

Impressum

Klaus Bung: Wishful Thinking: History Lessons from Kuwait
An Essay with a Catechism

Length: 28,033 words = 101,740 characters = 97pp A4 approx
35 exercises (10 Q+A each)
350 Question and Answer pairs

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TECHNICAL NOTE

Note: The figures for population, economics and some other information is as it was before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. They will be up-dated after a publisher has been found.

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Triggered by the 1990 Gulf War in response to Saddam Hussein's attempt to annex Kuwait, the author reflects on the causes of Saddam's actions, the self-righteous indignation of the Western powers who defeated him, on the misery of the Iraqi soldiers retreating from Kuwait.

This essay was written during the final stages of the 1990/1991 Gulf War, which lead to the expulsion of occupying Iraq from Kuwait. While seeing the necessity of the military action as such, the author criticises the enthusiasm and the self-righteousness with which it was experienced by western politicians, media and people and the empty moralising political slogans (e.g. the millennial 'New World Order', where 'henceforth' justice wins over brute force). Even internally 'democratic' nations, such as the USA and Great Britain, can be brutal imperialists in their international relations (and therefore cause resentment), as was Athens, the oft idolised cradle of democracy.

After giving a potted history of Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the author shows the parallels of the Kuwait-Iraq affair and its morality, or lack of it, with events and arguments in classical antiquity. For instance, Athens behaved like Iraq when, in 416 B.C., it attacked, occupied, depopulated and colonised the independent island of Melos (famous negotiations with arguments of might over right), and like Iraq in Kuwait (or Hitler in Stalingrad in 1943) it got its come-uppance when it overreached itself and attacked the independent city of Syracuse (414 B.C.).

The delusions of Saddam Hussain are seen as analogous to those of Don Quijote. The horrendous destruction of the Iraqis withdrawing from Kuwait with their ill-gotten booty were an exact mirror of what happened to the Persian army when their attempt to conquer Athens failed during the sea Battle of Salamis (480 B.C.) and they had to withdraw over land, and is movingly described in Aeschylus's play 'The Persians' (472 B.C.).

These themes are of permanent relevance and throw, from some angle or other, useful light on more recent conflicts (esp. all stories of conquest, foreign domination and ethnic cleansing), e.g., Hitler's annexation of Czechoslovakia and Austria, the Israeli theft, conquest and occupation of Palestinian land, the modern Balkan conflicts, Russia's attempt to annex Ukraine, or an American president in 2025 coveting adjacent Canada and distant Greenland etc.

The author's exposition is followed by a **Catechism (or Quiz)** consisting of about 300 questions and answers which enable readers to ponder individual facts by seeing them in isolation, compare them with similar events or situations in more familiar parts of the world or in earlier periods of history, to learn (memorise) names, dates, events and reasons, and (if desired) practise using them.

The Catechism provides a potted history of Kuwait in question and answer form, with frequent sideways glances at other countries and other periods of history, to help readers, especially younger readers (or their teachers), to put the events into contexts which they can understand.

This collection of questions and answers about Kuwait history is a tool for people who want to practise having the facts, the names and the dates and the events at their finger-tips, remember them long-term and learn to use them confidently and instantly during discussions. It can also serve as a tool for teachers preparing their lessons. This is an efficient approach to studying and exam preparation which can also be used for other topics.

It can also be useful for people visiting Kuwait for work or leisure.

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**Klaus Bung:
Wishful Thinking:
History Lessons from Kuwait
(An Essay with a Catechism)**

**^Part 1: Essay:
The 1990 Gulf War in Perspective**

1. Introduction: So many questions

CAN WE REVERSE HISTORY?

During the Gulf War of 1991, I was asked by supporters of Saddam Hussein whether it was true that Kuwait was once part of Iraq?

Well, what would you say? Was it, or was it not?

If it was, when was it and how was it? Did that justify Iraq's occupation of Kuwait?

- Iraq (then called Mesopotamia) was once ruled by Turkey (during the time of the Ottoman Empire). Should Turkey therefore occupy Iraq today?
- Mesopotamia was once ruled by Persia (now called Iran). Should Iran therefore occupy Iraq today?
- Switzerland was once ruled by Austria. Should the Austrians invade Switzerland?
- France and Germany were both ruled by Charlemagne. Does that make Germany part of France or vice versa?
- The Netherlands and Austria were both ruled from Spain. Does that entitle the Dutch to take over Austria?
- The United States of America were once under British rule. Should the British take over again (if they could)?
- Afterthought of 2025 (showing that these issues persist): The Ukraine was for centuries culturally closely linked to Russia and was once part of the Soviet Union. Does that give Moscow the right to rule today's Ukraine, an independent state since December 1991:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_Independence_of_Ukraine
- Afterthought of 2025: The Jewish god, in biblical mythology a few thousand years ago, promised the itinerant Israelites the land of Canaan (which did not belong to him) and instructed them to ethnically cleanse it by killing all its current inhabitants, which, according to the bible, they did. In 70 AD, these events were reversed. The Romans besieged and destroyed Jerusalem, and killed, enslaved or expelled its Jewish population. Over the centuries, the land was gradually resettled by Arabs and a few peaceful indigenous Jews. Does this give the Zionists today (and since 1897), with the active participation of the USA, the UK, Germany, France, and the European Union, the right to take possession of Palestine and make it "pure Jewish" by killing and expelling the indigenous Arab population?

WHY ARE WE OUTRAGED BY SADDAM HUSSEIN?

It has been said that Saddam Hussein did nothing but follow the common practices of the Middle East: 'If you want something and if you are strong enough, go and grab it. If indigenous populations are in the way, terrorise them until they go.' Try to answer that question for yourself. Study each change in national boundaries which have occurred in the Middle East since 1918, and ask whether it was brought about by consent or power, by right or by might, and whether the residents' wishes were respected.

Abdul Aziz (later King Ibn Saud) attacked and conquered many small territories on the Arabian Peninsula. He is now remembered as the man who **unified Arabia** and as the greatest Arab leader since the Holy Prophet Mohammed himself. Was this because he was successful in his wars and in the administration of his conquests, or was it because it is good and great to gather adjacent territories under one rule?

Admittedly, Saddam Hussein has failed in his attempt to conquer and retain Kuwait. Granted also that he is a torturer, butcher and dictator. But he was that even before he annexed Kuwait. So we can set that aside when judging his attempt to capture Kuwait.

Assume he had been successful in keeping Kuwait, in straightening out Iraq's borders, in giving Iraq access to the open sea (which, as a brief look at the map shows, Iraq seems to cry out for), in giving Kuwait fresh water (which it used to import from Iraq), would the historians of the future still talk about the rape of Kuwait (as they do now) or would they regard the union of Iraq and Kuwait as a marriage that was made in heaven (or hell) and call Saddam Hussein, after a few more conquests, 'Saddam the Great', the 'unifier of the Fertile Crescent'? (1)

MORALITY RULES OK?

International morality seems to be guiding the actions of the United Nations, the Americans, the British and their Allies in their dealings with Iraq. Nine years ago, when the USSR still posed a threat to the West, the security of Saudi Arabia was assessed as follows:

'The USSR could invade the Saudi oilfields tomorrow. So, of course, could the USA - and contingency planners on both sides of the Iron Curtain regularly update their scenarios for doing precisely that. But each superpower holds back from the grab through fear of how the other would retaliate, and it is in the shelter of this massive mutual blackmail that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is free to do a little business of its own. They have got the oil, and we have got to pay for it.' (Robert Lacey, 1982, p 5).

What protects Saudi Arabia now that the threat from the USSR seems to have receded?

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

Why did the 'special relationship' between the USA and Great Britain work so well during this Gulf War? Did Great Britain have any justification for interfering in the disagreements of two Arab States? Did Britain have a special relationship with Kuwait? Did it have a special relationship with Iraq?

Criticise the victim:
Serves her right
to be raped:
why is she so beautiful!

Kuwait has been accused of not being a democracy and therefore not deserving protection. Was Saddam Hussein the best qualified person to bring democracy to Kuwait?

Do you know the answers to such questions? Are there simple answers?

If you do not know the answers, do you at least know some facts? Are you able to argue intelligently about these and many other questions which arise as Iraq, Kuwait, the Arab World and Israel try to resolve their problems?

Are you at least aware of how much you do not know and how difficult it is to interpret the facts? Or are you simply happy that you are on the side of the angels and that, for once, your team is winning?

KNOWING SOMETHING ABOUT THE PAST AND THE HISTORY OF OTHER PEOPLE

If you want to argue, you have, at least, to know some facts.

Many people do not even know much about their own history. In a survey conducted in Great Britain, adults and children were asked 12 simple questions about British history (Sunday Express, London, 17 March 91, p 12f). If the test was easy, the results were appalling. 25% of the test persons could not name Winston Churchill as the Prime Minister who lead England during the War against Nazi Germany. One woman did not know his name but gave a fair description instead: 'A great big bloke'. Unfortunately the description also applies to the present German Chancellor Kohl and to General Norman Schwarzkopf. Which Roman General invaded Britain with the lines 'I came, I saw, I conquered'? One person thought it was Hitler. Others suggested Brutus and Napoleon. Only 50% had the correct answer: Julius Caesar.

If we know so little about the history of our own country, how much less do we know about the Arabs, the Muslims, their relations with the West and with each other! We have just fought a risky war that seems only to concern other nations. How can we argue about that with each other, or with people who live nearer

to the area (e.g. Arabs, Turks) if we know nothing about them? It is useful to know something about how the other half lives.

It is useful to know something about history on the one hand and present-day reality on the other. It is useful to know something about a tiny little state, the Switzerland of the Middle East, which is considered important enough to go to war about – when there was no war about the Chinese annexation of Tibet (1950), and no war about the Soviet invasions of Hungary (1956), of Czechoslovakia (1968) and of Afghanistan (1979).

It is up to you to draw your own inferences from the facts and look behind some of the unanswered questions, which are designed to make you think or read and ask questions.

Since this war was partly about bullying, the discussion about it should not be dominated by bullies. You therefore should prepare yourself. This book does not pretend to go to any depth but it gives you the most primitive tools of discussion, bare facts and a few excursions to give you some perspective.

Perhaps it raises more questions than it answers. That would be very desirable, not least to help you check your own euphoria. Libraries and book shops can help you find the answers to the unanswered questions. You may, for example, find it useful to look at a map of all the major states in the Middle East, especially those which were threatened or attacked during this Gulf War. For each, look at its boundaries in 1918. Then check if these boundaries have changed since then. If they have changed (and that means especially 'expanded'), find out if any territories gained during that time were empty or if there were residents (as there were in Kuwait). How long had these residents been living in their villages and towns? Were they consulted when a new power took control? How many of them are still in their former towns? How many left? Why exactly did they leave? Where are they now?

Through incessant television and radio reporting, we had a vivid picture of this war. It would be useful also to have a vivid picture of the past. This little booklet cannot even begin to answer any of these questions. But you will be a wiser and more compassionate person if you at least start asking these questions.

2. The Gulf War in Perspective

2.1 The importance of Kuwait

Kuwait is a tiny country which, throughout its history, has been much more important than its size suggests. These are the reasons:

1. Kuwait has a strategic location, at the furthest end of a long waterway (the Persian Gulf). Before the arrival of air transport it not only provided access to the sea for its neighbours but also was an important link in long-distance routes, such as an overland route to the Mediterranean in one direction and a sea route to India in the other, or an overland route via Turkey to Germany and the North Sea.
2. Kuwait played a critical role in the creation of a huge and important country, Saudi Arabia, at the beginning of this century.
3. Today Kuwait is important because it is one of the greatest oil producers.

2.2 A potted history of Iraq

Iraq is the cradle of our civilisation. If you want to study this aspect and gain respect for it (as we should, for should we not respect our cradle, even when it has been soiled?), read books about the names on which we only touch. 3000 B.C. the Sumerians inhabited Mesopotamia (the land between the rivers) and developed the world's first system of writing (cuneiform writing). A thousand years later Mesopotamia belonged to the Assyrian Empire in the north and the Babylonian Empire in the South. The Babylonians had great astronomers. They had a number system based on '60', to which we owe our system of measuring time. From the Bible you know about the city of Babylon (near Baghdad) and of Niniveh (near Mosul in the Kurdish north). About 500 B.C. Babylon and Assyria became part of the Persian Empire, which also threatened the Greeks not long before they indulged in their adventures at Melos and Sicily (see below).

The total destruction of the invading Persian fleet at the hands of the Greek during the Battle of Salamis (480 B.C.) was the subject of one of the first plays still performed and read today, 'The Persians' by the Greek playwright Aeschylus, who himself had fought at Salamis eight years before his play was first performed (472 B.C.). The ghost of Darius, ancestor of the defeated Xerxes, appears in the play and predicts the miseries that will befall the retreating survivors of the battle in retribution for the way in which they have profaned, during their invasion, the sacred ground of Greece [similar to the devastation the Iraqi troops wrought before they fled from Kuwait]:

There misery waits to crush them with the load
 Of heaviest ills, in vengeance for their proud
 And impious daring; for where'er they held
 Through Greece they march, they feared not to profane
 The statues of the gods; their hallowed shrines
 Emblazed, o'erturned their altars, and in ruins,
 Rent from their firm foundations, to the ground
 Levelled their temples. Such their frantic deeds,
 Nor less their sufferings: greater still await them;
 For vengeance hath not wasted all her stores,
 The heap yet swells: for in Plataea's plains
 Beneath the Doric spear the clotted mass
 Of carnage shall arise, that the high mounds,
 Piled o'er the dead, to late posterity
 Shall give this silent record to men's eyes,
 That proud aspiring thoughts but ill besem
 Weak mortals: for oppression, when it springs,
 Puts forth the blade of vengeance, and its fruit
 Yields a ripe harvest of repentant woe.
Behold this vengeance, and remember Greece,
Remember Athens: henceforth let not pride,
Her present state disdaining, strive to grasp
Another's, and her treasured happiness
Shed on the ground: such insolent attempts
 Awake the vengeance of offended Jove.'

(from Aeschylus, The Persians; p 280)

Mesopotamia belonged, in turn, to Alexander the Great's Empire, and its successor, the Parthian Empire. The Romans did not hold it for long and it became the eastern border of the Roman empire.

In the Middle Ages (637 A.D.), Mesopotamia became part of the Arab Empire and exchanged its Greek name 'Mesopotamia' for its Arabic name 'Iraq'. After the death of the Prophet Mohammed in 632 A.D., his successors, the Caliphs (khalifa = successor), conquered large areas of Africa (ultimately including Spain) and the Middle East (including Syria and Iraq). The first three caliphs, Abu Bakr, Omar and Othman ruled from Medina. In 656 A.D. Othman was murdered by supporters of Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law. Ali was proclaimed caliph, but after a period of civil war, Ali in turn was murdered (661 A.D.) by supporters of Muwayyah, governor of Syria and cousin of Othman. So Muwayyah became caliph, the founder of a new dynasty of caliphs, the Umayyads, and Damaskus became the capital of the Arab Empire.

Concealed behind the names of these caliphs, is the struggle of two parties for the succession of the Prophet Mohammed. Those who supported Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman and the Umayyads are called 'Sunnis'. Those who supported Ali and his descendants are called

'Shiites'. The Arab peninsula is mainly sunni, Iran officially shiite, Iraq a mixture of both, but a slight majority of Shiites (55%).

A feud had been going on between the Umayyads and the Abbas family (the Abbasids) from a time before the birth of Islam. As the quality of the Umayyad rule deteriorated in successive generations of caliphs, the Abbasids identified themselves with the shiite tradition and declared that all caliphs after Ali were usurpers. They staged a revolution, and in 749 the last of the Umayyad caliphs was killed in Egypt. The first Abbasid caliph, Abul Abbas, collected into one prison every living male of the Umayyad line he could find and had them all killed. He then proceeded to hunt down and kill all of Ali's descendants (i.e. his intention in taking up the shiite cause had not been to reinstate Ali's line). In Spain a member of the Umayyad dynasty survived and established there an independent caliphate.

Mansur, the successor of Abul Abbas made Baghdad his capital. At that time, then, the whole of the Moslem world, including the Arab Peninsula, was ruled from Baghdad. One of the most famous Caliphs who ruled in Baghdad, when the Arab empire was already in its decline, was Harun-ar-Rashid (of the Arabian Nights) (ruled 786-809 A.D.). 'Baghdad rapidly became the centre of a brilliant intellectual and material civilization which spread over the entire Muslim world and reached its height in the 10th century'.

In 1258 Hulagu Khan, grandson of Jenghiz Khan, picked a quarrel with the last caliph, Mustasim, killed him, sacked Baghdad and turned Iraq into a wilderness. In 1393 Timur the Tatar (Timur the Lame, the hero of Christopher Marlowe's play 'Tamburlaine the Great', the first English play ever written in blank verse) conquered Iraq, but his empire collapsed after his death.

In 1508 Iraq was conquered by the Ottoman Turks. It was lost and reconquered several times in the wars between the Turks and the Persians. The final conquest of Baghdad took place in 1638, and Iraq remained in the Ottoman Empire until its demise at the end of the First World War in 1918.

Iraq had contained both sunnis and shiites, the sunnis in the north and the shiites in the south. The sunnis tended to live in the cities and the shiites in the country. The Ottomans were sunnis, distrusted the shiites (whose natural allies had in the past been the shiite Persians) and tended to employ Iraqi sunnis in their local administration.

At the very beginning of the War, in 1914, Great Britain occupied Iraq, in order to 'reassure the sheikhs of Muhammareh and Kuwait, to counter the threats of German and Turkish penetration of Persia with consequent danger to India and to protect the south Persian oil fields'.

In 1920, at the San Remo conference, in the aftermath of the First World War, Great Britain accepted a League of Nations

mandate for Iraq. In 1921 Emir Faisal was crowned King of Iraq. The mandate continued and many political complications arose. In 1932 Iraq became a member of the League of Nations and thus formally independent.

In 1933, King Faisal died and was succeeded by his son, who ruled as King Ghazi I. King Ghazi I, drunk in charge of a car, died in a car accident and was succeeded by his four-year-old son as King Faisal II in 1939. His uncle Abd ul Ilah became Regent. After an attempted coup-d'état in 1941, British troops occupied Baghdad. From then on, Iraq supported the allied war effort by sending food and materials to its neighbour, the U.S.S.R. In 1943 Iraq formally joined the allies by declaring war on Germany, Japan and Italy.

In 1948, Iraq took part in the Arab-Israeli war.

From 1956 to 1957 Iraq was under martial law introduced during the Suez canal crisis. In 1958 a union between Iraq and Jordan was proclaimed. A few months later, there was a revolt and King Faisal II was killed. Iraq became a republic, whose head was the revolutionary leader, General Abdul Karim Qassim.

In February 1963, the then still small socialist Baath party under their leader Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr staged a coup and killed Qassim. Only nine months later, in November 1963, the Baath Party regime was overthrown by Colonel Arif. He died in 1966 in a mysterious helicopter crash and was succeeded as president by his brother Abdul Rahman Arif. In July 1968 the Baath party staged another coup, with the help of the Republican Guards. Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr became president again. One of his protégés was Saddam Hussein, who now proceeded rapidly to build his power base and to eliminate all his rivals until only Bakr himself was left. In July 1979, President Bakr resigned, under pressure from Saddam Hussein, and Saddam Hussein became president. In the same year, the Shah of Iran was overthrown and Khomeini returned to Iran. In the same year, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan.

2.3 A potted history of Saudi Arabia

The origins of Saudi Arabia go back to an alliance made in 1744 between a small sheikh (a political ruler) and a religious reformer.

The Sheikh was Muhammad ibn Saud, an ancestor of the famous King Ibn Saud, and ruler of the town of Dariyah, not far from Riyadh.

The religious reformer was Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab. Wahhab was the Luther (or perhaps rather Calvin) of Islam, preaching an uncompromising return to the pure teachings of original Islam.

Since in Islam religious practice and political organisation go hand in hand, the spread of the Wahhabi doctrine and the growth of the Saudi rule fed each other. Tribes which accepted the

Wahhabi doctrine switched their allegiance to Saudi rule, and those tribes and sheikhdoms which rejected either one or the other were gradually brought into the Saudi 'empire' by military force or threat. Thus the names 'the Wahhabis' and 'the Saudis' have sometimes been used interchangeably. This explains why, to this day, Saudi Arabia remains a theocracy, a state in which everything is done 'In the name of God'.

Adherents to the Wahhabi doctrine do not like to be called Wahhabis and may retort that they are simply sunnis, i.e. orthodox Muslims. The name 'Wahhabi' has also been used by opponents of the movement in a derogatory way, e.g. to mean 'fanatic', 'militant', 'fundamentalist'. However, no convenient alternative name is available, so that, in the literature, the name 'Wahhabi' is generally used.

During the course of several generations the Saudis conquered most of the towns, sheikhdoms and territories that make up the two main regions of the Arab peninsula, namely Najd (from where they came) and Hejaz, which was then part of the Egyptian province of the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire. Eventually they conquered the holy cities of Mecca (1802) and Medina (1806). That was the first Saudi empire, comprising large parts of Najd and Hejaz.

In 1812 the Turks recaptured Mecca and Medina and then began to dismantle as much of the Saudi Empire as they needed to reach its capital, Dariyah, which they did in 1818. They totally destroyed the town, which has remained in ruins to this day. Then they returned to their base in Egypt. The Saudis moved to Riyadh and made it their new capital. From there they built their second empire, smaller than the first, consisting mainly of Najd territory.

Northern Arabia remained largely independent of the Saudis. The leading dynasty there was that of Mohammed Ibn Rashid, whose capital was Hail. Rashid defeated the Saudis in the battle of al-Mulaida in 1891. Thus ended the second Saudi empire.

The Saudi ruler Abdul-Rahman and his young son Abdul-Aziz took refuge in Kuwait, where Abdul-Aziz was groomed for leadership by the Kuwaiti Sheikh Mubarak. With Kuwaiti support Abdul-Aziz reconquered his capital Riyadh, the territory of Najd and of Hejaz. His main opponent was Rashid, who was supported by the Turks. After capturing Rashid's capital Hail in 1921, Abdul-Aziz assumed the title of Sultan of Najd. In 1926 he was proclaimed King of Hejaz. In 1932 he united the two parts of his empire, Najd and Hejaz, which now became known, after his dynasty, as 'Saudi Arabia'. He became King of Saudi Arabia and is best known under the name of 'King Ibn Saud'.

Limits to Saudi expansion were set by the British who prevented the Saudis from incorporating Kuwait and other states on the coast of Arabia into their empire or from expanding into Transjordan and Iraq. Most of the Saudi conquests took place

before Saudi Arabia was known for its oil wealth. The British therefore had no interest in inland deserts, whereas, as a sea-faring nation and as the controlling power of India, they were very much interested in territories along the coast. This accounts for the puzzling fact that

- (a) there are still some independent states on the Arab peninsula and
- (b) that they are all on the coast.

2.4 The Battle of Nicopolis

During the last week of the 1991 Gulf War, in one of his last defiant speeches on Baghdad radio, in which he grudgingly agreed to withdraw from Kuwait, Saddam Hussein showed that, deep at heart, he is a romantic: a man fond of reading about the deeds of great men in history. (Children today love to read about the great deeds of Batman. But woe betide them if they jump out of windows in the belief that they can fly.)

To his offer of withdrawal from Kuwait, Saddam Hussein added the cryptic remark that Constantinople did not fall during the first siege. A few thousand more Iraqi soldiers had to die for that remark, for it meant that Saddam Hussein intended to return and renew his attack on Kuwait when he was better prepared. The allies therefore did not stop strafing the Iraqi troops.

Yet, the history of Constantinople does not augur well for Saddam Hussein. Constantinople withstood numerous sieges, by Persians, Arabs, Bulgarians, Russians and others, for almost 800 years (from 626), till it finally fell to the Turks in 1453.

Nor does history (if history really repeats itself) augur well for Kuwait. For even though Constantinople did not fall for 800 years, it was assaulted for 800 years, and, after 800 years, it fell. Determinists would say it was destined to fall.

Saddam Hussein is deeply steeped in historical folklore, especially the glories of the Ottoman Empire (Turkish Empire), which started about 1300 AD with Osman and survived for over 600 years until it was finally dissolved in consequence of World War I by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. One of its constituents, then released, was modern Iraq.

Even Saddam Hussein's battle strategies seem to be taken from Ottoman history textbooks. In preparation for the ground war, the 'Mother of Battles', in 1991, he placed his least motivated, least qualified, worst fed and worst equipped soldiers 'as cannon fodder' into the front line. This must have had a purpose.

The purpose becomes clear when we read about the battle of Nicopolis (now: Nikopol, Bulgaria, at the Rumanian border), which in parts sounds like a description of Operation Desert Shield or Desert Storm.

In telling the story of the battle of Nicopolis, I am largely following the account given by Lord Kinross in 'The Ottoman Centuries. The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire', London 1977, p 66 ff).

Nicopolis means 'Victory City' (Greek nike = victory, polis = city) but might just as well have been called Hettapolis (City of Defeat) (Greek hetta = defeat), since for each of the many battles that were won there, there was also a battle lost - by the other side: Every silver lining has a cloud, as a Hindu proverb says. But there is not a single city called Hettapolis in the world. Such is human optimism.

The battle of Nicopolis was the end of one of the last crusades, held at a time when, after the eighth crusade, the romance and excitement had gone out of crusading and people had stopped counting.

The western (European) powers grew nervous over the ever expanding Ottoman Empire and felt it was time to put a stop to it. Bayezid I (1389-1403) was in charge of the Ottoman Empire at the time. When he came to power after the battle of Kosovo (1389), he declared that 'after conquering Hungary he would ride to Rome and would feed his horse with oats on the altar of St Peter's' (Kinross, p 66). Strong stuff, and very poetic - as were the military communiqués from Baghdad in 1991 or the shouted pro-Saddam slogan: 'Saddam, Saddam, our boss / Go ahead and hit the Cross'.

King Sigismund of Hungary felt threatened by the Ottomans and tried to get allies for a crusade, to put the Turks in their place once and for all. Similarly, in 1990, US Secretary of State, James Baker, travelled around the world trying to find allies and elicit contributions to the war chest.

Sigismund 'met with little encouragement but words from a succession of Popes ... The Genoese merely vied with their Venetian rivals for commercial favours from Bayezid; while both Naples and Milan maintained amicable Ottoman contacts.' The Iraqi airforce shelters destroyed by American bombs in 1991 had been largely built by British engineers, and Iraq's weapons had been largely supplied by the Western Powers, including the Soviet Union.

Sigismund turned to France and managed to get support from the 'intermittently mad King Charles VI'. He promised to send a force of chevaliers and mercenaries under the command of his young son.

The response in feudal Europe was excellent.

'There rallied to his standard not merely the French force but also knights from the nobility of England, Scotland, Flanders, Lombardy, Savoy, and all parts of Germany, together with adventurers from Poland, Bohemia, Italy, and Spain. For the last time in history, the finest flower of European chivalry gathered together for a crusade as much

secular as religious in impulse, whose objective was to check Bayezid's lightning advance and eject the Turks, once and for all, from the Balkans. Thus an "international" army, ..., mustered at Buda in the early summer of 1396 - the largest Christian force that had ever confronted the infidel. It had moreover the auxiliary support of a fleet in the Black Sea, ...':

a fair description of the force assembled in Saudi Arabia and in the Persian Gulf for Operation Desert Shield.

The crusaders had some difficulty locating the enemy. The Turks did not invade Hungary as expected, and Sigismund's 'scouts could find no trace of the enemy'. ... 'Still Bayezid, occupied in fact with the siege of Constantinople, did not come.' The crusaders marched down the valley of the Danube and passed unopposed through Serbia and into Bulgaria. In Rahova 'the large Turkish garrison, faced with the whole Christian army of Franks and Hungarians, surrendered, and the bulk of the population, including many Bulgarian Christians, was put to the sword.' These were the civilian casualties of the Gulf war.

Finally the crusaders came to the fortress of Nicopolis. 'There was still no sign of an invading Turkish army.' The crusaders had forgotten to bring any siege equipment and therefore 'they sat down before the walls, hoping to starve the city into surrender.'

'The Western knights, with no enemy to fight, treated the whole operation rather in the spirit of a picnic, enjoying the women and the wines and the luxuries they had brought from home, gambling and engaging in debauchery, ceasing in contemptuous fashion to believe that the Turk could ever be a dangerous foe to them. Those soldiers who dared to suggest otherwise had their ears cut off as a punishment for defeatism. Meanwhile there were quarrels between the different contingents, among whom the Wallachians and Transylvanians were not to be trusted.

For sixteen days there was still not sign of Bayezid. But now suddenly, with his habitual swiftness of movement, there he was before the city ... with an army reported to Sigismund to consist of anything up to two hundred thousand men. Sigismund knew his enemy and that the Ottoman army - well trained, strictly disciplined, and more mobile than that of the crusaders - was not to be trifled with. He insisted on the need for a carefully concerted plan of action. A preliminary reconnaissance was carried out by an experienced French knight, De Courcy, who came upon a detachment of the Turkish vanguard and defeated it in a mountain pass, charging with cries of "Our Lady for the Lord De Courcy!" This success merely aroused the jealousy of the other French knights, who accused him of vanity. Sigismund tried to urge on them the need to remain on the defensive, to allow the foot soldiers of the Hungarians and Wallachians to hold the first attack, while the cavalry and mercenaries of the knights formed a second line, whether for attack or defense. At this the French chevaliers were furious, insisting that the king of Hungary was trying to steal from them "the flower of the day and the honour" for himself. The first battle must be theirs.

... So ... they charged without thought into battle, confident of defeating the despised infidel. "The Knights of France," records Froissart, "were sumptuously armed. ... But I am told that when they advanced against the Turks, they were not more than seven hundred in number. Think of the folly, and the pity of it! If they had only waited for the King of Hungary, who had at least sixteen thousand men, they could have done great deeds; but pride was their downfall."

Charging uphill, they surprised and slaughtered Bayezid's outpost. After scattering his cavalry they dismounted and continued to charge on foot against his infantry, pulling up as they ran the line of stakes which protected its position, and maintaining an impetus which scattered these forces as well. The swords of the knights ran with blood. The day, they confidently believed, was theirs. Then, reaching the hilltop, they came up against the Sultan's main army of sixty thousand men, much strengthened by Serbian support, which was drawn up beyond the crest, fresh and ready for battle. According to his usual tactics, with which Sigismund was familiar, Bayezid had put his expendable untrained levies in the forefront of the battle, to exhaust the enemy's strength. Then "the horsemen of Bayezid and his hosts and chariots came against them in battle array, like the moon when she is new." The knights, being unhorsed and weighed down by their heavy armour, became helpless against attack. They were totally routed. Their horses galloped riderless back to camp. The finest flower of European chivalry lay dead on the field of Nicopolis or captive in the hand of the Turks.

The crusaders were still, by the standards of the time, essentially amateur soldiers, fighting in the past and in a romantic spirit. They had learned nothing of the professional art of war as it progressed through the centuries, none of the military skills of the Turks, with their superior discipline, training, briefing, and tactics, and above all the mobility of their light-armoured forces and archers on horse-back.'

How did General Norman Schwarzkopf, during his last press briefing in Riyadh, describe Saddam Hussein: 'He is neither a strategist nor is he schooled in the operational art, nor is he a tactician, nor is he a general, nor is he a soldier. Other than that he is a great military man!'

'These were lessons which Sigismund, with his Hungarians, had begun to learn through experience. He advanced with his forces to follow up the crusaders, but knew that once his advice was disregarded, the day was lost. "If they had only believed me," he said, "we had forces in plenty to fight our enemies." As he had boasted before the battle, "If the sky fell on our army we should have enough lances to uphold it."

Presently he escaped ... while the survivors of his army ... fled before the Ottomans, some reaching the ships, but thousands of others enduring severe hardships as they trekked across the Carpathian Mountains. Next day Bayezid, inspecting the battlefield and assessing his casualties, ordered a general massacre of prisoners ...

"The people that were killed that day," it is recorded, "were reckoned at ten thousand men." Thus did the last of the crusades end with a catastrophic defeat by the Moslems in the heart of Christian Europe. The Sultan, content with his victory, was not tempted to follow it up further. In a scornful farewell oration he challenged the knights to return and risk a further defeat at his hands.' (Kinross, p 68 f)

2.5 The Turkish threat

Christendom had been worried about the Turkish threat for a long time. In 1322 Pope John XXII had ordered that a church bell be rung daily (the 'Türkenglocke' or 'Turks Bell') and that the old (6th century A.D.) Antiphona pro pace be said three times when the bell sounded (Köhler, p 242). Its text is 'Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris, quia non est alius qui pugnet pro nobis, nisi tu, Deus noster.' The English version of this text is still used daily during Evensong in Anglican Cathedrals: 'Give peace in our time, o Lord, because there is none other who fighteth for us but only thou, o God' and, no doubt, has been fervently prayed during the Gulf crisis.

The Turkish victory at Nicopolis in 1396 put fear and terror into Christian hearts far and wide, and with good reason too. For 133 years later, in 1529, the army of Suleiman I the Magnificent managed to reach Vienna and laid siege to it after having adopted threatening postures for some time before.

Two famous Lutheran hymns, still sung in German churches today, were written on that occasion.

The first (from which, ad usum delphini, the title and the offensive references to the pope and the Turks have been removed in today's hymn books) was written in 1529 and is entitled 'Ein Kinderlied, zu singen, wider die zween Ertzfeinde Christi und seiner heiligen Kirchen, den Bapst und Türcken, etc.' (A children's song to sing against the two arch enemies of Christ and his holy church, the pope and the Turks, etc.). The text runs thus:

| | |
|--|--|
| ERhalt uns HErr bey deinem Wort Und steur des Bapsts und Türcken Mord, Die Ihesum Christum deinen Son Wolten stürtzen von deinem Thron. | Keep us, o Lord, obedient to your word and keep in check the murderous activities of the Pope and the Turks, who want to topple Jesus Christ, your son, from his throne. (2) |
|--|--|

The second of these hymns was written at the end of 1528 or at the beginning of 1529 and is a prayer for peace. The text runs thus:

| | |
|---|--|
| Verley uns frieden gnediglich Herr Got zu unsern zeiten, Es ist doch pa keyn ander nicht, der für uns künde streitten, Denn du unser Gotd allaine. | Grant peace, o Lord, in our time When fearsome armies threaten. For our defence is only thine, Thou art our only weapon. Be thou our shield and helper. (translation: Klaus Bung) |
|---|--|

It is a rhymed German version of the Antiphona pro pace.

2.6 Parallels and lessons

Use your own television experience of the Gulf War to draw out the many parallels between the Battle of Nicopolis and the tactics, incidents and language used on both sides in the Gulf conflict. You have seen the stakes and barbed wire which was to hold off the allied offensive. You have seen the defeated Iraqi soldiers, sometimes barefooted, trek along the road from Kuwait to Basra, often even ignored by the allies.

If the allied forces had been as ill prepared and undisciplined as the crusaders in the Battle of Nicopolis, perhaps Saddam Hussein could have won. But were they ill prepared, were they undisciplined, were they without a plan?

Who has to learn which lessons? Could the tactics of putting the expendable troops in the front line, which were successful in 1396, guarantee a victory against the infidels (Who calls whom 'infidel'?) in 1991, 595 years later? Was it right to assume that, what worked in 1396, would work in 1990, or that the international morality of pre-1945 had not changed in 1990? And has it changed?

2.7 The Don Quixote of the Eastern world

It was Saddam Hussein's misfortune that he was born 600 years too late. Like a Peter Pan of the Baghdad Arabian Nights he lived in dream land.

Saddam Hussein's story has, in fact, been told in depth by the Spanish novelist Cervantes (1547-1616). Cervantes was born in Alcalá de Henares (on the outskirts of Madrid), a town that was destroyed (1000 AD), rebuilt (1038) and named by the Arabs in Spain. Its name (al kala = Fortress) is as military as that of Nicopolis. It also comes from the same Arabic root as 'Kuwait' (kut = fortress, kuwait = little fortress). Cervantes spent the years from 1573 to 1580 as a slave, having been taken captive and sold by Arab pirates on his way from Sicily to Spain. In 1605 he published his most famous novel, 'Don Quixote'.

Don Quixote was a man addicted to reading knightly adventure stories: today they would be comics.

'... he passed his time in reading books of knight-errantry; which he did with that application and delight, that at last he in a manner wholly left off his country sports, and even the care of his estate; nay, he grew so strangely besotted with those amusements, that he sold many acres of arable land to purchase books of that kind; by which means he collected as many of them as were to be had ...

He gave himself up so wholly to the reading of romances, that a-nights he would pore on until it was day, and a-days he would read on until it was night; and thus, by sleeping little and reading much, the moisture of his brain was exhausted to that degree, that at last he lost the use of his reason. A world of disorderly notions, picked out of his books,

crowded into his imagination; and now his head was full of nothing but enchantments, quarrels, battles, challenges, wounds, complaints, amours, torments, and abundance of stuff and impossibilities; insomuch, that all the fables and fantastical tales which he read seemed to him now as true as the most authentic histories. ...

Having thus lost his understanding, he unluckily stumbled upon the oddest fancy that ever entered into a madman's brain; for now he thought it convenient and necessary, as well for the increase of his own honour, as the service of the public, to turn knight-errant, and roam through the whole world, armed cap-à-pie and mounted on his steed, in quest of adventures; that thus imitating those knights-errant of whom he had read, and following their course of life, redressing all manner of grievances, and exposing himself to danger on all occasions, at last, after a happy conclusion of his enterprises, he might purchase everlasting honour and renown. Transported with these agreeable delusions, the poor gentleman already grasped in imagination the imperial sceptre of Trapizonda; and, hurried away by his mighty expectations, he prepares with all expedition to take the field... ('Don Quixote', Chapter 1)

Don Quixote lived 'not long ago', i.e. in the second half of the 16th century. By that time, gunpowder had been invented, people no longer lived in castles, knights no longer fought with swords and lances and no longer wore armour. Dragons had become extinct and the world was no longer full of damsels in distress waiting to be rescued. But Don Quixote took his comics so seriously that he, like a schizophrenic, believed them to represent reality and acted accordingly. He mistook a windmill for a giant, with whom he had to do battle, and criminals who were being taken to the galleys appeared in his imagination as victims of a cruel tyrant from whose claws he had to rescue them, just as Saddam Hussein felt he had to bring the blessings of Iraqi democracy to the poor oppressed Kuwaitis.

Two hundred years earlier, a man with Don Quixote's idealism would have been a hero or a saint. At the time when he actually lived, the same behaviour was rated as that of a lunatic.

If Don Quixote was born 200 years too late, Saddam Hussein was born 600 years too late. That is the analogy. We might therefore interpret Saddam Hussein as a latter-day Don Quixote.

Saddam Hussein did not understand today's reality. In his (and our) history books countries are continually being conquered, boundaries changed, territories negotiated about and traded for one another. But that was in the past, when empire building was still the duty of Kings. 'A king must conquer', says the Mahabharata. 'Nation states' in the modern sense did not exist and there was nothing sacred about territorial boundaries. It was a matter of what you could get away with. Like Don Quixote, Saddam Hussein was brought up sharp against reality.

2.8 Oh, West is West: President Bush as a negotiator

Saddam Hussein did not seem to understand why President Bush would not negotiate about Kuwait: that today national boundaries are sacred: nor did we, in the West, seem to understand why (as a matter of principle) Saddam Hussein wished to negotiate.

Note added in 2025: Is it not the same today with President Putin trying to incorporate little adjacent Ukraine into Russia! Or with President Trump dreaming of incorporating Canada and Greenland into the USA and turning Gaza into an Arab-free holiday resort for Americans!

Saddam Hussein did not understand that, unlike in past history, in today's world, especially since the demise of the power of the Soviet Union, he would have the whole world against him if he trespassed across a national boundary. Had he been an Ottoman ruler, he would have had a few states against him, but not everybody: he would have had a sporting chance. In 1991, he thought himself a giant when, faced with the whole world, he was in fact a dwarf.

Not only had Saddam Hussein lost touch with reality in historical terms, he also did not know or understand how the other half of the world lived (the more important it is that we understand how the other half lives):

Oh, East is East, and West is West,
and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently
at God's great Judgment Seat.

(Kipling:
The Ballad of East and West)

In England, you cannot even bargain about the price of an apple in a supermarket. You have to pay the price that is printed on the ticket.

Much to the naive amazement of the West, Saddam Hussein wanted to negotiate about a national territory. And much to the consternation of Saddam Hussein, the West would not give an inch. Rightly (from the technical angle of negotiating), Saddam Hussein tried one ploy after another to get negotiations going, like Nixon he persisted to the bitter end, true to character, the character of a man who knows from (limited) experience and his knowledge of history that 'everything is negotiable' and that in negotiations you have to persist. In the history of empires, indeed, countries can change hands like goods in a supermarket and the price is negotiable.

How difficult this is to understand for either side is shown in the following incident which happened a few years ago in an American Supermarket in Texarkana, which straddles the border between Texas and Arkansas.

'Gilbert Summers knows all about the fragility of fixed prices. He runs a store in Texarkana, Texas, and has done so for 20 years. He never had any trouble with his prices until 1979. Up to then housewives and their families loaded up the carts in his store with their weekly shopping, waited quietly while the clerks at the checkouts totalled the price tags, and then paid with cash, cheques or credit cards.

If there were any 'rows' they were over delays while a price was checked because the tag had come off, or if the clerk suspected it had been 'accidentally' changed, or a drunk had wandered in and wouldn't go home, or a couple were fighting over an incident at last night's party.

Most of the time the only noise was that of the cash registers, the piped music wafting overhead, and kids screaming as they larked about. Nobody, but nobody, ever asked to see Gilbert Summers about a price tag.

That was until Hang Ha Dong and family moved into the neighbourhood. They are Vietnamese refugees – the survivors of a particularly harrowing boat voyage from Saigon to Thailand. Hang Ha Dong brought with him his entire family – all twelve of them, including his wife's sister and her aged mother.

He also brought with him the habits of a lifetime – one of which is a total incomprehension of the phenomenon of fixed prices. The first time the Hang family (en masse) visited Gilbert Summer's store was nearly their last.

Dutifully they loaded up their carts with their requirements, as they had seen the soldiers do in the PX on the US Army base where Hang and Mrs Hang had worked as cleaners for several years. They hadn't shopped in the PX themselves – they preferred the local market – but they had been in it a few times, marvelling at its stocks.

When they got to the checkout, Mr Hang picked up a tin and asked how much the clerk wanted for it. The bored clerk checked the price and drawled '\$2.25'. Mr Hang delved into the cart and asked: 'How much for two tins?'. The clerk looked puzzled and said, irritably, '\$4.50'.

It was Mr Hang's turn to look puzzled and he spoke to his wife in Vietnamese. Whatever she replied, Mr Hang told the clerk that he would offer him \$3.98 for the two tins. This was obviously a bit much for Mrs Hang because she let forth a gale of Vietnamese at him – and her mother joined in too. The clerk wondered what was happening.

Mr Hang next lifted out of the cart four string bags of oranges. The clerk said '\$1.30, each'.

'\$1.05', said Mr Hang.

'\$1.30', repeated the clerk, adding 'Can't you read? It says a dollar-thirty on the tag. Where did you get a dollar-five from?'

'\$1.10 and that's my best price', said Mr Hang.

'\$1.30', replied the clerk.

'\$1.12, if you throw in the bag of rice at \$4', said Mr Hang.

'It's a dollar-thirty for the oranges and five-forty for the rice, as it says on the tag.'

'But how much for two bags of rice?', asked Mr Hang.

'Jesus!', exclaimed the clerk, by this time losing his cool. 'Are you nuts or something?'

He decided to explain in simple English (he knew no Vietnamese, having spent his army service in Colorado Springs) how the Texarkana store run by Mr Summers operated, which he assured Mr Hang was no different to every other store in the United States of America.

'**You** have to pay the price on the tag. ****I**** have to check it here. When you've paid, you take the goods home. Until then they stay in the store. Got it?'

Mr Hang and his family began speaking at once. Some to each other in Vietnamese, picking up and turning over items to look at the tags, some to the clerk in English, trying to get the haggle under way again.

The din rose considerably and other shoppers crowded round to watch what was going on (watching people shouting at each other is a common trait in the West).

At this point Gilbert Summers arrived at the checkout. The clerk explained to him that he was dealing with some weird people who didn't appear to understand how the world was organised.

'What do you mean?', asked his boss.

'They want to haggle over every goddamned tin of peas and packet of soup', he told him. 'Christ, Gil, they're offering me deals left, right and centre, for two of this and one of that, or three of this or one of the other. I don't know what's going on. Can't they read the frigging price tags?'

'H-o-l-d-i-t!', bawled Gilbert above the row.

His whole store stopped.

The checkouts, crowded with carts and people, stopped ringing up the dollars, which in Gilbert Summers' world made it an emergency.

He ordered Mr Hang to take his family out of the store and not to come back. He told the clerk to run their carts into the shelf lanes and then get back to his desk 'pronto'.

Mr Hang didn't move. He was clearly completely bewildered by the strange behaviour of the Bossman. He knew about hard bargaining from the market square at Lang Foo, but had never had a merchant snatch away his goods and order him off!

This was clearly a time to try another tack. He put his hand in his coat to take out his wallet.

Gilbert Summers, the clerk and a half-dozen others, hit the floor as if to get through it. When they saw Mr Hang was holding his wallet and not a Magnum revolver they got up sheepishly.

Mr Hang shoved a piece of paper towards Gilbert. It was his honourable discharge as a cleaner from the US Army back in Vietnam. (Hang was using the 'returned soldier' ploy, or rather a 'Vietnamese ex-cleaner' version of it.)

He explained to Gilbert Summers that he had always liked the Americans and had wanted to be in Texas ever since he had seen a John Wayne film where everybody in it spoke Vietnamese. He had heard that Texas was a

land of opportunity where anybody could make their fortune if they worked hard and knew that 'a dollar saved was a dollar earned'.

'Damn right', said Summers, 'as my daddy told me, you'all work hard and live like decent folks and you'all get by'.

'OK', said a beaming Mr Hang, happy to have resolved the misunderstanding with such a fine Texan as Gilbert Summers (though he didn't understand why he spoke no Vietnamese). 'Now about these oranges at \$1.30. I'll give you \$1.15 if you throw in two tins of tomato soup at 35c each ...'.

It took many months for Gilbert Summers to get used to Mr Hang and his family. Likewise for Mr Hang, who found that if he waited until 5 p.m. each day he could get his fruit and vegetables from the Summer's store much cheaper than they were in the morning (giving him a unique insight into the American concept of the 'happy hour').

He also found if he bought soup by the case he got a few cents off the per tin price. Sometimes he sat outside the shop with his family for hours and made trial runs inside to see if the price of tins of soup had fallen in the past hour. Occasionally, the clerks would give in to the Hangs just to get rid of them.

Other times, Mr Hang chose to go in when the shop was busiest and delay the checkout while he haggled over the price of three loaves of bread, or fruit cake (for which Texarkana is famous), or the weekend's groceries.

Gilbert Summers and Hang Ha Dong have got on fine since 1979. Their families are soon to be related for the eldest Summers' boy began courting young Miss Hang at the 1981 Thanksgiving.

She told him that marriage was the price tag (and definitely COD only!), but happily for the young lovers his future father-in-law had already taught the good people of Texarkana about taking on a fixed price!' (3)

2.9 ... or even as this publican (4)

A great euphoria has swept through some countries on the allied side during the Gulf War. Like so many, you may enjoy the feeling of being on the stronger side, which is always a good feeling, especially when you can share it with virtually everybody around you.

Being strong enables you to use your fists, and that can also cause great elation - as many football hooligans know only too well.

You can only show your strength if the other guy is weak. Fortunately for the Allies in this war, Saddam Hussein turned out to be weaker than he seemed, and he no longer had his former ally, the Soviet Union, to support him and prevent any war from even starting.

Unfortunately for the strong they often have to inhibit the use of their fists because they lack a good moral cause. Well, it does not usually stop them from using their fists, but a bad conscience spoils the fun. And that is what matters: do you feel good about what you are doing.

From the dawn of history it seems that the bad are strong and the good are weak, and the peaceful are swallowed up by the strong, as was intended with Kuwait, and as actually happened when China annexed Tibet in 1950, and nobody came to Tibet's aid.

What was unique in the Gulf War is that the other guy was not only weak but that he was also bad. If you rejoiced in the strength of the allied forces, then you owe a debt of gratitude to Saddam Hussein and his badness. Without his badness, no fun for you.

'There was in President Bush's pronouncements something of an understated swagger, a bit of Clint Eastwood's deadly squint ... Bush seemed to relish playing Dirty Harry. And how much more satisfying it was to turn his scowl against a truly evil man in the name of principle, not petroleum.' (Miller and Mylroie, p 228)

2.10 Saddam: the new Adam

This notion is not as absurd as it may seem at first sight. In Christian theology, the first sin is that committed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, traditionally sited in or near today's Iraq. It was so serious that Adam and Eve themselves could not sufficiently atone for it, but that all their descendants had to suffer in consequence, and all evil and suffering in the world, including the present Gulf War, are due to it. It was atoned for by the death of Jesus Christ, even though its consequences still endure.

In the Exsultet, one of the ancient prayers sung in Roman Catholic churches during the Easter Night Vigil, Adam and Eve's heinous crime is therefore praised:

| | |
|--|--|
| Haec nox est, in qua, destructis vinculis mortis, Christus ab inferis victor ascendit. | This is the night in which Christ destroyed the bonds of death and victoriously rose from the grave... |
| O certe necessarium Adae peccatum, quod Christi morte deletum est! | O truly necessary was Adam's sin which has been wiped away by Christ's death. |
| O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem! | O fortunate sin, which deserved to have such a great and worthy Redeemer! |

2.11 The story of Melos and the old world order

Great events cast their shadows far ahead. What happened in Kuwait and what happened to the Iraqi army is epitomised by an event that befell the mother of western democracy, Athens, almost 2,500 years ago.

There was a war between the city states of Athens and of Sparta (on the Peloponnese). This is known as the Peloponnesian War. It was described in detail by the famous Greek historian Thucydides, a contemporary, from whose description I shall quote at length, if only to prove that I am not inventing the close parallels to the Kuwait war of 1990/91.

The Peloponnesian War lasted from 431 to 404 B.C. Athens and Sparta were part of 'the Greek world', as Kuwait and Iraq are now part of 'the Arab world' or 'the Islamic world'. Most communities (e.g. islands, cities, colonies) of the Greek world fought on one side or the other. But, like Jordan today, there was a little island state that wanted to remain neutral. This was the island of Melos, nominally a colony of Sparta. The Athenians were offended by the independent stance of Melos and felt that it would reflect badly on their reputation as a powerful nation if they allowed Melos to go its own way. They wanted to incorporate Melos into their own empire.

In 427 B.C., they therefore sent a fleet of sixty ships and 2,000 infantry men (hoplites): 'They wished to subdue Melos, which, although it was an island, had refused to submit to Athens or even to join the Athenian alliance. However, though they laid the country waste, the Melians still refused to come to terms.' (Thucydides 3, 91). Having tried in vain to intimidate the Melians and having taught them a lesson, the fleet sailed away and devoted itself to other military actions.

However, the Athenians, who had 'sea supremacy' (the equivalent of today's 'air supremacy'), were sorely grieved at having been given the brush-off by the paltry little island and were determined to have their way. The people of Melos, similarly, no longer felt much friendship for the Athenians.

Eleven years later, in 416 B.C., the Athenians returned with a fleet and army that was still huge by the standards of the time and especially when poised against tiny Melos: 36 ships, and about 3000 soldiers (Thucydides 5, 84 ff). Two Athenian generals met the Melian cabinet with last minute proposals designed, as the Athenians said, 'to save your city from destruction'. They did not attempt to use any grievances as a pretext for military action nor did they want to hear any moral reasoning from the Melians, such as that the Melians were neutral in the war and that they had never harmed the Athenians. Instead, the Athenians said,

'you should try what it is possible for you to get, taking into consideration what we both really do think; since you know as well as we do that, when these matters are discussed by practical people, the standard of justice depends on the equality of power to compel and that in fact the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept.'

In other words, the Athenians enunciated the following principle as a law of nature:

Actions are governed by the principles of justice only if the parties concerned are equally strong. If the parties are not equally strong, the stronger party prevails.

In view of the large fleet anchored off-shore, the Melians no longer argued about justice of the Athenians but used a utilitarian argument:

'It is useful that you should not destroy a principle that is to the general good of all men - namely, that in the case of all who fall into danger there should be such a thing as fair play and just dealing... And this is a principle that affects you as much as anybody, since your own fall would be visited by the most terrible vengeance and would be an example to the world'

(prophetic words which remind us not only of what befell the Athenians on their next enterprise but also of what happened to the Iraqi army).

The Athenians told the Melians not to worry about the hypothetical fate of the Athenian empire.

'What we shall do now is to show you that it is for the good of our own empire that we are here and that it is for the preservation of your city that we shall say what we are going to say. We do not want any trouble in bringing you into our empire, and we want you to be spared for the good both of yourselves and of ourselves. ... You, by giving in, would save yourselves from disaster; we, by not destroying you, would be able to profit from you.'

'We rule the sea and you are islanders, and weaker islanders too than the others; it is therefore particularly important that you should not escape'.

The Melians brought the possible reactions of other states into the discussion, the neutrals and stronger protecting powers (such as the USA and the USSR in our time).

Melians: 'You will make enemies of all states who are at present neutral, when they see what is happening here and naturally conclude that in course of time you will attack them too.'

The Athenians were not concerned.

Athenians: 'This is no fair fight, with honour on one side and shame on the other. It is rather a question of saving your lives and not resisting those who are far too strong for you.'

Melians: 'Yet we know that in war fortune sometimes makes the odds more even than could be expected from the difference in numbers of the two sides. And if we surrender, then all our hope is lost at once, whereas, so long as we remain in action, there is still a hope that we may yet stand upright... It is difficult, and you may be sure that we know it, for us to oppose your power and fortune, unless the terms be equal. Nevertheless we trust that the gods will give us fortune as good as yours, because we are standing for what is right against what is wrong; and as for what we lack in power, we trust that it will be made up for by our alliance with the Spartans, who are bound, if for no other

reason, then for honour's sake, and because we are their kinsmen, to come to our help.'

The Athenians expect as much favour from the gods as the Melians because their conduct is governed by a law of nature and therefore right:

'It is a general and necessary law of nature to rule whatever one can. This is not a law that we made ourselves, nor were we the first to act upon it when it was made. We found it already in existence, and we shall leave it to exist for ever among those who come after us. We are merely acting in accordance with it, and we know that you or anybody else with the same power as ours would be acting in precisely the same way.'

The Athenians proceeded to demolish the hope the Melians put into their 'mother country', Sparta. [This would be the USSR for Iraq, and the USA or Great Britain for Kuwait.] The Spartans will not help you, said the Athenians, because of their honour or because you are their kinsmen. Like all other people the Spartans believe 'that what they like doing is honourable and what suits their interests is just... If one follows one's self-interest one wants to be safe, whereas the path of justice and honour involves one in danger.' The Spartans will not help you because it means risk and danger and they have nothing to gain by it. You have nothing to offer them, even as an ally, because you are weak and are asking for help. Think it over while we adjourn the meeting, and remember 'that you are discussing the fate of your country, that you have only one country, and that its future for good or ill depends on this one single decision.'

When the meeting resumed the Melians announced their decision:

'Our decision, Athenians, is just the same as it was at first. We are not prepared to give up in a short moment the liberty which our city has enjoyed from its foundation for 700 years. We put our trust in the fortune that the gods will send and which has saved us up to now, and in the help of men - that is, of the Spartans; and so we shall try to save ourselves. But we invite you to allow us to be friends of yours and enemies to neither side, to make a treaty which shall be agreeable to both you and us, and so to leave our country.'

The Athenians broke off the discussion and immediately began to blockade the island. The Spartans did not come to assist the Melians. The blockade lasted for about six months. During this time, the Melians made a couple of successful attacks on the besieging forces. The Athenians therefore brought reinforcements.

'The Melians surrendered unconditionally to the Athenians, who put to death all the men of military age whom they took, and sold the women and children as slaves. Melos itself they took over for themselves, sending out later a colony of 500 men.' (Thucydides, 5, 116).

Correspondingly, for some considerable time prior to the invasion, Iraq had been trying to extort money from Kuwait and other Gulf states. (See Miller and Mylroie for details.) The considerations which Thucydides compressed so admirably in the Melian Dialogue were also raised during that period.

'On Saturday, July 28 [1990], an American oil expert and former government official discussed the crisis in the Gulf with a senior Iraqi official whom he knew well. What did Iraq have up its sleeve? he asked his Iraqi contact. "You'll see by next week", came the reply. The expert pressed further. Was Iraq contemplating military action? "By next week," the Iraqi said, "we will be protecting the people of Kuwait." But what about the Americans? [cf the Spartans in the Melian Dialogue.] The Iraqi paused. "The Americans are a paper tiger," he said. "They won't do anything."

The expert called the State Department to report on his conversation. He was told not to be concerned; the government was aware of Iraq's actions, but was persuaded that Saddam was only blustering. He would not invade.' (Miller and Mylroie, p 19)

On 31 July 1990, two days before the invasion, the Melian Dialogue was re-enacted in Jeddah. Kuwait and Iraq met under Saudi auspices 'to mediate their differences.'

'What happened at this crucial meeting remains in dispute. Mohammed al-Mashat, the Iraqi ambassador to the United States, said in effect that the Kuwaitis had come to the meeting in bad faith, that they had been unwilling to listen or to negotiate seriously [like the Melians]. "They were arrogant," said Mashat. "The Kuwaitis were conducting themselves like small-time grocery-store owners. The gap was irreconcilable, so the meeting collapsed."

The Kuwaiti version of events, not surprisingly, differs. According to Kuwaiti officials, the head of Iraq's delegation opened the meeting with a list of demands. He wanted Kuwait to cede some disputed territory and oil-pumping rights, and to give Baghdad 10 billion. The Kuwaitis replied that these were not negotiations, but orders. Iraq told Kuwait to consider the demands overnight [like the Athenians told the Melians]. Having slept on it, Crown Prince Saad met one-on-one with his Iraqi counterpart. But during the meeting, the Iraqi developed a severe headache and retired in a huff to his room. Saad pleaded with him not to leave, to no avail. Then Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah tried to sway the Iraqi, who refused. "Nothing of substance was ever discussed in Jeddah," a Kuwaiti official said.

Kuwait, he continued, had been prepared to make concessions, if necessary. Specifically, the Kuwaitis were prepared to write off Iraq's debt and to lease one of the Kuwaiti islands in the gulf to Iraq, but the delegation needed further instructions. Both sides agreed to talk further in Baghdad in a few days.

At 2:00 A.M. the next morning, Iraqi forces swept across the border and in the space of six hours had seized and annexed Kuwait.' (Miller and Mylroie, p 19f)

As the Athenians changed the population of Melos by killing and deporting the natives and replacing them by their own people, so Iraq, after invading Kuwait, killed and deported many Kuwaitis, imported Iraqis and destroyed the public records in order to make it impossible to distinguish between native Kuwaitis and immigrants.

The meeting in Jeddah was only the last step in a long-running dispute and, as the following observations show, American

observers seem to be judging it by the standards of Athenian ideology:

'Kuwait had repeatedly raised the debt issue as a bargaining chip whenever Iraq reiterated demands for territory or more money after the [Iran-Iraq] war's end. The Kuwaitis were accustomed to pressure from Iraq; after all, the dispute over the Iraq-Kuwait border had continued, on and off, for more than fifty years. What about your debt to us, the Kuwaitis would politely, but firmly, reply. And what about recognizing Kuwait's borders in exchange for forgiving the debt, Kuwaitis would press. What was perceived as insulting Kuwaiti intransigence infuriated Saddam. With hindsight, some diplomats said, Kuwait might have prevented, or at least deferred, Iraqi aggression if it had heeded its powerful neighbor. "When the lion is hungry," a U.S. official said, "you don't tell it that there isn't going to be any dinner." (Miller and Mylroie, p 10)

You may disagree with that maxime of appeasement. If you are on a sledge fleeing from a pack of wolves, you must not throw meat at them to make them desist. If you do, you will merely attract more wolves. The same goes for sharks or for blackmailers.

2.12 Nemesis

The story of Athens or that of Iraq has not ended yet.

Encouraged by their success in Melos, the Athenians began to look for some bigger fry. So they turned their attention to the island of Sicily in general and the city of Syracuse in particular. Under the pretext of helping two Sicilian cities, Segesta and Leontini, they sent a fleet to Sicily.

'It was an island of this size that the Athenians were now so eager to attack. In fact they aimed at conquering the whole of it, though they wanted at the same time to make it look as though they were sending help to their own kinsmen and to their newly acquired allies there' (Thucydides 6, 6).

[Similarly, the demands the Iraqis put to the Kuwaitis at the last meeting in Jeddah were only a pretext.]

The Syracusans were no saints themselves: 'It seemed clear that Syracuse wanted to get rid of the Athenians only for the purpose of tyrannising over her neighbours' (Bury, p 466). It seems to have been a case of the type that Luther warned against (in 1528) when he advised that before fighting the Turks (as 'infidels') we should become better Christians ourselves:

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| <p>So gefiel mir das auch nicht, das man so treib, hetzt und reizt die Christen und die Fürsten, den Türcken anzugreifen und zu überzihen, ehe denn wir selbs uns besserten und als die rechten Christen lebeten, Welche alle beide stück und ein iglichs ynn sonderheit gnugsam ursach ist, allen krieg zu widderraten. Denn da wil ich keinem beiden noch Türcken raten, schweige denn eym Christen, das sie angreifen odder krieg anfahen (welchs ist nichts anders denn zu blut vergissen und zu verderben raten)... So gellinget es auch nymer nicht wol, wenn ein bube den andern straffen und nicht zuvor selbs frum werden wil.</p> | <p>Therefore I also did not like that they are driving, inciting and encouraging the Christians and the princes to attack the Turks and war against them before we ourselves become better people and live like true Christians. These two points together and each in its own right are enough reason to advise against any war. For I will not advise any pagan or Turk, to say nothing of Christians, that they should attack or start a war (which is like advising people to shed blood and to destroy) ... Therefore there is never any blessing if one knave wants to punish another and not first better his own way of life. (5)</p> |
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This was a time when the Turks posed an acute threat to Austria and Germany, one year before they managed to lay siege to Vienna.

The admiral in charge of the Athenian fleet, Nicias, had been against the expedition.

'The people, however, elated by their recent triumph over Melos, were fascinated by the idea of making new conquests in a distant, unfamiliar world; the ordinary Athenian had very vague ideas of what Sicily meant; and carried away by dreams of a western empire, he paid no more attention to the discreet counsels of Nicias than to vote a hundred triremes [warships] instead of the sixty that were asked for' (Bury, p 466).

Even democracies can rejoice in war and indulge in imperialism! If Nicias had been a dictator, the Sicilian expedition would not have taken place.

The expedition set sail in 415 B.C. While the expedition was on its way and the people of Athens were in their euphoric and adventurous mood, Aristophanes wrote and performed his famous comedy 'The Birds' (414 B.C.), in which he invented the term and concept of 'Cloud-Cuckoo-Land', in which not only Saddam Hussein and Don Quixote but also some enthusiastic western observers of the 1990 gulf war might well have felt at home.

In 414 B.C. the Athenians began to besiege Syracuse but were not as skillful or successful as they might have been. The siege or blockade was never complete. The Syracusans received reinforcements, supplies and military experts. The Athenians were forced to send a second expedition to rescue the first.

The Syracusans managed to lay siege to the besieging Athenian land forces and to barricade the mouth of their Great Harbour, thus preventing the Athenian fleet from leaving. Unlike the differently designed Syracusan ships, the Athenian ships were designed for the open sea and could not be manoeuvred well in the narrow confines of the harbour. The Athenians tried to break

through the barricade. The Syracusan ships came out from all sides and a long battle developed in the middle of the harbour, where the Athenians were at a disadvantage. At last the Athenians were forced back to the shore.

'As for the army on land, the period of uncertainty was over, now one impulse overpowered them all as they cried aloud and groaned in pain for what had happened, some going down to give help to the ships, some to guard what was left of their wall, while others (and these were now in the majority) began to think of themselves and how they could get away safe.'

[Cf the demoralised state of the Iraqi front line soldiers when the ground 'battle' began.]

'Indeed, the panic of this moment was something greater than anything they had ever known' (Thucydides 7, 71).

The Athenians now had only one hope - to escape by land to the territories of their allies in Sicily. The Syracusans [like the allies in the Kuwait war, with an eye in the Iraqi Republican Guards] were determined not to let them escape, at least not altogether, and for the same reasons. They

'thought it would be a dangerous thing for Syracuse if so large an army were to get away by land and settle in some part of Sicily from which it could wage war against them again.'

They therefore found a way of delaying the start of the Athenian retreat, anticipated the route the Athenians were trying to take [the Kuwait-Basra highway in the recent re-enactment], set up road-blocks in strategic places and attacked and harassed the retreating Athenian army from all sides for much of their march, which took about a week.'

The 40,000 fleeing Athenians must have been in a most desperate condition. They had to leave their wounded and dead behind. They were carrying their own water and provisions, knowing that they would not get further supplies until they reached allied territory. Even so there was no longer enough food in their camp. 'There were sad sights for every eye, sad thoughts for every mind to feel... And then there was the degradation of it all and the fact that all without exception were afflicted, so that, although there may be some lightening of a burden when it is shared with many others, this still did not make the burden seem any easier to bear at the time, especially when they remembered the splendour and the pride of their setting out and saw how mean and abject was the conclusion. No Hellenic army had ever suffered such a reverse. **They had come to enslave others, and now they were going away frightened of being enslaved themselves.**' (Thucydides 7, 75).

As the retreating army started their march to safety, their leader, Nicias, encouraged his soldiers:

'Other men before us have attacked their neighbours, and, after doing what men will do, have suffered no more than what men can bear. So it is now reasonable for us to hope that the gods will be kinder to us,

since by now we deserve their pity rather than their jealousy'
(Thucydides 7, 77).

After several days marching,

'the Athenians went forward, and the cavalry and javelin-throwers of the Syracusans and their allies came up in great numbers from both sides, hampering their march with volleys of javelins and with cavalry charges on their flanks... they forced their way up to the hill which had been fortified. Here they found in front of them the enemy's infantry ready to defend the fortification and drawn up many shields deep, since the place was a narrow one. The Athenians charged and assaulted the wall: missiles rained down on them from the hill, which rose steeply, so that it was all the easier for those on it to be sure of hitting their target.' (Thucydides 7, 79)

[Cf the bombardment of the retreating Iraqis.]

The Syracusans then managed to separate the retreating army. The rear part, under Demosthenes, surrendered. Nicias, for his part of the army, was then asked to do the same. He said

'he was prepared to make an agreement with them in the name of the Athenians that, in return for letting his army go, they would pay back to Syracuse all the money that she had spent on the war [reparations]; until the money should be paid he would give them Athenian citizens as hostages, one man for each talent' (Thucydides 7, 83).

[Like Saddam Hussein, Nicias still tried to negotiate terms even though he was utterly defeated and the allies were determined not to give an inch but to trample him into the ground.] The Syracusans immediately rejected these proposals [as did President Bush when Saddam Hussein tried to negotiate in the week of his defeat].

So the retreat and the attacks on the retreating army continued, and what follows is the prototype for the carnage on the road from Kuwait to Basra.

'When day came Nicias led his army on, and the Syracusans and their allies pressed them hard in the same way as before, showering missiles and hurling javelins in upon them from every side. The Athenians hurried on towards the **River Assinarus**,

- partly because they were under pressure from the attacks made upon them from every side by the numbers of cavalry and the masses of other troops, and thought that things would not be so bad if they got to the river,

- partly because they were exhausted and were longing for water to drink.

Once they reached the river, they rushed down into it, and now all discipline was at an end. Every man wanted to be the first to get across, and, as the enemy persisted in his attacks, the crossing now became a difficult matter. Forced to crowd in close together, they fell upon each other and trampled each other underfoot; some were killed immediately by their own spears, others got entangled among themselves and among the baggage and were swept away by the river. Syracusan troops were stationed on the opposite bank, which was a steep one. They hurled down their weapons from above on the Athenians, most of whom, in a disordered mass, were greedily drinking in the deep river-bed. And the Peloponnesians came down and slaughtered them, especially those who

were in the river. The water immediately became foul, but nevertheless they went on drinking it, all muddy as it was and stained with blood; indeed, most of them were fighting among themselves to have it.

Finally, when the many dead were by now heaped upon each other in the bed of the stream, when part of the army had been destroyed there in the river, and the few who managed to get away had been cut down by the cavalry, Nicias surrendered himself... to do what they liked with him personally, but to stop the slaughter of his soldiers... The number of prisoners taken over in a body by the state was not very large; great numbers, however, had been appropriated by their captors; in fact the whole of Sicily was full of them [like the Iraqi desert full of frightened Iraqi soldiers wandering aimlessly about], there having been no fixed agreement for the surrender...' (Thucydides 7, 84-85).

The Athenian generals Nicias and Demosthenes were put to death by the Syracusans.

Two Syracusan generals 'would have wished to save them, but they were powerless in the face of the intense feeling of fury against Athens which animated Syracuse in the hour of her triumph. If a man's punishment should be proportionate not to his intentions but to the positive sum of mischief which his conduct has caused, no measure of punishment would have been too great for the deserts of Nicias. His incompetence, his incredible bungling, ruined the expedition and led to the downfall of Athens [today Iraq]. But the blunders of Nicias were merely the revelation of his own nature, and for his own nature he could hardly be held accountable. The whole blame rests with the Athenian people, who insisted on his playing a part for which he was utterly unsuited... In estimating the character of the Athenian people, we must not forget their choice of this hero of conscientious indecision' (Bury, p 483).

The famous theologian Paul Tillich has some useful thoughts for the hour of our triumph:

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| <p>'Wer nicht die Zweideutigkeit in sich selbst und seinem Werk - auch dem vollkommensten - erkennt, ist nicht menschlich reif, und eine Nation, die nicht die Zweideutigkeit ihrer Größe gewahr wird, zeigt einen Mangel an Reife... Die Kräfte, die für sich unzweideutige Vollkommenheit beanspruchen, zerstören das Beste im amerikanischen Geist, das, was einst eine Verfassung schuf, die auf der Erkenntnis der Zweideutigkeit in aller Trägern der Macht beruht.'</p> <p>(Paul Tillich, Ges. Werke, Vol 13, Stuttgart 1972, p 429-430)</p> | <p>If a person does not recognise the ambiguity in himself and his work, however perfect it may be, he is not a mature human being, and a nation which does not become aware of the ambiguity of its greatness displays a lack of maturity... The forces which claim to be unambiguously perfect destroy the best in the American spirit, that which once created a constitution which is based on the knowledge that there is ambiguity in all who have power.</p> |
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2.13 A new world order?

The old world order is encapsulated in the Melos Doctrine.

The Melos Doctrine

It is a general and necessary law of nature
to rule whatever one can.

We found it already in existence,
and we shall leave it to exist for ever
among those who come after us.

It has been asserted, explicitly or implicitly,

- that Saddam Hussein erred because he played his game by the rules of the old world order (the Melos Doctrine)
- that he relied on strength rather than justice, and
- that he was defeated because, by the rules of the new world order, it is not strength but justice that wins and it was accordingly the Americans and their allies who had to win.

Did Saddam Hussein (Mr Badman) act in accordance with the Melos doctrine, and the USA (Mr Goodman) did not?

Were the Athenians wrong in asserting that the Melos Doctrine would be valid 'for ever'? If so, when did it cease to be valid or was it at least suspended in the one instance of the Kuwait war. When was the new principle (justice triumphs over strength) put into practice for the first time? During the Kuwait war?

When the Soviets invaded Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), Afghanistan (1979), and when the Chinese annexed Tibet (1950), nobody heeded the cries for help. Nobody saved the Palestinians when they were driven out of their towns and villages. Ben-Gurion reiterated the spirit of the Melos doctrine in 1937 when he wrote to his son that, when the Jewish state was created 'we will expel the Arabs and take their places' (Palumbo, p 32) or when he said, on 19 December 1947: 'In each attack, a decisive blow should be struck, resulting in the destruction of homes and the expulsion of the population' (Palumbo, p 40).

On 9 April 1948, a massacre took place at the Arab Village of Deir Yassin, west of Jerusalem. The British sent an investigator, who reported:

"Many infants were also butchered and killed. I also saw one old woman who gave her age as 104 who had been severely beaten about the head with rifle butts. Women had bracelets torn from their arms and rings from their fingers and parts of some women's ears were severed in order to remove earrings." ...

After the massacre, Menachem Begin sent an order of the day to the attackers of Deir Yassin. "Accept congratulations on this

splendid act of conquest... Tell the soldiers you have made history in Israel." ' (Palumbo, p 55)

These were local examples for Saddam Hussein.

The fact that it is widely accepted that the allied cause is just and that the allies won does not prove that the Melos Doctrine is dead.

The Melos Doctrine says that the stronger party wins, **regardless of right or wrong**, which was the case in Kuwait:

1. Saddam Hussein annexed Kuwait because he was stronger than Kuwait.
2. America and its allies drove Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait because they were stronger than Iraq.

If Saddam Hussein had had the backing of the Soviet Union and if the Soviet Union had been strong enough, the Americans would not have attacked and defeated Saddam Hussein.

The Melos Doctrine therefore still operates: the only novelty is that in the past it was less predictable which alliances would form and therefore which party would be stronger or weaker, and which party would therefore prevail. With the demise of the Soviet Union there are no longer two strongest players in the world but only one, and the outcome of any action is therefore more (but not entirely) predictable.

The acid test for the death of the Melos Doctrine is not whether there is an instance when justice has won, internationally, over injustice but: **when did a weaker party win over the stronger party because it had a just cause**. When a seemingly weaker party can go to law (e.g. intra-national = domestic law) and win against a stronger party, the 'weaker' party is in fact stronger because it has the law, the police and ultimately the majority of the citizens on its side, i.e. here too the Melos Doctrine applies.

In case of the Kuwait War, we merely have to ask:

1. Why did the allies intervene, because they were good or because they were strong?
2. Why did the allies win, because they were good or because they were strong?

That answer, at least, is obvious.

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Footnotes

1. 'The Fertile Crescent': traditional name for the territories of Palestine, Syria and Iraq
2. Text and historical notes can be found in Luther, WA 35, p 467 f and 235 ff.
3. from: Gavin Kennedy: 'Everything is negotiable!' Business Books, London 1982, p 136-142
4. Luke 18:11
5. Luther: 'Vom Kriege wider die Türken' (About the war against the Turks), 1528, WA 30.2, p 111

**Klaus Bung:
Wishful Thinking:
History Lessons from Kuwait
(An Essay with a Catechism)**

**^Part 2: Catechism:
Kuwait History Quiz**
355 Questions and Answers

A potted history of Kuwait
in question and answer form,

Or: A simpleton's guide, or catechism,
to the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait

1. Introduction to Kuwait History Quiz

1.1 Why rehearse a Kuwait quiz?

If you want to argue, you have, at least, to know some facts.

Many people do not know much even about their own history. In a survey conducted in Great Britain, adults and children were asked 12 simple questions about British history (Sunday Express, London, 17 March 91, p 12f). If the test was easy, the results were appalling. 25% of the test persons could not name Winston Churchill as the Prime Minister who lead England during the War against Nazi Germany. One woman did not know his name but gave a fair description instead: 'A great big bloke'. Unfortunately the description also applied to the present German Chancellor Kohl and to General Norman Schwarzkopf. Which Roman General invaded Britain with the lines 'I came, I saw, I conquered'? One person thought it was Hitler. Others suggested Brutus and Napoleon. Only 50% had the correct answer: Julius Caesar.

If we know so little about the history of our own country, how much less do we know about the Arabs, the Muslims, their relations with the West and with each other! We have just fought a risky war that seems only to concern other nations. How can we argue about that with each other, or with people who live nearer to the area (e.g. Arabs, Turks) if we know nothing about them?

It is useful to know something about how the other half lives. It is useful to know something about history on the one hand and present-day reality on the other. It is useful to know something about a tiny little state, the Switzerland of the Middle East, which is considered important enough to go to war about - when there was no war about the Chinese annexation of Tibet (1950), and no war about the Soviet invasions of Hungary (1956), of Czechoslovakia (1968) and of Afghanistan (1979).

In this booklet I have brought together from easily accessible sources, some basic facts about Kuwait and its history. They have largely been culled from the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which everybody can read, free of charge, in a public library. Perhaps that is what you should do. However, they come from different articles, and it will take you some time to get together what belongs together in the context of the present crisis.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica facts have then been supplemented by information from other sources, partly to make them more complete or up-to-date, partly in order to help you to link them to facts which some of you might know (e.g. the points about Mozart and Luther, English and Greek literature etc). These references and quotations are meant to aid your memory and imagination, to give you some historical perspective and to appeal to your emotions in a less simplistic or chauvinist way than media or politicians have done during the conflict.

Moreover, simply reading the facts in the compressed form in which they are offered in an Encyclopaedia does not enable you to remember them or to use them in a conversation. You will not necessarily become more knowledgeable and more articulate. The questions and answer form enables you to rehearse the facts you consider important. I have deliberately included questions which may be considered trivial (statistics, dates etc). If you do not like them, omit them. It is easier for you to cross out an item you do not want than to insert one that is missing.

It is up to you to draw your own inferences from the facts and look behind some of the unanswered questions, which are designed to make you think or read and ask questions.

If you have an opinion and somebody challenges you with facts, or alleged facts, you cannot know whether he is knowledgeable or ignorant if you do not have the facts at your fingertips.

You cannot argue convincingly if all you can say is 'Wasn't there some sheikh some time ago who did such and such, ..., no not that one, the other, his nephew, no I mean his uncle, well you know what I mean, the great big bloke with the moustache'. Much popular discussion about the Gulf War has been at this level. As so often in history, the person with the louder voice or the more aggressive manner, i.e. the 'stronger' person or the bully, wins, even if he does not have a clue.

Since this war was partly about bullying, the discussion about it should not be dominated by bullies. You therefore should prepare yourself. This book does not pretend to go to any depth but it gives you the most primitive tools of discussion, bare facts and a few excursions to give you some perspective.

Perhaps it raises more questions than it answers. That would be very desirable, not least to help you check your own euphoria. Libraries and book shops can help you find the answers to the unanswered questions. You may, for example, find it useful to look at a map of all the major states in the Middle East, especially those which were threatened or attacked during this Gulf War. For each, look at its boundaries in 1918. Then check if these boundaries have changed since then. If they have changed (and that means especially 'expanded'), find out if any territories gained during that time were empty or if there were residents (as there were in Kuwait). How long had these residents been living in their villages and towns? Were they consulted when a new power took control? How many of them are still in their former towns? How many left? Why exactly did they leave? Where are they now?

Through incessant television and radio reporting, we had a vivid picture of this war. It would be useful also to have a vivid picture of the past. This little booklet cannot even begin to answer any of these questions. But you will be a wiser and more compassionate person if you at least start asking these questions.

1.2 How can you use this book?

Some questions have been formulated to mislead you (until you see the answer). We may ask for dates of something that never happened. This has been done to increase the challenge to you and to make sure we do not give away the answer by the fact that we are asking a question about it.

1. Read the questions and answers once, to get some general information. Then test yourself and see how much you can remember after one reading.
2. Try to learn those facts or quotations which you think are worth knowing. Leave out those which you find useless. Different people have different needs and interests.
3. Take a piece of cardboard and slide it down each page of the book. Cover the answer to the first question. Try to answer the question without cheating. If you do not know the answer, guess first. Test your present degree of knowledge. In case of the figures (population, production, heights, areas, etc) guess and see if you get at least the right order of magnitude. If you don't, be pleased since it proves that this book can teach you something.

Go through the book repeatedly, testing yourself on one question after another. Notice how more and more questions and their answers become familiar to you.

In case of the names, write down your attempted answers and correct every letter you get wrong. This is like learning foreign language vocabulary.

You may consider the quantities, the names and the dates trivial. In a way they are. But so is every brick of a beautiful cathedral. No bricks, no cathedral.

Each pigment used in a painting is trivial. Well put together they make a field of sunflowers. In this Kuwait quiz, you buy the pigments, but you are the Van Gogh.

Remember, you sound much more convincing, to yourself and to others, if you can quote dates. And without dates, you cannot determine what came before and what came after – and what was simultaneous. It is the detail which makes a story credible and interesting. Abstractions are not enough.

Without facts no informed discussion is possible. And facts, in themselves, are necessary.

4. If you still go to school, you can use the questions and answers like a game, such as Trivial Pursuit.

Well, this is a non-trivial pursuit. Quiz each other on the facts, incessantly. That is a pleasant way of learning them. Get yourself a video tape of Barbra Streisand's film 'Yentle'. It shows the Polish theology students quizzing each other incessantly and thus acquiring knowledge and fortifying it against attack, confusion and forgetting.


Having tried the method with the subject of Kuwait, you may wish to **apply it to other historical subjects.**

5. If you are a businessman or contractor or worker about to go to Kuwait to help with the reconstruction, turn the questions into a family game. Fire questions at each other during meals and see who scores most points.


In a country and in a region whose history and achievements are so little known and so underrated in the West, and where Westerners are known for their ignorance, every scrap of knowledge, information and understanding that you display will be greatly appreciated and can help to win you personal friends.

If you want to do even better, learn 10, 20, 50 or 100 greetings, words and phrases in Arabic. You can learn these also in the company, and with the help of, your family. The effort that you put into learning these phrases will be seen as a sign of respect for the people among whom you work. They will make your stay in Kuwait pleasant through their friendliness. The rewards will be incomparably greater than the small effort required.

2. Why Kuwait?

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| Exercise 1 | |
| Q1: | <p>Why is and was a tiny country like Kuwait so important?</p> <p>Give three reasons, in historical sequence.</p> |
| A1: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Before the arrival of air transport: Because of its strategic location, at the furthest end of an long waterway, providing access to the sea and linking long-distance routes. At the beginning of this century: Because it played a critical role in the creation of a huge and important country, Saudi Arabia. Today: Because of its oil. <p>(Accordingly, this Quiz will contain special sections concerned with (1) the Berlin-Baghdad-Kuwait railway project, (2) the emergence of Saudi Arabia, (3) the discovery of oil in Kuwait.)</p> |
| |  <p>Tiny Kuwait on World map: Source https://d2z7bzwflv7old.cloudfront.net/cdn_image/exW_1200/images/maps/en/ku/ku-area.gif</p> |


3. Geography and climate

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| Exercise 1 | |
| Q2: | What is the Arabic name of the State of Kuwait? |
| A2: | Dawlat al-Kuwayt. |
| Q3: | Explain the meaning of the word 'Kuwait'. |
| A3: | Arabic 'kut' means 'fort'. 'Kuwait' is the diminutive of 'kut' (as 'kitchenette' is the diminutive of 'kitchen') and means 'little fort'. |
| Q4: | Kuwait joins the sea. Name its location (two names). |
| A4: | It lies at the Persian Gulf (= Arabian Gulf). |
| Q5: | Why are there two names for this Gulf? |
| A5: | Because on one side is Persia (Iran) and on the other Arabia (Saudi Arabia). |
| Q6: | Be more precise about the location. (Wanted: two additional pieces of information) |
| A6: | It lies at the (1) upper (2) northwestern corner of the Persian (Arabian) Gulf. |
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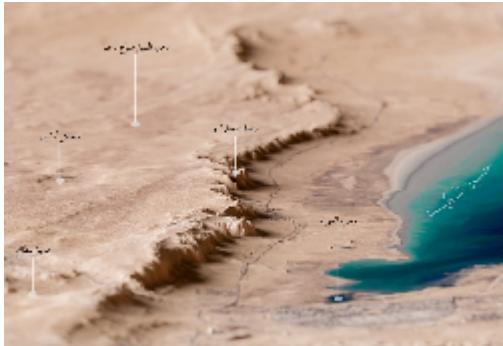
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| Exercise 1 | |
| Q7: | The area of Kuwait (in square miles) is: |
| A7: | 6,880 square miles. |
| Q8: | The area of Kuwait (in square km) is: |
| A8: | 17,818 square km. |
| Q9: | Name the capital of the State of Kuwait. |
| A9: | Kuwait City. |
| Q10: | What is the approximate distance (in miles) from the northern to the southern border of Kuwait? |
| A10: | About 100 miles. |





Source: Michelin

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| Exercise 2 | |
| Q1: | What is the approximate distance (in km) from the northern to the southern border of Kuwait? |
| A1: | About 160 km. |
| Q2: | What is the approximate distance (in miles) from the eastern to the western border of Kuwait? |
| A2: | 90 miles. |
| Q3: | What is the approximate distance (in km) from the eastern to the western border of Kuwait? |
| A3: | 140 km. |
| Q4: | Kuwait shares borders with two neighbours. Which are the neighbours, and in which direction are their territories? |
| A4: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Iraq on the west and north 2. Saudi Arabia on the south.  |
| Q5: | What is on the eastern front of Kuwait? |
| A5: | The Persian Gulf. |

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| Exercise 2 | |
| Q6: | How large was the population of Kuwait in 1988 (approximately)? |
| A6: | 2 million. |
| Q7: | Is Kuwait a mountainous country? |
| A7: | It lies on a gently sloping plain. |
| Q8: | What is Kuwait's highest elevation in feet? |
| A8: | 951 feet. |
| Q9: | What is Kuwait's highest elevation in metres? |
| A9: | 290 metres. |
| Q10: | What is the name of Kuwait's highest point? |
| A10: | Ash-Shaqaya. |

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| Exercise 3 | |
| Q1: | Where is ash-Shaqaya? |
| A1: | Near the extreme western border between Iraq and Saudi Arabia. |
| Q2: | Just north of Kuwait City there is a bay, Kuwait Bay, which extends inland from the Gulf. How many miles inland does it extend? |
| A2: | 30 miles. |
| Q3: | Just north of Kuwait City there is a bay, Kuwait Bay, which extends inland from the Gulf. How many km inland does it extend? |
| A3: | 48 km. |
| Q4: | A geographical feature extends along the northwestern shore of Kuwait Bay. What is it and what is its name? |
| A4: | <p>It is the Az-Zawr Escarpment.</p>  <p>also spelt: Zour</p> |
| Q5: | How high is the Az-Zawr Escarpment (in feet)? |
| A5: | 475 feet. |
| Q6: | How high is the Az-Zawr Escarpment (in metres)? |
| A6: | <p>145 metres.</p>  |

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| Exercise 3 | |
| Q7: | What is on the southern shore of Kuwait Bay (2 items)? |
| A7: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A natural harbour 2. Kuwait City, the capital of Kuwait  |
| Q8: | Is Kuwait very fertile? |
| A8: | No, it is largely desert. |
| Q9: | What interrupts the large Kuwaiti desert (2 items)? |
| A9: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An oasis 2. A few fertile patches |
| Q10: | What is the name of the oasis? |
| A10: | <p>The al-Jahrah Oasis.</p>  |

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| Exercise 4 | |
| Q1: | Where is the al-Jahrah Oasis? |
| A1: | At the western end of Kuwait Bay. |
| Q2: | Where are the fertile patches? |
| A2: | In the southeastern and coastal areas. |
| Q3: | What is the climate like? |
| A3: | Semitropical. |
| Q4: | The contrast between summer and winter is great. What are the average temperatures in summer? |
| A4: | 111° F (44° C). |
| Q5: | What is the highest summer temperature? |
| A5: | 130° F (54° C). |
| Q6: | What are the average temperatures in winter? |
| A6: | 61° F (16° C) in the coolest months. |
| Q7: | Is there any rain in summer? |
| A7: | Virtually none. Whatever rain there is falls in winter. |
| Q8: | What is the annual rainfall? |
| A8: | 1 to 7 inches (25 to 180 mm). |
| Q9: | Where does that rain go? |
| A9: | It fills the desert basins with fresh water. |
| Q10: | What is another name for these desert basins (temporary lakes)? |
| A10: | The playas. |

4. Population

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| Exercise 5 | |
| Q1: | Kuwait's population belongs mostly to which race? |
| A1: | It is overwhelmingly Arab. |
| Q2: | Kuwait's population consists of native Kuwaitis and of foreigners. What percentage of Kuwait's population consists of native Kuwaitis? |
| A2: | Only 40% (= two fifths). |
| Q3: | Foreigners living in Kuwait consist of Arabs and non-Arabs. Where do the non-Arabs come from? |
| A3: | Name the two most prominent non-Arab countries of origin. |
| Q4: | Who are the most important Arab foreigners in Kuwait? |
| A4: | Palestinians. |
| Q5: | Are all Palestinians in Kuwait menial workers? |
| A5: | No, many are teachers, journalists and administrators. |
| Q6: | Why are there so many Palestinians in Kuwait? |
| A6: | Because they were expelled from their homeland. |
| Q7: | Describe the three stages of Palestinian immigration into Kuwait. |
| A7: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A small trickle of Palestinians entered Kuwait in the 1930s. At the same time an increasing number of Jewish immigrants were allowed into, or encouraged to come to, Palestine. 2. When, in 1948, the State of Israel was established in Palestine territory, a huge number of Palestinians were driven from their homeland and became refugees in other Arab countries. Many of them came to Kuwait in search for a home and work. 3. During the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Israel occupied further Palestinian territory, causing a new flood of refugees to leave their country. 200,000 of them came to Kuwait. After that immigration restrictions were imposed. |


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| Exercise 5 | |
| Q8: | <p>Where did the loyalties of the Palestinians lie during the 1990/91 Kuwait conflict,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with Kuwait (which gave them a home and livelihood) • or with Iraq (which appeared to some of them capable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . of hurting the enemy of their homeland (Israel) . or of putting pressure on Israel to give them part of their homeland back)? |
| A8: | <p>The Palestinians were in a tragic dilemma, with reason and emotions, gratitude and hope pointing in different directions. (Reason: Could Iraq really be useful to them? Emotion: Israel's enemy is my friend. Gratitude to Kuwait for giving them refuge. Hope for a return to their homeland.)</p> <p>The international Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat expressed support for Saddam Hussein, and so did many Palestinians in the territories occupied by Israel.</p> <p>The emotional post-war chaos in Kuwait may make it difficult to assess the behaviour of Palestinians in Kuwait objectively. Unfortunately they are now under suspicion.</p> <p>They have doubly suffered: not only has their first home, Palestine, been devastated but also their second home, Kuwait.</p> |
| Q9: | Are the Palestinians unique in the dilemma of finding it difficult to decide whom to support? |
| A9: | <p>No, this is the stuff which tragedies are made of. For years, the Americans supported Saddam Hussein in his war against Iran. They might not have liked either regime, but Saddam's seemed the lesser of two evils. And if equally evil, the explanation might have been: 'He may be a thug, but he is our thug.'</p> <p>Was it outrageous that the Americans supported Iraq? Was it outrageous that some Palestinians supported Iraq? Or was it, with the benefit of hindsight, merely a mistake.</p> |
| Q10: | Apart from the Palestinians, list the other important Arab foreigners in Kuwait in alphabetical order. |
| A10: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egyptians • Iraqis • Lebanese • Syrians |


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| Exercise 6 | |
| Q1: | What percentage of the population of Kuwait consists of Arab foreigners? |
| A1: | 50% |
| Q2: | What is the main religion of Kuwait's population (natives and foreigners)? |
| A2: | Islam. |
| Q3: | What percentage of Kuwait's inhabitants (natives and foreigners) adheres to Islam? |
| A3: | More than 90 percent. |
| Q4: | What is the official language of Kuwait? |
| A4: | Arabic. |
| Q5: | Name two other languages which are also widely spoken in Kuwait. |
| A5: | Persian and English. |
| Q6: | The sexes are not well-balanced in Kuwait. Are there more men or more women? |
| A6: | There are significantly more men. |
| Q7: | Why do men outnumber women? |
| A7: | Because there are so many male foreign workers. |
| Q8: | Where do most of the people live, in the city or in the country-side? |
| A8: | In the city. |
| Q9: | Can you immigrate into Kuwait and, after a while, acquire Kuwaiti citizenship? |
| A9: | No. |
| Q10: | <p>If you are born in England, of whatever parents, you automatically acquire British Citizenship. If you are born, in whatever country, of German parents, you are automatically entitled to German citizenship.</p> <p>If you are born in Kuwait of non-Kuwaiti parents, are you entitled to Kuwaiti citizenship?</p> |
| A10: | No. |

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| Exercise 7 | |
| Q1: | Who can have Kuwaiti citizenship? Name two categories of people. |
| A1: | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Native Kuwaitis2. People who can prove Kuwaiti ancestry from before 1920 |
| Q2: | Name a country in Europe which, like Kuwait, is very small, very prosperous and into which many people would like to immigrate, and which also, to protect its indigenous population from change, makes it very difficult for foreigners and their descendants to acquire its nationality. |
| A2: | Switzerland |

5. Economy

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| Exercise 7 | |
| Q3: | Is the Kuwaiti economy privately owned or government owned? |
| A3: | The economy is mixed, i.e. it is partly government-owned and partly private enterprise. |
| Q4: | How great is the gross national product (GNP) per capita compared with other countries in the world? |
| A4: | It is one of the highest. |
| Q5: | What is the greater cause of population increase, births or immigration? |
| A5: | Immigration. |
| Q6: | What is growing faster, the GNP or the population? |
| A6: | The population. |
| Q7: | List three activities which are most important for the GNP. |
| A7: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crude petroleum production 2. Natural-gas production 3. Refining |
| Q8: | <p>While other oil-producing countries used their oil revenue primarily to build up industries in their own country, Kuwait concentrated on investing its oil revenue in foreign countries and companies.</p> <p>Compare the size of Kuwait's income from oil and from investments before Iraq's invasion.</p> |
| A8: | <p>However large its income from oil, before the invasion, Kuwait received more income from investments than from oil.</p> <p>(In view of Iraq's systematic destruction of Kuwaiti property inside Kuwait, this was an unexpectedly fortunate situation, since, by its destruction, Iraq could deprive Kuwait of at most half its income.)</p> |
| Q9: | How important is agriculture in Kuwait? |
| A9: | It is a marginal economic activity and contributes little to the GNP. |
| Q10: | There is little arable land in Kuwait. How is it irrigated? |
| A10: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From recycled wastewater • From brackish groundwater |

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| Exercise 8 | |
| Q1: | What is grown on Kuwait's arable land? |
| A1: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden produce • Livestock feed |
| Q2: | The government operates an experimental farm. Where is it? |
| A2: | At Omariyah. |
| Q3: | What is being used in that farm? |
| A3: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic greenhouses • Hydroponic systems |
| Q4: | What are hydroponic systems? |
| A4: | A method of cultivating plants by growing them in gravel, etc, through which water containing dissolved inorganic nutrient salts is pumped. |
| Q5: | What percentage of land is covered by pastures? |
| A5: | Less than 8%. |
| Q6: | What sort of farm animals are kept? |
| A6: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - Sheep • - Goats • - Cattle |
| Q7: | What do fishermen in the Persian Gulf produce for the local market? |
| A7: | Silver pomfret. |
| Q8: | What are pomfret? |
| A8: | Pomfret are fish of the genus <i>Stomateoides</i> , which are common in the Indian and Pacific oceans. |
| Q9: | What are the two types of pomfret? |
| A9: | Black pomfret and white pomfret. |
| Q10: | What is the name for white pomfret when they are young? |
| A10: | <p>Silver pomfret</p>  |

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| Exercise 9 | |
| Q1: | What is the name for white pomfret when they are old? |
| A1: | <p>Grey pomfret.</p>  |
| Q2: | What is the origin of the name 'pomfret'? |
| A2: | 'Pomfret' comes from the Portuguese. |
| Q3: | Why do fish in the Persian Gulf have a Portuguese name? |
| A3: | Because the Portuguese were the first Europeans in fairly modern times to establish settlements on the shores of the Persian Gulf. |
| Q4: | When did the Portuguese first come to the Persian Gulf? |
| A4: | About 1600 A.D. |
| Q5: | What do fishermen in the Persian Gulf produce for export? |
| A5: | Prawns and shrimp. |
| Q6: | Are these prawns and shrimp exported fresh? |
| A6: | They are frozen. |
| Q7: | What percentage of GNP comes from manufacturing? |
| A7: | 8%. |
| Q8: | What percentage of the labour force is employed in manufacturing? |
| A8: | 8%. |
| Q9: | What are the main manufactured products? List eight. |
| A9: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Various petroleum products 2. Plastics 3. Cement 4. Ceramic and asbestos products 5. Metal pipes 6. Electric cables and dry-cell batteries 7. Furniture 8. Woolen blankets |

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| Exercise 9 | |
| Q10: | Name the two major industrial parks in Kuwait. |
| A10: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ash-Shu'aybah industrial park• Mina' Abdullah industrial park |

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| Exercise 10 | |
| Q1: | How is electricity produced? |
| A1: | By thermal power plants. |
| Q2: | Describe the policy for Kuwait's economic development since the 1970s. |
| A2: | Vertical integration of its oil industry by expanding its refining, shipping, and marketing capabilities. |
| Q3: | Certain industries are exclusively owned by the government. Name them. |
| A3: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All petroleum, natural-gas, and derivative industries - Electrical-generation plants - Desalination plants |
| Q4: | What kinds of companies are owned by the private sector? |
| A4: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building-materials companies • Construction companies • Trade companies • Finance companies |
| Q5: | Since the late 1970s the government has favoured the development of certain industries. Define them. |
| A5: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petroleum- and natural-gas-related industries • Other low-pollution industries that require minimum labour |
| Q6: | Why are these industries favoured? |
| A6: | Because the government wants to decrease the expatriate work force. |
| Q7: | Why does the Kuwaiti government want to decrease the expatriate work force? |
| A7: | Because it accounts for about two-thirds of the country's total labour force. |
| Q8: | <p>Kuwait has a generous social program for its citizens. It has also spent much on developing its industries.</p> <p>How great were the budgetary deficits required for financing these programmes?</p> |
| A8: | No budgetary deficits were necessary. The program was financed from Kuwait's large petroleum revenues. |
| Q9: | Which percentage of jobs in Kuwait are in public administration, defence, and services sectors? |
| A9: | Almost 50 percent. |
| Q10: | Which percentage of jobs in Kuwait are in construction? |
| A10: | 20 percent. |

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| Exercise 11 | |
| Q1: | When did Kuwait for the first time experience a budget deficit? |
| A1: | In 1982-83. |
| Q2: | What was the reason for the budget deficit of 1982-83? |
| A2: | Petroleum revenues declined. |
| Q3: | List the five major items of government expenditures. |
| A3: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wages and salaries 2. Construction and expropriations 3. Expenditures for goods and services 4. The reserve fund for future generations 5. Transport equipment |
| Q4: | What percentage of government expenditure is for wages and salaries? |
| A4: | 25%. |
| Q5: | What percentage of government expenditure is for construction and expropriations? |
| A5: | 25%. |
| Q6: | How many mud roads are there in Kuwait? |
| A6: | Virtually all of Kuwait's roads are paved. |
| Q7: | Which are the main ports? Name two which are situated on the mainland. |
| A7: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ash-Shu'waykh • Ash-Shu'aybah |
| Q8: | Name the main oil port. |
| A8: | Mina' al-Ahmadi. |
| Q9: | Where is Mina' al-Ahmadi located? |
| A9: | It is located offshore. |
| Q10: | What government regulations are there for shipping petroleum exports? |
| A10: | All petroleum exports must be shipped on Kuwaiti tankers. |

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| Exercise 12 | |
| Q1: | What is conveyed in most of the pipelines? |
| A1: | Crude petroleum. |
| Q2: | What are Kuwait's main exports? |
| A2: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - Crude petroleum • - Natural gas • - Refined-petroleum products |
| Q3: | To which countries does Kuwait sell its products? |
| A3: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Japan • To Italy • To the United States • To Germany |
| Q4: | What goods does Kuwait import? |
| A4: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Machinery and transport equipment • Basic manufactures • Food • Live animals |
| Q5: | Where do these imports come from? |
| A5: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Japan • From the United States • From Germany • From the United Kingdom |

6. Politics and government

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| Exercise 12 | |
| Q6: | What is Kuwait's form of government? |
| A6: | Kuwait is a constitutional monarchy. |
| Q7: | Name a country in Europe which is also a constitutional monarchy? |
| A7: | The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. |
| Q8: | Which family governs Kuwait? |
| A8: | The Sabah family (Al Sabah). |
| Q9: | Is the Kuwaiti head of state a 'King'? |
| A9: | He is called 'Emir'. |
| Q10: | Give the linguistic derivation of the word 'emir'. |
| A10: | <p>The original word is Arabic 'amir' = 'commander'.</p> <p>It passed from Arabic into Spanish (around 1300 A.D.) and later from Spanish into French.</p> <p>In the 17th century it passed from French into English.</p> |

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| Exercise 13 | |
| Q1: | An English dictionary gives three related meanings for the word 'emir'. Quote them. |
| A1: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An independent ruler or chieftain • A military commander or governor • A descendant of the Prophet Mohammed |
| Q2: | When did the British Government give full independence to Kuwait? |
| A2: | In June 1961. |
| Q3: | When was Kuwait's present constitution adopted? |
| A3: | In 1962. |
| Q4: | Who, according to the constitution, chooses the Emir? |
| A4: | The ruling family. |
| Q5: | How does the Emir exercise his power? |
| A5: | Through an appointed Prime Minister and Council of Ministers. |
| Q6: | Name the two chambers which constitute Kuwait's legislature. |
| A6: | There is only one chamber, the National Assembly. |
| Q7: | The National Assembly has not always worked without trouble. What was the result? |
| A7: | The Emir reluctantly suspended the National Assembly and the Constitution on two occasions. |
| Q8: | When was the first time the National Assembly was dissolved? |
| A8: | In 1976. |
| Q9: | When was the second time the National Assembly was dissolved? |
| A9: | Ten years later, in 1986. |
| Q10: | What were the causes of the 1976 suspension of the constitution? |
| A10: | <p>The country had been divided into ten constituencies. Each deputy represented a narrow range of interests peculiar to his electors and liable to be incompatible with those of other constituencies.</p> <p>It was therefore difficult for the Assembly to agree on any of the measures which the government thought necessary.</p> <p>In brief, the Assembly was 'factional and disruptive' (Mansfield, p 106 f; look there for more detailed information on the constitutional problems.)</p> |

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| Exercise 14 | |
| Q1: | Which were the major interest groups in Kuwait? Name four. |
| A1: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The merchants 2. The new middle class 3. The beduins 4. The Shia (shiites) |
| Q2: | <p>When the Emir dissolved the National Assembly in 1976, he promised to revise the constitution in the light of experience and to hold new elections within four years.</p> <p>How long did the Kuwaiti citizens have to wait for these elections?</p> |
| A2: | Four years, as promised. A new National Assembly started work in 1981. |
| Q3: | Name a European country which, when it first tried its hands at democracy, suffered from a constitution which allowed too many splinter parties and which became virtually ungovernable because the parties in parliament could not agree. |
| A3: | Germany, under the 'Weimar constitution', before Hitler came to power in 1933. |
| Q4: | The Kuwait National Assembly was dissolved for a second time in 1986. This was, at least partly, caused by events emanating from another country. Which was the country? |
| A4: | Iran. |

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| Exercise 14 | |
| Q5: | A few years earlier one ruler in Iran was ousted and another took his place. Name the people concerned and give the year. |
| A5: | In 1979, the <u>Shah of Iran</u> was ousted and the <u>Ayatollah Khomeini</u> came to power. |
| Q6: | In the same year, Iraq's president was pushed aside by a much younger man. Who was the new president? |
| A6: | Saddam Hussein. |
| Q7: | Soon after, war broke out between Iraq and Iran. When did this happen. |
| A7: | In 1980, one year after the Ayatollah Khomeini and Saddam Hussein had assumed the highest office in their countries. |
| Q8: | It is very easy to remember the starting date, the duration and the finishing date of the Iran-Iraq war, since they are all associated with one digit. Explain. |
| A8: | The digit is 8. The war started in 1980, it lasted for eight years and ended on 8 August 1988 (i.e. 8.8.88). |
| Q9: | Kuwait did not participate in the Iran-Iraq war but it generously supported one side. Which? |
| A9: | Kuwait supported Iraq. |
| Q10: | What has Kuwait's support for Iraq to do with the second suspension of the constitution? |
| A10: | As from 1983 there were many terrorist incidents in Kuwait, pipelines were blown up, bombs exploded in Kuwait city, a Kuwaiti aircraft was hijacked to Teheran, and Iranian troops occupied the Faw peninsula near the Kuwait border. The cabinet was strongly attacked in parliament and eventually resigned, saying that it was unable to govern. This led to the second suspension of the constitution and the National Assembly. |


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| Exercise 15 | |
| Q1: | Name the two main political parties of Kuwait. |
| A1: | There are none. Kuwaiti law prohibits political parties. |
| Q2: | Who has the highest judicial authority? |
| A2: | The High Court of Appeal. |
| Q3: | Does Islamic religious law have a function in Kuwait? |
| A3: | Yes, it governs matters of civil and personal status law. |
| Q4: | What does the social-welfare system provide for needy Kuwaitis? |
| A4: | Financial assistance and comfortable housing. |
| Q5: | What does the social-welfare system provide for all employed citizens? |
| A5: | Benefits for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work injury • old age • disability |
| Q6: | In Kuwait's social welfare system, how does medical care for Kuwaiti citizens differ from that for foreign residents? |
| A6: | Medical care at low cost is provided for all residents, regardless of nationality. |
| Q7: | Is there a shortage of doctors in Kuwait? |
| A7: | No, Kuwait has a high ratio of doctors per capita. |
| Q8: | Life expectancy in Kuwait is high by the standards of the region. What is the life expectancy for men? |
| A8: | 68 years. |
| Q9: | What is the life expectancy for women? |
| A9: | 73 years. |
| Q10: | There is one serious problem in relation to life expectancy. What is it? |
| A10: | Relatively high infant mortality. |

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| Exercise 16 | |
| Q1: | In Kuwait's education system, how does provision for Kuwaiti citizens differ from that for foreign residents? |
| A1: | Education for native Kuwaitis (but not for foreigners) at all school levels is free. |
| Q2: | Is education compulsory? |
| A2: | It is compulsory for native Kuwaitis between the ages of 6 and 14 years. |
| Q3: | Where do non-Kuwaiti students study? |
| A3: | They attend government schools as space permits or attend private schools. |
| Q4: | What is the literacy rate (percentage) among adults (Kuwaitis and foreigners) in Kuwait? |
| A4: | More than 75%. |
| Q5: | How many institutions of higher learning are there in Kuwait? |
| A5: | Only Kuwait University. |
| Q6: | When was Kuwait University founded? |
| A6: | In 1962. |
| Q7: | How many students are there at Kuwait University? |
| A7: | 17,000 students. |
| Q8: | How many graduates of Kuwait University are women? |
| A8: | More than 50%. |
| Q9: | Who owns the Kuwait press? |
| A9: | It is privately owned. |
| Q10: | How many newspapers were there in Kuwait before the invasion? |
| A10: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven dailies (5 Arabic, 2 English) • Six weeklies <p>(Note: This is a large number for such a small population.)</p> |

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| Exercise 17 | |
| Q1: | How much press censorship is there? |
| A1: | The press is generally free from censorship. |
| Q2: | There are some limitations to the freedom of the press. The Council of Ministers has the right to suspend newspapers for certain acts. Which? |
| A2: | Newspapers can be suspended if they criticise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Emir • or the Kuwaiti economy. |
| Q3: | There is a Ministry of Information. What does it do in relation to the media? |
| A3: | It runs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - the government press • - and the radio and television broadcasting stations. |
| Q4: | Is the Kuwaiti system of government universally acknowledged as being ideal in every respect? |
| A4: | No, there is an opposition which is pressing for the revival of the constitution and for more democracy. |
| Q5: | What is the name for the pilgrimage to Mecca, which every Muslim must undertake at least once in his life? |
| A5: | The Hajj. |
| Q6: | In which country is Mecca situated? |
| A6: | In Saudi Arabia. |
| Q7: | Kuwait borders on Saudi Arabia. What is its function for some of the pilgrims bound for Mecca? |
| A7: | It serves as a transit point. |
| Q8: | Where does Kuwait provide for the welfare of pilgrims on the Hajj? |
| A8: | In a place called "Pilgrim's City". |
| Q9: | What does Kuwait's Pilgrim's City offer the pilgrims? |
| A9: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board • Lodging • Essential services |
| Q10: | Mention some traditional and modern sports and entertainments found and practised in Kuwait. |
| A10: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desert hunting • Camel racing • Football • Sailing • Theatre • 'Opera and ballet' (Kuwaiti themes) |

7. History

7.1 Early history

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| Exercise 18 | |
| Q1: | Where have most archaeological remains of Kuwait's history been found? |
| A1: | On Faylakah Island. |
| Q2: | Where is Faylakah Island situated? |
| A2: | In Kuwait Bay. |
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| Q3: | <p>Ancient Kuwait was part of an early civilization which was contemporary with two other well-known civilisations.</p> <p>Name these two civilisations.</p> |
| A3: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The civilisation of Sumeria • The Indus Valley civilisation |
| Q4: | Give an approximate date (in thousands of years) for the Sumerian and Indus Valley civilisations, and hence for the early Kuwaiti civilisation. |
| A4: | 3000 B.C. |
| Q5: | Where did the Sumerians live? |
| A5: | In the area later known as Mesopotamia and now as Iraq, i.e. in an area adjacent to present-day Kuwait. |

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| Exercise 18 | |
| Q6: | Faylakah Island had close trading connections in two directions. Describe them. |
| A6: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cities of Mesopotamia (north) The trading centre of Dilmun (south) |
| Q7: | Which modern location is thought to be identical with Dilmun? |
| A7: | <p>Bahrain.</p>  |
| Q8: | When did Faylakah Island disappear from the historical record? |
| A8: | About 1200 B.C. |
| Q9: | Who were the first European colonists to arrive on Faylakah Island? |
| A9: | Greeks. |
| Q10: | What did the Greeks build on Faylakah Island? |
| A10: | A temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis. |

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| Exercise 19 | |
| Q1: | During whose time did the Greek colonists arrive? |
| A1: | During the time of Alexander the Great. |
| Q2: | When did Alexander the Great die? |
| A2: | In 323 B.C. |
| Q3: | Which Arabic country did Alexander the Great conquer in 331 B.C.? |
| A3: | Egypt. |
| Q4: | Which Egyptian city is named after Alexander the Great? |
| A4: | Alexandria. |
| Q5: | Did the territory of present-day Kuwait ever belong to Alexander's empire? |
| A5: | It seems so. Mesopotamia (now Iraq) was part of Alexander's empire. Alexander returned from India by land along the coast of Persia and his fleet followed the same coast to the mouth of the River Euphrates (Iraq). This was close to Kuwait. After the breakup of Alexander's empire, Faylakah Island passed to its successor in that region. |
| Q6: | After the death of Alexander the Great, his empire broke up into four parts . Name them. |
| A6: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The empire of Seleucus (one of Alexander's generals) 2. The empire of Ptolemy 3. The empire of Cassander 4. The empire of Lysimachus |
| Q7: | Give an indication of the location of the empire of Seleucus. |
| A7: | His empire contained Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria and a piece of Asia Minor. |
| Q8: | Give an indication of the location of the empire of Ptolemy. |
| A8: | His empire contained Egypt, present-day Palestine, Cyprus and a piece of Asia Minor. |
| Q9: | Give an indication of the location of the empire of Cassander. |
| A9: | His empire contained Greece and Macedonia. |
| Q10: | Give an indication of the location of the empire of Lysimachus. |
| A10: | His empire contained parts of what is today Bulgaria and Turkey. |

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| Exercise 20 | |
| Q1: | When did Faylakah Island become less important. |
| A1: | During Roman times. |

7.2 Foundation of modern Kuwait

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| Exercise 20 | |
| Q2: | A tribe of central Arabia (west of Kuwait) came to the area and founded Kuwait City. What was the name of that tribe? |
| A2: | The Anizah tribe. |
| Q3: | When approximately did the Anizah tribe found Kuwait City? |
| A3: | At the beginning of the 18th century. |
| Q4: | Why did the Anizah tribe come to the Kuwait area? |
| A4: | They were in search for better pasture and water. |
| Q5: | In which year was Kuwait City founded, as the date is traditionally given? |
| A5: | 1710 |
| Q6: | When was the autonomous sheikhdom of Kuwait founded? |
| A6: | In 1756. |
| Q7: | <p>To help you remember the year 1756:</p> <p>A famous composer was born in 1756. He wrote an opera about the attempt of an Englishman to rescue his wife from a Turkish harem and a piano sonata with mock-Turkish music ('A la Turca'). What was the composer's name and the opera with the Turkish plot?</p> |
| A7: | <p>Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart</p> <p>Opera: Die Entführung aus dem Serail (= Rescue from the Harem), known in English as 'The Seraglio' (= Harem). First performed in 1782.</p> |
| Q8: | Who became Sheikh of Kuwait in 1756? |
| A8: | Abd Rahim of the Al Sabah family. |
| Q9: | Which family rules Kuwait today (1991)? |
| A9: | Still the same family, the Sabah family. |

7.3 The Berlin-Baghdad Railway

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| Exercise 20 | |
| Q10: | When did European powers start taking an interest in Kuwait? |
| A10: | In the late 19th century. |

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| Exercise 21 | |
| Q1: | Which European project affected Kuwait? |
| A1: | The building of the Berlin-Baghdad railway. |
| Q2: | What has the Berlin-Baghdad railway to do with Kuwait? |
| A2: | The Berlin-Baghdad railway was to be extended to Kuwait. |
| Q3: | The projected Berlin-Kuwait railway would have been a competitor to another feat of 19th century transport engineering. Which? |
| A3: | The Suez Canal. |
| Q4: | When was the Suez Canal completed? |
| A4: | In 1869. |
| Q5: | When did Germany (the Deutsche Bank, to be more precise) take its first steps on the way towards the Berlin-Baghdad railway? |
| A5: | In 1888, when the Deutsche Bank was granted a concession to extend the existing line to Ankara. This extension was completed in 1896. |
| Q6: | Who controlled the Suez Canal at that time (1896)? |
| A6: | Great Britain. |
| Q7: | Was Great Britain at that time worried about the German project? |
| A7: | No. |
| Q8: | Which two countries were jointly responsible for the Baghdad railway project? |
| A8: | Germany and the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire. |
| Q9: | What was the economic significance of the proposed railway extension? Give four alternative formulations of the same point. |
| A9: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It would have connected the North Sea (or the Baltic) by land with the Persian Gulf, and thence by ship to India and the Far East. 2. It would have connected the Mediterranean Sea by land with the Persian Gulf. 3. Its function would have been similar that of the Suez Canal, i.e. cutting out the long sea route round Africa. 4. 'It threatened the monopoly previously held by the sea route between Europe, the middle east and India.' |
| Q10: | In 1890 (i.e. exactly a hundred years before Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait), a German team arrived in Kuwait. Who were the members of that team? |
| A10: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The German Consul-General at Constantinople (capital of the Turkish Empire) • Railway engineers • The German military attaché at Constantinople |

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| Exercise 22 | |
| Q1: | What did the German team do? |
| A1: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They carried out a survey of the route to be traversed by the Baghdad railway to the Persian gulf. • They visited the Sheikh of Kuwait and asked if they could buy a site for the terminus of the Baghdad railway and lease a larger area around it. |
| Q2: | Did the Sheikh grant their request? |
| A2: | No. This would have been a breach of his treaty with Britain. |
| Q3: | What was Germany's next move? |
| A3: | They incited their ally, Turkey, to seize Kuwait. |
| Q4: | Was Sheikh Mubarak strong enough to resist a Turkish attack? |
| A4: | No, he had just been defeated by Najd (now Saudi Arabia). (See Exercise 26, Q2, below) |
| Q5: | What did the Turks do? |
| A5: | They sent a warship with troops into Kuwait Bay. |
| Q6: | How were the Turks received in Kuwait? |
| A6: | A British cruiser had arrived before them and threatened to open fire on the Turkish ship if the Turks tried to land. |
| Q7: | There were two further attempts by Germany to obtain greater influence in Kuwait. Which was the first? |
| A7: | Sheikh Mubarak's nephews tried to seize Kuwait City by armed force. Under German influence the Turks connived at this attempt. |
| Q8: | Were Sheikh Mubarak's nephews successful? |
| A8: | No, British ships came to the Sheikh's aid. |
| Q9: | Which was the second attempt of Germany to realise the railway scheme with Turkish help? |
| A9: | In 1902 Turkey established military posts at Umm Qasr and on Bubiyan island in order to enable Germany to build the terminal in or near Umm Qasr. |
| Q10: | Was the plan successful? |
| A10: | No, the British prevented it. |

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| Exercise 23 | |
| Q1: | Was present-day Iraq (and its capital Baghdad) an independent country at the end of the 19th century? |
| A1: | It was part of the Ottoman Empire. |
| Q2: | Was Kuwait ever part of the Ottoman Empire? |
| A2: | Only in a vague sense. In practice, the Ottomans never exercised close control over it. |
| Q3: | Describe the relations between Kuwait and the Turkish Empire in the first half of the 19th century? |
| A3: | 'In those days Kuwait, like other small States on the fringes of the then far-flung Turkish Empire, often paid only nominal allegiance to the Sultan. The Sheikh sometimes recognized Turkish suzerainty by the payment of tribute, but there were times when these payments were discontinued and independence was almost complete' (Lockart, p 266). |
| Q4: | At one time, Kuwait received a visit from the Governor of one of the Turkish provinces. What was his name, and where did he rule? |
| A4: | He was Midhat Pasha, the Governor of Baghdad. |
| Q5: | When did Midhat Pasha visit Kuwait? |
| A5: | In 1871. |
| Q6: | What was the purpose of Midhat Pasha's visit to Kuwait? |
| A6: | He was on his way to Najd under the pretext of assisting an opponent of the Saud family (ancestors of the famous King Ibn Saud). In fact he wanted to extend the Sultan's authority in Arabia. |
| Q7: | What is Najd? |
| A7: | A large territory, forming the eastern part of the Arab peninsula (now Saudi Arabia). |
| Q8: | Did Kuwait try to prevent Midhat Pasha's military expedition into Najd? |
| A8: | No, Kuwait let Midhat Pasha's tribal supporters pass through its territory and supplied 300 boats to transport his regular forces. |
| Q9: | Midhat Pasha conferred a title on the Sheikh of Kuwait. What was that title? |
| A9: | Qaim-Maqam (Deputy Governor) of Kuwait. |
| Q10: | In what relation did that put the Sheikh to the Governor? |
| A10: | It made the Sheikh Deputy to the Governor of Baghdad. |

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| Exercise 24 | |
| Q1: | What did the acceptance of this title mean in respect of Kuwait's relations to the Ottoman Empire? |
| A1: | It constituted the Sheikh's acknowledgement of Turkish suzerainty. |
| Q2: | Did Turkey exercise its nominal authority in the Persian Gulf. |
| A2: | No, it remained as nebulous as before. |
| Q3: | In 1896 a new ruler came to power in Kuwait. What was his name? |
| A3: | Sheikh Mubarak. |
| Q4: | Sheikh Mubarak took measures to raise revenue for the state by imposing a customs duty on all goods entering his state. Was this duty also imposed on goods coming from Turkish ports? |
| A4: | Yes. |
| Q5: | Why does it matter whether or not goods from Turkish ports were subject to customs duty? |
| A5: | This duty implied that Kuwait was not part of the Turkish empire. |
| Q6: | Sheikh Mubarak made an unwise move which endangered Kuwait's independence such as it was. What did he do? |
| A6: | Like his grandfather, he accepted the office of Qaim-Maqam from the Turkish government. |
| Q7: | When did Sheikh Mubarak accept the office of Qaim-Maqam? |
| A7: | In 1897. |
| Q8: | Sheikh Mubarak soon had cause to regret his acceptance of the Turkish title. Why? |
| A8: | The Turks sent a quarantine inspector to Kuwait and showed other signs of firmly establishing their authority there. |
| Q9: | How did Sheikh Mubarak try to protect himself against complete absorption into Turkey? |
| A9: | He asked for British protection. |
| Q10: | Did the British give him that protection. |
| A10: | No, they urged him to remain under Turkish suzerainty. A year later, they refused a second request for protection. |

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| Exercise 25 | |
| Q1: | Eventually, the British changed their mind. Why? |
| A1: | They feared Russian intrusion. |
| Q2: | What had the Russians done to arouse that fear? |
| A2: | The Russian Count Kapnist tried to obtain a concession for a railway line from the Mediterranean coast to Kuwait. It was rumoured that Russia wanted to use Kuwait as a coaling station. |
| Q3: | What is a coaling station? |
| A3: | A port where steamships can pick up fuel. (Aden was a famous coaling station on the route to India.) |
| Q4: | When did Count Kapnist make his proposal? |
| A4: | In 1898. |
| Q5: | Fear of Russian intrusion resulted in a treaty between Britain and Kuwait. When was that treaty concluded? |
| A5: | In 1899. |
| Q6: | What did the ruler of Kuwait promise in that treaty? |
| A6: | Never to cede or lease any portion of his territory to any foreign government or national except with the express authorization of the British Government. |
| Q7: | What did the British promise in return? |
| A7: | To protect Kuwait in case of need. |
| Q8: | A few years before the outbreak of the First World War, Great Britain and Turkey began a series of negotiations which resulted (in July 1913) in the conclusion of a convention which included three points relevant to Kuwait. List these points. |
| A8: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turkey recognised Great Britain's special relationship with Kuwait. 2. The territories of the Sheikh, although nominally forming part of the province of Baghdad, were to be autonomous. 3. Turkey would not extend the Baghdad railway to the south of Basra without first obtaining Great Britain's consent. |
| Q9: | When was this agreement ratified? |
| A9: | Never. The outbreak of war between Great Britain and Turkey in 1914 prevented ratification. |
| Q10: | How did the entry of Turkey into the First World War (September 1914) affect Kuwait? |
| A10: | Britain established a protectorate over Kuwait. |

7.4 Kuwait and Saudi-Arabia


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| Exercise 26 | |
| Q1: | Were Kuwait's relations with its neighbour on the Arab peninsula always peaceful? |
| A1: | No. They were often cordial but, like the other small sheikdoms on the coast of the Arabian peninsula, Kuwait always had to be wary not to be swallowed up by its large neighbour. This was often only possible because of British protection for these sheikdoms. Kuwait's rulers always had to perform precarious balancing acts in their alliances. |
| Q2: | What was the name of the neighbouring state at the beginning of this century? |
| A2: | Najd. |
| Q3: | What is the name of the neighbouring state today? |
| A3: | Saudi Arabia. |
| Q4: | When did Saudi Arabia come into being? |
| A4: | In 1932. |
| Q5: | What are the components of Saudi Arabia? |
| A5: | Saudi Arabia resulted from the union, in 1932, of Najd and Hejaz. |
| Q6: | In which part of Saudi Arabia are the holy cities of Mecca and Medina? |
| A6: | In Hejaz. |
| Q7: | Who was the most famous ruler of Saudi Arabia? |
| A7: | King Ibn Saud. |
| Q8: | How has Ibn Saud's importance once been described? |
| A8: | 'The greatest Arab ruler since the prophet Mohammed himself'. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1964, article on 'Arabia') |
| Q9: | When did King Ibn Saud live? |
| A9: | From 1880 to 1953. |
| Q10: | At the beginning of this century there was a feud between the Saud family and a rival dynasty in northern Najd. Who was the leader of that dynasty? |
| A10: | Mohammed ibn Rashid. |

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| Exercise 27 | |
| Q1: | What was King Ibn Saud's (short) name? |
| A1: | Abdul-Aziz. |
| Q2: | What was his father's name? |
| A2: | Abdul-Rahman. |
| Q3: | The greatness of the Saudi family goes back to an alliance between an ancestor of King Ibn Saud and a religious reformer who tried to revive the pure traditions of original Islam. Name the Saudi ancestor and the religious reformer. |
| A3: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ancestor was Muhammad ibn Saud. • The religious reformer was Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab. |
| Q4: | When was the alliance between Muhammad ibn Saud and Abdul Wahhab forged? |
| A4: | In 1744. |
| Q5: | What was the capital of the Saudi state? |
| A5: | Riyadh. |
| Q6: | When did Ibn Rashid occupy the Wahhabi capital Riyadh? |
| A6: | In 1891. |
| Q7: | How did Abdul-Rahman react to the occupation of his state and its capital (a situation corresponding to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990, almost exactly 99 years later)? |
| A7: | He and his family went into exile, first in Bahrain and then in Kuwait. [In 1990, the Emir of Kuwait went into exile in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia)]. |
| Q8: | How old was Abdul-Aziz (later King Ibn Saud) when he arrived in Kuwait? |
| A8: | 11 years or slightly older. In effect, King Ibn Saud grew up in Kuwait. |
| Q9: | What were the relations between young Abdul-Aziz and his host, Sheikh Mubarak of Kuwait. |
| A9: | They admired each other. Sheikh Mubarak let Abdul-Aziz participate in his business of state and groomed him for the office of government. If some credit for the achievements of children has to be given to their parents, then Sheikh Mubarak deserves some credit for the greatness of his protégé, Abdul-Aziz. |
| Q10: | During his stay in Kuwait Abdul-Aziz was impressed by, and learnt from Sheikh Mubarak, two things, which were important in his later career as a King. Which were they? |
| A10: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The efficient way in which Sheikh Mubarak ruled his country. • Sheikh Mubarak's friendship for Great Britain. |

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| Exercise 28 | |
| Q1: | In 1901 Sheikh Mubarak, during his joint campaign with Abdul-Aziz, suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Ibn Rashid, near Sarif, south-east of Hail. Another foreign power tried to take advantage of Kuwait's weakness at that time. What happened? |
| A1: | The Turks tried to seize Kuwait but were stopped by the British. (This is the incident referred to in above in Ex22:4 to Ex22:6) |
| Q2: | Did Abdul-Aziz give up in his attempts to regain his country? |
| A2: | No, in the same year, 1901, he made a second, dramatic and successful attempt to recapture Riyadh and firmly established himself in Najd. |
| Q3: | What is the parallel between the Gulf conflict of 1990/91 and the establishment of Saudi Arabia? |
| A3: | In and before 1900, Kuwait served as a base for the Saudi dynasty when their territory had been taken over by a 'foreign' power. Several times Kuwait equipped the Saud family in its struggle to regain power in their country. 90 years later, the Saudis did the same for the Kuwaiti dynasty. |
| Q4: | Sheikh Mubarak had been succeeded, in 1916, by one of his sons. What was his name? |
| A4: | Sheikh Salim. |
| Q5: | Did the good relations between Abdul-Aziz and Kuwait continue when Sheikh Salim became ruler of Kuwait in 1916. |
| A5: | No, Abdul-Aziz became increasingly aggrieved by Sheikh Salim's actions. |

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| Exercise 28 | |
| Q6: | What were Abdul-Aziz's grievances? |
| A6: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sheikh Salim supported his enemy Ibn Rashid. 2. Sheikh Salim supported Turkey and allowed military supplies for the Turks to go through his port. This was a breach of Kuwait's treaty obligations with Great Britain. 3. Sheikh Salim encouraged tribesmen in the province of Hasa to revolt against Abdul-Aziz. |
| Q7: | <p>During the First World War, Russia, England and France were at war with Turkey, which was allied with Germany.</p> <p>How did Great Britain respond to Sheikh Salim's actions?</p> |
| A7: | Great Britain blockaded Kuwait from February 1918 until the end of hostilities with Turkey. |
| Q8: | <p>There was a dispute about the border between Najd and Kuwait. The borders being unmarked, Sheikh Salim was concerned by creeping annexation of his territory and infiltration of Kuwait by Wahhabis. He built a fort 100 miles inland to stake a claim to the territory that had always been regarded as his father's.</p> <p>Kuwait's attitude annoyed Abdul-Aziz. Moreover, Kuwait had something that Abdul-Aziz badly wanted.</p> <p>What was it?</p> |
| A8: | Excellent port facilities, in a strategic position. |
| Q9: | How did Abdul-Aziz try to resolve the problem? |
| A9: | He let his armies march against Kuwait. |
| Q10: | When did Abdul-Aziz attack Kuwait? |
| A10: | In 1919. |

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| Exercise 29 | |
| Q1: | Was Kuwait able to defend itself? |
| A1: | No, Kuwait had no seizable army of its own. |
| Q2: | What did Sheikh Salim do to defend himself as best he could? |
| A2: | The Kuwaitis built a mud wall to protect the city and sent a small force against the army of Abdul-Aziz. (The mud wall was demolished in 1957.) |
| Q3: | Where did the Kuwaiti force meet the Saudi army? |
| A3: | Near the village of Jahara, twenty miles west of Kuwait City. |
| Q4: | What was the outcome of the battle of Jahara? |
| A4: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kuwaitis were beaten. • A short truce was arranged. |
| Q5: | What did the two opponents do during that truce? |
| A5: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdul-Aziz prepared his men for the occupation of Kuwait. • Sheikh Salim formally invited Great Britain to defend his country. |
| Q6: | Did Abdul-Aziz (like Saddam Hussein in 1991) try to face Great Britain in battle? |
| A6: | No. On October 24, 1920, Abdul-Aziz withdrew his forces. He was more realistic than Saddam Hussein and did not want to fight with lances and rifles against superior western technology (planes and big guns). |

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| Exercise 29 | |
| Q7: | <p>The British convened a conference to settle border questions. Britain, Kuwait, Iraq and Najd (later Saudi Arabia) were represented. The chairman was Sir Percy Cox, British High Commissioner in Baghdad.</p> <p>Where was that conference held?</p> |
| A7: | At Uqair. |
| Q8: | Where is Uqair? |
| A8: | <p>In Saudi Arabia (near Bahrain, south of Kuwait).</p>  |
| Q9: | When was the Uqair convention signed? |
| A9: | In 1922. |
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| Q10: | On the map of Kuwait, you can see a neutral zone between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. What is its significance? |
| A10: | <p>The neutral zone contains the territory on which Kuwait and Saudi Arabia could not agree. It was given by the British to Saudi Arabia to compensate Ibn Saud for territory he was forced to cede to Iraq.</p> |

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| Exercise 30 | |
| Q1: | What are the rights of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in the neutral zone? |
| A1: | It was agreed in the Uqair convention, that both states should have equal rights in that zone. |
| Q2: | Why do Arabs historically seem to have so little respect for national territories and their boundaries, and how is it possible that there are so many disputes about them? Give three related arguments. |
| A2: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Their tradition is that of nomads. 2. Boundaries are difficult to mark or to defend in the desert. 3. Before the discovery of oil, there were no fixed assets in the desert. <p>What mattered was not, as today, the physical possession (= 'sitting on') a piece of land.</p> <p>What mattered was</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the allegiance of people (which could change easily) and • the right to pass through a territory. <p>Note:</p> <p>'... until this century the territory which now comprises Saudi Arabia was a disunited land of small kingdoms, imperial spheres of influences and warring tribes, where boundaries and allegiances shifted as swiftly and erratically as the desert sands.' (Almana, p 21)</p> <p>The frontiers of Great Britain have been historically well defined because it is an island. By contrast, the frontiers of, say, Poland, Germany and France have been much more mobile, even though these countries are not populated by nomads and there are many natural demarcation lines. The stable frontiers of Great Britain and the invisible frontiers in the Arabian desert constitute two extremes on a scale of stability and instability.</p> <p>To understand what happened in the desert we must understand how the desert differs from our home countries. After the United Nations sanctioned the use of force against Iraq, Thomas R Pickering, the US ambassador to the United Nations said: 'We have drawn a firm line in the sand.' A sympathetic Arab diplomat mused: 'Fine. Now let us pray we can control the winds' (Miller and Mylroie, p xv).</p> <p>Saddam Hussein behaved in respect of Kuwait, as if there were no fixed assets and as if physical possession was still a trivial (and therefore negotiable or changeable) matter. Kuwait in 1990 is not the desert in 1900.</p> |
| Q3: | Who succeeded Sheikh Salim as ruler of Kuwait and when? |
| A3: | His nephew succeeded him in 1921 and became Sheikh Ahmad. |

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| Exercise 30 | |
| Q4: | Who is the present Emir of Kuwait? |
| A4: | Sheikh Jaber al-Sabah. (State of 1991) |
| Q5: | When did Sheikh Jaber al-Sabah come to power? |
| A5: | <p>In 1977.</p> <p>Note: List of the immediate predecessors of the present Emir:</p> <p>Sheikh Mubarak 1896-1915</p> <p>Sheikh Salim 1916-1921</p> <p>Sheikh Ahmad 1921-1950</p> <p>Sheikh Abdullah 1950-1965</p> <p>Sheikh Sabah Salem 1965-1977</p> |

8. oil


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| Exercise 30 | |
| Q6: | Which countries were setting an example for Kuwait in the exploitation of their oil resources? |
| A6: | Iran and Bahrein. |
| Q7: | When was the Kuwait Oil Company founded? |
| A7: | In 1934. |
| Q8: | Who were the owners of the Kuwait Oil Company? |
| A8: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company of Great Britain • The Gulf Oil Corporation of the United States |
| Q9: | What is the territory covered by the Kuwait Oil Company concession of 1934? |
| A9: | The whole of Kuwait's territory. |
| Q10: | What is the duration of the concession? |
| A10: | 75 years, starting in 1934. |

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| Exercise 31 | |
| Q1: | When did drilling operations in Kuwait begin? |
| A1: | In 1949. |

9. Kuwait and Iraq


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| Exercise 31 | |
| Q2: | When was the northern frontier between Kuwait and Iraq agreed upon? |
| A2: | In 1923. |
| |  <p>The map shows the Persian Gulf region. Kuwait is highlighted in the center, bordered by Iraq to the north and west, Saudi Arabia to the south, and Iran to the northeast. Major cities like Baghdad, Tehran, and Riyadh are marked. The map also shows the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the Arabian Peninsula. A legend in the bottom left corner identifies symbols for international boundaries, national capitals, railways, and roads.</p> |
| Q3: | Which Iraqi leader first advocated total absorption of Kuwait into Iraq and when? |
| A3: | Young King Ghazi in 1937. |
| Q4: | When did the British Government give full independence to Kuwait? |
| A4: | In June 1961. |
| Q5: | How did Iraq react? |
| A5: | Iraq claimed that all of Kuwait belonged to Iraq. |
| Q6: | What was the British response? |
| A6: | The British sent troops to defend Kuwait. |
| Q7: | Did Iraq maintain its claim to Kuwait? |
| A7: | No, Iraq dropped its claim when the Arab League recognized Kuwait's independence on July 20, 1961. |
| Q8: | Who was in charge of Iraq in 1961? |
| A8: | General Qassim. |
| Q9: | Did Iraq ever formally recognise Kuwait's independence? |


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| Exercise 31 | |
| A9: | Yes, in 1963 when the Baath party under Qassim was in power in Iraq. Kuwait had to pay a substantial sum in exchange for this settlement, which included an agreement about all border disputes. |
| Q10: | Two more agreements between Iraq and Kuwait were signed in 1963. What were they? |
| A10: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Iraq agreed to supply Kuwait with 120 million gallons of water per day from the Shatt-al-Arab.• Customs duties on trade between Iraq and Kuwait were virtually abolished. |


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| Exercise 32 | |
| Q1: | In 1973, there was a military incident between Iraq and Kuwait? What was it? |
| A1: | Iraqi troops occupied Al-Samitah, a border post in northeastern Kuwait. |
| Q2: | What was the dispute about? |
| A2: | The Kuwaiti islands of Bubiyan and Warbah. |
| Q3: | Why are these islands important for Iraq ? |
| A3: | <p>They control access to Umm Qasr, Iraq's military port.</p>  <p>The map shows the Umm Qasr area in Iraq. Umm Qasr is marked with a red dot. The Kānāl-e Rūkā is a large body of water. To the north are Basra, Al Muhammarah, and Abadan. To the east is Bandar-e Mahshahr. To the south are the Kuwaiti islands of Bubiyan and Warbah. Other locations include Az Zubayr, Ar Rawḍah, Khabrat Umm al 'Aysh, Sabah Al Ahmad Nature Preserve, Al Farwaniyah, Kuwait, and Mubarak Al Kabeer.</p> |
| Q4: | Kuwait has been described as anachronistic, while Iraq has been described as progressive. Give a quote which summarises the deceptive appearances of the two countries. |
| A4: | <p>'On paper, Iraq was the more "progressive" of the two societies - socialist and secular. Kuwait, by contrast, was the feudal monarchy, a religious state in which alcohol and other Western vices were supposedly taboo, and whose women could not vote. In practice, however, Iraq ruled mainly through arbitrary terror and intimidation; Kuwait, by contrast, was relatively open and tolerant, a place where authorities tended to wink at regulations, or look the other way when it pleased them.' (Miller and Mylroie, p 200).</p> <p>"We rule with moderate strictness, and in return we are satisfied with moderate obedience. And I think I can claim that our people are moderately sober, moderately chaste, and moderately honest." Quote from: James Hilton: Lost Horizon (a novel) (1933)</p> |
| Q5: | When did the war between Iran and Iraq start? |
| A5: | In 1980. |

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| Exercise 32 | |
| Q6: | Which side did Kuwait take during the Iran-Iraq war? |
| A6: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kuwait gave considerable financial assistance to Iraq. • Kuwait was a supply route for civilian and military imports into Iraq. |
| Q7: | Why did Kuwait support Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war? |
| A7: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kuwait was afraid of Iran's attempt to export its fundamentalist shiite Islamic revolution. • 55% of Iraq's population is shiite. The Kuwaitis are mainly sunnis. • If Iran had overrun southern Iraq, it would have become Kuwait's neighbour. Even the present border of Iran is only a few miles from Kuwait's eastern border. |
| Q8: | Did Kuwait suffer during the Iran-Iraq war? |
| A8: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As from 1983, there were Iran inspired terrorist attacks inside Kuwait. • In 1984, a Kuwaiti Airways plane was hijacked to Teheran. • There were more terrorist attacks and more hijackings in later years. • At the same time, Kuwait suffered from falling oil prices. |
| Q9: | How did the Emir of Kuwait respond to the precarious situation in his country? |
| A9: | He suspended parliament and the constitution. |
| Q10: | What is Iraq's greatest geographical disadvantage? |
| A10: | Like Austria or Afghanistan, it is almost completely landlocked, i.e. it has hardly any access to the open sea. |

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| Exercise 33 | |
| Q1: | How long is Iraq's coastline? |
| A1: | 26 miles. |
| Q2: | What is the name of Iraq's only significant commercial port? |
| A2: | Basra. |

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| Exercise 33 | |
| Q3: | How far is Basra from the open sea? |
| A3: | 50 miles.  |
| Q4: | What connects Basra to the open sea? |
| A4: | The river Shatt-al-Arab. |

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| Exercise 33 | |
| Q5: | Which rivers meet near Basra to form the Shatt-al-Arab? |
| A5: | <p>The rivers Euphrates and Tigris.</p>  <p>biblestudy.org</p> |
| Q6: | Why could Iraq not use the Shatt-al-Arab during the Iran-Iraq war? |
| A6: | After a few days it had become blocked by damaged ships and war debris. |
| Q7: | Does Iraq have a navy? |
| A7: | Yes, but it is very small. |
| Q8: | What is the name of Iraq's military port? |
| A8: | Umm Qasr? (See Ex 22:9 and Ex 32:3 above) |
| Q9: | Where was Iraq's navy at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war? |
| A9: | In the Khor Abdullah, also spelt "Khawr Abd Allah" |

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| Exercise 33 | |
| Q10: | What is the Khor Abdullah? |
| A10: | <p>A small channel that forms part of the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border.</p> <p>Note: "Khor Abdullah is a tidal channel located in the northern part of the Persian Gulf, situated between Kuwait's Bubiyan Island and Warba Island on one side, and Iraq's Al-Faw Peninsula on the other." (Wikipedia)</p>  <p>The map shows the northern part of the Persian Gulf. On the left is Kuwait, and on the right is Iraq. In the center, there is a large island labeled 'Bubiyan Island'. To its north, there is a smaller island labeled 'Warbah Island'. A small channel, labeled 'Khor Abdullah Channel', is shown between Warbah Island and the Iraqi coast. A dashed orange line indicates the border between Kuwait and Iraq. A small orange circle marks 'Umm Qasr Port' on the Iraqi coast. The 'Arabian Gulf' is labeled in the bottom right corner.</p> |

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| Exercise 34 | |
| Q1: | In which respects was Iraq frustrated by Kuwait during the Iran-Iraq war? |
| A1: | Kuwait did not allow Iraq to use a channel leading south between the Kuwaiti islands of Warba and Bubiyan. |
| Q2: | Why did Kuwait not allow Iraqi ships to pass between Warba and Bubiyan? |
| A2: | Kuwait was afraid of the Iranian response. |
| Q3: | During the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq had to export its oil, its only source of income. How did Iraq get the oil out of its country? |
| A3: | By pipeline: first across Turkey and Syria, later also through Saudi Arabia. |
| Q4: | How did Iraq receive its imports? |
| A4: | Via Jordan, Kuwait and Turkey. |
| Q5: | What lessons did Iraq learn from this situation? |
| A5: | That it was totally dependent on its neighbours for handling its exports and imports and therefore very vulnerable. |
| Q6: | In 1986 a new development occurred in the Iran-Iraq war. What was it? |
| A6: | The Iranians began to attack Kuwaiti oil tankers because Kuwait was an ally of Iraq. |
| Q7: | How did the Kuwaitis try to protect themselves? |
| A7: | They asked the USA for help. |
| Q8: | Did the USA respond positively? |
| A8: | No. |
| Q9: | What was Kuwait's next move? |
| A9: | Kuwait obtained a promise of help from the USSR. |
| Q10: | Did the USA like the prospect of the USSR becoming involved in the Gulf? |
| A10: | No. They therefore overcame their earlier reluctance and allowed Kuwaiti ships to be re-registered as US ships and fly the American flag and sent out ships to escort and protect the Kuwaiti ships sailing under the US flag. |

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| Exercise 35 | |
| Q1: | How large was Iraq's international debt at the end of the Iran-Iraq war? |
| A1: | \$70 billion. |
| Q2: | How much of this money did Iraq owe to its ally Kuwait? |
| A2: | More than \$10 billion. |
| Q3: | When did the Iran-Iraq war end? |
| A3: | With Iraq's acceptance of a cease-fire on the 8.8.88 (8 August 1988). |
| Q4: | Iraq had several grievances and demands, which later served as a pretext or excuse for its invasion of Kuwait. Which were they? |
| A4: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Iraq wanted Kuwait to cancel its war debts of over \$10 billion. 2. Iraq wanted an additional \$27 billion from Kuwait. 3. Iraq wanted Kuwait to reduce its oil production in order to increase the price of oil on the world market. 4. Iraq accused Kuwait of stealing Iraqi oil from the Rumaila oil field. Most of the Rumaila oil field is in Iraq. Iraq accused Kuwait of lifting, from its small section of the oil field, more than its fair share. 5. Iraq wanted the islands of Warba and Bubiyan. |
| Q5: | What were probably the real reasons for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait? Name the two most obvious ones. |
| A5: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iraq wanted Kuwait's riches (oil, money, investments). • Iraq wanted free access to the Persian Gulf to escape from its landlocked position. |

Here endeth the Kuwaiti Catechism

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