

**Kuwaiti Relations with Iraq in the post-Saddam Era:
Strategic Hedging, Regional Effects & the Structural Power of Small States**

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Abstract

Although often overshadowed by the tumult in the region, and in Iraq specifically, there has been discussion in recent years of the normalization of relations between Kuwait and Iraq. The primary purposes of this study are, first, to provide an analysis of Kuwaiti foreign policy toward Iraq and, second, to determine the role of regional inter-state structures in shaping this policy. Using journalistic accounts, statements from government officials, and data concerning macroeconomic activity and military expenditure, this research shows that relations have indeed gotten closer between Kuwait and Iraq, particularly since 2010. Additionally, evidence is presented demonstrating that Kuwait is engaging in a foreign policy strategy of hedging in its relations with Iraq, allowing it to prepare for multiple potential security threats while maximizing short-term economic and political benefits. It is argued that closer ties between Kuwait and Iraq have been enabled and incentivized by the changing structure (both material and social) of international relations in the Gulf region. Finally, through its analysis of Kuwaiti foreign policy toward Iraq, this thesis seeks to demonstrate the potential usefulness of the concepts of strategic hedging and structural power in the analysis of small state behavior in international relations.

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Introduction

Following the visit of a Kuwaiti delegation to Baghdad in early 2012, the office of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki issued a statement conveying the Kuwaiti representatives' emphasis on the necessity of Iraq joining the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).¹ While, more than five years later, it remains true that there is no likelihood of Iraq joining the GCC in the near future, the statement was representative of the reconciliation which had been developing between Kuwait and Iraq since at least 2010. This reconciliation was particularly remarkable in that it had to overcome serious animosities between the two neighboring countries following Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990-91.

A number of observers have noted the improvements in the Kuwaiti-Iraqi relationship in recent years.² There does not yet seem to be, however, much in-depth analysis of this development. It is at times implied to be the inevitable outcome of the 2003 fall of Saddam; indeed, as this thesis will discuss, this event certainly played a role - but only in that it was an enabling factor, rather than a causal one. Given the substantial progress which was required to mend Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations, however, there are various aspects of this relationship which deserve greater inquiry - not least of which is the foreign policy strategy pursued by the Kuwaiti government and its response to the shifting dynamics of international relations in the Gulf.

Accordingly, this thesis will focus on investigating the drivers of Kuwait's policy toward Iraq in the post-Saddam era. In doing so, this work will analyze Kuwait's policy toward Iraq through the conceptual framework of strategic hedging and discuss this policy within the context of the broader inter-state structure of the Gulf region, focusing specifically on recent changes

¹ "Kuwait stresses necessity for Iraq to join GCC," *Alsumaria News*. Published April 27, 2012, accessed September 25, 2016. <http://www.alsumaria.tv/news/55919/kuwait-stresses-necessity-for-iraq-to-join-gcc/en#>.

² Kenneth Katzman, "Kuwait: Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service*, (February 19, 2016), 16; "Statement of General Lloyd J. Austin III, Commander, US Centcom before the House Armed Services Committee on the Posture of US Central Command," (March 3, 2015), accessed April 18, 2017: 23, <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20150303/103076/HHRG-114-AS00-Wstate-AustinUSAL-20150303.pdf>; Anthony H. Cordesman, Robert M. Shelala II and Omar Mohamed, "The Gulf Military Balance Volume III: The Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, U.S.-Iranian Competition Series (September 4, 2013): 37.

within this structure and the effects which they may have had on the Kuwaiti-Iraqi relationship.

The concept of *strategic hedging* (or simply hedging) is one which has received increasing attention within the field of international relations.³ It is perhaps most simply understood as a strategy in which “engagement policies are pursued at the same time as indirect balancing policies.”⁴ While this definition will be elaborated on in the following chapter, suffice it to say for now that hedging has emerged as an alternative to realist theories which assume that small states are bound to either balance against or bandwagon with larger powers.⁵

In its focus on regional structure, this work hopes to bring greater understanding to the ways in which Kuwait has been incentivized, empowered or constrained in its foreign relations by the structure of international relations in the Gulf. Therefore, while international structures are crucially important to state behavior, they do not dictate states’ actions. Even small states such as Kuwait must be acknowledged as having agency in their decision-making, as well as the potential to benefit from - or be empowered by - structural configurations.

Research Questions

In light of these observations, this research intends to answer the following research questions: How can Kuwait’s foreign policy strategy toward Iraq in the post-Saddam era be best explained? Has the adoption of Kuwait’s strategy regarding Iraq been influenced by the structure of international relations in the Gulf region? If so, how? It is hypothesized that Kuwait is indeed engaging in a strategy of hedging toward Iraq and that regional structural factors have been greatly influential to Kuwait’s adoption of this strategy - in both enabling and incentivizing Kuwait’s simultaneous engagement with and indirect balancing against Iraq.

³ Morten Valbjørn, “International Relations Theory and the New Middle East: Three Levels of a Debate,” *POMEPS Studies: International Relations Theory and a Changing Middle East* 16 (September 17, 2015): 74-5.

⁴ Evelyn Goh, “Understanding “Hedging” in Asia-Pacific Security,” *Pacific Forum CSIS*, PacNet Number 43 (August 31, 2006): 1.

⁵ Mehran Kamrava, *Qatar: Small State, Big Politics*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 51-2.

Methodology

The research presented in this thesis will employ a strategy of analytic induction, meaning that data will be gathered in order to test the above stated hypotheses. Revisions or additions to these hypotheses will be made as needed after an investigation of the data.⁶ A theory will then be presented as a result of this process attempting to explain Kuwait's policy toward Iraq as well as the effects of regional structure on the adoption of this policy.

The process for testing these hypotheses will be as follows: First, a descriptive account will be given of Kuwait and Iraq's mutual reconciliation over the past decade and a half. Second, an analysis will be made of the ways in which inter-state structures in the Gulf region may have influenced this reconciliation. Finally - keeping in mind the possible effects of regional structures - the analytical framework of strategic hedging will be applied in an examination of Kuwait's policy toward Iraq.

This research will be conducted primarily through a qualitative content analysis of news articles and statements from governments or government officials, but will also make reference to macroeconomic data and reports of military expenditure as well as previous academic scholarship.⁷ Finally, throughout its analysis, this thesis will rely on a strategy of theoretical sampling in which various theories of international relations will be invoked and tested throughout the collection and presentation of data.⁸ The process of data collection will therefore be in part driven by the observations within these theories which are deemed relevant to this particular case study.

The following chapter will consist of a literature review providing an introduction to the theoretical concepts which will be referred to throughout this research. These concepts include: strategic hedging, small states, power, and structure. Chapter two will discuss, in detail, the developments in bilateral relations between Kuwait and Iraq since 2003 and provide some of the historical context for these developments. Chapter three will consist of an investigation into the

⁶ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 539-41.

⁷ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 276.

⁸ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 414-6.

potential effects of regional structures on Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations, with particular attention paid to changes in both the power politics and the social structure of the Gulf region in recent years. Chapter four will provide an analysis of Kuwaiti foreign policy toward Iraq within the framework of strategic hedging, followed by a discussion on the theoretical concepts of hedging, structural power, and small states as they relate to this case study. Finally, the findings of this research will be presented along with a brief discussion of what the future could hold for Kuwait's position in the region in light of its policy toward Iraq.

Chapter 1

Theoretical Concepts & Literature Review

One of the primary objectives of this research is to fill a perceived gap in the academic literature on the foreign relations of both Kuwait and Iraq. Within the field of international relations, Iraq is regularly discussed solely as the object of other states' power struggles, while Kuwait is often neglected in favor of more typically dynamic GCC member-states such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).⁹ Further, while it may seem intuitive to some, the improvement in relations between these two neighbors deserves much deeper analytical inquiry.¹⁰ Specifically, it is crucial that analyses of this relationship take into account the effects of the broader regional structures within which Kuwait and Iraq are interacting with one another and the changes which these structures have undergone in recent years.

As Morten Valbjørn points out, there has been somewhat of a boom in interdisciplinary dialogue between area studies of the Middle East and comparative politics in the years since the Arab Spring.¹¹ The field of *international relations* of the Middle East, however, has been far less dynamic. Although there has indeed been important work published in recent years on the international relations of the region, Valbjørn argues that this work has not yet garnered the attention it deserves from generalists - nor has it come close to exhausting the opportunities for challenging existing theoretical concepts or exploring new ones. For the purpose of this research, it is important to establish a conceptual framework which can aid in better understanding the position of Kuwait vis-à-vis both Iraq and the broader region. Thus, this chapter will discuss the literature surrounding four applicable analytic concepts (strategic hedging, small states, power, and structure), aiming to further formulate such a framework.

⁹ Jane Kinninmont, Omar Sirri and Gareth Stansfield, "Iraq's Foreign Policy, Ten Years On," in *Iraq: Ten Years On*, eds. Claire Spencer, Jane Kinninmont and Omar Sirri (London: Chatham House, May, 2013), 37, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/191107>.

¹⁰ Katzman, "Kuwait," 16; "Statement of General Lloyd J. Austin III," 23; Cordesman et al., 37.

¹¹ Valbjørn, "International Relations Theory and the New Middle East," 74-5.

Strategic Hedging

The concept of *strategic hedging* is a relatively recent development in international relations theory. While Evelyn Goh's description of hedging as referenced in the previous chapter - a strategy in which "engagement policies are pursued at the same time as indirect balancing policies"¹² - provides a basic introduction to the concept, Kuik Cheng-Chwee (in his analysis of Southeast Asian-Chinese relations) has developed a much more comprehensive conceptualization. Kuik defines hedging as "a behaviour in which a country seeks to offset risks by pursuing multiple policy options that are intended to produce mutually counteracting effects, under the situation of high-uncertainties and high-stakes." Kuik identifies five "constituent components" of hedging strategies. These five components include both risk-contingency options (indirect-balancing and dominance-denial) and return-maximizing options (economic-pragmatism, binding-engagement and limited-bandwagoning).¹³ States engaging in hedging strategies employ varying combinations of these options as their respective circumstances allow or require.

The concept of hedging has been applied in two types of case studies within the academic literature: first, in cases of superpower interaction with one another (specifically, between China and the US); and second, in cases of smaller states which are facing multiple potential security threats. Regardless of case type, however, these studies generally have two unifying factors: the state engaging in hedging is often responding to changes (or anticipated changes) in systemic structure; and there are no *immediate* threats to the state in question.¹⁴

To this first factor, shifts in the hierarchical structures of international and regional systems - often precipitated by the rise or decline of larger powers - directly affect the security considerations and prospects for states within these systems. Shifting threat perceptions and uncertainties about the future often make it difficult to wholeheartedly pursue one straightforward policy (i.e. bandwagoning or balancing). This is not to say that hedging is a strategy employed only by those states which are unsure about how to formulate their foreign

¹² Goh, "Understanding "Hedging,"" 1.

¹³ Kuik Cheng-Chwee, "The Essence of Hedging: Malaysia and Singapore's Response to a Rising China," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30, no. 2 (2008): 165-6.

¹⁴ Kuik, "The Essence of Hedging," 165.

policies (as Goh implies).¹⁵ Rather, it is a way of rationally responding to a number of potential, but not imminent, threats and planning for multiple possible contingencies.¹⁶

To the second of these unifying factors, the more immediate the threats are that a state faces, the more it will be forced into purely balancing against or bandwagoning with other states in order to provide for its security. Therefore, while hedging states may be in the uncomfortable position of dealing with multiple potential threats, none of these threats is so immediate that it supersedes all others.

Applications of the concept of hedging to the Middle East are, so far, fairly few in number. Salman et al. use the term to describe China's strategy of attempting to develop its economic and military capabilities in the Middle East "while avoiding direct confrontation with" the United States.¹⁷ Yoel Guzansky provides an overview of the ways in which the smaller GCC states (Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman) are employing hedging as a strategy for dealing with Iran. Guzansky's rather brief article, however, declares the concept of hedging in need of refinement and adjustment "to the accepted terms of the field."¹⁸ Although Guzansky's analysis is somewhat cursory (it fails to significantly contribute to the refining of the concept), it still demonstrates the relevance of hedging to the international relations of small states in the Gulf region.

Mehran Kamrava has used the term hedging to refer to Qatar's activist, multidimensional approach to foreign affairs. In the case of Qatar, hedging has meant firmly placing themselves under the security umbrella of the United States, while at the same time maintaining ties with both Iran and Islamists in the region. While he describes hedging as an "insurance policy of sorts" and a "luxury of the weak only," Kamrava also notes that it can be useful in terms of maximizing a state's bargaining leverage: "Although [small states] may be in need of military protection from others, they can use foreign policy strategies such as hedging to greatly strengthen their leverage vis-à-vis potential foes and friends alike."¹⁹

Unlike Guzansky, Kamrava argues that Qatar is the only small Gulf state to have employed a strategy of hedging to a significant extent. Kuwait, he writes, has "opted for close

¹⁵ Goh, "Understanding "Hedging,"" 1.

¹⁶ Kamrava, *Qatar*, 51-2.

¹⁷ Mohammad Salman, Moritz Pieper, and Gustaaf Geeraerts, "Hedging in the Middle East and China-U.S. Competition 1," *Asian Politics & Policy* 7, no. 4 (2015): 577.

¹⁸ Yoel Guzansky, "The Foreign-Policy Tools of Small Powers: Strategic Hedging in the Persian Gulf," *Middle East Policy* 22, no. 1 (2015): 121.

¹⁹ Kamrava, *Qatar*, 48.

alliance with Saudi Arabia and the United States instead of hedging.”²⁰ While it may be true that the other Gulf states, including Kuwait, have not engaged in hedging strategies to the extent which Qatar has, this thesis intends to show that there is growing evidence of Kuwaiti hedging toward Iraq.

Small States

In its various applications to analyses of small state behavior, the concept of hedging has emerged as an alternative to realist international relations theories which argue that, when faced with potential threats, small states are constrained to either balance against or bandwagon with these threats. As Neal Jesse and John Dreyer have pointed out, however, these realist theories often do not line up with reality; indeed, the historical record is full of small states which have not followed these assumptions (their primary examples being Ireland and Switzerland).²¹ Jesse and Dreyer conclude that “[t]he role of small states has been little understood while also being over-generalized.”²² As such, the concept of hedging holds the potential to make significant contributions to the study of small states in particular.

One of the shortcomings of much of the previous theorizing on small states is that it assumes that small states are typically consumed with ensuring their own security; this is due to their lack of relative power and the fact that in an anarchical international system “war may at any time break out.”²³ As indicated above, however, threats are not always imminent nor do they always require a decisive response. Furthermore, states (especially small states) often face a number of threats that are “versatile, multifaceted and uncertain.”²⁴ Therefore, having to plan for multiple contingencies with limited resources, states generally act on the basis of probabilities, not possibilities.

²⁰ Kamrava, *Qatar*, 70-1.

²¹ Neal G. Jesse and John R. Dreyer, *Small States in the International System: At Peace and at War*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), 3, 32.

²² Jesse and Dreyer, *Small States in the International System*, 3.

²³ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1979), 102.

²⁴ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 52.

There is, additionally, a growing body of literature which sees small states as being able to “go beyond simple resilience” to the point of projecting power on the international stage.²⁵ Kamrava notes three tools of power projection which small states have at their disposal: “forging alliances, mustering up issue-specific power [norm entrepreneurship],” and hedging.²⁶ While norm entrepreneurship requires that a state develop certain skills or capabilities, both alliance-forging and hedging require a state to proactively take advantage of the configuration of the international structure which it inhabits. Inherent to this line of theorizing is the idea that power in international relations is not only derived from material or coercive capability, but can also be provided to states by structural circumstances. This idea holds particular relevance for small states, which are less likely to be able to rely on hard power capabilities. In its analysis of Kuwaiti foreign policy toward Iraq, this thesis seeks to contribute to ongoing discussions within the field of international relations theory regarding small states, their foreign policy options, and their potential for power projection.

Power

In its treatment of the concept of *power* in international relations, this thesis will primarily refer to Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall’s definition of power as “the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their circumstances and fate.”²⁷ Barnett and Duvall present a taxonomy for the conceptualization of power consisting of four types of power: compulsory, institutional, structural, and productive. The distinctions between these four types are dependent on two dimensions of power: first, “the kinds of social relations through which actors’ capacities are affected (and effected)”;²⁸ and second, “the specificity of those social relations.”²⁸ Concerning the first dimension, power can be expressed either through interactions between actors or through the constitution of actors’ capacities, identities and interests. As Barnett and Duvall describe, power through interaction and power through constitution can be respectively thought of as “power over” (one actor’s

²⁵ Kamrava, *Qatar*, 48.

²⁶ Kamrava, *Qatar*, 49-50.

²⁷ Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall, “Power in International Politics,” *International Organization* 59, no. 01 (2005): 42.

²⁸ Barnett and Duvall, “Power in International Politics,” 45.

control over another) and “power to” (“how social structures and processes generate differential social capacities for actors to define and pursue their interests and ideals”).²⁹ The second dimension of power - the specificity of the social relations through which power works - differentiates between power exercised in a direct, causal manner and power exercised in a diffuse, indirect manner. While Barnett and Duvall emphasize that “in most social contexts” all four of these types of power “are operating simultaneously, intersecting with and reflecting off of each other,” the type of power most relevant to this research is structural power - that is, power which is expressed through the constitution of states’ capacities, identities and interests, but is exercised in a direct, causal manner.³⁰ As Barnett and Duvall write:

Structural power concerns the structures - or, more precisely, the co-constitutive, internal relations of structural positions - that define what kinds of social beings actors are. It produces the very social capacities of structural, or subject, positions in direct relation to one another, and the associated interests, that underlie and dispose action.³¹

As will be elaborated on throughout this thesis, this form of power - dependent on the configuration of international structures rather than on relative hard power capabilities - may be particularly useful in understanding the social capacities of small states and may help to refine the concept of strategic hedging in international relations - a strategy which is itself dependent on international structural configurations. Furthermore, the concept of structural power is reliant on the ontological assertion that structure both “constitutes actors and their capacities” and “also shapes their self-understanding and subjective interests.”³² This view of a ‘constitutive’ relationship between structure and agent, as will now be discussed, largely accords with holist, constructivist theories concerning the nature of structures in international relations.

²⁹ Barnett and Duvall, “Power in International Politics,” 42-8.

³⁰ Barnett and Duvall, “Power in International Politics,” 67.

³¹ Barnett and Duvall, “Power in International Politics,” 52-3.

³² Barnett and Duvall, “Power in International Politics,” 53.

Structure

The historically dominant conceptualization of structure in international relations, as proposed by neorealism, is based primarily on “the distribution of capabilities across units” within a given system.³³ What is meant by capabilities is the *material* capacities of states to affect outcomes. According to Kenneth Waltz, notions such as “the principle by which a system is ordered” and “the specification of functions of differentiated units” have little concern for international politics due to the international system being both anarchic (lacking order) and “composed of like units.”³⁴ In describing states as ‘like units,’ Waltz means that there is no substantial differentiation between states’ functions in the international system as anarchy does not allow for role differentiation. Structural change in neorealist international relations theory, then, refers to “changes in the distribution of capabilities across nations.”³⁵

Epitomizing the constructivist critique of neorealism, Alexander Wendt argues that mainstream international relations theory places too much emphasis on materialism at the expense of idealism. Wendt writes that:

the character of international life is determined by the beliefs and expectations that states have about each other, and these are constituted largely by social rather than material structures. This does not mean that material power and interests are unimportant, but rather that their meaning and effects depend on the social structure of the system.³⁶

In focusing on *social* structures, constructivism not only emphasizes ideas (beliefs and expectations) over material capabilities, but also re-conceptualizes the very nature of the relationship between agents and structures. Mainstream international relations theorizing (both neorealism and liberalism, according to Wendt) largely sees states through an *individualist* ontological perspective: as agents existing independently of other agents and their external structure (the international system). Structures therefore have *causal* effects on states’ identities and interests, but do not constitute them. Adopting a *holist* perspective, constructivism views

³³ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 101.

³⁴ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 100-1.

³⁵ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 102.

³⁶ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 20.

structure as having *constitutive* effects on agents in that states are continually reconstituted through processes of social interaction and their identities and interests are constructed (at least in part) through shared knowledge. As will be argued in this thesis, Iraq may be an extreme case of an agent constituted by structure, but this is ultimately true of all states - to varying degrees - in that “international politics is an on-going process of states taking identities in relation to Others, casting them into corresponding counter-identities, and playing out the result.”³⁷ As such, constructivism allows for the strong influence of domestic structures on the constitution of states, but asserts that these internal factors are incomplete without considering the external structures in which agents are constituted.

Drawing on holist, constitutive conceptions of structure, Wendt argues that the culture - the “socially shared knowledge” - of a system is crucially important to explaining and predicting the behavior of states.³⁸ Accepting Waltz’s depiction of the international system as being anarchical, Wendt asserts that “anarchy can have at least three distinct cultures, Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian, which are based on different role relationships, enemy, rival, and friend.”³⁹ Accordingly, “[t]he structure and tendencies of anarchic systems will depend on which of our three roles - enemy, rival, and friend - dominate those systems.”⁴⁰ These cultures are internalized by the actors within a system to varying degrees: the first, whereby states recognize, but do not adhere to cultural norms; the second, whereby states adhere to norms out of self-interest; and the third, whereby states adhere to norms because they believe them to be legitimate. In this way, Wendt himself refers to the Gulf during the 1990-91 war as an example of a system in which a Lockean culture had been internalized to the first degree - in that the norm of sovereignty was not willingly adhered to and had to be enforced through coercion.

With these observations in mind, this thesis will employ both the Wendtian and the Waltzian conceptualizations of structure - finding both the distribution of cultural norms as well as the distribution of material capabilities to be of relevance to this case study. This thesis will therefore refer to both *material* as well as *social* structure throughout - at times specifying which is being discussed at the given moment, while at others referring to structures, in the plural, in

³⁷ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 21.

³⁸ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 141.

³⁹ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 309.

⁴⁰ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 259.

recognition of the ways in which these structures are often interconnected and acting simultaneously to produce certain outcomes.

Chapter 2

Kuwaiti-Iraqi Relations since 2003

Although often overshadowed by the tumult in the region, and in Iraq specifically, there has been discussion over the past few years of the normalization of relations between Kuwait and Iraq - the shedding of a “heavy burden” as Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber al-Sabah put it in 2013.⁴¹ The burden to which Emir Sheikh Jaber was referring, of course, was the burden of history: primarily the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait from August 1990 until February 1991. It is important to remember, however, that the invasion - justified by Saddam on the grounds that Kuwait was exceeding its OPEC oil production quotas and (allegedly) stealing Iraqi oil through a process known as slant-drilling - was in part the culmination of bilateral tensions which stretched back decades.⁴² Indeed, when Saddam claimed Kuwait as Iraqi territory, he was tapping into a long-running narrative in Iraqi politics which considered Kuwait to be a ‘lost province’ of Iraq - a claim first made in 1938, under King Ghazi, and then again in 1961, by President Abdul Kareem.⁴³

Historical Context of Kuwaiti-Iraqi Relations

At the heart of the territorial dispute between Kuwait and Iraq was the organizational structure in place toward the end of the Ottoman Empire, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; although administered locally by the al-Sabah family (which is still in power today), Kuwait was also a part of the Ottoman wilayet (province) of Basra - which would later,

⁴¹ Adam Shreck, “Kuwaiti Premier Visits Iraq, Tightening Bonds,” *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, published June 12, 2013, accessed July 15, 2017, <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-kuwaiti-premier-visits-iraq-tightening-bonds-2013jun12-story.amp.html>.

⁴² Katzman, “Kuwait,” 11.

⁴³ Jasem Karam, “The Boundary Dispute between Kuwait and Iraq: an Endless Dilemma,” *Digest of Middle East Studies*, (Spring 2005): 1.

along with the wilayets of Baghdad and Mosul, form the basis of the Iraqi state.⁴⁴ Having been absorbed into the British mandate system following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire during World War I, clear demarcations separating Kuwait from Basra were not made until the formation of the Iraqi state in 1932. Despite winning their independence, however, there were those in Iraq who felt slighted by Britain's refusal to include Kuwait as part of its territory - a circumstance which not only limited Iraq's access to the Gulf and the region's oil reserves, but also, in the minds of some Iraqis, denied them what was rightfully theirs. In 1938, Iraq delivered to the British government a memorandum asserting its sovereignty over Kuwait. The British, however, dismissed Iraq's claim - ultimately maintaining their titular authority over Kuwait until 1961. Iraqi claims to Kuwaiti territory would continue while Kuwait remained under British mandate, although these were generally restricted to the Bubiyan and Warbah islands (in the waters of the Gulf, at the mouth of the Euphrates River).

With Kuwait's independence, made official on June 19th, 1961, came reinvigorated assertions of sovereignty over Kuwait from the Ba'athist government in Baghdad (which had come to power after the overthrow of the Hashemite monarchy in July of 1958). In response - only eleven days after achieving independence - Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Abdullah al-Salim al-Sabah was forced to request British military assistance in order to deter any potential Iraqi encroachment.⁴⁵ Tensions would remain high between Kuwait and Iraq (despite Kuwait's acceptance into the Arab League in July of 1961 - upon the condition that Britain's military presence in Kuwait be replaced by Arab League forces) until 1963, when the two reached an agreement demarcating their shared border. As part of this agreement, Kuwait also paid the equivalent of 80 million USD to Baghdad.

The Kuwaiti-Iraqi relationship was fairly stable through the 1970s and 1980s, as Iraq developed into a burgeoning military and political power in the region - and Kuwait began increasing its international profile through the use of its economic capital (often in the form of humanitarian or developmental aid).⁴⁶ When Iraq became mired in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War,

⁴⁴ Emily L. Meierding, "No Blood for Oil? The Dynamics Interstate Petroleum Disputes," (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2010), 102-4.

⁴⁵ Mary Ann Tètreault, "Autonomy, Necessity, and the Small State: Ruling Kuwait in the Twentieth Century," *International Organization* 45, no. 04 (1991): 582-6.

⁴⁶ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "The Gulf Goes Global: The Evolving Role of Gulf Countries in the Middle East and North Africa and Beyond," *FRIDE*, working paper no. 121 (December 2011): 3-4.

Kuwait contributed significant financial assistance (along with a number of other Arab and Western states) to alleviate Baghdad's strained fiscal situation.⁴⁷

Despite the toll that the eight year-long Iran-Iraq War took on Iraqi society, Iraq was nevertheless still in a place of prominence within the Gulf region as well as the broader Arab world as the war came to a conclusion in 1988.⁴⁸ Although the war ended with neither side being the clear victor, Saddam proclaimed that Iraq had successfully defended the Arab world from Persian aggression. Furthermore, Iraq's primary competitors for leadership within the Arab world - Egypt and Saudi Arabia - were both discredited: Egypt for its perceived capitulation during negotiations with Israel and the US in the late 1970s; Saudi Arabia for its growing patron-client relationship with the US.⁴⁹ Additionally, Iraq's army had more than quintupled in size over the course of the war - from approximately 190,000 men in 1980 to around 1 million in 1988 - while a staggering "\$5 billion per year was allocated to rearmament" in the two years following the war's conclusion.⁵⁰

Iraq was, therefore, at the peak of its power in the region when Saddam began agitating against the Kuwaiti government in the run up to its invasion of Kuwait in the summer of 1990. It is imperative that an analysis of Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations recognize this - as it was not merely Iraq's relative power advantages over Kuwait (or Saddam's ego) which emboldened Iraq in its invasion and annexation of Kuwait in 1990, but also Iraq's position in the regional power hierarchy.⁵¹ Furthermore, not only was the invasion motivated in large part by Baghdad's bid for regional hegemony (despite Saddam's accusations of economic warfare on the part of Kuwait), but the operation itself would have been practically unthinkable had Iraq not been one of the preeminent military and ideational powers in the both the Gulf and the Arab world at the time.

As it happened, however, Iraqi troops crossed the border into Kuwait on August 2nd, 1990, taking over much of the country within a few short hours.⁵² In response, the UN issued Resolution 678 - authorizing the use of force against Iraq if it did not withdraw from Kuwait

⁴⁷ Tètreault, "Autonomy, Necessity, and the Small State," 583-4.

⁴⁸ Mehran Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East, Third Edition: A Political History Since the First World War*. (University of California Press, 2013), 172.

⁴⁹ Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2015), 182.

⁵⁰ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since Nineteen Fifty-Eight* (London: KPI, 1987), 271-3.

⁵¹ Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 210.

⁵² Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 184.

before January 15th, 1991.⁵³ Following Saddam's refusal to pull back, a US-led coalition (including a number of Arab states) began bombing targets in Iraq on January 17th. After five weeks of this bombing campaign, on February 24th, the coalition began its ground operations. By February 27th, the Iraqi forces had been overrun and a cease-fire declared.

Iraq would become largely isolated in the region and on the global stage as a result of its invasion of Kuwait. The US and its allies imposed a strict sanctions regime on Iraq, restricting imports of food and medicine and greatly hindering Iraq's reconstruction (the sanctions regime was so harsh that it prompted the then-UN humanitarian coordinator for Iraq to proclaim that it "amounted to genocide.")⁵⁴ As for Kuwait, it strengthened its ties with the US - becoming one of the primary bases for US military forces in the region. Kuwait would also play an instrumental role in the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, hosting the majority of the coalition forces which would invade Iraq in March of that year - toppling the Saddam government and dismantling the Ba'athist administrative state within a matter of weeks.⁵⁵

Kuwait & Iraq since 2003

There was certainly some reason to believe, in the wake of Saddam's ouster, that Kuwait and Iraq would soon be on their way to the reconciliation of their differences and a relationship based on cooperation rather than contention. Diplomatic relations were officially resumed in April of 2004 (on the same day that the Iraqi Provisional Government took over nominal control of the country from coalition forces) and, soon after, Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad al-Alawi paid a visit to Kuwait in commemoration of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.⁵⁶ Despite these initial steps, however, subsequent progress in the relationship would come slowly, in part because of Kuwait's wariness. As then-Speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, Jassim al-Khoraffi, said in an interview in April of 2003:

⁵³ Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since Nineteen Fifty-Eight*, 281-3.

⁵⁴ Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 233.

⁵⁵ Katzman, "Kuwait," 11.

⁵⁶ "Allawi's Visit Eyes Mending Fences with Kuwait," *People's Daily Online*, published August 2, 2004, accessed April 18, 2017, http://en.people.cn/200408/02/eng20040802_151535.html.

[W]e will not rush to any regime as we did to Saddam's regime before we make sure that the new regime is serious and keen about our mutual interests and good neighbourliness... It is our duty to get assurances... We have learned a lesson and I believe that we have to be logical and reasonable this time.⁵⁷

It was not until July of 2008, therefore, that Kuwait appointed an ambassador to Iraq (its first since 1990) - and not until 2010 that Iraq appointed its own ambassador to Kuwait.⁵⁸

An episode in the spring of 2010 would indicate the magnitude of the obstacles in the way of a Kuwaiti-Iraqi reconciliation. In April of that year, Iraqi Airways (Iraq's state-owned airline company) resumed its commercial flight service to the UK for the first time since the company's operations had been grounded in 1991 due to sanctions and reparations payments owed to Kuwait.⁵⁹ Upon the arrival of the first Iraqi Airways' flight at Gatwick Airport in London, however, the aircraft - along with the passport of Iraqi Airways' chief executive Kifah Hassan, who was on board - were confiscated. As it turned out, Kuwaiti Airlines had filed a suit against Iraqi Airways in a UK court and had, in 2004, been given the right to seize the assets of Iraqi Airways within the UK. Six years later (and still owed more than one billion USD by Iraqi Airways), Kuwait demonstrated its determination to assert itself against its larger neighbor.⁶⁰ It was subsequently announced, less than a month later, that the Iraqi government would be dissolving Iraqi Airways due to the burden of its financial obligations to Kuwait.⁶¹

Beyond demonstrating how much progress was still to be made in repairing relations between Kuwait and Iraq, the Iraqi Airways episode may have also served as a reminder to the Iraqi leadership that, in its re-entry onto the international stage, it must pay due attention to its regional relations as well as those with Western powers. Indeed, a little over a year later, the decision to dissolve Iraqi Airways would be reversed following bilateral negotiations in which

⁵⁷ Nadim Kawach, "Kuwait 'In No Hurry to Resume Ties'," *Gulf News*, published April 10, 2003, accessed May 10, 2017, <http://gulfnews.com/news/uae/general/kuwait-in-no-hurry-to-resume-ties-1.352985>.

⁵⁸ Habib Toumi, "Iraq's Envoy to Kuwait Calls for New Chapter in Bilateral Ties," *Gulf News*, published June 6, 2010, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/iraq-s-envoy-to-kuwait-calls-for-new-chapter-in-bilateral-ties-1.637457>.

⁵⁹ Damien McElroy, "First Flight from Baghdad to London in 20 Years Ends in Farce with Plane Impounded," *The Telegraph*, published May 1, 2010, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/7658857/First-flight-from-Baghdad-to-London-in-20-years-ends-in-farce-with-plane-impounded.html>.

⁶⁰ "History: Revival," Iraqi Airways, accessed April 18, 2017, http://www.iraqairways.co.uk/en/history_revival.html.

⁶¹ "Iraq to Dissolve Iraqi Airways," *Al Jazeera*, published May 26, 2010, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2010/05/2010526133236850746.html>.

Kuwait agreed to accept a 500 million USD settlement payment from Iraq.⁶² Less than two years after this agreement, Iraqi Airways began offering the first direct flights between Kuwait and Iraq since 1990. This service was initiated in February of 2013 with a symbolic flight from Baghdad to Kuwait. On board were the Iraqi Foreign and Transport Ministers, who were greeted by Kuwaiti officials when they landed. The event was hailed at the time “as a sign of improving relations between the oil-producing neighbours.”⁶³

Since 2010, Kuwait and Iraq have made significant progress in repairing their bilateral relationship, with the period from 2010 to 2013 being particularly fruitful in this regard. In addition to the resolution of the Iraqi Airways dispute and the two countries’ cooperation on the matter of settling Iraq’s outstanding debts, Kuwait made a substantial show of faith in March of 2012 when Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah personally attended the Arab League summit being held in Baghdad.⁶⁴ Not only was this visit the first by a Kuwaiti head of state to Iraq since 1990, but Kuwait was also the only GCC member-state to send their head of state to the Baghdad summit (Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Bahrain being embroiled in a dispute with Iraq over Baghdad’s criticism of the heavy-handed response to political unrest in Bahrain at the time). It was also in early 2012 that Kuwait voiced its support for Iraq joining the GCC - still the only member-state to have done so.⁶⁵

Most significantly, during this time period, Kuwait and Iraq worked together - both bilaterally and within the UN - to resolve their outstanding issues from the 1990 invasion.⁶⁶ This culminated, in June of 2013, in the UNSC releasing Iraq from its obligations to Kuwait under Chapter VII of the UN Charter regarding the return of Kuwaiti nationals, their property, or their

⁶² “Iraq Approves \$500m Deal with Kuwait Airways to End Dispute,” *Middle East Business Intelligence*, published July 26, 2012, accessed April 18, 2017, <https://www.meed.com/sectors/transport/aviation-and-airports/iraq-approves-500m-deal-with-kuwait-airways-to-end-dispute/3145816.article>.

⁶³ “Iraq’s First Flight to Kuwait since 1990 Takes to Skies,” *Reuters*, published February 27, 2013, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/uk-iraq-kuwait-flights-idUSLNE91Q02620130227>.

⁶⁴ Patrick Markey and Suadad al-Salhy, “Iraq Hosts Arab Summit, Seeking Regional Role,” *Reuters*, published March 29, 2012, accessed May 10, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-summit-idUSBRE82S08X20120329>.

⁶⁵ “Kuwait Stresses Necessity for Iraq to Join GCC.”

⁶⁶ Katzman, “Kuwait,” 16; Adal Mirza, “Kuwait Accepts \$500m Iraqi Settlement,” *Middle East Business Intelligence*, published October 12, 2012, accessed April 18, 2017, <https://www.meed.com/home/kuwait-accepts-500m-iraqi-settlement/3156036.article>; “Iraq Premier Seeks to Repair Relations with Kuwait,” *Gulf News*, published February 17, 2011, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://gulfnews.com/news/mena/iraq/iraq-premier-seeks-to-repair-relations-with-kuwait-1.763275>.

remains.⁶⁷ Although this did not declare the matter settled, it was an acknowledgment of “[t]he common ground attained by Iraq and Kuwait regarding the issue of missing Kuwaiti persons and property...signalling a new level of mutual trust and a fresh chapter in the relations between the two neighbouring countries,” (as stated in a report by then-UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon).⁶⁸ Iraqi Foreign Minister, Hoshiyar Zebari, recognized this ‘new chapter’ during a July, 2013 joint press conference with Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al Sabah: “From last year, until now, the relationship has taken a big step thanks to the will of the two countries to solve all these issues.”⁶⁹

The 2013 report from the UN Secretary-General further recognized “[t]he recent fulfilment by Iraq of its outstanding Chapter VII obligations related to its common border with Kuwait.”⁷⁰ While Iraq officially accepted the border demarcation in 1994, there have remained issues over the enforcement of the border and questions of whether or not Iraq would abide by its agreements - even in the post-Saddam era.⁷¹ Contributing to tensions have been questions of access to farmland, oil and gas reserves and fishing rights, as well as ongoing unrest amongst Iraqis living near the border.⁷² A bilateral agreement was reached in late 2010 whereby Kuwait would pay for the relocation of up to 50 Iraqi households in order for a no-man’s land of 500 meters to be created on each side of the border.⁷³ In the spring of 2013, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki sent a letter to the UN Secretary-General reaffirming Iraq’s commitment to the border, stating that he had “directed the competent Iraqi authorities to do all that is required with regard to the maintenance of the border pillars and the demarcation of the border.”⁷⁴

Despite the progress that has been made concerning the border, however, the issue is still occasionally pushed to the forefront of Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations. There was the recent incident, for

⁶⁷ “Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2107 (2013), Security Council Removes Iraq from Chapter VII Obligations over Return of Kuwaiti Nationals,” United Nations Security Council, published June 27, 2013, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2013/sc11050.doc.htm>.

⁶⁸ “Thirty-fifth Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Paragraph 14 of Resolution 1284 (1999),” United Nations Security Council (June 17, 2013): 6, accessed April 18, 2017, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2013/357.

⁶⁹ “Kuwaiti Prime Minister Visits Baghdad,” *Gulf News*, published June 12, 2013, accessed April 18, 2013, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/kuwaiti-prime-minister-visits-baghdad-1.1196345>.

⁷⁰ “Thirty-fifth Report of the Secretary-General,” 5.

⁷¹ John Leland and Omar al-Jawshy, “Iraq and Kuwait Remain at Odds after Shootout,” *Gulf News*, published January 11, 2011, accessed April 28, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/12/world/middleeast/12iraq.html>.

⁷² “Gunfire Breaks out on Iraq-Kuwait Border,” *Gulf News*, published March 11, 2013, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/gunfire-breaks-out-on-iraq-kuwait-border-1.1157009>.

⁷³ “Kuwait Settles Border Dispute with Iraq,” *Gulf News*, published November 25, 2010, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/kuwait-settles-border-dispute-with-iraq-1.718234>.

⁷⁴ “Thirty-fifth Report of the Secretary-General,” 11.

example, when six Iraqi fishermen were arrested by Kuwaiti authorities for trespassing into the Khor Abdullah waterway. Large parts of the Khor Abdullah are officially recognized as Kuwaiti territory, but still contested by some in Iraq. The arrested fishermen were soon released to the Iraqi navy, but the arrests sparked accusations of “Kuwaiti harassments of Iraqi fishermen” from politicians in Iraq and are an indication of the difficulties in enforcing the existing border agreements.⁷⁵ Even more seriously, there have been renewed calls by Iraqi members of parliament to reject the current demarcation of the border altogether.⁷⁶ These challenges to the border, however, have been strongly denounced by Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and Kuwaiti officials have expressed their confidence that Kuwait’s sovereignty will continue to be respected by its neighbor (although Kuwait has also reportedly moved additional troops to the border).⁷⁷ As Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled al-Jarallah has stated: “We look at the positive side. The positive statements of the Iraqi official[s] including Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi and Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari are what matters.”⁷⁸

These border disputes aside, the Kuwaiti-Iraqi relationship continues to benefit from the progress made in the 2010-13 period. Kuwaiti officials recently, in October of 2016, stated their satisfaction with the Iraqi government’s attention to the ongoing matter of missing Kuwaiti persons and property.⁷⁹ Additionally, Kuwait has been notably forgiving of Iraq’s inability to meet its financial obligations, agreeing to the postponement of Iraq’s final reparations payments from the 1990 invasion for the past three consecutive years (2014-2016).⁸⁰ On the humanitarian front, Kuwaiti news sources have been keen to emphasize Kuwaiti aid to Iraqis affected by the

⁷⁵ Mohamed Mostafa, “Kuwait Releases Six Fishermen Intercepted at Disputed Bay,” *Iraqi News*, published April 14, 2017, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://www.iraqinews.com/features/kuwait-releases-six-iraqi-fishermen-intercepted-disputed-bay/>.

⁷⁶ Mohamed Mostafa, “Kuwait MPs Urge Military Alertness as Waterway Dispute with Iraq Fumes,” *Iraqi News*, published February 6, 2017, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/156657/>; “Assembly to Hold Debate on Khor Abdullah Issue,” *Kuwait Times*, published February 6, 2017, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://news.kuwaittimes.net/website/assembly-hold-debate-khor-abdullah-issue/>; Sara al-Qaher, “Renewed Tensions over Kuwait-Iraq Border,” *Iraq-Business News*, published February 8, 2017, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2017/02/08/renewed-tensions-over-kuwait-iraq-border/>.

⁷⁷ Habib Toumi, “Kuwait Downplays Border Tension with Iraq,” *Gulf News*, published February 13, 2017, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/kuwait-downplays-border-tension-with-iraq-1.1977503>; “Situation on Borders with Iraq Normal: Deputy FM,” *Kuwait Times*, published February 13, 2017, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://news.kuwaittimes.net/website/situation-borders-iraq-normal-deputy-fm/>.

⁷⁸ “Kuwait Welcomes Iraqi Statements over Khor Abdullah - Deputy FM,” *Kuwait News Agency*, published February 7, 2017, accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2590886&language=en>.

⁷⁹ “Iraq Offers Rewards for Information about Kuwaiti Missing, Archive,” *Kuwait News Agency*, published October 3, 2016, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2595687&language=en>.

⁸⁰ Katzman, “Kuwait,” 16; “Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director For Iraq,” International Monetary Fund, IMF Country Report No. 16/379 (December, 2016): 57.

instability and violence in their own country.⁸¹ This has included providing economic assistance and training,⁸² supplying food and fuel for internally displaced Iraqis,⁸³ and establishing schools and health centers in Iraq.⁸⁴ Most recently, in April of 2017, it was announced that Kuwait had approved a grant of 100 million USD to the government of Iraq in order to assist with reconstruction in areas previously held by IS. The grant is the first financial assistance of its kind to be given directly to Baghdad by Kuwait since 1990.⁸⁵

On a final note, there has also been substantial economic engagement between Kuwait and Iraq. This started soon after the removal of Saddam, but has increased as the domestic situation in Iraq has become (relatively) more stable and diplomatic ties have been repaired. The Kuwaiti telecommunications firm Zain, for example, obtained its first license to operate in Iraq in 2003. In 2007, Zain both acquired a major Iraqi competitor (Iraqna) and secured a 15-year license to provide services nationwide in Iraq.⁸⁶ Today, Zain is Iraq's largest mobile network operator and, furthermore, out of the 15 countries in which Zain operates, Iraq is its largest source of revenue by country.⁸⁷

In the energy sector, Kuwait Energy (founded in 2005) began expanding into Iraq in 2011 when it was awarded two 20-year gas development and production service contracts for the Siba and Mansuriya fields, in southern and eastern Iraq, respectively.⁸⁸ These were followed the subsequent year by an exploration, development and production service contract for the Block 9 field (also in southern Iraq). According to its February, 2017 corporate profile, Kuwait Energy's long-term growth strategy is substantially dependent on these projects in Iraq.⁸⁹ Furthermore, it was announced in December of 2016 that Kuwait and Iraq would finally be acting on a 2010

⁸¹ "Week Roundup of Kuwait's Regional Humanitarian Action," *Kuwait News Agency*, published March 25, 2017, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2598048&language=en>.

⁸² "Kuwait Helps Iraqi Widows Open Businesses," *Kuwait Times*, published March 24, 2017, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://news.kuwaittimes.net/website/kuwait-helps-iraqi-widows-open-businesses/>.

⁸³ "Kuwait Delivers Fuel to Displaced Iraqis," *Gulf News*, published January 12, 2017, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2585683&language=en>.

⁸⁴ "Kuwait-financed School Opens in Southern Iraq," *Kuwait News Agency*, published October 20, 2017, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2540192&language=en>.

⁸⁵ "Kuwait OKs \$100m Grant for Iraq, First Since 1990," *Kuwait Times*, published April 25, 2017, accessed May 8, 2017, <http://news.kuwaittimes.net/website/kuwait-oks-100m-grant-iraqi-first-since-1990/>.

⁸⁶ "Financial Highlights," Zain Iraq, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://www.zain.com/en/investor-relations/facts-figures/>.

⁸⁷ "Zain Iraq to Pay \$94 Million to Settle Iraqna Tax Case," *Reuters*, published December 21, 2016, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/zain-iraqi-court-idUSL5N1EG314>.

⁸⁸ "Operations: Iraq," Kuwait Energy, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://www.kuwaitenergy.co/Operations/Iraq>.

⁸⁹ "Corporate Profile," Kuwait Energy, (February, 2017): 5-7, 12-7, <http://www.kuwaitenergy.co/Frontend/KEC/FlipBook/120320170326243413/index.html#4>.

agreement made “in principle” on the sale of Iraqi gas to Kuwait.⁹⁰ Long delayed by Iraq’s problems with political violence and a lack of the necessary investment capital needed for infrastructure development, Iraq exported gas for the first time in 2016 and has pledged to supply Kuwait with 200 million cubic feet of gas per day.

Beyond Domestic Politics: Toward a Regional Perspective

The end of the Saddam Hussein era was certainly a pivotal moment in the Kuwaiti-Iraqi relationship. Given the feeling of utter betrayal that many Kuwaitis were left with after Saddam’s decision to invade (Kuwait, after all, had been a reliable ally of Iraq throughout the Iran-Iraq War), any and all prospects for reconciliation were extremely limited as long as Saddam remained in power. Analyses of this relationship, however, should not end with this fact - as if amicable relations were the natural state of things and Saddam the only impediment to this.

First, on the domestic level, political leaders in the post-Saddam era certainly deserve some credit for the reconciliation which has taken place. In Kuwait, Emir Sheikh Sabah not only has unquestioned authority on matters of foreign policy, but also brings significant experience to the table (serving as Foreign Minister from 1963 until 2003) and a tendency toward diplomatic engagement.⁹¹ As for Iraq, while former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki (2006-14) provoked much criticism from the GCC states for his closeness with Iran, it must be pointed out that much of the reconciliation between Kuwait and Iraq took place during his tenure.⁹² Indeed, meeting Iraq’s Chapter VII obligations to Kuwait - and ridding itself of the accompanying UN sanctions - had been one of the al-Maliki government’s top priorities prior to this being accomplished in 2013.⁹³

While Kuwait and Iraq’s respective leaderships may each have played important roles in the tedious work which their reconciliation required, however, it is often difficult - if not

⁹⁰ “Kuwait, Iraq Eye Closer Ties, Sign 4 Agreements,” *Kuwait Times*, published December 28, 2017, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://news.kuwaittimes.net/website/kuwait-start-importing-gas-iraq/>.

⁹¹ Talal Z. A. Alazemi, “Kuwaiti Foreign Policy in Light of the Iraqi Invasion, with Particular Reference to Kuwait’s Policy towards Iraq, 1990-2010,” (PhD dissertation, University of Exeter, 2013), 146-8.

⁹² Margo Balboni, “Iraq: The View from the GCC,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, Gulf Analysis Paper (February, 2017): 1.

⁹³ Paolo Maggiolini, “Iraq’s Foreign Policy Directions and Regional Developments: Where Does Iraqi Foreign Policy Start?,” *Institute for International Political Studies*, Analysis No. 199, (September 2013): 4.

impossible - to fully analyze matters at the bilateral or even the domestic level without reference to regional and international structures. It is ultimately the inter-state structures in which states interact that set the limits on what they are able to achieve with their material capabilities and what is (and is not) permissible, norm-abiding behavior. Furthermore, the domestic political sphere is often imposed upon by regional and international politics - key examples of which are the 2003 externally-imposed change of regime in Iraq and the influence that various outside actors have had in Iraq since. In this vein, and as previously noted, Iraq is “an extreme case of an agent constituted by structure.”⁹⁴ As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, this is true both in the *material* sense of structure - in that it was an asymmetric distribution of capabilities which allowed for externally imposed regime change to take place - as well as in the *social* sense of structure - in that external actors and cultures of shared knowledge have had considerable influence in setting the norms by which the post-Saddam government in Baghdad behaves and identifies itself as a state actor. Indeed, one could very well imagine a very different Iraq if Saddam had been able to simply pass the Presidency on to one of his sons (or alternatively, if an Iranian-inspired Islamic revolution had taken place). Questions such as where the regime derives its legitimacy from or how it views the sovereignty of other (Western-created) states would very likely have different answers than they do now. It is with these observations in mind that this thesis now turns to its analysis of regional structures in the Gulf.

⁹⁴ See Literature Review, page 14.

Chapter 3

The Gulf: Regional Structures in Flux

The international relations of the Gulf region have perhaps been as dramatic as in any region of the world since the end of the Cold War - with the Gulf Wars in 1990-91 and 2003, the rise of non-state actors such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS), massive fluctuations in oil prices, and periodic intensifications of the regional power struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran. In conjunction with its many developments, the structure of the region's international relations has evolved - affecting states' threat perceptions and their expectations of one another, as well as their own understandings of themselves and their own capabilities. This chapter will, first, discuss the material structure of the Gulf - focusing on the region's power politics and touching upon, in turn, each of the (current and recent) powers in the region: Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the US, and Iran. Next, it will examine the social structure of the Gulf in terms of the norm of sovereignty and its relationship to Arab nationalism. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an analysis of the effects of regional structures, both material and social, on the Kuwaiti-Iraqi relationship - looking to both the constraints and opportunities which international structures present to states, as well as the ways in which these structures ultimately constitute states as social actors within an international community. This analysis will then serve as crucial context in chapter four's examination of Kuwait's foreign policy strategy toward Iraq.

Iraq's Fall from Grace

The two Gulf wars of 1990-91 and 2003 would both serve as pivotal events regarding Iraq's role as a regional power in the Gulf. Perhaps first and foremost, the significant investments which Iraq had made in its military throughout the 1980s were made a mockery of in 1991 when - in the span of a few weeks - more than 100,000 Iraqi troops were killed, another

60,000 surrendered, and much of Iraq's military hardware (3,700 tanks, 2,400 armored vehicles and 2,600 artillery pieces) was destroyed.⁹⁵ This effective neutralization of Iraq as a military power in the Gulf would benefit both Saudi Arabia and Iran - its two primary contenders in this regard. The events of 1990-91 also marked a key turning point in the US's engagement in the region, providing it with the opportunity to impose itself as an active power in the Gulf - a move which would further elevate the position of its key regional ally, Saudi Arabia. The 1990-91 war, therefore, would set the stage for, as Kamrava writes: "the emergence of three poles of power" in the Gulf: Saudi Arabia (and the GCC); Iran; and the US.⁹⁶

Moreover, the utter devastation which Iraqi society experienced in the wake of the 2003 US-led invasion (with the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians, the rise of sectarian political violence, and the collapse of public institutions and the economy) has meant its temporary disqualification from the power politics of the region.⁹⁷ The resulting power vacuum has led to a struggle for power both within the Gulf - between Iran and the GCC states (predominantly Saudi Arabia) - and in the broader Middle East - with Turkey demonstrating increasing regional ambitions. Baghdad, rather than playing an active role in these regional power contests, has instead been consumed by the daunting tasks of reconstruction and reducing domestic political violence - tasks made even more difficult by IS's conquering of much of northern Iraq in 2014-15. In addition to its domestic woes, Iraq has - in its external relations - had to walk the fine line of balancing its reliance on its more powerful partners (most notably the US and Iran) with its desire to reduce their influence over its decision-making.⁹⁸

Saudi Arabia: The Rise of a Regional Power

Endowed with some of the largest known oil reserves in the world and having developed (at least since the 1973-74 oil embargo) a close relationship with the US, Saudi Arabia was well

⁹⁵ Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 186.

⁹⁶ Mehran Kamrava, "The Changing International Relations of the Persian Gulf," in *The International Politics of the Persian Gulf*, ed. Mehran Kamrava (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 10.

⁹⁷ Louise Fawcett, "The Iraq War Ten Years On: Assessing the Fallout," *International Affairs* 89, no. 2 (2013): 326, 332-3, 342.

⁹⁸ "Who's in Charge?" *The Economist*, published April 12, 2017, accessed May 14, 2017, <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21720612-no-one-knows-what-donald-trump-wants-america-and-iran-are-jostling>.

poised to fill the power vacuum in the Gulf following Iraq's decline as a power in the region from 1991 onwards.⁹⁹ To contrast its economic performance against that of Iraq, Saudi Arabia's GDP (according to World Bank estimates) is today approximately three and a half times the GDP of Iraq; in the late 1980s, Saudi Arabia's GDP was only *one* and a half times the GDP of Iraq.¹⁰⁰ Saudi Arabia has, furthermore, surpassed Iran during that time as the largest economy in the Gulf - despite the fact that Iran has a population nearly three times that of Saudi Arabia.¹⁰¹

The Saudi-US alliance was initiated in part a response to the 1973 oil embargo and the recognition of the US that it was in their interest to develop relations with (and gain leverage over) the states of the Gulf in the wake of Great Britain's 1971 withdrawal from "east of Suez."¹⁰² For the US, engagement in the region was initially guided by the 'twin pillar' policy, whereby the US sought to exert its influence in the region through close relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran.¹⁰³ After the 1979 Iranian revolution and the collapse of US-Iranian relations, Iran was replaced by Iraq in the overall US regional strategy. US relations with the Saddam regime in Iraq, however, never developed to point of closeness which they had reached with Iran under the Shah - and would ultimately only last until Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. As a result, Saudi Arabia has reaped enormous benefits from the fact that it is the only major Gulf state which is a longstanding ally of the US.

Perhaps the primary benefit of Saudi Arabia's ties to Washington has been its access to large quantities of state-of-the-art military equipment. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 - and Riyadh's realization that Saudi Arabia would similarly be dependent on the US for its protection should one of its regional competitors decide to attack it - prompted the Saudi government to begin seriously investing in its own military capabilities.¹⁰⁴ Saudi Arabia increased its purchases of military hardware (primarily from the US and France) and expanded its armed forces from approximately 67,000 active duty personnel in 1991 to more than 110,000 by the year 2000. The

⁹⁹ F. Gregory Gause, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 182.

¹⁰⁰ "GDP (current US\$)," GDP (current US\$) | Data, accessed March 17, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2015&locations=IQ-SA-KW-IR&start=1984&view=chart>.

¹⁰¹ "Country Comparison: Population," Central Intelligence Agency, accessed March 21, 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html#sa>.

¹⁰² Mohammed Ayoob, "American Policy Toward the Persian Gulf," in *The International Politics of the Persian Gulf*, ed. Mehran Kamrava (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 124.

¹⁰³ Kamrava, "The Changing International Relations of the Persian Gulf," 9-10.

¹⁰⁴ Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 153.

boom in oil prices from 2002 to 2008 further enabled Riyadh's military build-up, with Saudi military expenditure increasing by nearly fifty percent between the years 2003 and 2007.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, as figure 2 below shows, an even more dramatic increase would take place between the years 2011 and 2015, with Saudi military expenditure increasing nearly sixty percent during this time. From 2012 to 2016, Saudi Arabia was the second largest importer of arms worldwide, behind only India (Iraq was the world's eighth largest importer over the same time period).¹⁰⁶ The result of this has been that, for the past two and a half decades, Saudi Arabia has been able to consistently make relative gains in its hard power capabilities vis-à-vis its regional rivals.

Figure 2: Military Expenditure by Country (in constant 2014 US \$ million)¹⁰⁷

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Saudi Arabia	31543	38008	43297	49872	48949	50299	52350	53062	60041	68810	80762	85354
Iraq	2090	2821	2025	3025	3778	3581	4200	6545	6305	8070	9516	12873
Iran	10201	12131	14276	13142	12629	13220	13446	12150	12639	9984	9901	9969
Kuwait	5595	5415	5353	5686	5235	5089	4996	5705	6178	5844	5942	--

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have largely been aligned on security-related matters, particularly in their responses to the Arab Spring and their stances on organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Kuwait has expressed its support for the Saudi-led campaign in Yemen and both countries participated the Peninsula Shield Force which provided support to the government of Bahrain in 2011.¹⁰⁸ Further, the two have shown their support for the al-Sisi government in Egypt in the form of significant financial aid following the toppling of the Muslim Brotherhood-led government in 2013.¹⁰⁹ Although there have been periodic disputes

¹⁰⁵ Fred Lawson, "Security Dilemmas in the Persian Gulf," in *The International Politics of the Persian Gulf*, ed. Mehran Kamrava (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 52-3.

¹⁰⁶ "The State of Major Arms Transfers in 8 Graphics," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, accessed March 17, 2017, <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2017/state-major-arms-transfers-8-graphics>.

¹⁰⁷ "Military Expenditure by Country," accessed 17 March, 2017, <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Milex-constant-USD.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸ "Gulf of Aden: Security Review," *Critical Threats*, published September 10, 2015, accessed May 10, 2017, https://www.criticalthreats.org/briefs/gulf-of-aden/gulf-of-aden-security-review-september-10-2015#_ftn2.

¹⁰⁹ Katzman, "Kuwait," 18-9.

between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in recent years over the rights to oil fields found in the neutral zone along the border between the two countries, these disputes have not, as of yet, posed a serious threat to Kuwaiti-Saudi cooperation on the most pressing security matters facing them.¹¹⁰

Despite their frequent policy alignment, however, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have adopted markedly divergent approaches in their relations with Iraq. Relative to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia (who had opposed the 2003 US-led invasion - seeing Saddam as a buffer against Iran)¹¹¹ has been much more wary of developing relations with Baghdad.¹¹² Saudi-Iraqi relations were particularly tense under Iraqi President Nouri al-Maliki, who had criticized the Saudi leadership for their ties to extremist organizations and whom Riyadh considered a “puppet” of Iran.¹¹³ Bilateral engagement seems to have increased since 2014 - with both al-Maliki out of office and the accession of King Salman to the throne in 2015 - but significant problems in the relationship still persist. Notably, the progress represented by the 2016 re-opening of the Saudi embassy in Baghdad (closed since the 1990-91 Gulf War) was tarnished a few months later when Riyadh was asked to recall their ambassador over his criticisms of Shi‘a militias in Iraq.¹¹⁴ More recently, in February of 2017, the Saudi Foreign Minister paid a visit to Baghdad - the first such trip since 1990 (and one which it appears the US had a hand in arranging).¹¹⁵

The United States: A Superpower Engaged

As noted above, meaningful US engagement in the Gulf began to take shape in the 1970s with the ‘twin pillar’ strategy. Under this strategy, the US relied on patron-client relationships with Saudi Arabia and Iran - the latter replaced by Iraq after 1979 - to secure its interests in the Gulf (namely the free flow of oil and an alliance structure opposed to the Soviet Union). The 1991 intervention in Kuwait ushered in a new era of US involvement in the Gulf, marking its

¹¹⁰ Katzman, “Kuwait,” 22.

¹¹¹ Balboni, “Iraq,” 2.

¹¹² Katzman, “Kuwait,” 16.

¹¹³ Balboni, “Iraq,” 3-4.

¹¹⁴ Paul Iddon, “It’s High Time for a Restoration of Iraqi-Saudi Relations,” *The New Arab*, published April 14, 2017, accessed May 14, 2017, <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2017/4/14/its-high-time-for-a-restoration-of-iraq-saudi-relations>.

¹¹⁵ Taimur Khan, “Saudi Foreign Minister Visits Iraq in First Such Trip for 27 Years,” *The National*, published February 25, 2017, accessed May 14, 2017, <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/20170225/4995/saudi-foreign-minister-visits-iraq-in-first-such-trip-for-27-years>.

first large-scale military operation in the region.¹¹⁶ This increased engagement was reflected in the shift from the ‘twin-pillar’ strategy to one of ‘dual containment’ - specifically the containment of Iraq and Iran, which were seen to pose a threat to the Western-friendly status quo in which both oil and petrodollars (the revenue accrued by oil exporting countries) were readily available to world markets.¹¹⁷

This strategy of dual containment required the US to go above and beyond its regional patron-client relationships (which it still carefully maintained with its GCC allies) and impose a strong military presence on the region.¹¹⁸ This military presence has primarily taken the form of CENTCOM (US Central Command). Established in 1983 with the explicit mission of protecting oil flows in the Gulf, CENTCOM today has an area of responsibility which encompasses twenty-five countries stretching from the Arabian Peninsula to Central Asia; the majority of CENTCOM forces, however, are concentrated in the Gulf (specifically the six GCC states and Iraq). In implementing this security regime, the US signed bilateral defense and access agreements with each of the GCC states between the years 1990 and 1994 - based in part on the analysis of CENTCOM that the GCC states could not be counted on to provide for the security of the region and that, therefore, the US must become “the Gulf’s policeman.”¹¹⁹

The attacks of September 11th, 2001 would lead to the further entrenchment of the US presence in the Gulf. In the span of a year and a half - the period of time between 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003 - the US set about building new military facilities in Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain (initially in support of its operations in Afghanistan).¹²⁰ The years 2003 through 2011 would mark the peak of US military engagement in the region - with the occupation of Iraq, the escalation of the drone war against non-state militants, and the ongoing war in Afghanistan nearby. There has since been much speculation about the possibilities of a long term decline in the US presence in the Gulf going forward in response to a number of factors: the political and strategic setbacks resulting from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; a greater focus on relations in East and Southeast Asia (the so-called ‘pivot to Asia’); and the US’s

¹¹⁶ Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations*, 141.

¹¹⁷ Stephen Wright, “Foreign Policy in the GCC States,” in *The International Politics of the Persian Gulf*, ed. Mehran Kamrava (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 91-2.

¹¹⁸ Ayoob, “American Policy Toward the Persian Gulf,” 131.

¹¹⁹ John Morrissey, “US Central Command and Liberal Imperial Reach: ‘Shaping the Central Region for the 21st Century,’” *The Geographical Journal* Vol. 182, No. 1, (March, 2016), 20-1.

¹²⁰ Lawson, “Security Dilemmas in the Persian Gulf,” 65.

diminishing dependence on foreign oil.¹²¹ Indeed, while we may be past the point of peak US engagement in the Gulf, the US is still far more embedded in the region than it was in 1990 or even in early-2001. As then-US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel said in a speech in 2013: “Even as we put our presence on a more sustainable long-term footing, our capabilities in the [Middle East] region will far exceed those that were in place September 11, 2001.”¹²² The US, at present, still has military personnel stationed in each of the GCC countries in addition to “more than 5,000...military advisers, trainers and attack helicopter crews in Iraq.”¹²³ Furthermore, the Trump administration is considering “sending several thousands of additional troops to Kuwait...as a “reserve” force for the anti-ISIS fight.”¹²⁴

Given the magnitude of the US military presence in the Gulf, the US essentially serves as protector of the GCC states from the potential threats posed by Iran and, to a lesser extent, Iraq. While the US may be genuinely interested in the stability of the region, however, its protection of the GCC states is contingent on an alignment of interests vis-à-vis the power politics of the region rather than any deep affection for the ruling families of the GCC monarchies. For this reason, GCC leaders are unable to rely on their respective alliances with the US as long-term strategies for ensuring their external security. Additionally, these regimes’ close ties to the US may only be exacerbating their domestic political insecurities by provoking anti-Western criticisms. The fact remains, however, that in the short-to-medium term, the US presence in the Gulf is a feature of the regional inter-state system - acting as a preemptive deterrent against breaches of the GCC states’ sovereignty of the sort exhibited by Iraq in 1990.

Iran: A Disruptive Power

While Iran’s role as a regional power in the Gulf had been cemented for some time prior to the Gulf wars of 1990-91 and 2003 (as indicated by its centrality in the minds of Western policymakers), the effects of these events vis-à-vis Iran are notable here due to the impacts they

¹²¹ Kamrava, “The Changing International Relations of the Persian Gulf,” 9-12.

¹²² Cordesman et al., “The Gulf Military Balance Volume III,” 5.

¹²³ Bryan Bender, “Trump’s Mideast Surge Has Pentagon Debating ‘Mission Creep,’” *Politico*, published March 17, 2017, accessed March 19, 2017, <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/03/pentagon-syria-mission-creep-trump-236156?cmpid=sf>.

¹²⁴ Bender, “Trump’s Mideast Surge.”

had on Iran's relative power standing in regard to Iraq. First, Iran's position was strengthened as result of Iraq's decline as a security threat in the aftermath of 1991.¹²⁵ Second (although indignant toward the expansion of US military presence in the region that the 2003 Gulf War required), Iran has increasingly taken advantage of the opportunities which a weakened, post-Ba'athist Iraq has offered - seeking close ties with the vulnerable, and newly Shi'a-majority, government in Baghdad. As the US occupation of Iraq began to wind down in 2010-11, Iran saw its influence in Iraq become more pronounced while the rise of IS in 2014 gave it the opportunity to install a significant military presence in Iraq.¹²⁶

Tehran's heightened influence in Baghdad has played into GCC fears of Iran's aspirations in the region and contributed to the rise in GCC-Iranian tensions in recent years. These tensions culminated, in January of 2016, in Saudi Arabia cutting diplomatic ties with Tehran in response to protests in Iran over the execution of a Shi'a cleric in Saudi Arabia.¹²⁷ Bahrain quickly followed suit while the UAE downgraded relations and recalled their ambassador from Tehran.

While Kuwait has recently (in July of 2017) fallen out with Iran over alleged links between Tehran and terrorist networks in Kuwait, it has generally had amicable relations with Iran in recent years and has, at times (along with Oman and Qatar), acted as a mediator between Iran and its various rivals.¹²⁸ In 2014, Kuwait became the first US-allied Arab Gulf state to send a head of state to Iran since the 1979 revolution (when Emir Sheikh Sabah visited Tehran in June of that year).¹²⁹ Additionally, prior to its current dispute with Iran, Kuwait had been mediating on behalf of the rest of the GCC states with Iran in an effort to de-escalate regional tensions. In January of 2017, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Khaled al-Sabah visited Tehran, delivering a letter from the Kuwaiti Emir calling for greater dialogue between the GCC states and Iran.¹³⁰ This visit was reciprocated in February, when Iranian president Hassan Rouhani

¹²⁵ Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 185-9.

¹²⁶ "Who's in Charge?"

¹²⁷ Catherine E. Shoichet and Mariano Castillo, "Saudi Arabia-Iran Row Spreads to Other Nations," *CNN*, published January 5, 2016, accessed May 14, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/04/middleeast/saudi-arabia-iran-severing-ties-whats-next/>.

¹²⁸ "Iran Says Ambassador to Remain in Kuwait despite Row," *Reuters*, published July 24, 2017, accessed July 26, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-kuwait-diplomacy-idUSKBN1A91CC?il=0>.

¹²⁹ "Kuwait's Ruler Makes Rare Visit to Iran to Build Ties," *Reuters*, published June 1, 2014, accessed May 14, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-kuwait-idUSKBN0EC1LX20140601>.

¹³⁰ Mohamed Abdel Ghaffar, "Kuwait FM Visit 'Broke Ice' between Gulf, Iran: Analyst," *Anadolu Agency*, published January 26, 2017, accessed May 12, 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/kuwait-fm-visit-broke-ice-between-gulf-iran-analyst/735734>.

travelled to both Kuwait and Oman in order to further discussions on problematic issue areas such as the conflicts in Yemen, Syria and Iraq.¹³¹ The volatile nature of the Iranian-GCC relationship, while rarely rising to the level of an actual security threat to Kuwait, certainly contributes to the complexity of Kuwait's relations in the region and with Iraq specifically (given its close ties with Iran) - adding a level of uncertainty which must be accounted for in its medium- and long-term policymaking.

Social Structure in the Gulf: Sovereignty & Arab Nationalism

Given Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990-91, the question of Kuwait's sovereignty has been central to the relationship between Kuwait and Iraq in recent decades. This fact has been reflected in their rhetoric concerning their relations with one another - with Kuwaiti officials regularly invoking their sovereignty and the Iraqi government repeatedly stating its respect for Kuwait's sovereignty.¹³² On this question of Iraq's regard for Kuwait's sovereignty, however, it is important to note that Kuwait and Iraq are inhabiting a regional social structure that has undergone significant change since Iraq's invasion in 1990 - one in which the norm of sovereignty has become more deeply internalized (or, as Wendt would describe it, one in which the culture has become more Lockean).¹³³

Entwined with this process of internalization has been the concurrent decline of the ideology of Arab nationalism. The dominant political ideology throughout the Arab world for much of the mid-to-late twentieth century, Arab nationalism gives precedence to the broader Arab population as a political entity over the individual Arab states. Debates (somewhat naturally) arose within the Arab world over what the interests of the Arab nation were, who should represent it, and how much deference Arab states and leaders should give to this broader Arab constituency. The last of these debates touched upon the very sovereignty of Arab states, with the more extreme variations of Arab nationalism dismissing these states as imperialist

¹³¹ "Iran's President Rouhani Visits Kuwait to Soothe Gulf Tensions," *The New Arab*, published February 15, 2017, accessed May 12, 2017, <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/2/15/irans-president-rouhani-visits-kuwait-to-soothe-gulf-tensions>.

¹³² "Kuwait Downplays Border Tensions with Iraq.," "Kuwaiti Prime Minister Visits Baghdad."

¹³³ Michael N. Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 239.

fabrications and promoting the political unification of the Arab world. This posed a serious problem for the leaders of Arab states: while these leaders often had to make appeals to Arab nationalism in order to maintain their legitimacy, the fact remained that it was the states themselves that were the sources of their positions of power and where their primary constituencies were located.

Arab nationalism, furthermore, often placed considerable constraints on the behavior of Arab states in the form of “normative expectations” (e.g. defining which states were acceptable allies, defining how Arab states were supposed to behave toward one another...).¹³⁴ Nevertheless, Arab nationalism was at times an effective tool for those states or individuals who were able to position themselves as leaders of the Arab world. By manipulating the narratives through which events, ideas and policies were interpreted, these leaders were often able to influence both public opinion and policymakers throughout the Arab world. Framing their behavior within the context of Arab nationalism was, therefore, both a requirement of Arab states as well as a potential method of projecting power.

In the case of Iraq, the rhetoric of Arab nationalism was key to Saddam’s efforts to legitimize his foreign policy behavior. This was most effective during the Iran-Iraq War, with Saddam claiming to be defending the entire Arab nation from the threat of revolutionary Iran. As Iraq began preparing to invade Kuwait in the summer of 1990, Saddam again employed the rhetoric of Arab nationalism - this time in an attempt to posture Iraq as protector of the Arab world from Western imperialism.¹³⁵ In a July national broadcast, Saddam declared (in reference to the ruling families of Kuwait and the UAE): “The policies of some Arab rulers...are inspired by America to undermine Arab interests and security.”¹³⁶

Despite Saddam’s attempts to frame the event, the response of the Arab world to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait was deeply divided. Ultimately, a narrow majority of Arab League member-states would condemn the action in a resolution at an emergency summit convened in Cairo.¹³⁷ The fact that the vote on the resolution was the most divisive in the history of the Arab League, however - with only 12 of the then-21 member-states voting in favor of it - was an indication of

¹³⁴ Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics*, 239.

¹³⁵ Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics*, 215; Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 210.

¹³⁶ Youssef M. Ibrahim, “Iraq Threatens Emirates and Kuwait on Oil Glut,” *The New York Times*, published July 18, 1990, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/07/18/business/iraq-threatens-emirates-and-kuwait-on-oil-glut.html?>

¹³⁷ Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, “The Inter-Arab System and the Gulf War: Continuity and Change,” *The Carter Center*, (November 1991): 8-10, <https://www.cartercenter.org/documents/1223.pdf>.

how deeply the Arab nationalist project was in trouble.¹³⁸ Furthermore, with the Arab world divided - and their military capabilities questionable - there appeared to be no 'Arab' solution to the problem of restoring Kuwait's sovereignty. That Western intervention was required to remedy the situation meant that many Arab states found themselves in the position of acting as minor partners in a US-led coalition to solve an inter-Arab problem. The crisis was, therefore, problematic for Arab nationalism beyond the fact that it involved one Arab state invading another: it also laid bare the inability of the Arab nation to resolve inter-Arab issues in an effective manner, leading the way to a significant expansion of Western involvement in the region.

With the restoration of Kuwait's sovereignty, Arab nationalism (already weakened by its internal debates and the concessions made to the US and Israel by Egypt and Saudi Arabia) became the primary victim of the Gulf War.¹³⁹ As Arab nationalism lost its place at the center of the regional social structure, however, the norm of state sovereignty became more deeply internalized by Arab states - ultimately becoming explicitly coupled with their conceptions of their own security. As Michael Barnett put it, "[t]he retreat to the state" within the Arab world at the time "was unmistakable."¹⁴⁰ As a result of this shift in social structure, the challenging of one Arab state's sovereignty by another under the banner of Arab nationalism - as foolish as it may have been in 1990 - would be practically unthinkable today.

On a final note regarding sovereignty in the Gulf, the 2003 US-led invasion deserves mention. Regardless of how wide the support for Saddam's removal was - both within as well as outside of Iraq - the invasion was problematic for the norm of sovereignty in the region. Here was the former defender of Kuwait's sovereignty, the US, seemingly demonstrating that individual state interests superseded the collective interest of upholding the norms of the international system. The fact that the invasion had such destabilizing effects on the region, however, may have actually reinforced the notion of sovereignty as being central to security in the eyes of the Gulf states. Further, the feeling amongst many Iraqis (even those who opposed Saddam) that the US had unrightfully imposed itself upon Iraq may have additionally contributed

¹³⁸ Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics*, 217-8, 227-8.

¹³⁹ Raymond Hinnebusch, "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy: Imperialism and Resistance," *Journal of International Relations and Development* vol 14, no. 2 (2011): 236.

¹⁴⁰ Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics*, 213.

to a greater recognition of the importance state sovereignty.¹⁴¹ Similarly, challenges to the Iraqi state by non-state actors such as IS may be doing the very same today. As such, the Iraqi state - formerly the primary threat to the norm of sovereignty in the region - has become a staunch defender of this norm now that its own sovereignty has come under threat (both by more powerful states as well as by non-state actors).

Regional Effects

The changes within the regional structures of the Gulf and the broader Middle East in recent decades, as demonstrated throughout this chapter, have been both dramatic and various. The effects of these structural changes on intra-structural bilateral relationships have therefore been multifaceted - at times acting in contradiction to one another, while at others working in conjunction to produce certain outcomes. As such, it is often difficult to isolate causal factors or identify simple cause-and-effect relationships. That said, what follows are relatively generalized observations regarding the effects of the regional developments discussed in this chapter on Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations.

In terms of material structure, the decline of Iraq's position has been pivotal, particularly in light of the increased capabilities of Saudi Arabia and the increased involvement of the US. This has not only constrained the possibilities of what is achievable with Iraq's own capabilities, but has also provided Kuwait with explicit security assurances. In addition to these security assurances, however, Kuwait has been bolstered in its dealings with Iraq by a regional structure which has offered it numerous alternatives in its foreign relations (i.e. Saudi Arabia, the US, and even Iran). As Robert Jervis has observed: "Structure strongly influences the state's needs and alternatives, which in turn establish its bargaining power."¹⁴² Conversely, Iraq - sorely in need of foreign investment and regional allies - has seen its bargaining leverage in its relations with Kuwait decline drastically - far beyond its decline in relative power.

¹⁴¹ "National Survey of Iraq: February 2004," *Oxford Research Group*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/0/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/15_03_04_iraqsurvey.pdf.

¹⁴² Robert Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 209.

In regard to the social structure of the Gulf, the norm of sovereignty has become more internalized within the culture of the region as the ideology of Arab nationalism has receded. Further, the state which formerly posed the greatest threat to sovereignty in the Gulf, Iraq, has been reconstituted as an actor whose legitimacy, interests and identity rely on the norm of sovereignty - particularly as its own sovereignty has become threatened by transnational non-state actors. This analysis of social structure perhaps explains, in part, why Kuwait is offering the assistance that it is to Iraq: in doing so, Kuwait is essentially initiating a joint effort of further strengthening and asserting the norm of sovereignty as the foundation of inter-state relations in the Gulf. More fundamentally, however, the Kuwaiti government's assistance to Iraq demonstrates its perception that Iraq will continue to abide by this norm - allowing for "absolute gains [to] override relative losses" in the minds of Kuwaiti policymakers.¹⁴³ Indeed, as Wendt writes, "[i]f states think that others recognize their sovereignty...then survival is not at stake if their relative power falls."¹⁴⁴

Finally, despite Kuwait's security assurances (or Iraq's respect for its sovereignty), there are indeed still a number of potential threats that it faces. The most pressing of these include: violence on the part of non-state extremist organizations (which Kuwait experienced first-hand in 2015 when IS bombed a Shi'a mosque, killing 27);¹⁴⁵ Iranian revisionism; Saudi political subjugation; and internal political insecurities. Kuwait's efforts to mend ties with Iraq, therefore, make sense on a number of strategic levels beyond the mere courting of closer relations with a larger neighbor who could potentially pose a threat in the future: First of all, Kuwait is willing, for the moment, to empower Iraq (through aid, economic investment and international legitimation) in exchange for reducing the threat of political violence from non-state actors. Additionally, deepening ties with Iraq could serve to counter the influence of Iran in Baghdad¹⁴⁶ - a strategy which the US has actively encouraged.¹⁴⁷ Finally, by seeking close relations with Iraq, Kuwait is forming ties with a potential regional power other than Saudi Arabia - while also showing its willingness to work closely with a large state in the region which is far closer to Tehran than it is to Riyadh.

¹⁴³ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 282.

¹⁴⁴ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 284.

¹⁴⁵ Micahel Pearson, "ISIS Claims Fatal Mosque Attack in Kuwait," *CNN*, published June 27, 2015, accessed May 8, 20137, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/06/26/world/kuwait-mosque-attack/>.

¹⁴⁶ Cordesman et al., "The Gulf Military Balance Volume III," xx.

¹⁴⁷ Balboni, "Iraq," 2.

Chapter 4
Kuwait's Hedging Strategy:
Small States & Structural Power

Building on the research presented in the two previous chapters, this thesis will now apply Kuik's analytical framework of hedging to an analysis of Kuwait's behavior toward Iraq (and, to a lesser degree, toward the other regional powers). Subsequently, theories of international relations regarding structural power and small states will be evoked in order to provide a broader conceptual understanding of Kuwait's hedging behavior and the effects of regional structures on Kuwait's policy toward Iraq.

Kuwait's Strategy of Hedging toward Iraq

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, strategic hedging has emerged as an analytical concept for understanding the behavior of small states which do not conform to the traditional, realist model - which assumes that small states are bound to either bandwagon with or balance against larger powers. Hedging has therefore proved useful within the context of describing the behavior of small states responding to rising powers within regional structures undergoing change. As defensive realism emphasizes, however, (most notably in Stephen Walt's 'balance of threats' theory)¹⁴⁸ it is often more useful to think of international relations in terms of the potential *threats* which states pose, rather than the *power* that they hold. Accordingly, hedging should be viewed, first and foremost, as a foreign policy strategy for engaging with states which pose a potential threat. In this way, while it may be difficult to think of Iraq as a regional power (either presently or in the near future), the potential threat it poses to a small, geopolitically vulnerable country such as Kuwait cannot be discounted. Furthermore, in the medium-to-long term, Iraq could indeed re-emerge as a consequential military and economic power in the Gulf.

¹⁴⁸ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

Kuwait's response to these circumstances has been, for the time being, to attempt to benefit from both the *risk-contingency* options as well as the *return-maximizing* options of hedging in its dealings with Iraq.

Regarding the first risk-contingency option, *indirect-balancing*, Kuwait is still largely aligned on security matters with the same countries which came to Kuwait's rescue in the wake of the 1990 Iraqi invasion (namely the US and Saudi Arabia). These security alliances were, initially, designed to directly balance against the Iraqi threat (as well as Iran). The question now, however, is whether Kuwait is still balancing directly against Iraq, or whether these alliances have been adapted to Kuwait's evolving security needs while remaining an assurance (albeit indirectly) against any threat which Iraq might pose. The distinction between direct and indirect balancing may not always be clear in a given situation, but refers to whether security efforts are aimed at a specific threat or diffuse, non-specific threats. While Iraq may still pose a potential threat to Kuwait, the fact that the US and (to a lesser degree) Kuwait itself are actively cooperating with Iraq on security matters indicates that Kuwait's balancing is now aimed only indirectly at Iraq.

According to Kuik, there are two means by which states can engage in *dominance-denial* (the second risk-contingency option of hedging): "by: (a) involving other powers in regional affairs; and (b) developing their own resilience and strengthening their collective diplomatic clout."¹⁴⁹ As such, Kuwait is engaging in dominance-denial on both grounds: First and foremost, they played a central role in the expansion of the US presence in the Gulf from the early 1990s through the Iraq War and are still hosting significant numbers of US troops today. Second, Kuwait has consistently aimed to bolster their own standing and influence on matters of regional diplomacy through mediation, humanitarian aid programs and emphasizing cooperation within intergovernmental organizations such as the GCC or the UN - which are often useful in amplifying the voices of coalitions of small states. The relevance of dominance-denial to Kuwait's relationship with Iraq, however, may be questionable in the current context given that there is no prospect of Iraq establishing regional dominance anytime soon. This said, it is important to note, first, that Kuwait is clearly practicing the behavior which constitutes dominance-denial and, second, that this behavior would indeed work to counter Iraqi attempts at dominance should it re-emerge as a regional power.

¹⁴⁹ Kuik, "The Essence of Hedging," 169-70.

As far as the return-maximizing options of hedging strategies - economic-pragmatism, binding-engagement and limited-bandwagoning - it appears that Kuwait is engaging in both the first and the second of these. Kuwait's *economic-pragmatism* has been evident in its investments in Iraq (most prominently in energy and telecommunications) as well as the steps that it has taken to begin importing Iraqi natural gas - which could work to dramatically increase the two countries' bilateral interdependencies on one another. *Binding-engagement* (that is, "regularized diplomatic" activity) between Kuwait and Iraq was, given their contentious history and lingering issues, a practical necessity in order for the reopening of bilateral relations to take place.¹⁵⁰ The two have shown increasing willingness, however, to go above and beyond the minimum demands which the maintaining of relations would require - most recently leading to the humanitarian aid package which Kuwait pledged to the Iraqi government in April of 2017.

The final return-maximizing option of hedging, *limited-bandwagoning*, is not currently a component of Kuwait's policy toward Iraq (although it may be an adequate description of Kuwait's respective relations with Saudi Arabia or the US - a full analysis of these relations, however, is beyond the scope of this research). Kuik describes limited-bandwagoning as requiring both: "(a) policy coordination on selective issues; and (b) voluntary deference giving to the larger partner."¹⁵¹ (Kuik also differentiates limited-bandwagoning from pure-bandwagoning in that the latter comprises both "political and military alignment" with a larger power, while the former refers only to political alignment.¹⁵²) While Kuwait is indeed coordinating with Iraq on a number of issues (e.g. terrorism, trade, humanitarian aid...), there is no voluntary deference to Baghdad to speak of at this time.

Kuwait, therefore, is engaging in four out of the five constituent components of a hedging strategy in its relations with Iraq: indirect-balancing, dominance-denial, economic-pragmatism, and binding-engagement (as indicated in Kuik's own research, it may be rare that a state employs all five of these options within a given bilateral relationship). As for limited-bandwagoning, although it is not a component of Kuwait's relationship with Iraq, it may indeed play a role in its broader regional policy (in as far as it may be useful to Kuwait in maintaining autonomy from Saudi Arabia and the US).

¹⁵⁰ Kuik, "The Essence of Hedging," 167.

¹⁵¹ Kuik, "The Essence of Hedging," 168.

¹⁵² Kuik, "The Essence of Hedging," 168.

Strategic Hedging, Structural Power & Small States

The case of Kuwait's relations with Iraq is an example of how, through strategic hedging, small states may be able to capitalize on the structural power afforded to them by the configurations of regional and international structures. As such, hedging has enabled Kuwait to prepare for multiple potential security threats while maximizing short-term economic and political benefits. Additionally, by cultivating relations with multiple larger states, Kuwait may be putting itself in a position to maximize its bargaining leverage in its dealings with these various partners in that it is creating diplomatic, economic and security alternatives for itself in the future.

In its analysis of Kuwait's hedging strategy, this thesis has found Barnett and Duvall's conceptualization of structural power to be particularly useful in that - inasmuch as Kuwait's policy toward Iraq is an active choice on the part of Kuwait's domestic leadership - it is ultimately enabled by (and dependent on) regional structural configurations. Accordingly, this thesis has identified a number of structural changes in recent decades which have ultimately served to empower Kuwait in its relations with Iraq: Firstly, the region's material structure was utterly transformed by the confluence of Iraq's decline as a regional power, the rise of Saudi Arabia, and the increased regional engagement on the part of the US. This structural configuration grants Kuwait greater alternatives, and therefore leverage, in its relations with Iraq. Secondly, the further internalization of the norm of state sovereignty in the Gulf (and the Arab world) - in conjunction with the decline of Arab nationalism - has resulted in a social structure in which Kuwait can rest relatively well-assured that Iraq has no ideological legitimation for infringing upon its sovereignty.

It is, therefore, due to the alternatives and security assurances that Kuwait has been afforded by regional structures which have enabled it to indirectly balance against Iraq while still actively taking part in bilateral binding-engagement. This is not to neglect the reality that Kuwait does indeed still face potential threats to its security. Rather, while Kuwait is enabled to pursue its policy of hedging by the configuration of regional structures - the ultimate adoption of this policy has been incentivized by the pressure on Kuwait to plan contingencies for multiple

potential threats. It is the fact that none of these threats is imminent, however, that allows Kuwait maneuverability, for the time being, in its regional relations.

In its application of the analytical frameworks of strategic hedging and structural power, this thesis has demonstrated the usefulness of these concepts in the analysis of small state behavior in international relations: By adopting policies of hedging, states may be able to capitalize on their structural power without having to exert power directly over other states;¹⁵³ small states - by definition limited in their ability to project power through traditional, hard power means - may therefore be more likely to resort to hedging strategies and structural power in their foreign policies.

Of course, we must be careful not to extrapolate too much based on a single case study - especially given the particularities of the history between Kuwait and Iraq and the region which they inhabit. The conceptual frameworks outlined in this thesis must be tested further in various other analyses in order for theorists to gain a fuller understanding of their applicabilities to comparable cases. In regard to Kuwait and its relations with Iraq, however, we can conclude that the dual concepts of hedging and structural power are indeed informative and hold significant explanatory power in that they: first, provide an adequate description of Kuwait's behavior (hedging); and second, account for the effects of regional structures (which, although multifaceted, have ultimately served to empower Kuwait in its interactions with Iraq).

¹⁵³ Barnett and Duvall, "Power in International Politics," 53; Kamrava, *Qatar*, 49.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this thesis has been to shed light on Kuwait's evolving relationship with Iraq in the post-Saddam era. As such, chapter one provided an overview of the theoretical concepts referred to throughout this work. Chapter two laid out Kuwait and Iraq's historical relations with one another and detailed the trajectory of their relationship since 2003. Chapter three contextualized this bilateral relationship through a discussion of the material and social structures in the Gulf region. Finally, chapter four made the argument that Kuwait is currently engaging in a policy of strategic hedging toward Iraq - enabled by the structural power it currently holds and incentivized by the number of threats present in the region.

In light of the research presented throughout these chapters, this thesis has been able to come to two conclusions: First, that Kuwait is indeed hedging toward Iraq in that it has significantly expanded its diplomatic and economic engagement with Baghdad while still relying on its relationships with the US and Saudi Arabia for its security. Second, regional structures (both material and social) have had substantial influence on the adoption of this policy in that Kuwait has been enabled to pursue a hedging strategy by the structural power which the configuration of regional structures have afforded it. In regard to material structure, Kuwait has been empowered by the expansion of its security alternatives (and bargaining leverage) in the region since the 1990-91 war - primarily as a result of the increased regional engagement of the US and Saudi Arabia's rise as a regional military power. As far as social structure, Kuwait has gained additional security assurances as the norm of state sovereignty has become more deeply internalized (albeit not fully) as a cultural norm in the region - and as Iraq has been reconstituted as an actor abiding by and accepting of this norm. Additionally, Kuwait's hedging strategy has been incentivized by the number of potential threats present in the region (i.e. Iraqi aggression, Iranian revisionism, Saudi dominance, and violence on the part of non-state actors) as well as the

likelihood of continuing material structural change in the form of further shifts in the power politics in the region. Kuwait is therefore required to plan contingencies for multiple potential threats; the fact that none of these threats is imminent, however, grants Kuwait maneuverability in its regional relations - allowing it to engage in a multi-pronged hedging strategy.

All of this is not to say that Kuwait's hedging strategy is not also influenced, in part, by domestic politics. Indeed, this may well be the case (one of the limitations of this research has been that domestic determinants were not able to be explored further) - but it is ultimately regional and international structures which determine states' possibilities for action on the international stage and define the external threats which they may face. Thus, while Kuwait may desire better relations with Baghdad in order to avoid a repeat of the 1990 invasion, this is not an imminent concern. More immediately, a better relationship with Iraq may grant more bargaining leverage to Kuwait in its relations with (and eventually reduce its dependence on) its other larger partners - Saudi Arabia and the US.

In its analysis of how regional structures have affected the Kuwaiti-Iraqi relationship, this thesis has also sought to refine the conceptual frameworks available for the analysis of small states and hedging behavior. As such, this research has found Barnett and Duvall's conceptualization of structural power to be useful in that it refers to the power afforded to states by structural configurations, rather than the power they hold due to their own capabilities and are able to wield directly over other states. Accordingly, small states are less likely to be able to rely on their own capabilities when dealing with larger states - and therefore more likely to resort to alternative, indirect means of projecting power on the international stage. Additionally, small state hedging strategies are dependent on particular structural configurations - ones in which there are multiple larger potential partners, on the one hand, and no significant imminent threats, on the other. It is hoped that the theoretical connections laid out in this thesis will be investigated further in other various case studies.

It would appear that Kuwait has so far been relatively successful in harnessing its structural power - stepping up its regional engagement while maintaining its security alliances. This strategy holds the potential to greatly benefit Kuwait in the near future - further increasing its structural power as it develops relations with multiple larger partners and, therefore, increasing its alternatives and bargaining leverage in its relations with those partners. On the other hand, however, it may also prove to add to Kuwait's insecurities - weakening its existing

alliances, opening it up to criticism from within its own population, or leading to significant economic losses from its investments in a still unstable Iraqi economy. Furthermore, as this hedging strategy is only possible in an environment where there is a lack of imminent threats, the future of this strategy is, in many ways, dependent on factors outside of the control of Kuwaiti policymakers.

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