
5	LA Tech	2	Kansas
Mideast Region:		East Region:	
5	S Carolina	12	Butler
4	Penn State	3	Syracuse
2	Villanova	10	Auburn
7	Geo Wash	1	Oklahoma
East Region:		South:	
1	Connecticut	6	Maryland
9	TCU	1	Texas
11	Notre Dame	7	Michigan St
3	Kansas St	5	Connecticut

FEATURE:

Kuwaiti Government

Kuwait is a constitutional monarchy governed by the Al Sabah family, which has maintained a dynastic regime since the mid-18th century. Prior to the discovery of oil, power was closely shared with the leading merchant families, but with the wealth acquired from the new resource, the Al Sabah were propelled into a more prominent and powerful role. The ruling family holds many key cabinet posts, including the oil, finance, foreign, defense, and interior portfolios.

The Cabinet : The Amir is restricted to governing via his Council (Cabinet) of Ministers. He appoints each minister and the Prime Minister from among members of the National Assembly or other notable citizens, and the ministers are responsible to both the Amir and the National Assembly. In accordance with practice (but not specifically dictated by the Constitution), the Crown Prince has always been the Prime Minister. The Amir has the ability to decree legislation through his Cabinet, but all of his actions must be approved by the Assembly. If the Assembly is not in session, all decrees made during the parliamentary interregnum must be ratified upon its reconvening.

The Judiciary: The Kuwaiti judicial system, although based on the Egyptian model, is an amalgam of Islamic law, English common law, and the Ottoman civil code. Personal and family matters such as divorce and inheritance are governed by separate family courts operating under religious laws, each religion (e.g. Sunni, Shia, Christian) having its own laws and courts.

The Legislature: Kuwait is the only Arab Gulf state with an elected parliament. The country's unicameral parliament, the National Assembly (Majlis al-Umma), consists of 50 members who are elected by a select electorate. Members are elected to four-year terms and the entire body stands for election at the same time. The Amir has the power to adjourn the Assembly

for a period not exceeding one month and may also dissolve the Assembly and call for new elections within two months.

One power of the Assembly that has repeatedly caused tension with the government is its right of interpolation, or the right to question Ministers "with regard to matters falling within their competence." The Constitution also empowers the National Assembly to overturn any Amiri decrees made during the dissolution, and the Assembly has exercised this right on occasion. The parliament can also veto a law proposed by the government or impose a law rejected by the government. No bill becomes law in Kuwait without parliamentary approval.

Elections and Campaigning: Each MP is responsible to the nation as a whole, but is elected by a certain constituency. The country is divided in 25 electoral districts and the top two vote-winners in each are granted Assembly seats. Since political parties are prohibited, Candidates must nominate themselves and run as independents.

Although there is some door-to-door campaigning, most is done through the tradition of the *diwaniya*. A *diwaniya* is an evening session—held weekly throughout the year by each family—where men get together and discuss issues of the day. During election campaigns, these gatherings are held in large open-air tents, which serve as campaign headquarters, where the men sit and sip beverages while they listen to a candidate's platform before having a fancy dinner.

Enfranchisement: Voting in Kuwait is currently restricted to men who resided in Kuwait before 1920, their male descendants and the descendants of naturalized citizens. All voters must also be 21 years of age. The national constituency is relatively small—approximately 113,000—and makes up roughly 15 percent of Kuwaiti nationals. Citizens naturalized less than twenty years earlier may not vote or seek election to the National Assembly. In addition, members of the military and police are prohibited from voting, in an effort to keep the armed forces depoliticized.

Quote of the Week:

I know that Saddam is losing control of his country.
-President Bush

Fact of the Week:

15% of Iraqis under 5; 48% are under 18; 3% are over 65.

Word of the Week:

Amir *n.* 1. an independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia)
Synonyms: emir, emeer, ameer

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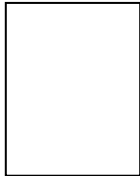
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