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DEVELOPMENT AND VITALITY  
OF KUWAITI MASS MEDIA  
BEFORE, DURING, AND  
AFTER THE GULF CRISIS

SAUD A. ALKHARRAZ

1997





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The American University in Cairo  
Development And Vitality of Kuwaiti  
Mass Media Before, During, and  
After the Gulf Crisis  
A Thesis submitted to

To Department of Journalism and Mass Communication  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
The degree of Master of Arts

by  
Saud A. Alkharraz

Jan. 1997



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The American University in Cairo  
Development And Vitality of Kuwaiti  
Mass Media Before, During, and  
After the Gulf Crisis

A Thesis submitted by Saud A. Alkhrraz  
To Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

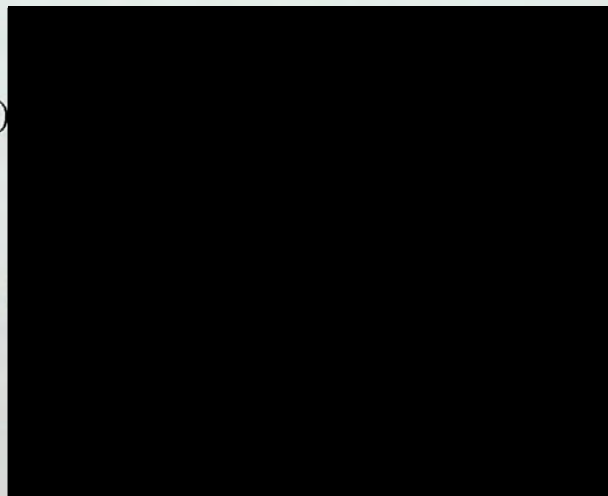
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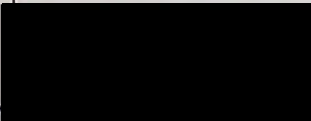
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
The degree of Master of Arts  
has been approved by

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Thesis Committee Reader



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Date

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## ABSTRACT

This research is mainly concerned with describing the basic principles governing the Kuwaiti mass media before, during , and after the Gulf Crisis. It could be interpreted as an introductory study to Kuwaiti mass media and mass communication for researchers as well as students in this field.

The role of media and the Ministry of Information before, during , and after the Gulf Crisis are thoroughly examined. It should be noted that the researcher has utilized the latest available documents related to his argument.



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## INTRODUCTION

This study intends to look into the dynamism of the Kuwaiti mass media. The study will discuss the country's mass media before, during, and after the Gulf Crisis. The study will discuss the Kuwaiti mass media during the seven-month occupation of the country by Iraq, to show the various efforts that were undertaken by the Kuwaiti people - including journalists - to keep the world informed about the situation in Kuwait. To adequately understand the resistance mass media in Kuwait, it is pertinent to discuss the country's mass media before and after the Gulf Crisis. Studying any phenomenon is only relevant if discussed in context, and not as an isolated piece.

The Kuwaiti media helped change some of the deep-rooted traditions, customs, and principles of the society, but within the framework of the country's religion, Islam, and the demands of a modern society. As in other developing countries, information in Kuwait has gone through several stages of development over the last quarter of a century since independence. This change has taken place in radio, television, daily newspapers, news agencies, and magazines (Al-Arabi, 1989, p. 169).

According to Jurdi (1994), there are three components reflected in the media policy of Kuwait: the Constitution, state-run media, and the rules and regulations the government implemented to provide appropriate information to



society. The media policy includes internal policy which is to inform and build a society that is capable of practicing its rights and facing the challenge of the future. The external media policy is to inform the world about Kuwait and problems facing the Arab, the Islamic, and the world communities (p. 21).

The Supreme Executive (which comprises the Amir, the Prime Minister, and the ministers) is the government post that sets the rules over the media in Kuwait. It has the power to determine the policy of the media. It practices its power through the Ministry of Information. The Information Minister is most influential in the media policy of Kuwait. He sets the goals of the media in Kuwait whether it is state-run media or non-state media. His regulation should coincide with the policy of the Supreme Executive and should not violate the Constitution. He has the power to issue permission for a new publication.

To co-ordinate news gathering for Kuwaiti mass media both at home and abroad, the Wakalat al-Anba' al-Kuwayt (Kuwait News Agency KUNA) was established on October 6, 1976. KUNA is the main source of news. Nominally independent, it is in practice operated by the Ministry of Information. For foreign news the media also rely on other Arab and the international agencies. Reuters has a bureau in Kuwait City (Drost 1991, P.285).



Jurdi (1994) quotes the KUNA memorandum attached to the decree explained the purpose of KUNA: "In view of fact-distortion by imperialist and Zionist misleading propaganda, and the ensuing implications on world public opinion, it was emphatic to establish the Kuwait News Agency. KUNA will be compiling news and circulating factual material to media institutions and individuals, in a bid to furnish the most comprehensive and unbiased news service to counter prevaricate propaganda, fill the gap in news gathering in the region and carry news items with honesty and neutrality to the world public opinion (p. 34)."

KUNA started to test its news broadcasting to its subscribers in March 11, 1978, and in May 20, 1978, it started officially to broadcast six hours daily. It increased its broadcasting to twelve hours in June 10, 1987, and sixteen hours daily in October 14, 1987. It was broadcasting to Kuwait and the Gulf area.

KUNA started to test its English broadcasting in January 15, 1980, and officially in February 25, 1980 inside Kuwait and abroad (Ezzat 1992, P. 204).

The agency uses ten satellite lines to communicate with its offices and its subscribers and 14 satellite lines to communicate with the world. It has 17 offices in many Arab and other capitals, and 40 foreign correspondents. KUNA has also signed a cooperative agreement with different news agencies.



Many print media in Kuwait rely on KUNA for local and most international news. The agency transmits its news in Arabic and English, and exchanges news with other regional and international news agencies.

On August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait. This invasion caused the destruction of all aspects of modernization in Kuwait. Most of the media infrastructure was destroyed or looted. Kuwait Facts and Figures (1992) concludes that since the liberation, the Ministry of Information in Kuwait has spared no effort in rebuilding and developing its institutions. National expertise is employed to carry on these reforms reflecting the ambitions of the government.

One important aspect about the press in Kuwait is that the National Assembly is the body that ensures the freedom of the press. Whenever the fortunes of the Assembly falters, the press is also affected. When the Assembly was dissolved in 1986, the press had nowhere to turn for protection. After the liberation of the country from Iraq and the subsequent reconvening of the National Assembly, the press enjoyed an increased degree of freedom.

Starting from a modest station in 1951, Kuwait Radio began as a two-hour per day broadcasting unit to become, by 1988, a gigantic international radio service. It transmits over several channels in four languages for 63 hours



daily. The eight programs on Kuwait radio include the General Program Channel of 20 hours daily, the Second Channel which broadcasts for six hours daily, the European Channel (in English) which transmits for another six hours, the Urdu Channel for two hours daily, the FM Channel which broadcasts for 18 hours daily, the Persian Channel of two hours daily, the Holy Quran of eight hours daily, and the Special Channel directed to Europe for seven hours every day (Kuwait Facts and Figures, 1988, p. 256).

The first television station in Kuwait began in 1961 before any other Gulf state. By 1963, television transmission hours were 28 per week. It rose to 52 hours per week by 1966, and in 1985 television transmission time rose to an average of 16 hours per day or about 112 hours per week. By 1989, the Ministry of Information was preparing to launch a third television station (Al-Arabi, 1989, p. 170).

This multiplicity of voices in the form of the press, radio, and television were silenced on August 2, 1990, with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. But the voices refused to die. Today, the Kuwaiti mass media is more dynamic than ever.



## I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF KUWAIT

Population: 2,020,000
Capital: Kuwait City
GNP per capita: US\$16,380
Political system: absolute monarchy
Principal languages: Arabic (official), English
Literacy: 75%
Daily newspaper circulation: 223 per 1,000 people
Radio receivers: 545 per 1,000 people
Television sets: 396 per 1,000 people

source: Drost 1991

Kuwait is one of the twenty-two Arab states extending from the far east of Asia to the northern part of Africa. Before the discovery of oil, Kuwait was a transit area for nomadic tribes and caravans. It has not yet been possible to fix a date for the establishment of the town of Kuwait city. Nor is it easy to accurately date the rise of the Sheikdom of Kuwait under the ruling Sabah family. "However, earlier research, based on records from the English East India Company suggests that the town was built about 1716" (Abu-Hakima, 1985, p. 1).

Kuwait was under the direct rule of the Bani Khalid tribes, who ruled eastern Arabia at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Al-Sabah arrived in Kuwait with permission from the Bani Khalid ruler. Family disputes after the death of the Bani Khalid ruler in 1722 gave the Al-Sabah a chance to



practice some form of independence. This opportunity was enhanced after 1752. The absence of strong centralized rule in Eastern Arabia made it possible for the Al-Sabah to become totally independent of the Bani Khalid in the town of Kuwait.

The first Amir of Kuwait was chosen by the inhabitants of Kuwait, in the tribal manner, to administer justice and the affairs of the thriving town.

The Shaikh of Kuwait who is referred to in Dr. Edward Ives' voyage of 1758 was Sabah, according to Abu-Hakima (p. 6), who rose to power a few years earlier, in 1752, and who established authority in Kuwait and vicinity. Because of its commercial success, Kuwait became an important port of call for desert caravans to and from Aleppo. These caravans carried goods imported by Kuwaiti vessels from India and passengers who wanted to travel from the Arabian Gulf, via the desert, to Aleppo in Syria. The English East India Company used Kuwait as an important route for mailing and trading purposes. Al-Hatim (1980) state that, on January 23, 1899, Kuwait signed an agreement with Great Britain to come to aid if the Ottoman in Baghdad attack Kuwait (P. 22).

Formely a British protectorate, Kuwait achieved full independence in 1961 under the as-Sabah family, which has been in power since the 1750s. The 1962 Constitution provides for the appointmint by the Amir of a council



of ministers and the election by limited suffrage of a legislature. Amid growing tension between the government and the National Assembly the current Amir, Shaikh Jabir al Ahmad al Jabir Al-Sabah, dissolved parliament in 1986. Since that, he has ruled by decree until the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq.

Kuwait's enormous wealth is based on oil. Around 60 per cent of the population are foreign nationals, mostly other Arabs, as well as a large Palestinian community, and migrant workers from Iran, India, Pakistan and elsewhere. (These figures reflect the demographic situation before the Iraqi invasion in August 1990 and the subsequent departure of many foreigners.) The official language is Arabic but English is the lingua franca (Drost 1991, P.284.)

Kuwait is located in the northwest corner of the Arabian Gulf, between latitudes 28\* and 30\* to the north of the Equator and between longitudes 46\* and 48\* to the east of Greenwich. The weather is typical of the Sahara geographical region.

In the north and the west, Kuwait shares a 240 km (149 miles) border with the Republic of Iraq, and to the south and southwest it shares a border of 250 km (155 miles) with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On the east, Kuwait has a coastline of 290 km on the Arabian Gulf. The distance from the extreme



points in the south to the north is about 200 km (124 miles) and from west to east is about 170 km (106 miles). The total area of Kuwait is 17,818 square kilometers (6,969 square miles).

The location of Kuwait, the discovery of oil and the positive relationship with other countries have made Kuwait a strategic and vital factor in the regional and world economy. The country became a target for superpowers and industrial countries. It attracted many countries to invest and send workers to participate in Kuwait's strong economy and modernization. Kuwait helped Third World nations by providing monetary assistance toward their modernization, including the areas of medical supplies, education, social improvements, and disaster relief.

The first population census conducted in Kuwait was in 1957. The Central Statistics Office estimated the 1910 population at about 35,000. From 1910 to 1935 it increased rapidly to 75,000 after the discovery of oil.

When the first population census was conducted in 1957 the population of Kuwait was 206,000. The results of the April 1985 population census indicate that the population was 1,712,133. Estimates from the Central Statistics Office indicate that the population rose by mid-1988 to 1,958,477, and by the year 1990 to 2.1 million if the rate of growth remained constant (Kuwait Facts and Figures, 1992, p. 35).



The increase of foreign labor was a major cause of the increase of population in Kuwait. The population of non-Kuwaitis in 1965 was 298,546; it increased in 1975 to 687,082 and in 1985 the non-Kuwaiti population totaled 1,697,301 (Ministry of Planning, 1992, p. 27).

Since there are more foreigners than Kuwaitis, the National Council's Committee recommended that Kuwaitis should eventually become 70 percent of the total population, with the remaining 30 percent comprised of other Arab and non-Arab nationalities. The Committee recommended that foreign laborers brought to Kuwait should possess technical skills and other skills needed by the country (Facts, p. 38).

On August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, and claimed that Kuwait is the 19th province of Iraq. This invasion caused the destruction of all aspects of modernization in Kuwait. On February 26, 1991, a coalition of countries, led by the United States, led an invasion that eventually forced the Iraqis out of Kuwait, and Kuwait was liberated. Since the liberation, Kuwait has begun to rebuild the country and again become part of the world economy. The rebuilding included the reconstruction of government buildings, oil industries, roads and transportation, telecommunication and media systems, medical buildings, educational buildings, and the coastline. In other words, Kuwait had to rebuild a new country with a new attitude and mentality (Jurdi, p. 11).



## GOVERNORATES

Kuwait is divided into five governorates, each governorate has several districts. A selected governor is responsible for administering the district.

The governorates are the governorate of the Capital (1962) has a population of 241,356. This governorate includes government buildings, main bank centers, museums, old wall gates, and all Kuwaiti islands. The Hawally governorate (1962) is the smallest, but it has the largest population totaling 496,503. The Ahmadi governorate (1962) has a population of 301,513. This governorate is known for its oil fields and wells. The Jahra governorate (1979) is the largest in area, with a population of 241,285. Al-Farwaniya governorate (1988) has a population of 416,644 (Annual Statistical Abstract, 1992, p. 28).

## THE ECONOMY

The Kuwaiti economy depends on and is closely interlinked with the rest of the world in terms of transactions and exports. It is evident that world economic conditions have a great impact on Kuwait's economy, which is dependent on oil production. It was estimated that 89.9 percent of Kuwait revenues come from oil products and 10.1 percent come from non-oil products (Kuwait Facts and Figures, 1988, p. 58). Kuwait also has overseas investments which are carried through the State General Reserve Fund and the Future Generations Reserve. In recent years, Kuwait's once prominent per



capita income has declined. In 1965, the national income per capita was 1,137 KD (KD = US \$3), and it increased to 3,594 KD in 1975; in 1988, it reached its apex at 6,440 KD (Statistical Abstract, 1990, p. xxviii). In 1988, it went down again to 3,591 KD, and rose to 4,924 KD in 1992 (Statistical Abstract, 1992, p. xxxix).

To supplement oil production, Kuwait has offered domestic industries specific incentives: tax breaks and exemptions to encourage investment in those industries in Kuwait. This includes long-term loans to Kuwaiti business people, government contributions to the capital cost, government finance for all infrastructure facilities, protective tariffs, restriction on imports, and allocation of special plots at nominal rents for long periods (Facts and Figures, 1992, p. 83). The manufacturing industries in Kuwait include flour, bran, macaroni, biscuits, bread, salt, hydrogen gas, detergent, cement, sand lime bricks, pipes, caustic soda, and standard accumulators (Jurdi, p. 13).

Kuwait's economy suffered tremendous setbacks because of the Iraqi invasion. The Central Bank of Kuwait faces a deficit; corruption of the Kuwaiti overseas investment during the invasion also caused the economy to lose billions of dollars.

## **EDUCATION**

Education in Kuwait includes private and public schools, both of which



fall under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. For public schools all stages of education are free. The government takes the responsibility of providing school buildings, textbooks, teachers, transportation, and other facilities. There are three schooling stages in Kuwait: the elementary, the intermediate, and the secondary. Each stage consists of four years. Statistical Abstract 1992 (p. 325) shows 535 kindergartens, primary, intermediate, and secondary government schools, and 240 private schools and institutions in Kuwait in 1992-1993.

Private education began in Kuwait to accommodate the needs of the expatriates seeking work in Kuwait. Private schools are supervised under the Ministry of Education. The government of Kuwait provides annual funds for private Arab schools. Other private schools are supervised by other countries such as the United States and England. Each school has its own educational system.

Kuwait has one university, the University of Kuwait, established in 1966 to give citizens the opportunity of gaining higher, professional, artistic and vocational education. Besides classroom education, those institutions provides students with practical training. The government of Kuwait provides scholarships for those who successfully finished high school or earned a bachelor's degree to continue their higher education in America or England.



## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

### Telephones

Telephone services cover all towns in Kuwait. The telephone system continues to expand with new technology and has a capacity of 548,000 lines (Facts and Figures, 1992, p. 107). In 1975, there were 85,612 telephone lines, and this number increased in 1988 to 281,771 (Statistical Abstract in 25 Years, 1990, p. 190). International service include all countries in the world, and can be dialed directly from any household. The Ministry of Communications is planning to add more services to the telephone system, such as call waiting. Car telephone services also expanded to 100,000 lines, and can be used for local and international calls. The Ministry is providing domestic services like the wake-up, weather forecasting and other services to accommodate the needs of this fast developing society. Kuwait adopted an Electronic Telephone Directory to provide detailed information (name, address, telephone numbers, P. O. Box, cable, etc.) in 50 seconds. Emergency telephones are connected directly to the fire department, police stations, and ambulance services (Jurdi, p. 18).

### Post

In 1986, new automatic sorting systems added to postal service with five-digit number (the code) to accommodate the large quantity of incoming



mail. Recently, the postal service handed over the mail distributions to the private sector. In addition to government postal service, there are other services such as DHL, UPS, and Federal Express (Facts, 1992, p. 109).

### Telex

Telex service was added to telephone services in 1975. Government and private companies are the main users of this service. In 1990, there were 1,580 international outgoing telexes (Statistical Abstract, 1992, p. 228).

### Satellite Earth Stations

Kuwait had five satellites stationed in the northern part of the country. The first one was commissioned in 1969 to be linked with another satellite over the Indian Ocean. The second satellite opened in 1977 to operate with another satellite over the Atlantic Ocean. Between 1981-1983 other satellite stations opened to communicate with the rest of the world. Kuwait satellite earth stations operate through the Arab Satellite (Arabsat). The invasion of Kuwait destroyed all five satellites; new satellites were opened in the Doha area.

Household satellite dishes have become popular in Kuwait. Many houses possess satellite dishes to increase the television channels from four local stations to more than ten channels covering Gulf states, Europe, Asia, and Africa (Jurdi, p. 19).



## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The information media play an important role as a means of transmitting ideas and values to the society by reaffirmation, criticism, and evaluation. The media have an even more important role to play in developing countries. In Kuwait, the media inform the public about the country's resources, abilities, potentials, and limitations. There is no doubt about the direct link that binds information and development.

Kuwait produces a large number of newspapers for its size, and the quality of its press reached a remarkable level during the 1970s and 1980s. By 1979, seven daily newspapers with an estimated domestic circulation of over 124,000 were being published in Kuwait, although the population was still under one million and literacy was only 60 percent. By 1986, newspaper circulation reached 275,000 inside the country, although the population was still only 1.7 million and literacy was 71 percent. In addition, more than a dozen weeklies and an equal number of other periodicals were published in Kuwait. All of the dailies were known outside of Kuwait, where they sold another 100,000 copies (Rugh 1987, p. 101). With this large number of publishing, does Kuwait have free press?

Before the press law of 1956, freedom of the press was new in the country, and there were no specific rules or regulations governing the press in



Kuwait. Publications were open to anyone as long as they do not offend the government (Jurdi, 1994, p. 21).

The Constitution of Kuwait is the safeguard of freedom of expression in Kuwait, according to Jurdi (p. 21). He states that:

Article 36 of the Constitution provides protection for freedom of expression as long as it is not violating the law. Article 37 is specifically written for the press. It is stated that, "Freedom of the press, printing and publishing shall be guaranteed in accordance with the conditions and manner specified by law. "

Jurdi says that the first Press Law in Kuwait was promulgated in 1956 which set the rules and regulations of the press in Kuwait. The law contained 35 articles covering the definition of the print media, rules related to printing and publication, specific rules related to newspaper, illegal publication, press violation, and general rules. This law was in effect for a short time, and was changed to a more accurate and specific law in 1961.

On the latter law, another writer (Abdullah, 1985, p.196), states:

the 1961 law contained 45 articles and it is more specific than the old one. It is the one that is still working in Kuwait. It has four chapters dealing with printing publications, newspaper publications, illegal issues and final laws. Article 35 of the press law is the most controversial one. It gives the government the power to suspend any print medium. This law was amended in 1965, 1972, and 1976.



Under the Constitution, "freedom of opinion is guaranteed to everyone, within the limits of the law". These limits were specified in the 1961 Press and Publishing Law, and include fines or prison sentences for publishing banned material, including anti-government views and economically sensitive reports. Before 1986 these formal powers were rarely used, but provided the framework for an unstated agreement between the government and media regarding the limits of press freedom. At this time Kuwait was home to the freest press in the Arab world, having become one of the region's primary publishing centres as scores of publications and journalists relocated from Beirut to Kuwait after the eruption of civil war in Lebanon in 1975 (Drost 1991, P. 284.)

The Kuwaiti press, according to Rugh (1987), "has developed a degree of diversity, competition and outspokenness which put it in a special category distinguishable from the press systems" of other Arab countries (p. 101). The writer likens the Kuwaiti press to the press in Lebanon, a country which may be the most liberal in the Arab world.

Apart from its diversity and outspokenness, Rugh (1987) states that:

the (Kuwaiti) press..has considerable freedom to criticize. (By law) the government could not take direct action to suspend a newspaper which broke the rules but could only take it to court... (This) gave the press



additional freedom (p. 106).

Rugh (1987) concludes that "the Kuwaiti press continues to challenge the regime, and the government's primary means of influence is persuasion" (p. 106).

Jurdi (p. 23) states that in 1962, the Ministry of Guidance and Information was established to take over the Printing and Publication Administration as well as the radio and television and be responsible for all publications in the country. On February 2, 1971, the name was changed to Ministry of Information. Article 35 of the Press Law stated that the head of the Press and Publications Office can suspend any newspaper for less than one year or cancel the newspaper's permit if it was found serving the interest of a foreign country against the national interest, or if a non-political newspaper switched to politics.

Abdullah (1985) states that in 1965, this article was substituted with a new one. The new one gives the Supreme Executive the power to suspend a newspaper if it was found in violation of the press law. In 1972, Article 35 was amended to give the suspension procedure more democratic power. The Supreme Executive no longer has the power to suspend any newspaper. In 1972, after the National Assembly ratified the new law, the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al Salem Al Subah, added a new amendment to Article 35 of



the press law of 1961. The new amendments stated that: it is illegal to suspend any newspaper until the court makes its final decision, and the time of suspension should not exceed one year; the owner of the newspaper and the editor-in-chief will appear in court after the government prosecutor finished his investigation of the complaint filed by the Information Minister; then the head of the Criminal Court upon request from the general prosecution to stop the newspaper temporarily during the investigation for less than three weeks (p. 247).

On the same issue, Jurdi mentions that in 1976 the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Subah Al Salem Al Subah, added a new condition to Article 35 of the Press Law, in which the Supreme Executive retained the power to suspend a newspaper for a time less than two years or suspend its permit if it was found serving the interest of other governments, showing policy different than the government, or receiving money or support from any government for any reason (p. 23).

Another writer (Al-Hatim, 1980) states that the new condition also gave the Information Minister the power to suspend a paper for a time less than three months in urgent matters, and any paper that wants to publish any foreign advertising or statement should first get the permission from the Ministry of Information. With this law the government gained absolute power



over the press (p. 252).

New censorship rules were introduced as part of the political crackdown in 1986, when the Amir dissolved the National Assembly. They oblige all newspapers and magazines to submit their copy for approval to the Ministry of Information before publication; ban any criticism of the Amir, the ruling family, Islam, or leaders of Arab states; and prohibit the acceptance of financial support from foreign sources (Drost 1991, P. 284).

Jurdi states that in 1991, the government stopped using Article 35 against the press. However, after dissolving the National Assembly in 1986, the government added new articles called Repeated 35, Repeated 35A, and Repeated 35B to the Press Law to give the Information Minister the power to censor the press. The new articles stated that the Information Minister can censor any circulated publication prior to the print; those who violate the Repeated Articles 4, 27, and 35 will face one year to three years in prison and pay a penalty of 3,000 to 5,000 KD (1 KD = US\$3), and the Ministry can keep the seized publication; inspectors of the Ministry of Information can enter any publication, newspaper, or local commercial printing to catch (sic) the violators of this law (p. 24).



The writer adds that the Ministry appointed people for each paper to work as a gatekeeper of the government. They heavily censored the press. The censorship included any material that might create negative reaction against the government. Even though freedom of expression is protected by the constitution, freedom of the press could not escape government censorship. The government either directly censored the print media or the print media practiced self-censorship in order to survive (p. 30). These multitudes of censorship laws greatly confused the Kuwaiti press.

Government's absolute control of the Kuwaiti press after the dissolution of the National Assembly ensured that the press had no choice but to follow the opinion of the government in order to survive. This was obvious, according to Jurdi, before the invasion of Kuwait. When the government supported Iraq in its war against Iran, the press became the cheerleaders for the Iraqi government. Truth about Saddam killing his own people in the north was never introduced in the press until the invasion of Kuwait, when the press (actually the government) realized its mistake (p. 29).

One other factor in the weakness of the Kuwaiti press was its over-dependence on foreign wire services and foreign journalists. The Kuwait press heavily relied on Palestinians, Lebanese, Egyptians, and other Arab journalists to cover their foreign news. This caused the journalists to say what the



government want them to say in order to get paid (Jurdi, p.29). Waqiyah (1994) also states that there were too many non-Kuwaitis working in the Kuwaiti press compared to the small number of Kuwaitis. The press cannot be built except on the effort of a country's citizens, but the press in Kuwait went against this by relying heavily on non-Kuwaitis. This caused very dangerous negative outcomes. Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was very much aware of the Kuwaiti Press indispensability in the Arab world as it always supported the Arabs whether they are right or wrong. Therefore, it could rightly be said that if Saddam Hussein had no "insider" influence in the press, there was no way he could have received the massive coverage he did in the Kuwaiti press (p.163)

During the occupation the government-in-exile made a range of promises to opposition groups concerning a return to constitutional rule and freedom of expression. But since its restoration of the government there have been no moves to meet opposition demands. In April 1991 the six main opposition parties issued a joint call for the introduction of a free press (Drost 1991, P. 284.)



Jurdi states that, the Kuwaiti government realized its mistake and that there was no alternative but to remove the restrictive media laws after liberation. After liberation, the Amir of Kuwait Shaikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Subah ordered the government to cancel the Repeated Articles 35, 35A, and 35B of the Press Law. Since then, the press freedom in Kuwait has gained momentum (Jurdi p. 24). Newspapers can print anything as long as the information is not harmful to the government, national security, or other friendly foreign states. Today, according to him, the press in Kuwait is considered one of the freest in the Gulf and Arab states (Jurdi, p.24).

Finally, the Kuwaiti press before the invasion was completely censored which made it confuse the Kuwaiti people by publishing false news about Saddam being the ideal Arab hero to defend what they called "the eastern-gate." This propaganda was so strong, it made all Kuwaiti people believe it. The press followed the government line in supporting Iraq completely.

Now, after truth about Iraq have been disclosed, and after the cancelation of the censorship Repeated Articles 35, 35A, and 35B of the press Law. Did the press really gain its freedom?



### III. AIM, PURPOSE, AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this research is to show how a small country like Kuwait could have a vibrant mass media, arguably "too large" for its size. The research will discuss how a small country (Kuwait) started a mass media nearly a century ago. How the government of the country painstakingly spent huge amounts of money to invest in the media, knowing fully well the importance of information-dissemination. Compared to its size geographically, Kuwait had a giant media establishment. The people of the country, mostly literate, made good use of the media of mass communication for modernization.

After this tremendous effort at developing the Kuwaiti mass media, the Iraqi invasion of August 2, 1990, destroyed all the communication and information infrastructure. Kuwait had to start all over again. Yet, during the occupation, the Kuwaiti-media-in-exile, publishing and broadcasting from friendly countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, were able to adequately counter Iraqi propaganda about their claims to Kuwait.

The media-in-exile helped in no small measure in convincing the world - as well as the citizens left behind - that the powerful propaganda machinery put in place by the occupying Iraqi forces was false, and the efforts of the Iraqis came to nought. During the occupation, the resistance continued to



publish newspapers underground, despite all the difficulties in logistics and distribution. Similarly, the radio continued to broadcast for a short period of time, also underground, before the occupation forces were able to annihilate them.

When the media "died" in occupied Kuwait, the ancestral means of traditional communication returned. Increasingly, the mosques, the *Diwaniyyah*, and what is referred to in Kuwait as the They-Say-Agency (Yaguloon) became the sources of information for the people of Kuwait.

Waqiyan (p. 245) states that during the occupation, even though the printing presses had stopped, the underground press did not. Pamphleteering emerged and volunteers smuggled publications to people all over the country. Even though the radio and television stations had closed, the informal broadcast stations, the mosques and *Diwaniyyah* remained active. Waqiyan says that there were no printing presses, no cameras, no editors, no producers, no information centers, but the most important asset - the human spirit - was still present. Many countries in the world have faced problems such as Kuwait's at one time or another. Despite numerous difficulties, effort was made to ensure that people were kept informed about the state of affairs.

The effort of the Kuwaiti people and their underground media in resisting occupation should be exemplary to all other countries. This research



is significant because it will show that a people as small in number as the Kuwaitis could keep their spirits alive - with the help of the media - and triumph at the end. The research will show how the Kuwaiti people have held tightly to the beliefs inculcated in them by their media, and how the media were able to regain their lost ground immediately after liberation.

One writer (Waqiyan, p. 271) is of the opinion that the Kuwaiti press had an enviable position among the mass media of the Arab world long before invasion. This, according to him, was not only because the country had the money to spend on its media, but because the government, through constitutional provisions, has encouraged the flourishing of the mass media and freedom of expression.



## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **Methodology**

This research is a descriptive study. "Research is not limited to decision-making situations," according to Wimmer and Dominick (1991). These authors also state that: "It is also widely used in theoretical areas to attempt to describe the media, to understand audience behavior" (Wimmer and Dominick, 1991, p. 4).

Some research follows the so-called "method of tenacity," which follows the logic asserting that something is true because it has always been so. Others use the method of intuition which holds that something is true because it stands to reason. Another is the method of authority which "seeks to promote belief in something because a trusted source...says it is true" (Wimmer and Dominick, 1991, p. 8).

Strauss and Corbin (1990) state that in sourcing material for a study, "all kinds of literature can be used before a research study is begun: both in thinking about and getting the study off the ground. They can also be used during the study itself, contributing to its forward thrust. In fact, there should also be some searching out of the literature during the research itself, an actual interplay of



reading literature and data analysis. So, in effect, we read and use published material during all phases of the research" (p. 56). This study, as a descriptive research, is no exception.

Babbie (1986) has noted that descriptive research in the social sciences serves a multitude of functions. Among these functions are the identification of relevant variables and factors impinging upon a problem or issue as a preliminary to quantitative research efforts designed to capture measurable data. Babbie (1986) also makes note of the fact that qualitative, descriptive, narrative scholarly research is extremely useful in defining an issue in order to identify the most significant forces shaping outcomes and results. In geopolitical matters, which often defy accurate or meaningful quantification, this approach to analysis is extremely useful and even necessary (P. 106).

Similarly, Palmer, Stern, and Gaile (1974) have argued that the central and dominant goal of political science is to systematically explain and predict political and sociopolitical phenomena (P. 72). In the present case, "explanation" rather than "prediction" is predominant. Explanation can be achieved, according to these researchers, via qualitative or quantitative research methodologies. They further argue that before a quantitative study of any sociopolitical or purely



political phenomenon is undertaken, a qualitative research effort is a fundamental necessity. Such an activity enables the researcher to identify relevant variables impacting upon a specific situation and to narrowly define the area to be quantitatively investigated.

Scarrow (1969) early on argued forcefully in favor of comparative political analysis as the primary method of research in this discipline. In his view, comparison involves definition of the generic as a preliminary to the elaboration of the particular (P. 8). The present study proceeded in light of these methodological considerations.

This research is intended to be a descriptive study of the mass media of Kuwait before, during and after the Iraqi occupation of August 1990 to February 1991. It will describe how the Kuwaiti mass media developed from its beginnings early this century to the time of the Iraqi invasion in 1990. It will also describe how the media functioned during the seven-month occupation against the background of the destruction that befell them. It will also describe how the Kuwaiti mass media were able to come back fully after the liberation of the country in 1991.

The study will also discuss the equipment lost during the invasion and how



the country was able to acquire new equipment after liberation. It will also attempt to discuss new developments in the Kuwaiti mass media, with special emphasis on the establishment of new and vibrant media outlets and mechanisms, some of which were not as vigorous before the invasion.

The liberation brought with it liberalization of the airwaves. The new FM channel, called 99.7 Super Station, became very popular over a short period of time. This suggests an incipient responsiveness of the Kuwaiti people to enhanced communications and greater access to the free flow of information within society.

Many writers have discussed the mass media in Kuwait covering these three periods. These works will serve as primary reference material for the study. A personal on-site visit to the mass media establishments in Kuwait, already conducted by the researcher, will provide additional material for the study.

Descriptive research has been defined as that "which attempts to picture or document current conditions or attitudes, that is to describe what exists at the moment" (Wimmer and Dominick, 1991, p. 107). Descriptive studies are classified as part of the field of qualitative research, a term which Strauss and Corbin explain to "mean any kind of research that produces findings not arrived



at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about persons' lives, stories, behavior, but also about organizational functioning, social movements, or interactional relationships" (p. 17).

Wimmer and Dominick state that some of the advantages of qualitative research include that "it allows a researcher to view behavior in a natural setting without the artificiality that sometimes surrounds experimental or survey research; it can increase a researcher's depth of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation; and it is flexible and allows the researcher to pursue new areas of interest" (p. 450).

Strauss and Corbin state that one reason for doing qualitative research "is the conviction of the researcher based upon research experience which advocates the use of qualitative methods for data gathering and analysis, whose use has given satisfactory result. Another reason is the nature of the research problem. Some areas of study naturally lend themselves more to qualitative types of research. Qualitative methods can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known. It can be used to gain novel and fresh slants on familiar subjects. Also, qualitative methods can give the intricate details of phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative



methods" (p. 19).

A descriptive research design follows these precepts. It is characterized by the following elements:

- it contains an explanatory rather than a quantifiable focus;
- it identifies specific orientations, ideological in nature, that influence behaviors and outcomes;
- it allows causal analysis with respect to identification of paradigms relevant situationally rather than generally (Scarrow, 1969, P. 139).



## CHAPTER TWO:

### THE KUWAITI MASS MEDIA BEFORE THE GULF CRISIS

#### I. The Kuwaiti Print Media Before the Gulf Crisis

"Prior to the advent of the printed press," according to Ogan (1983), "the bazaar coffeehouse and mosques served as the loci of news and information in much of the Middle East" (p. 130). The same is true in Kuwait. There, places where people gather, called *Diwaniyyah* and *coffee houses*, served as a grapevine. People have exchanged information in these places for centuries and, the writer continues, "those places still function as important traditional communication centers alongside the mass media" (p. 130).

The first publication in Kuwait, according to Waqiyani (1994), appeared in 1928: *Al-Kuwait* was a monthly general interest magazine established by Abdel Aziz Al-Rashid. The first issue was published June 20, 1928, and contained 80 pages. Waqiyani states that Al-Rashid was the first Kuwaiti journalist, "but as there then was no printing press in his own country, he published his magazine at the Shura Press in Egypt. Despite the difficulty in transportation then, the *Al-Kuwait* magazine was rarely late in arriving" (p. 28).



Al-Rashid's innovative action was informed by his standing as a social reformer, an intellectual, and a reformist with modernist opinions. He used his publication to propagate his views, as well as provide a bridge between Kuwait and its neighbors, both in the Gulf and the larger Arab world. Waqiyah (p. 29) states that "Al-Rashid's activity was not profit motivated even though publishing was (and still is) a capital-intensive exercise."

*Al-Kuwait* magazine from its inception published investigative news reports, book reviews, obituaries, poetry, scholarly-written feature articles, columns by famous contributors, and so forth. This pioneer journalist, editor and publisher faced a lot of opposition at home. People thought a publication such as his was dangerous to religion, and bad for the society. Al-Rashid was very unhappy about that. Nevertheless, *Al-Kuwait* became very popular among readers.

Al-Barghas states that the editor and proprietor, greatly influenced by the well-known Egyptian reformer Mohammed Abdou, rendered the magazine a forum for spreading thoughts of development and modernization not only among the Kuwaiti people, but also among the Arab nation at large, and sought contributions from Arab writers such as Emir Shakib Arslan, Sheikh Rashid



Rida, Mahmud Shukri Al-Aloosi, Abdelkader Al-Magrabi and Sheikh Abdelaziz Al-Tha'alibi (p. 77).

*Al-Kuwait* closed down after two years when Al-Rashid left the country to live in Indonesia. However, that was not the end of his journalistic career. According to the Al-Arabi (1989), in 1931 in Indonesia, "Al-Rashid started another magazine, *Kuwaiti and Iraqi*, in collaboration with the seasoned Iraqi traveller Youssef Al-Bahri" (p. 171). It proved to be the second Kuwaiti magazine. This lasted for another six years, and it stopped only when he died in 1937. Interestingly, while collaborating on *Kuwaiti and Iraqi*, Al-Rashid published a third magazine, *Al-Tauhid*, which ran simultaneously with the former, and the latter lasted eleven issues.

Al-Rashid, according to Waqiyan, was a fiery defender of Islam and Arab culture. He feared no one, and "when famous British politician and later Prime Minister Winston Churchill wrote a book critical of Islam, Al-Rashid vociferously went on the defensive" (p. 46). After the pioneer's death, Kuwait had no other publication until 1946. During that time, according to the writer, "Cultural bridges were established between Kuwait and other Arab countries, especially Egypt. Kuwait House was opened in Cairo in 1945 and Kuwait began



sending students to study in Egyptian institutions" (p. 51).

According to Al-Barges, supervised by the previous Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Abdul Aziz Hussein, Kuwait House in Cairo issued *Al-Bi'athah* magazine (The Mission) (p. 177). Al-Arabi adds that Abdul Aziz Hussein published the magazine in collaboration with his fellow students in 1946 (p. 172).

Waqiyan states that *Al-Bi'athah* became the beacon for Kuwaiti journalism. It was as advanced as any of the important magazines of its time. It used pictures extensively, and even regularly featured cartoons. It was also modernist, as it aimed at inculcating modernism among its readers. It was also interested in sports, while it afforded the first few Kuwaiti women writers with their first training ground (p. 61).

Waqiyan (p. 63) states that *Al-Bi'athah* carried a special supplement on the occasion of a visit to Cairo of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber, then minister of education of Kuwait, in 1953. There was soon another supplement on Bahrain, Kuwait's neighbor.

*Al-Bi'athah* culled articles from other international magazines, translating into Arabic for its readers. This was more so if the articles in the other magazines concerned Kuwait. When Abdul Aziz Hussein left Cairo in 1950 to continue his



studies in England, Abdallah Zakarya Al-Ansari took over editing the magazine until it closed in 1954 when those pioneer students graduated from their Egyptian institutions and returned home. While it lasted, the magazine had the advantage of being in Egypt, the center of Arab nationalism and where a highly developed press was functioning. This interaction afforded the pioneer publishers an opportunity to learn first-hand the political developments of their region, as well as the experience needed to publish and run a magazine. "They lived through the July 26, 1952 Egyptian Revolution which brought many changes in the politics of the Arab world. That was also another learning process," according to Waqiyani, (p. 66).

Waqiyani (1994) discusses the reasons why the magazine was published in Egypt, and not in Kuwait, is that, until 1945 there was no printing press in Kuwait.

Al-Bargh (1986) mentions that the first magazine to be actually printed in Kuwait, *Al-Kazima*, was owned by Abdul Hamid Al-Sane'a and edited by Ahmad Al-Saqqaf in 1948. Waqiyani states that the arrival of a printing press, acquired by the Ministry of Education, encouraged the Kuwaiti intellectuals to start a home-made magazine, the first to be published and printed inside Kuwait.



It was a monthly, and its articles covered literature, sciences, arts, and society (p. 69). Waqiyah (p. 76) continues to state that even though they had only little journalistic experience, this group tried their best to succeed and faced all obstacles to achieve their goals. Being a specialized magazine, the readership was limited. In addition, as the government does not finance publications, the publication was doomed to fail after only nine months. According to Al-Barghas (p. 178) "*Al-Kazima* closed down in March 1949 as a result of publishing an article calling for further attention to educators." Jurdi (p. 22) adds that the article offended the government officials who ordered that the magazine be suspended.

Then followed what Waqiyah (p. 78) calls the "Fifties' Press". First was *Al-Kuwait* was published from June 1950 by Ya'qub Abdul Aziz Al-Rashid, son of the pioneer Kuwaiti journalist Abdul Aziz Al-Rashid. The son published the new *Al-Kuwait* magazine in memory of his father who issued his own magazine in 1928. The son retained the same name as that of his father's magazine. It was a monthly and lasted until December of the same year.

*Al-Fukahha* (The Humor) followed on October 12, 1950. It was edited by Farhan Rashid Al-Farhan, and was the first weekly magazine in Kuwait. When the publisher was asked why he published a humor magazine in a country known



for its conservatism and a people not known as avid readers of publications, the publisher was reported to have said, "perhaps humor could be the cure for both ailments: conservatism and aloofness."

Lack of government patronage, as well as damage due to printing and distribution problems made the magazine close down on February 7, 1951, after only nine issues. However, *Al-Fukaha* returned on July 20, 1954, and lasted until November 24, 1958. Altogether, it published 97 issues (Waqiyan, p. 84).

*Al-Ba'ath*, another monthly, followed. Its co-editors were Hamad Al-Rujaib and Ahmad Al-Adwani. Its first issue was in June 1950. It lasted three issues, and closed down in August of the same year.

*Al-sehha*, a monthly magazine interested in health affairs, published by the Ministry of Health, appeared on January 1, 1952. It was followed by *Al-Yaqza*, a student magazine published by Al-Shuweikh Secondary School in January 1952. Members of the editorial board were Abdallah Al-Dishluti, Labib Shafiq, Zuheir Al-Karami, and Ahmad Al-Adwani (Waqiyan, p. 88). This was followed by *Al-Raed*, published by the Teachers' Club in March 1952, according to Al-Arabi (1989, p. 172). Waqiyan states that the publishers, who were from the Kuwaiti House in Cairo, were Ahmad Al-Adwani, Hamad Al-Rujaib, and Fahad Al-



Diweiry. It started as a monthly, in the shape and size of a book. Its area of primary interest was education, and it also was interested in pictorial reporting. It ceased publication in January 1954, only to return as *Al-Raed Al-Asbu'i* (*Al-Raed Weekly*) published by the same Teachers' Club during the same month (p. 89).

*Al-Iman* monthly magazine followed in January 1953. It was interested in politics, social issues, and it aimed at addressing Arab nationalism. It was published by the National Cultural Club. The magazine offered its pages to air the complaints of Kuwaiti women and their rights to work and participate in social life. It was printed at Dar Al-Khashaf in Beirut. It continued until June 1955 (Waqiyan, p. 92).

*Al-Irshad* followed as another monthly magazine. Its interest was mainly religious, and the first issue appeared in August 1953. It was also printed in Beirut. Its editor was Abdul Aziz Al-Mutaww'a (p. 81).

*Al-Maahad Al-Dini* appeared in April 1954, published by the Kuwaiti Religious Institute. It was an annual magazine (p. 81).

Al-Barges (1986) states that "December 11, 1954, witnessed the emergence of the first issue of the official gazette *Kuwait Al-Youm* (*Kuwait Today*), by the Printing and Publication Administration. The weekly contained all



communiqués, statements, bids, decrees, laws and all matters relating to the public with an official capacity. Since November 30, 1956, the gazette has been appearing on sundays. In its first supplement edition on December 14, 1959, the official gazette included the law on Nationality, Passport and Foreign Residents Permit (p. 178)." Waqiyān mentions that at the beginning this government publication was being printed in a private printing press owned by Al-Gharaballi. The difficulty sometimes encountered forced the government to acquire its own printing press in 1956 (p. 82).

*Al-Fajr* weekly magazine appeared in February 1955 as the mouthpiece of the Graduates Club in Kuwait. It was the first magazine to appear much like a modern publication. It published 17 issues over three years. The Kuwaiti Press Law of 1956 required that an editor could not hold any other job but editing, while the Graduates' Club was only a voluntary gathering. The magazine criticized the law and described it as impossible to comply with since the press in Kuwait was not political-party sponsored. The magazine was the first to criticize the British Protection Treaty in its headlines (Waqiyān, p. 93).

*Al-Ittihad* appeared in March 1955. It was published by the Kuwaiti Students Union in Egypt after the *Al-Bi'athah* closed down. It was an irregular



publication, as it did not appear during holidays and during examination periods (p. 82).

*Akhbar Al-Asbu'a* which was the first weekly newspaper concerned with politics and social issues, appeared on November 1, 1955. It was edited by Dawood Musa'd Al-Saleh, and it lasted only till March 27, 1956 (p. 82).

*Al-Rabita* was started by Kuwaiti students in England and Ireland in 1957. It was also irregular like its counterpart in Egypt. It was more interested in the affairs of the Kuwaiti students there. Its editor was Ahmad Al-Duaij (p. 82).

*Al-Shaab* arrived the scene on December 5, 1957. It was considered the most important publication in the 1950s because it was the closest to a modern newspaper in terms of content, size, sections, and printing quality. Its editor-in-chief was Khalid Al-Khalaf. Its ideology was pro-Arab nationalism, and sometimes became a daily for a few days depending on the news of the day. It was the first Kuwaiti magazine to afford a cartoonist the opportunity to air his views in the form of cartoons. Also, it was the first to publish interviews with important Arab leaders. Its circulation reached 4,000 copies a week, and it was sold in foreign countries. The press law that stipulated that an editor must be employed fully by the publication was also a problem for this magazine as it was



difficult for it to pay its employees at that period in time, especially since the government gave no assistance (Waqiyan, p. 98).

Waqiyan also says that according to the Kuwaiti Encyclopedia, *Al-Sha'ab* and all other publications and clubs were closed down on February 3, 1959, following the Amir's announcement that the freedom of expression and democracy were being abused. The Amir claimed that the press had started to attack his person (p. 98).

For three years, there was not a single publication in Kuwait. Waqiyan states that another scholar, Dr. Mohammed Hassan Abdulah, says the Kuwaiti Encyclopedia was not correct in saying that Kuwait went without any publication for three years. Dr. Abdulah is of the opinion that only the popular press closed down and only for two years. As of early 1961, new publications started to appear, while some never stopped publishing. These included *Al-Arabi* magazine, the military magazine *Homat Al-Waten*, and *Al-Mojtam'a* magazine, which was published by the Ministry of Social Affairs (p. 99).

The last magazine to appear in the late 1950s, according to Waqiyan, was *Al-Arabi*, the first issue of which appeared on December 1, 1958. It was published by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information with Dr. Ahmed Zaki as first



editor-in-chief. Being sponsored by the government, the magazine was assured of success. It soon became an ambassador of Kuwait in the Arab World (p. 104). Drost 1991, states that, Al-Arabi is the largest-selling magazine in Arabic and specializes in cultural affairs (P. 285).

Al-Barges (1986), states that *Al-Arabi* magazine has been addressing Arab public opinion with an eye to gaining support to the "purely Arab idea". It has functioned as a mouthpiece for individual and collective freedoms and vehemently exposed all forms of colonialism in conformity with its strategy based upon promulgation of human culture and awareness (p. 180).

There were many challenges facing the fifties' press. First the publications had to have solid readership base and adequate financing from advertising to keep going. The monthly became outdated, and the weekly came to stay as a mid-term solution. Until the end of the 1950s, Kuwait did not know any daily press: *Al-Sha'ab* was the first to try to be daily for a while after the union between Egypt and Syria in January 1958. An important departure from the normal was that while in most countries the printing machines came before the press, in Kuwait the reverse was the case. Kuwaiti journalists of the 1950s were not fully engaged in the job. They were either civil servants or employees in other



places, and so did not spend all their time on journalism. As there was not much assistance from the government, most of those early publications were destined to fail. Yet the government knew the importance of having its own press, that was why it established *Al-Mujtam'a*, *Al-Arabi*, *Al-Kuwait Al-Youm*, and even the Armed Forces established theirs: *Homat Al-Watan*.

Waqiyan (1994) states that the discovery of oil in Kuwait changed all aspects of life in the country: political, social, economic, and intellectual. Independence came in June 1961, and there was no doubt that the press had to change drastically to accommodate all these new changes. Similarly, government's attitudes toward the press changed. The establishment of the *Al-Arabi* magazine by the government in December 1958 showed the abilities of the new country as well as its ambitions. The government saw it a duty upon itself to assist the press so as to keep the publications going.

The year of independence 1961 was also the year that saw the emergence of modern Kuwaiti journalism. From that year until this day, a flood of daily newspapers, weekly magazines and other specialized publications have competed and continue to compete with the Arab press despite the size of Kuwait (p. 118).



The press is largely privately owned, although some newspapers and magazines receive subsidies from the government. The largest publishing houses are Dar Al-Sayassah, Dar Al-Rai Al-Aam and Dar Al-Qabas (Drost, P. 285).

Kuwaiti daily news papers

Name	Est. circ.	First pub.	Predominant orientation
Al-Qabas (The Beacon)	55,000	1972	free enterprise capitalist, politically objective, Kuwaiti nationalist
Al-Seyassah (Politics)	45,000	1965	moderate, pro-government, less emotional than others, pro-Egyptian
Al-Rai Al-Aam (Public opinion)	40,000	1961	conservative, monarchist, Kuwaiti nationalist, anti-Communist and pro-West but critical of U.S. Mideast policy
Al-Watan (The Homeland)	55,000	1974	liberal, critical of government, democratic including free speech, pro-Syrian
Al-Anba' (The News)	50,000	1976	capitalist, establishmentarian, critical of government and of U.S. Mideast policy, rival of Seyassah
The Kuwait Times (in English)	25,000	1961	middle of road, focus on non-Arab affairs
The Arab Times (in English)	25,000	1977	liberal, popular, focus on regional news

\* Source: Rugh 1987

Kuwait now publishes seven daily newspapers, five in Arabic and two in English. The five Arabic dailies are *Al-Rai Al-Aam* (established in 1961), *Al-Seyassah* (1965), *Al-Qabas* (1972), *Al-Watan* (1974) and *Al-Anba'* (1976). The two English dailies are *Kuwait Times* (1961) and *Arab Times* (1977) with special pages in Urdu and Malayalam.



According to Rugh, (1987) Kuwait's oldest successful daily is *Al-Ra'y Al-Aam*. This newspaper, which made its debut on April 16, 1961, is a conservative paper maintains a uniform and consistent editorial policy, strongly supporting the royal family while criticizing individual government officials and public figures, opposing communism and Arab socialism (especially that of the Iraqi Ba'ath Party) and advocating ties with the West, while defending Kuwaiti independence and frequently expressing unhappiness with American Middle East policy (p.102).

*Al-Siyassah*, which arrived the news-stands on June 3, 1963, according to Waqiyah (p. 134), was first a weekly political publication. Its first editor-in-chief was Abdul Rahman Al-Wilayeti. It was later bought by Ahmad Abdul Aziz Al-Jarallah, who became its second editor-in-chief. From 1965, the newspaper became a daily. It is published by Al-Seyassah House for Printing Press and Publications Issues.

Rugh (p. 103) states that the newspaper tends to be somewhat more outspoken, liberal and diverse in its interpretation of events. It tackles a variety of problems with vigor, and a considerable variety of viewpoints are expressed in its editorials, subjecting public figures of any persuasion to its close scrutiny. Its



well-known chief editor, Ahmad Jarallah, specializes in interviews with Arab leaders. Some of its writers have shown sympathy for Marxist interpretation and for the radical Arab regimes in Iraq and South Yemen. However *Al-Siyassah* does tend to support the ruling family, and it tends to advocate moderate courses of action, treating issues in a less emotional fashion than other papers do.

Waqiyan (1994, p. 211) mentions that *Al-Watan* newspaper first appeared as a weekly on June 5, 1962, with Ahmad Al-Amer as first editor, but became a daily newspaper when Mohammed Mosae'd Al-Saleh became its editor-in-chief in January 1974. Its present editor-in-chief is Jasem Mohammed Al-Mutaww'a. Rugh (p. 103) states that this liberal paper shows somewhat more concern for foreign affairs, especially the Gulf area, than the others. It is an advocate of democratic concepts including free speech and the free exchange of ideas, giving writers with diverse views access to its pages. It has often been outspokenly critical of the Kuwaiti government.

Al-Barges (1986) states that the next most important daily newspaper in Kuwait is *Al-Qabas*, which emerged on February 22, 1972. Its first editor-in-chief, who is still present is Mohammed Jasem Al-Saqer (p. 179). Drost (P. 285) states that *Al-Qabas* is the largest paper, which is known for its independent and



objective reporting and sometimes gives space to opposition activities and views. (During the Iraqi occupation its premises were used to produce Al-Nida', the only daily at that time.)

Rugh states that this newspaper has a different editorial approach which is even more successful than the others. In four years, it achieved the highest circulation of any daily. *Al-Qabas* does not advocate any one political line but seeks to satisfy all Kuwaiti factions. It is rather liberal and fairly objective in its presentation of news and commentary. Financed by a group of local businessmen, it gives especially good coverage to economic matters, giving emphasis to Kuwaiti business interest. It tends to use think pieces and translations from the foreign press (including the Israeli) more than its competitors, and it gives more space to its Palestinian writers (103).

Waqiyan (p. 214) states that *Al-Qabas* is the first Kuwaiti newspaper to have an international edition. The first issue of *Al-Qabas* Al-Duwali (*Al-Qabas* International) appeared on Monday, May 20, 1985. The international edition had the purpose of conveying the objective national and pan-Arab news and analysis for Arab people abroad.

Al-Barges (p. 179) states that *Al-Anba'* appeared on January 5, 1976,



chaired by Faisal Al-Marzouk. It is published by the Kuwaiti Press House. Its editor-in-chief is Walid Khalid Al-Marzouk. Rugh, while discussing the same newspaper, states that this conservative paper has strong ties with the Kuwaiti business community, is a staunch advocate of capitalism and Arab family tradition, and it has been an outspoken critic of governmental policy. Its chief editor, who is related to several prominent politicians, sometimes engages in polemics with other dailies, specially *Al-Siyassah*, which heightens the contrast in content and view between *Al-Anba'* and the other papers (103).

Al-Barges (1986) states that the first English language daily in the country, *Kuwait Times*, appeared on February 19, 1961. Its editor-in-chief is Youssif Al-Alayan (p. 179). Rugh (1987, p. 103) states that *Kuwait Times* has existed since independence, and it presents a moderate, liberal point of view. Its long-time competition, the more conservative *Daily News*, ceased publication in 1976, when Abdul Aziz Masa'id sold it to the Al-Ghanim family, which was unable to keep the publication going.

Waqiyan (1994, p. 151) mentions that the second Kuwaiti English language daily is *Arab Times*, which appeared in 1977, published by Al-Siyassah Publishing House owned by Ahmad Jarallah, who also became its editor-in-chief



after Mohammed Al-Rumaihi.

Kuwait also has 70 magazines covering all aspects of life: politics, social affairs, religion, medicine, sports, education, science, children, law, and others (Kuwait Facts and Figures: 1988, p. 214).

According to Rugh (p. 103), Kuwait's weekly publications present a spectrum of viewpoints and orientations, including liberal, and extreme and moderate conservatives, trade unionist and pro-management, Kuwaiti nationalist and Arab nationalist, Ba'athist and even Marxist.

According to Waqiyan (1994), there are more than 140 different publications in Kuwait. Many of these qualify to be called mass media, while many are specialized publications by government ministries, oil companies, educational institutions, and other bodies.

Among the most important of Kuwait's printed mass media are these weeklies: *Usrati* (established in 1965), *Al-Balagh* (1969), *Al-Risalah* (1961), *Al-Riyadhi Al-Arabi* (1971), *Sa'ad*, a magazine for children, started in 1969, *Al-Tali'a*, notorious for its opposition views (1962), *Alam Al-Fann* (1971), *Al-Majalis* (1970), *Mar'at Al Ummah* (1971), *Sawt Al-Kalij* (1962), *Al-Nahda* (1967), *Al-Hadaf* (1961), *Al-Mojtama'* (1970), *Arab* (1990), and *Al-Yaqz* (1967).



Many of Kuwait's news periodicals have an international focus and are distributed throughout the Arab world. They include (in order of circulation levels) *Al-Nahda*, *Al-Yaqza*, *Al-Majalis*, *Al-Hadaf* and *Al-Risalah*. *Mar'at Al-Ummah* is the main news magazine dealing with domestic issues. Smaller publications are *Al-Balagh*, *Sawt Al-Khalij* and *Al-Tali'a* (Drost, P. 285).

Kuwaiti magazine with international focus

Name	Est. circ.	First pub.	Orientation
Al-Nahda	150,000	1967	Weekly news magazine
Al-Yaqza	91,000	1966	Weekly news and current-affairs magazine
Al-Majalis	60,000	1970	Weekly news and current-affairs magazine
Al-Hadaf	53,000	1961	Weekly news and current-affairs magazine
Al-Risalah	25,000	1961	Weekly news magazine
Mar'at Al-Ummah	80,000	1971	Weekly news magazine
Al-Balagh	29,000	1969	Weekly current-affairs magazine
Sawt Al-Khalij	20,000	1962	Weekly current-affairs magazine, independent
Al-Tali'a	10,000	1962	Weekly current-affairs magazine

Source: Drost 1991

Some of the monthlies, which are mostly specialized publications, include the Kuwaiti Students Union's *Al-Ittihad* (1969), Social Reform Party's religiously-inclined *Al-Islah* (1962), Kuwaiti Airways *Al-Buraq* (1968), Interior Ministry's *Al-Dakhilia* (1963), Kuwait Oil Company's *Al-Kuwaity* (1961) and many others.

The Ministry of Information permit many print news agencies to report



news from Kuwait (Jurdi, P. 35). These are:

A- English:

- 1) AFP (Agence France-Presse)
- 2) AP (Associated Press)
- 3) Reuters
- 4) DPA (Deutsche Press-Agentur)
- 5) XINHUA (Xinhua News Agency)

B- Arabic:

- 1) MENA (Middle East News Agency)
- 2) SANA (Syrian Arab News Agency)
- 3) NNA (National News Agency for information)

## **II. The Kuwaiti Broadcast Media Before the Gulf Crisis**

Radio and television run by the Ministry of Information. Even though the broadcast media came to Kuwait much later than the press, Boyd (1993) states that:

The government wanted to reach a large, regional audience with Kuwaiti message. The Ministry of Information under which both broadcast media function, appears to have decided that a state could partially overcome the psychological disadvantage of smallness by having a powerful radio and television service (p. 131).

Rugh (1987, p. 123) states that Kuwait has shown some awareness of the political importance of the electronic media for reaching the masses, so the country has seen to it that radio and television are in government's hands.



Because Kuwait is so small and flat, the country has not had the radio coverage problems of larger Arab world nations. A service could be provided to all within the Kuwaiti border with a single medium-wave radio transmitter of modest power. However, during the 1960s and 1970s, as the country became increasingly wealthy and assumed an important leadership role in the Gulf, the number and power of transmitters rapidly increased. The government wanted to reach a large, regional audience with a Kuwaiti message (Boyd, 1993).

During World War II, the British operated a low-power radio transmitter in Kuwait to counter the Nazi broadcast in Arabic, which gives credit to the British for broadcasting the first wireless radio in Kuwait (p. 115). Hamed (1977, p. 1) states that Kuwait radio was established informally in 1951, but officially opened on February 2, 1952. Also according to Al-Arabi (1989), Kuwait radio dates back to 1951, when the first transmission took place from one small room in a building owned by the Internal Security Service-currently the site of the Municipality- and an adjacent room used for reception. There were just a few employees and transmission time averaged about two and a half hours a day.

Jurdi (1994) mentions that this early station was airing Holy Quran and some Arab music. At the beginning, the station transmitted the program on



shortwave with half kilowatt power, and in 1953 the airing time was increased to three and a half hours. The station was called Office of Wireless Radio. In 1958, the station became known as Kuwait Radio Station. In February 1960, the power of the station was increased to five kilowatts, and the medium range wave was opened. The broadcast time was increased to 10 and a half hours. In 1961 the station had 50 kilowatts, and the time of broadcasting increased to 17 hours per day. In this period, the station improved and started to broadcast some news, and two major projects were launched in 1964. The first radio was a local radio station and the second a Western radio station. The airing time increased to 22 hours daily. In 1962, the radio station came under the supervision of the Ministry of Guidance and Information (present Ministry of Information) (p. 39).

Al-Arabi (1989) states that "by 1967, Kuwait radio transmitted on four medium wavelengths and the number of employees rose to seven hundred. Transmission time on the two stations reached 27.5 hours per day. A large number of Kuwaiti employees were dispatched on training missions abroad to learn the latest in technology and programming. This eventually made it possible to extend transmission hours to 59 per day as more staff were employed at the station" (p.170). The Kuwaiti Digest (1978) states that the Ministry of



Information took over the radio station in January 1965. The Ministry provided eleven studios divided into: four for production; two for drama; one for music; one for FM; one for main program; one for second program; and one for Holy Quran (p. 7).

Kuwait Facts and Figures (1988) outlined the different programs on Kuwait Radio. They include the *General Program* (Al-Qanat Al-Ola) "which is intended for local people as well other Arab world consumption" (Boyd, p. 131; Jurdi, p. 39). It began in 1964 and Facts and Figures states that this program transmits for nearly 20 hours daily, from 5:30 am to 1:00 am the following day. By the beginning of 1989, transmission expanded to 24 hours a day (p. 255).

Jurdi says that the *General Program* broadcasts in Arabic, featuring a mixture of news, drama, music, discussion, educational, and variety. Transmission is done simultaneously on two frequencies (555.5 and 264.5 meters) using wavelengths of 540 khz and 1134 khz. On FM, the program is transmitted on two frequencies using wavelengths of 100.2 Mhz and 98.8 Mhz (P. 39).

Al-Sar'awi (1976) states that the variety features on the *General Program* include "Good Morning," "Good Evening," "Joheina News," "Strange World,"



"Listeners' Mail," and "A Word and a Meaning." These programs are always updated, bringing new ones at subsequent broadcast periods (p. 190). Boyd (1993) mentions that one of the transmitters used by the *General Program*, which is on the low end of the medium wave band renders the program accessible in most parts of the Arab world at night. An even wider reach is made possible by the use of nine shortwave frequencies during the day. This ensures reliable reception in all parts of the Middle East for those with shortwave radios and the motivation to tune to Kuwait.

The *Second Program* (Al-Qanat Al-Thaniyah) of Kuwaiti Radio, which also began in 1964, is intended to be an Arabic alternative to the *General Program* (Boyd, 1993). Broadcasting daily, the 6-hour schedule uses a 200-kilowatt medium wave and one shortwave transmitter. Programming on the service is similar in format to the *General Program*, but is intended for a local and regional audience rather than a larger Arab world audience. Facts and Figures (1988) adds that the *Second Program* is on from 12:00 noon to 6:00 pm, and its features are mainly on local popular topics, Gulf and Arab songs. It covers the Gulf, parts of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran (p. 255).

Al-Sar'awi (1976) states that the *Second Program* broadcast time



increased from two and a half hours in 1964 to six hours by 1975. It has several live programs. The most popular is a live program called "Al-Bernamig Al-Thani Ala Al-Khat" (The Program Two On Line). The program puts on-line by telephone important government officials, intellectuals, and opinion leaders, who are asked to respond to listeners' complaints, questions, and comments on air. The program plays a mediating role between the government and listeners, and radio talk shows have since become popular (p. 112).

The *European (English) Program*, which also began in 1964, was a one-hour program, according to Al-Sar'awi (1976). In April 1966 it became three hours, and by 1967 it increased to five hours, and to six hours in 1974. It broadcasts in English a variety of programs such as news, politics, sports, history, religion, science, social, music, and other entertainment. It aimed at serving Arab issues and strengthening relations between Kuwait and listeners in Asia, Africa, and Europe (p.112). Boyd states that the *English Program* operates on the same medium and shortwave frequencies as the *Second Program*. Kuwait is one of many Arab countries that operate an English-language radio service for their own citizens. English is widely spoken in the Arab world, particularly in the Gulf (p. 131).



The *FM Program*, according to Al-Sar'awi, began on March 20, 1971. It started broadcasting music on its modern stereo for 17 hours daily, although Facts and Figures (1988) mentions 18 hours of daily broadcasting of classical songs and music. The FM station became quite popular among Kuwaitis. One reason for this is the availability of a variety of multi-wave receivers (p. 112).

*Persian and Urdu Programs*, each of two-hour duration, began in 1974. Both broadcast on the medium and the shortwave. While the Urdu aims at consolidating relations with Urdu language speakers in India and the Arabian Gulf, the Persian aims at strengthening relations with Persian speakers and Iran (Facts and Figures, 1988, p. 255).

The *Holy Quran Program* transmits for eight hours daily. Boyd says special radio programs that feature religious discussions and readings from the Holy Quran have become a means of providing religious programs to Muslim as well as a way of reminding citizens and neighbors that Islam is still important. Kuwait's population is mostly Sunni Muslims but a sizable Shiite Muslim population also exists. The Iranian revolution has helped bring an increase in conservative religious activity in the Middle East, and this daily program on the same facility as the *English* and the *Second Program* provides a reminder that



the modern State of Kuwait is a dedicated Islamic nation (p.132).

The *Special Program* directed to Europe transmits for seven hours a day. It aims to serve Kuwaiti and Arab citizens residing in Europe by transmitting programs containing local serials, newscasts, political commentaries, and varied songs (Facts and Figures, p. 256).

Al-Arabi (1989) contends that Kuwait radio played an important role in the building of Kuwaiti society. Its cultural and educational programs have been invaluable, as has been its attempt to create a sense of connection between the present and past generations of this country. It has played an important role in bringing the rest of the world into Kuwaiti homes and in the process, making people realize the extent of the progress and development that they have witnessed in Kuwait over the last three decades (p. 176).

Ogan, in Merrill, (1991) states that "both radio and television broadcasting services in most Middle Eastern countries are either government-owned and operated (often under a Ministry of Information or Culture) or under government control." Kuwait is no exception." All broadcast systems in the region produce original programming, but programs are also imported from other countries, mainly Europe, the United States and Egypt" (p. 137).



Coupled with the pervasive radio broadcasting, Kuwaiti Television is also vigorous. The availability of Kuwaiti and other channels in the Gulf states has played an important part in television development in the area. Boyd (p. 133) mentions that television had an informal beginning when the local RCA television receiver dealer started a low-power American-standard transmitter in Kuwait city in order to promote set sales. At independence in 1961 the Ministry of Guidance and Information (later the Ministry of Information) became the television broadcaster and changed the system to the CCIR European standard.

Rugh (p. 125) states that:

The Kuwaiti government...was the first of the ten countries (Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and North Yemen) to go into television in 1961. But the newly independent Kuwaiti government at first allowed a wealthy private entrepreneur to establish a small television station and only after this had begun operating did it take over and start to develop a government-run system. With abundant resources and ideal geographical conditions the government was able to provide a good signal for all 900,000 inhabitants of this country without any difficulty.

Boyd (1993) mentions that the transmission capability of the Kuwaiti Main Television Channel has been increased since the 1960s. A separate transmitter, Channel 6, rebroadcasts the Main Channel specifically towards



Basrah, Iraq, in order to provide a television presence in a country that threatened in the early 1960s to invade Kuwait (p. 134).

Another writer (Al-Arabi, p. 170), discussing the same subject, states that the first television station was actually owned by a Kuwaiti merchant. The transmission power of the station was a mere 100 watts and the first programs were limited to cartoons and feature films. Jurdi (1994) states that the first channel broadcast with a black and white screen, while the staff strength of six, and duration of broadcasting was only two hours (p. 41). "A new lease of life for the television station came in 1961 when ownership was transferred to the Ministry of Guidance and Information, which immediately launched projects to expand the station and improve its programming. The number of transmission hours was 28 per week in 1963, rising to 52 hours per week by 1966."

Boyd (p. 133) states that in about 1967, residents in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain started purchasing dual-standard receivers so that the Kuwaiti channel could be viewed. Also, the expansion of television in Kuwait took place in 1973 as part of the completion of the radio and television broadcasting complex. Kuwait started color television transmission in 1974 using the PAL system. When it moved to a new television studio building in 1978,



Kuwait started a second color television channel. The television studios were impressive. The Kuwaiti facilities were the most modern and extensive in the Arab world. The equipment, with the exception of a few British Marconi cameras from the old studios, is French-supplied by Thomson CSF. Some of the equipment, such as bilingual character generators that can produce subtitling in Arabic and English, is specifically designed for Kuwaiti television. There are six studios, three for on-air programming such as news and interviews, and three larger studios for videotape production. One studio, 800 square meters in size, is spacious enough to accommodate several sets at the same time; it was used for the production of *Iftah Ya Simsim*, the Arabic Sesame Street (p. 134).

Jurdi (p. 41) states that by 1985 television transmission time rose to an average of 16 hours per day (112 hours a week). Kuwait Facts and Figures (1988) states that "Kuwaiti television not only plays a pioneering informational role within Kuwait but it also reaches out to cover most Gulf states that can receive its programs. The number of viewers is nearly ten million. Its programs are varied to cover all walks of life. They include local, recreational, cultural, political, sports, children, youth and women's program, televised dramas and serials. Local television production contains around 80 percent of the 90 hour



weekly material broadcast on its two channels. The foreign programs average around 30 hours. By 1986, Kuwait television staff number approximately 1,500, mostly young Kuwaitis who assume the biggest responsibility in developing the television's various sections. The television building located within the Ministry of Information complex contains huge studios equipped with the most modern technical requirements and sophisticated engineering devices. The building includes a library containing 30,000 videotapes and thousands of Arab and foreign films (p. 259).

Boyd (1993, p. 134) states that Kuwait television operates two television channels. *Channel One* (KTV One), an updated version of the original service started in the 1960s, is considered to be the main program. The *Channel Two* (KTV2) started in 1978, preceded by research to determine viewers' needs and preferences. *Channel One (Al-Qanat Al-Olah)* broadcasts predominantly in Arabic. It broadcasts local and imported entertainment programs. The channel regularly operates its programs from 5:00 to 11:30 pm daily. The broadcasting time is occasionally lengthened for special events, during the religious holidays, and on thursday and friday (the official days off in Kuwait). There are two newscasts nightly; at 5:00 and at 9:00 pm (Jurdi, p. 42).



*Channel Two (Al-Qanat Al-Thaniyah)* is generally referred to as the cultural service, and might more appropriately be called the foreign cultural service. Although it does feature some Arabic programming, the majority of the offerings are imported from Australia, Great Britain, and the United States. The service daily shows Western cartoon series, some of which have been dubbed into Arabic. Programming suitable for children is shown, for example, Big Blue Marble, Wild World Of Animals, and Bewitched. From 8:00 to 8:30 pm the news in English is featured. From 8:30 until about 11:00 pm, selected Arabic films and serials for television are scheduled. However, the majority of programs are U.S. and European programs and made-for-television films. According to Boyd, officials are not concerned about the cultural effect of imported programs because they believe that it is up to the viewer to make a choice between what is offered on the two services. They indicate that even if imported programs from the United States and Europe were not offered on Kuwait television, they are available in local cinemas or on videotape for home video systems (Boyd, p. 135).

Jurdi adds that "the prices of the programs depend on the time of each program."

Each minute costs 8 KD (\$24 US) or 9 KD



(\$27). However, this will increase to 12 KD (\$36) for each minute if the program is considered high quality. Arab programs and other educational programs are mainly owned, while renting is mainly for English movies, shows, and sports (p. 43).

Boyd (1993, p. 134) states that there are no radio and television receiver license fees in Kuwait. The government is wealthy enough to provide radio and television programs for citizens. Commercial advertising is allowed only on *Channel One* for a maximum of fifteen minutes per day between programs. The commercials are permitted because the government wishes to endorse the free enterprise system as well as to help viewers make choices about the kind of products they want to buy. Kuwaiti television viewers apparently watch their own channels. The propagation phenomenon that sends television signals long distances does not bring the signal northward as easily as it does southward. While the main Kuwaiti television program is generally available in Bahrain, the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, and at times the United Arab Emirates, the signals from these countries do not tend to reach Kuwait. One channel from the Basrah, Iraq station and another from Iran are easily received in Kuwait; but the political nature of Iraqi television and the rather bland educational and religious programming from Iran since the 1979 revolution do not seem to attract



many viewers.

Kuwait Facts and Figures (1988) mentions that television programs in Kuwait are received via three satellites designed to open new venues and horizons. Viewing of world events and live soccer matches in particular, has become possible. One satellite hovers over the Atlantic Ocean, the second over the Indian Ocean, and the third is the Arab Satellite (Arabsat) which covers the Arab world (p.258).

Rugh (1987) states that Arab states have given some attention to satellite communication for news exchange. By 1977 fourteen of the eighteen Arab states had satellite ground stations, and in February 1974 the Arab Information Ministers meeting in Cairo passed a resolution approving an Arab satellite project (p. 146).

Boyd (1993) states that Arab countries have created their own satellite system called Arabsat. Originally suggested at a meeting of gulf ministers of information during the oil-rich days of the 1970s as a means of linking the electronic media in the gulf states, Arabsat became a reality in 1985 (p. 9).

Kuwait Facts and Figures (1988) states that Kuwait television has realized rapid strides of progress and growth due to governmental support and attention.



Since its inception in 1957 as a modest private station, it has come a long way to a new start in 1961 under the aegis of the Ministry of Guidance and Information. In 1974 color transmission was introduced. In 1978 it moved to new premises within the Ministry of Information complex (p. 259).

More than half of all homes with television sets in Kuwait also owned Videocassette Recorders (VCRs).

In 1982, 52.7 percent of Kuwaiti homes with television sets owned VCRs, just over 20 percent owned more than one machine. 1981 was the most important year for VCR purchases --28.2 percent said they purchased units during this year. In late 1984, 85 percent of television homes had VCRs; and it was anticipated that by 1985, the market would be saturated (Boyd, Straubhaar, and Lent 1985, P. 65).



### **CHAPTER THREE:**

#### **THE KUWAITI MASS MEDIA DURING THE GULF CRISIS**

In August 1990 Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait. The occupation continued until Iraq's defeat in the subsequent Gulf War and its withdrawal in February 1991. During this period tens of thousands of Kuwaitis fled into exile, the country's resources were systematically plundered and transferred to Iraq, and serious damage was inflicted on the economic infrastructure. The media were also completely disrupted. The Iraqi authorities closed all existing media outlets and appropriated premises and equipment. Several Kuwaiti newspapers and the radio service resumed operations in exile (Drost 1991, P. 284).

When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the press buildings were destroyed, the broadcast establishments razed, and all equipment either destroyed or looted, but the will of the Kuwaiti people remained indefatigable. Apart from the formal mass media, the mosques as well as the graffiti on walls, both symbols of the traditional means of communication, were very effective, according to Shalabi (1992). "With 800 mosques all over the country, Kuwaitis had a very potent means of communication. The mosques were also very useful as places of information exchange, as stores for supplies and provisions, and as places for



distributing financial assistance" (p. 285).

Shalabi mentions that, when all formal means of communication were closed by the occupying forces, desert routes, fax machines, satellite telephones, and other means provided contact with the outside world, especially with the government in exile in Saudi Arabia. The *Dwaniyyah*, like the Mosques, also provided a fertile ground for information dissemination at the beginning of the Iraqi occupation. It was used by the resistance as bases for recruitment, meetings, and general logistical centers. As the resistance became more active, the Iraqi forces started to closely monitor the *Diwaniyyahs*. When they realized that they could not really penetrate what was going on, they began to forcibly enter and arrest anyone they found inside (researcher was there to witness that).

One very important means by which Kuwaitis exchanged information was the grapevine they called the *They-Say-Agency* (or *Wakalat Anba' Yaguloon*). Saqer (1991) states that during the occupation of Kuwait, a new system of dissemination of news appeared to serve a people who were unable to get the formal means of news such as newspapers, radio and television. How the "agency" worked was that if someone knew some important news he would tell his neighbors, friends, and his family. They in turn would pass it on to others.



That way news could get around, even though there was sometimes some exaggeration, rumors and false information. Despite this disadvantage, most of the news was factual, and it served the purpose the absent formal media served (p. 52).

Shalabi gives an example of the function of the They-Say-Agency. Kuwaiti citizens had a prior arrangement that on a certain day at a certain time the whole people of the country would go on to their rooftops and chant "Allah, Al-Watan, Al-Amir" (God, Country, Amir) in unison (p. 286). The appointed day and the exact time (midnight) arrived, all of Kuwait resounded with this cry. It was as if an earthquake was shaking the country. The cities and the buildings seemed to get a life of their own. The researcher actively participated in this show of national consciousness, which was effectively organized through the They-Say-Agency.

### **I. The Kuwaiti Print Media During the Gulf Crisis**

From the beginning of the occupation, the Kuwaiti journalists knew that they had to keep up the morale of the Kuwaiti people, encouraging them to keep up their hopes, and making them not to give in, as well as to endure the



occupation forces, so they started the underground press. The underground press had the task of countering the misleading Iraqi media and served as a window for the occupied Kuwaitis to have a glimpse of what was happening in the outside world especially news about the Kuwaiti situation. The role of the underground press in this task became more fundamental in view of the fact that the occupying Iraqis put restrictions on listening to foreign stations. The underground press also had to show to the outside world what was happening in Kuwait, including the actions of the Kuwaiti people involved in the resistance (Shalabi 1992).

It could not be ascertained whether the underground press was able to carry out all the aforementioned duties since there was no equipment that they could use, and especially after all the experienced journalists had left the country, as they were targeted by the Iraqis. Pamphlets started to appear on the second day of the invasion (p. 281). Al-Ahmad (1992) states that:

Pamphleteering underground took over from the formal press. A pen, some paper and a photo-copying machine were all that were available. Coupled with a strong will and determination, very soon Kuwait was flooded with information from the underground press. Many distributors were killed by the occupying army (p. 136).

Another writer (Waqiyan) mentions that "the first pamphlet published



during the occupation was *Al-Sumud Al-Sha'abi* (The People's Endurance). Its first issue was on the fifth day of occupation, August 5, 1990. It reached an international readership, as many radio stations, such as the Voice of America, quoted its contents as the truth about the resistance" (p. 247). Saqer (1991) adds that the second pamphlet from the Kuwaiti underground press was *Al-Sabah* (The Morning) published from August 14, 1990, by the resistance. *Al-Sabah* countered Iraqi propaganda. When the occupying forces destroyed the publishing houses, they left the *Al-Qabas* presses intact so as to use them for their own publication. From *Al-Qabas* the occupying Iraqis started a newspaper called *Al-Nida'a* (The Call), the first issue of which appeared on August 11, 1990. It was distributed free even though it carried a cover price. *Al-Sabah* and other pamphlets attempted to counter this newspaper. The resistance press called on the Kuwaiti people not to believe whatever they read on the pages of the *Al-Nida'a*, and to as much as possible to boycott it (p. 24).

The third pamphlet was called *Moose* (The Blade) which was published by other division of the resistance. It was called The Blade to belie Saddam Hussein who thought that swallowing Kuwait was like swallowing an easy morsel. The resistance wanted to show that he indeed swallowed a blade, which



could not be digested easily (Waqiyan, p. 249).

The next pamphlet to appear was *Saut Al-Haq* (Voice of Truth). Two pamphlets using the same name appeared at the same time. One was published by a group of Kuwaiti female teachers, which was why it looked like a wall magazine as used in school classrooms. The other was published by Martyr Mahmoud Al-Jassem, a religious person who extensively quoted from the Holy Quran and the Prophet's sayings, urging people to go for jihad and be martyrs for the sake of defending the country (Waqiyan, p. 249).

*Al-Qabas* came next. The occupying Iraqi forces were using the Al-Qabas Publishing House to publish their newspaper *Al-Nida'*. The new *Al-Qabas* was intended by its editor, Nadia Saqer, to tell the Iraqis that they could not kill *Al-Qabas*, and that it was still alive (Saqer, p. 31). This pamphlet even announced to the Kuwaiti people that they could get Kuwaiti radio on 690 khz on the medium wave band.

Next came *Abna' Jaber* (Sons of Jaber). The name was symbolic for the publishers, as the Kuwaiti Emir, Jaber, was seen not only as the Emir of Kuwait, but as the father of all Kuwaitis. This pamphlet was different from the rest, as it contained six pages and was printed on computer (Waqiyan, p. 254).



*Nisa' Wa Atfal Kuwait* (Women and Children of Kuwait) followed. It concentrated on the views of women and children. Women and children contributed to its publication (p. 254).

*Ahrar Kuwait* (Emancipated People of Kuwait) was published from August 1990 until January 1991. In its January 1991 edition, it called the year 1991 "The Year of Free Kuwait" (p. 262).

Another pamphlet, *Desman* (name of one of Kuwait City's residential areas), was also active during the resistance. Its first edition, it came out with a headline "The Day of Payback to Our Mother Kuwait." It asked Kuwaitis to take revenge against Iraq and participate in the jihad to free their country (Shalabi, p. 282). Many other pamphlets such as *Sarkha* (The Shout), *Al-Tahaddi* (The Challenge), *Al-Murabitoon* (The Steadfast), *Al-Thabat* (The Never-Wavering) were published later.

Numerous people participated in the production and editing of these pamphlets, e.g., the resistance, students, civil servants, engineers, officers, doctors, religious people, womens, individuals, and others. Other pamphlets appeared carrying instructions and advice to citizens on how to protect themselves in the event of chemical warfare, how to dispose of rubbish,



presenting news about the military resistance and their effectiveness, and telling the world about the misdeeds of the Iraqis, such as robbery, begging, bribery, and selling their guns for money. These pamphlets were hand-written, and thousands were photocopied and distributed by hand secretly. Some were pasted on walls of mosques, electric poles, and schools. At first they were being pasted on residential buildings, but orders came from Baghdad to demolish all such houses. A number of houses on whose walls pamphlets were pasted were blown up by the Iraqis. From then on, the pamphlets distributors stopped pasting on the walls of houses (Shalabi, p. 284).

Shalabi adds that the resistance also extensively used graffiti, writing on walls in public places and bridges. They wrote messages ferociously critical of Saddam Hussein, his occupying forces, and showing challenge and refusal against anything Iraqi, restating their allegiance to the legitimate government of Kuwait. That way, the walls became the new press of an occupied country, as if the occupation brought back a century before the invention of printing press and paper. The walls were overflowing with pictures of the Amir, Kuwaiti flags, slogans such as "Long Live the Amir and Prime Minister", "Jaber is Still Amir of Kuwait", and (to the Iraqi soldiers) "Go Back Home and Free Your People From



Saddam" (p. 285).

The researcher was a witness to an incident during the occupation. A 12-year old was writing on the wall of a school when soldiers on a passing Iraqi army truck shot him to death without stopping, and they kept driving on.

Some of the most humorous slogans, according to Shalabi, were directly to the illegitimate Iraqi-installed interim government in Kuwait headed by a person called Ala'. One read "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp", while another was "La Ala' Wa La Wala' Illa Li Al-Subah" (No Ala' and No Allegiance, Except to Al-Sabah) (p. 285).

As discussed earlier, the mosques were also very effective centers of resistance. The sermons delivered after the prayers kept the spirit of the people up, increased their endurance, and were so effective that many people were convinced to join the resistance. Many of the sermons talked about patience, martyrdom for the sake of God, the punishment awaiting the arrogant, and supplication during prayers (Shalabi, p. 286).

The content of the underground publications was a substitute for the closed down newspapers. Topics covered included all kinds of advices, guidance to what to do when war start, and general information (Al-Ahmad, 1992, p. 136).



The pamphlet distribution system was also effective. Al-Ahmad states that women were especially significant in the distribution network, because they could hide many copies under their clothes and cloak. The female distributors were aware of their function as means of communication, since they knew the importance of information dissemination, even though they were aware that arrest would mean instant death at the hands of the Iraqis (p. 137).

Al-Ahmad adds that people would take the pamphlets from the mosques and pass them on to members of their families and neighbors with a high sense of precaution. Some would destroy after reading, while others would try to pass on the pamphlets to others (p. 136).

The Iraqis acted against the pamphleteers. They realized the damage these pamphlets were causing them, especially as these pamphlets were calling on Kuwaitis to rise against the Iraqis. Because of the information contained in these pamphlets, the Kuwaiti resistance grew strong and was able to inflict serious casualties on the occupying soldiers, as well as great losses of military equipment and armaments. The Iraqis persecuted and arrested the producers, distributors and anyone involved in the production, as well as people with a typewriter, a photocopying machine and any apparatus that could help in publishing and



printing. The individuals involved did not suffer alone: their families were also tortured. Most of the Kuwaiti people involved in the production of these pamphlets realized that continuing the work was suicidal and decided to stop publishing. The original idea behind the start of the pamphlets was to serve humanity, and the stoppage was also considered a service to humanity (Waqiyan, p. 265).

## **II. The Kuwaiti Broadcast Media During the Gulf Crisis**

With the Iraqi invasion on August 2, 1990, not only Kuwait was destroyed, but its vibrant media was also silenced. The press, radio, and television establishments fell into the hands of the Iraqis, whose leader, Saddam Hussein, "throughout the 1980s...used the electronic media to perpetuate his carefully orchestrated personality cult" (Boyd, p. 4).

The Iraqis destroyed everything in their path. The mass media infrastructure was either destroyed or looted. Printing presses, computers, transmitters, television equipment, were lost.

The broadcast media were also not left behind in the underground activity, according to Al-Ahmad. "The first underground radio station started broadcasting



from the Kuwaiti Army headquarters on the first day of the occupation. It lasted for a very short period, but while it lasted it called the attention of the world to the plight of Kuwait, thereby calling for the assistance of all countries to help save Kuwait. The second broadcast was from Al-Desmah studio inside Kuwait City, using a transmission station on Failaka Island. A call came from someone who worked at the station on the Island to the underground radio operators in Desmah to immediately vacate the premises for the Iraqis have taken over the Island and would find out from where they were broadcasting. The workers left the building after destroying all the equipment so that the Iraqis could not use them. They also left the Outside-Broadcast Van they were using. The station finally closed in the afternoon of Friday August 3, 1990. This same studio was used for a short television transmission on the first day of the occupation: It lasted for half the day." That was all there was about Kuwaiti television during the occupation (p. 130).

Shalabi states that when these underground radio operators left the Desmah station went to broadcast from the house of Tawfiq Al-Amir in Subah Al-Salem area with the little equipment they had left. They used the telephone to call as many people as they could to inform them that Kuwait Radio was still on



the air, and mentioned the frequencies on which it could be received (p. 292).

Al-Ahmad mentions that this station went on until the afternoon of Saturday, August 4, 1990. From there, they moved to the palace of Shaikh Muhammad Saud Al-Sabah at Salwa area where there was a full broadcast station and they began to broadcast on another frequency. Whenever they started broadcasting on a certain channel, the Iraqis would jam it, and then they would try another. It was a race against time as the Iraqi army were closing in on the Salwa area, trying to locate the station. The broadcasting continued until Monday, August 6, 1990, when orders came from the resistance headquarters that the radio station should move out of Kuwait to Saudi Arabia. They relocated the next day (p. 132).

Inside Kuwait, the occupying Iraqi army knew the importance of having an effective mass media. Apart from the newspaper *Al-Nida'*, which the Iraqis were publishing from the hijacked premises of the Kuwaiti Al-Qabas Publishing House, the Iraqis also used massive doses of broadcast media in Kuwait to change facts on the ground and influence Kuwaitis with the propaganda of Saddam Hussein. There were attacks against the Amir, insinuating that he had stolen the country's wealth, and arguments that Kuwait belonged to Iraq and so



forth. The Kuwaiti resistance fought against these lies and propaganda in their pamphlets and writings on the walls and other means.

According to Al-Ahmad, before the Allied Forces attacked Iraq, Saddam Hussein had two radio stations broadcasting directly to Kuwait from inside Iraq. The first was *Voice of Medina Radio*. On this station, the Iraqis tried to lower the reputation of the rulers of Saudi Arabia who had refused to back Iraq. The radio called Saudi Arabia "Nejd and Hejaz" a holy area in Saudi Arabia in order to denigrate the rulers, and also to try to sway the Kuwaitis against them. The second station was called *Voice of Peace*, which broadcast in English directed to the foreigners who could not leave Kuwait and Iraq at the time. It also served as a means of psychological warfare against the Americans and the British in the Coalition Forces. For example, the station said to the Americans protecting Saudi Arabia, "How can you defend a country which looks down upon your religion, and which has not got a single church on its territory?" (Saquer, p. 79).

The third station was called *Mother of All Battles*, which was broadcast from the studios of the occupied Kuwaiti radio during the Allied Air Force attacks, where listeners were told lies such as Iraq have destroyed the Allied Air Force, and fake news of victories against the air attack (p. 138). Boyd states that



the Iraqis left Kuwaiti television transmitters standing in order to have them to rebroadcast Iraqi television from microwave feeds (p. 136). Iraqi television was broadcast inside Kuwait during the whole period of occupation. It was the only television available to people who did not possess satellite receiving dishes. When the Iraqis realized that those with such dishes were getting information other than from Iraq, the occupying forces destroyed most of the dishes they could find.

### **III. The Kuwaiti Mass Media in Exile**

Shalabi states that during the occupation, the government of Kuwait relocated to Saudi Arabia. A large number of Kuwaiti media practitioners and journalists were scattered in Arab and non-Arab countries. The Kuwaiti media still functioned during this period. One goal was to unite the Kuwaitis politically and socially, and to make them have the single aim of liberating their country and returning home under the legitimate government of the Amir. The second goal was to establish a means of communication between Kuwaitis inside the country and those in exile. The third goal was to persuade the world to the justice of the case of Kuwait as well to convince world opinion to agree to the need to restore



Kuwait's independence. A goal was to block Iraqi propaganda in the Arab and international theaters (p. 288).

Shalabi adds that the Iraqis counted on some Iraqi residents in Kuwait who had no Kuwaiti nationality but had lived in the country for decades for propaganda against Kuwaitis, using all means at their disposal in Kuwait: newspaper, radio, and television. Iraqi propaganda tried to put a wedge between Kuwaitis and their Amir and his government, and to influence Arab and world opinion against the Kuwaiti Amir and his government (p. 288).

Part of the effort of the Kuwaiti government and mass media in exile was political and diplomatic, such as visits by the Amir to conferences and media centers in Arab and European capitals. And the government made a range of promises to opposition groups concerning a return to constitutional rule and freedom of expression (Drost, P. 285).

Shalabi adds that some Kuwaiti publishers who owned newspapers inside the country before the invasion quickly re-established their publications in exile. The Kuwaiti *Al-Siyassah* newspaper started publishing in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; *Al-Anba'* began publishing from Cairo; and a new newspaper appeared during the Gulf Crisis. It was called *Saut Al-Kuwait* (Voice of Kuwait), a daily which was



simultaneously published in Cairo and London. These newspapers were the best source that Kuwaitis living in exile could depend upon for news about their country in general , about the activities of the armed resistance inside Kuwait, and the endurance of the Kuwaiti people left behind. The newspapers also concentrated on countering the propaganda of the Iraqi leader (p. 291).

Shalabi says that the Kuwaiti government in exile established radio stations in friendly countries. These included the radio *Saut Al-Kuwait* (Voice of Kuwait) from Cairo, and *Radio Kuwait* from Dammam in Saudi Arabia. These stations were wholly manned by Kuwaiti professionals who were working in the mother station (Kuwait Radio) before the invasion. Besides these stations, the Kuwaiti government, in cooperation with the governments of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria, directed two radio stations at Iraq. One was *Izaat Al-Jumhuriya Al-Iraqiyyah* (Iraqi Republic Radio) the other was *Saut Al-Iraq Al-Hurr* (Voice of the Free Iraq). Both broadcast from Jeddah and relied completely on Iraqi opposition broadcasters, such as the ex-manager of the Iraqi radio station Ibrahim al-Zubaidy. Because the broadcasters on these stations were Iraqis in exile and used Iraqi accents, these stations were kindling the fire of opposition against the Iraqi leader in his own country (p. 292).



Al-Ahmad is of the view that one of the two stations directed towards Kuwait, *Radio Kuwait* from Dammam, was weak because it faced jamming from the Iraqis so that the Kuwaitis inside the country could not receive it clearly (p. 138). The Kuwaitis also extensively used radio air time given free by friendly countries, especially in the Gulf. These broadcasts were mainly social, aiming at connecting Kuwaitis in exile with their relatives inside the occupied country, asking how they were and hoping that all was fine with them (Shalabi p. 293).

Shalabi adds that these broadcasts sometimes made grave errors that benefited Iraqi intelligence and caused great damage to people still living in Kuwait by giving information considered vitally important and secret. In one such broadcast, a Kuwaiti living in exile said to his relatives inside, "I left Kuwait on Friday, the second day of the invasion, but my brother Mustapha and his children are still there, and have joined the military resistance." Others on those broadcasts said, "A large number of Kuwaiti citizens succeeded in leaving the country with fake passports" while some gave special directions as to where they hid their guns, such as inside their car engines, inside air-conditioning, and inside roofs, and so forth (p. 293). Saqer, on the same subject, asked why Kuwaitis in exile used the radio to urge their relatives to leave the country, instead of urging



them to stay on and fight to liberate their country (p. 67).

The researcher himself heard one such broadcast. A Kuwaiti woman in exile was exhorting her brother to leave Kuwait and join her in Saudi Arabia. She continued, "Before leaving, please go to so and so place (mentioning the exact location) and bring out my money and jewelry and other precious things I have hidden." Obviously one can assume that Iraqi intelligence was also listening.

Shalabi mentions that some Kuwaitis video-recorded the activities of the Iraqi occupation forces inside Kuwait and smuggled the tapes to Saudi Arabia, where they were broadcast. Saudi television gave air time on their Channel One to Kuwaitis to broadcast news about Kuwait inside as well as to interview Kuwaitis in exile (p. 294).



## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **THE KUWAITI MASS MEDIA AFTER THE GULF CRISIS**

When Kuwait was liberated in February 1991, "Kuwait had to rebuild a new country with new attitudes and mentality" (Jurdi, 1994, p. 11).

In less than six years, the Kuwaiti mass media bounced back to life. Today, the seven daily newspapers (in both Arabic and English) are as vibrant as ever. Kuwaiti radio and television are received all over the world.

According to Jurdi, after liberation of Kuwait, the new information minister Bader Al-Yaqoup, set the goals of media policy in Kuwait. These dealt with internal and external media and stated that: The media should be the tool to help create citizens able to challenge the future, capable of depending on themselves, and be part of building Kuwait; the media should re-inform the belief of nationality and unity as the essence to protect Kuwait and provide safety in the country; the Kuwaiti media should follow the principles of Islamic thoughts and beliefs and Arab nationality; encourage and improve the skills of Kuwaitis to be able to work and handle the media; bring awareness of nationality, and help prepare the citizens to be able to sacrifice and die for Kuwait; invest in print and broadcast media to participate in communicating with current events, the people,



the government, the culture, and to learn the lessons of the invasion of Kuwait; improve the quality of print and broadcast programs and productions; use the new methods of technology and education to choose the programs and the implementation of these programs; re-inform honesty and objectivity of media; increase the communication to the Arab and Islamic worlds to gain their supports for the Kuwaiti cause; take care of the educational, scientific and Islamic corporations to build a good Kuwait; show the role of women in building Kuwait according to Islamic and Arab cultures; pay attention to children and provide them with the best programs to help them establish self-esteem and to be part of building Kuwait in the future; extensively use the media to prevent the enemy's media from influencing the people or Arab and Islamic states; show the positive aspects of the invasion and how Kuwait was liberated, and the rebuilding process; help enhance the Kuwaiti culture through theaters, literature, and music; improve relations with the countries that allied themselves with Kuwait during the Iraqi occupation.

How did the press resume operations after it was essentially destroyed by the Iraqi invaders? The first thing the government did was to engage a corps of Kuwaiti journalists. A multitude of courses were organized to prepare and train



Kuwaiti journalists. Well-known and experienced journalists were invited to teach these courses (Waqiyan, p. 269).

Kuwait Facts and Figures (1992) states that "since liberation, the Ministry of Information in Kuwait spares no effort in developing all its (media) institutions, whether written or spoken. National expertise is employed to carry on these reforms reflecting the ambitions of the government" (p. 119).

After Kuwait was liberated, Saqer states that "Kuwaiti radio returned on the air on Sunday March 3, 1991, with the familiar station signal Huna Al Kuwait (This is Kuwait) " (p. 249). Boyd mentions that,

It is not an exaggeration to say that the Iraqi invasion forces took virtually all radio production and control equipment to Iraq before they left Kuwait. An American broadcast engineer who spent several days in Kuwait in the late summer of 1991 reported that virtually all equipment was taken from the Ministry of Information studios in downtown Kuwait (P. 133).

He continues, "Likewise, all of the medium and shortwave transmitters and associated buildings from the transmission site near Kuwait City were destroyed by the Iraqis. Ironically, the transmission towers were left standing" (p. 133). Boyd says that "of all countries of the Gulf, Kuwait had the most developed radio and television system until the Iraqi invasion."

The status of television facilities in Kuwait after



the American-led liberation in 1991 is easily summarized: the Iraqis took virtually all of the production equipment, but left the transmitters. The existing transmitters were important because they rebroadcast Iraqi television from microwave feeds.

"The Iraqi also took television scenery," states Boyd, "costumes, and props. A particularly significant loss was sets, costumes, and even the puppets from *Iftah Ya Simsim* (*Arabic Sesame Street*). The Iraqis took Melsoun (a parrot) and Noaman, the popular life-sized Big Bird-like character who was a favorite of children throughout the Arab world."

### **I. The Kuwaiti Print Media After the Gulf Crisis**

Jurdi states that before the invasion of Kuwait, the press focused on regional and international news, but after the liberation, they changed to more local news. The newspapers still used news agencies for international news, however (p. 29). Waqiyah (1994) also mentioned this change from foreign to local news, as well as the fact that the Kuwaiti press is now trying to address the Kuwaiti citizen and present all facts at his disposal, and also to keep people informed about the traumatic experience of the Iraqi occupation, especially as many social problems appeared after the liberation. He adds that the Kuwaiti



press is no longer the soft-talking media of the past; it has started using words as swords. It now exposes all mistakes, whether small or big, and tries to present its opinions to the reader honestly. More women writers emerged in the new press. And the quality of the press had fallen due to the occupation, was in a resurgence.

Waqiyan adds that the press is no longer an ornament used at the whims of a few. It is today a force to be reckoned with, keeping citizens informed about the happenings in Kuwait, as well as providing positive or negative coverage of the country anywhere in the world. Thus, the press feels it can contribute to nation-building. The press now is in the courtroom, not to report on flimsy cases like alimony and traffic offenses and others, but to report important issues such as trials of officials accused of corruption (p. 276).

The press was all praise for Saddam Hussein before the invasion, saying he was the best contemporary Arab there ever was and will be. But after the liberation, the press is saying the exact opposite: that Saddam is the worst of mankind. This has confused readers and as a result, Jurdi states that public trust of the press decreased (p. 29).

Jurdi adds that the press had long been known for its over-reliance on



foreign employees, but after the liberation, this concept changed. The press is now trying to rely on Kuwaitis, but the problem of the press remains that it cannot fulfill what the public wants. The public lost its interest in trusting the press, because of its heavy backing to Iraq before the invasion of Kuwait. The five Arabic newspapers supposedly to represent different points of view, but in reality all of them are similar. They either serve the government or the family owning the paper. Since the liberation of Kuwait, *Al-Qabas* newspaper has been trying to make itself the opposition newspaper in the country. On the other hand, *Al-Talia'* (the weekly newspaper) appeared again (it has been the most oft-suspended newspaper) as the only opposition newspaper in Kuwait. Most of the paper's materials are devoted to criticism of the government actions (p. 29).

Jurdi adds that before the invasion, all the daily newspapers had the ability to print everything, including commercial publications, on their own advanced offset equipment. Even the government used the facilities of the daily newspapers to print its own publications. Although the occupying Iraqis destroyed or took away most of the modern equipment in Kuwait, the condition of the equipment is slowly improving (p. 30).

On the issue of censorship, Waqiyan states that the situation between the



press and censorship right after the liberation was the same as before the occupation. The practicing journalists after liberation started agitating for reform, arguing that censorship was outdated and damaging. Writers stated that the government did not learn any lesson from the Iraqi invasion and asked how they could ever speak the truth and present facts if their hands were tied? They asserted that the time had come to cancel all censorship. Drost adds that in April 1991 the main opposition parties issued a joint call for the introduction of a free press (P. 284). And they succeeded. Censorship was canceled with a Minister of Information decision published on December 12, 1992. The decision said that "the Minister of Information, Dr. Badar Al-Ya'aqub passed a decision today cancelling all previous censorship in publishing which bound all publications to it" (p. 279). Jurdi also noted that censorship was lifted by canceling article Repeated 35S, which the print media celebrated their freedom. However, most papers are still using self-censorship to prevent future obstacles with the government (p. 30).

Waqiyan discusses in detail the return of the newspapers. On *Al-Qabas*, he says that the first edition of this newspaper appeared on January 17, 1991, *Al-Watan* returned on July 15, 1991, *Al-Anba'* on December 21, 1991, and *Al-Rai*



*Al-Amm* on August 24, 1991 (p. 287).

Waqiyan adds that *Sout Al-Kuwait* newspaper, which was published by the government in London, appeared ten days after the invasion on August 12, 1990, was also printed on the same day in Cairo, Jeddah, Riyadh, Dammam, New York, and Frankfurt to be distributed in 38 countries. It started to be printed in Kuwait after liberation on July 11, 1991, and it stopped on November 15, 1992.

The first newspaper to appear after the liberation was *The 26 of February*, which was managed by some of the underground resistance journalists during the occupation. It looked like the pamphlets that were published during the invasion, but with more pages and news. It stopped printing on April, 1991.

The first government newspaper to appear after liberation was the new *Al-Fajr Al-Jadid* (New Dawn) which was published by the Ministry of Information and made its debut on April 20, 1991, and ceased publication on December 31, 1992 (p. 290).

The Kuwaiti press no longer keeps the public ignorant of the happenings in the Kuwaiti armed services. Purchases of arms and other equipment are discussed in the press. All military treaties with other countries are also



discussed. Concerning domestic issues, the press now focuses on crimes and the wrongdoings of the police. They do not underestimate the importance of this aspect of reporting. The print media criticize television programming and programming on Kuwaiti Radio (p. 301).

The press in Kuwait, nearly six years after the country's liberation, is more than recovered from the damage incurred by the Iraqi invasion. The government is planning to give new licenses to new publications, and it is encouraging the printed media, and provides financial support for it.

According to Kuwait Facts and Figures (1996), Kuwait press houses have become large informational and commercial establishments. They are no longer satisfied with printing only their daily newspaper. They have embarked on parallel lines carrying out all the functions of commercial printing presses.

Seven daily newspaper are being published now in Kuwait: *Al-Rai Al-Amm*; *Al-Seyassah*; *Al-Qabas*; *Al-Watan*; *Al-Anba'*. Two newspapers, *Arab Times* and *Kuwait Times*, are published in English, Urdu, and Indian Malayalam languages. Kuwait regards its press as a democratic form of freedom of expression. (p. 206).

According to Al-Jassem (1995), the Minister of Information states that



freedom of press occurred late in Kuwait, because the Kuwaiti press was operated by non-Kuwaitis, and those people offended Kuwait, the people of Kuwait, and friendly countries. He said that the Kuwaiti press should be Kuwaiti, in order to be in a safe hand.

Finally, it is right to say that the press even after it gained its freedom did not change much since before Iraqi invasion. The press is falling in the same mistake it did before invasion. Before invasion, the press was helping Iraq and now it is against Iraq. The press should realize that it should go against the leadership of Iraq and not the people of Iraq. In any case, reporting should be objective

Since the liberation there has been a gradual return to the situation existing before August 1990, also in the media. But the future of many media outlets remains uncertain (Drost, P. 284).

## **II. The Kuwaiti Broadcast Media After the Gulf Crisis**

Jurdi (1994) states that "the government of Kuwait uses the broadcast media to set its agenda as well as to communicate with its people. Now, every house in Kuwait has at least one television set. The radio is less accepted at



home, but is more widely used in driving to work and at work. The Kuwait Ministry of Information has committed to work with other Gulf states to produce programs that will unite the people of the region as well as to educate them."

After the invasion of Kuwait, most equipment was destroyed by the Iraqis, and the new broadcast building was destroyed. However, the Kuwaiti government decided to rebuild the new broadcast complex with modern radio and television equipment (p. 37).

The FM 24 hours music is the newest service of Kuwait's Radio, according to Jurdi (p. 40). It is continuous FM stereo music with occasional interruption for news. It broadcasts mainly English music with one hour every day of Spanish, French or Indian music.

In the yearly estimates for 1994 and 1995 of the Ministry of Information, Al-Rashid (1995), states that the radio produces 70 hours daily through the Main program, which is the main radio transmission supplied by strong transmitters to cover wide range of the globe, broadcasts its program around the clock 9,000 hours a year. Program Two, which is directed at the Gulf area, presents local materials of about 4,000 hours a year; the Holy Quran Program, which is concerned with the Islamic religious materials, broadcasts 3,700 hours a year. The FM program, which broadcasts musical programs, information and



cultural events, broadcasts 4,780 hours a year; the English Program, which includes three hours in the evening and of a total of 1,000 hours a year, is also popular. The Songs Program, which plays a variety of songs are represented with a total of 9,000 hours per year; and the Sports and Youth Program offers a total of 1,440 hours a year (p. 4). According to Al-Najar (1995), the Minister of Information stated that the Ministry of Information is thinking of cancelling the Sports and Youth program, and it reduced its broadcast to two hours daily. It will also join Program Two and broadcast through it, from 4-6 p.m. He added that the Ministry will increase broadcasting time in the Holy Quran channel from ten hours to nineteen hours, broadcasting from 5 a.m. to midnight (P. 1).

Al-Rashid (1995), discusses the newly established radio stations: the Arabic songs station on FM wave 103.7 has been established by Kuwaiti engineers and the whole system is computerized. The Super Station, on the FM wave 99.7, with a studio that was prepared in the United States, and is considered the only one in the Middle East with a variety of computer programs (p. 18).

Al-Rashid adds, that both the Arabic FM studio and the English FM studio are connected with international news agencies, where the computers have been



programmed in the U.S. Both studios can be operated by computer; the system can be programmed for several days, and the computer will play songs and commercials automatically. And, in case the system fails, an alternative electronic system will take over, and the system will inform the person in charge via pager through a special code (p. 18).

Boyd (1993) states that via a temporary low-power transmitter installed after the multinational force ejected Iraq from Kuwait in early 1991, Kuwait television has been operating a temporary service that features a limited amount of local news and a great deal of Egyptian satellite-provided programming. In September 1991, a ranking Ministry of Information official told a visiting American broadcast engineer that the country's number one priority was getting television back on the air (p. 136).

Now, according to Kuwait Facts and Figures (1996), the television building in the complex of the Ministry of Information contains four studios for transmission and three production studios, including the most updated technical and engineering facilities. Further, Kuwait TV provides Egyptian Satellite Channel (ESC), and Middle East Broadcasting Center (MBC) to its viewers free of charge. According to Al-Qabas newspaper (August 21, 1995), these two



satellite channels cost Kuwait Television one million KD for the years 1992, 1993, and 1994 (p. 1). Kuwait Facts and Figures adds that Kuwait Television provides the American Cable News Network (CNN) to its viewers (p. 208). Al-Rashid (1995), states that the Ministry of Information is expanding the Ministry Complex through opening new studios with modern technology (p. 6).

Kuwait Television achieves the media policy goals through its local channels, One and Two, and the new-born *Channel Three* and *Channel Four*. Al-Rashid continues to states that *Channel One* transmits its programs from eight o'clock in the morning until midnight, and transmits local programs in addition to news, entertainment, and religious programs. Production of these programs will be by Kuwaiti Television *Channel One*, depending on the local technical abilities and experience for the dramatic and other variety programs. Also, television will improve local programming by sharing production with local organizations, supporting them and sharing effort, money and experience. On the international level, *Channel One* will cooperate with organizations and associations with experience and expertise in television production (p. 6).

According to the Ministry of Information brochure (undated), January 1992 marked a turning point for *Channel Two* (KTV2), when the announcers



spoke exclusively in English. In July 1993, the department was changed to an administration. KTV2 is a family-oriented channel that focuses on programming such as entertainment, dramas, comedies, documentaries, variety, specials, cartoons, feature films, best sellers and series. KTV2 offered 3,360 hours of quality programming for the 1993-1994 season. From the total amount of programming, the translation operations will provide subtitling to a larger segment of the audience. A total of 2,016 hours has been translated during the 1993-1994 season.

KTV2 has increased its local programming from two weekly programs to four weekly programs in addition to weekly special reports and exclusive interviews. KTV2 produces 144 local television programs annually and aims to increase local programming to 30 percent in the future. KTV2 is committed to quality family programming. The goals of this media outlet are to improve programming, increase local material and upgrade technical manpower facilities.

Kuwait Television facilities are operated by Pal System, editing operations are run by C-Format and Beta SP, four OB stations, microwave facilities and one studio for KTV2 production. KTV2's engineering department has four Super Beta cams. It is technologically sophisticated within the region.



Jurdi (1994) states that *Channel Three* on Kuwait Television was opened after the liberation of the country. It is mainly used for sport events, which include local, regional and international events. The events include European soccer, American football, and all kinds of sports events (Jurdi, 1994, p. 41). Kuwait Ministry of Information Yearbook 1994 mentions that *Channel Three* transmits for eight hours daily.

Al-Rashid adds that *Channel Three* transmits its programs which handle youth and sports subjects. It aims at spreading sports awareness among the public and encouraging the youth to engage in sports.

Through the next "five year" plan, *Channel Three* plans:

- to improve programming;
- increase local material;
- and upgrade technical manpower facilities and increase its transmission hours to 15 hours, instead of 8 hours at the present time (p. 6).

*Channel Four* was started on November 1, 1993, on *Channel Two* frequency. The programs include movies, both in Arabic and in English, entertainment shows, drama, documentaries, and music. It was aimed to keep Kuwaiti Television, KTV, working around the clock (Jurdi, 1993, p. 41).



*Channel Four* is a variety entertainment channel broadcasting for about eight hours daily from midnight until eight in the morning (Yearbook, 1994, p. 620).

Al-Rashid continues to add that *Channel Four* is a new channel that was established after the liberation of Kuwait. It is a continuance channel to *Channel One*. It starts its transmission at midnight after the end of Channel One's transmission, continuing until eight o'clock in the morning. It focuses on programming such as entertainment, dramas, comedies, documentaries, variety, specials, feature films and Arabic and foreign series. All its programs are taped, and no announcers connect between these programs or provide for transitions (p. 6).

On July 4, 1992, KTV launched a new *Kuwaiti Satellite Channel* (KSC) to cover the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and other north Arabian countries (Jurdi, p. 41). This new channel was designed to make Kuwait heard all over the world. Both *Channel One* and *Channel Four* comprise the Kuwaiti Satellite Channel (KSC), which is carried out via ARABSAT (Yearbook, p. 620).

Shewaiter (1996), states that a second Kuwaiti Satellite Channel will start broadcasting in a few months. It will carry Kuwaiti programming in English and



will be connected with *Channel Two* in Kuwait Television (p. 2).

Kuwait, represented by the Ministry of Information will soon establish the Television Cable System. With regard to this project, Kuwait spent some time to study how to execute it to appear with the required competitive image. After long discussions with different companies and performing experiments, Kuwait settled for executing the Television Cable System "Multi Microwave Distribution System (MMDS)," instead of the Television Cable System "Fiber Optic" because the MMDS is faster and cheaper.

The project will be executed through two stages: the first stage, is an experimental stage through which only 16 channels will be transmitted through transmitting sets available at the Ministry of Information and will cover a circle of a diameter of 30 kilometers, so it will approximately reach Al-Ahmady city south of Kuwait. This stage which will take a year, will be a stage to study, analyze, and measure the project to discover the faults which will appear upon execution. The Ministry of Information will install computers and measuring devices at four different areas of Kuwait to measure and analyze the operation daily.

The second stage will address the problems that emerged in the first stage, and will enlarge the infrastructure to transmit 30 independent channels, which



will cover all the inhabited areas of Kuwait.

The MMDS project aims at making all its channels, plus the Kuwaiti Television Channels, cover all Kuwait with complete clarity without the necessity to use antennas above the buildings. The MMDS will include channels that conform with Kuwait religion, traditions and customs. Additionally, the MMDS will afford new and additional services targeted to all social audiences, including men, women and children, to compete with available satellite channels.

The technical side of the MMDS project is ready. But the most important aspect of the project is the managerial and executive side, and how it will be structured, staffed, and maintained. Since the MMDS service will not be free, the possibilities are being to give the project to a private company to execute the whole job. But what will be the most effective means of implementation? This is what is going to be decided by the higher officials of the Ministry of Information and the government (K. Al-Muqaisib, personal communication, August 10, 1995).

The Minister of Information according to Shewaiter (1996), states that the MMDS is ready, but the government is studying whether to censor programming or not. This official also said that if the government elects to censor



the cable, it will not attract the viewers (P. 10).

Al-Rashid (1996) mention that, the Television Cable has been successfully tested. Through this system the viewer will be able to select programs either locally, internationally or regionally. The only difference is that the cable will be under government supervision, unlike satellite channels (p. 8).

Jurdi (1993) adds that in 1992, the Ministry of Information installed a TV transmission station on Failaka Island (which lies 20 km northeast of Kuwait City). The new station has eight 60 and 20 kilowatt UHF system; the station will cover Kuwait, the Gulf states, south Iran, and Iraq (p. 41). He adds that KTV broadcasts a diversity of programs to satisfy a variety of populations living in Kuwait. The TV programs contain 75 percent local programs (63 percent on *Channel One* and 12 percent on *Channel Two*). The programs include culture (including science, art and literature), religious information, and documentaries. Sports programs (recorded and live) are aired on *Channel Three*. There are six TV studios, three for on-air programming such as news and interviews and three larger studios for video tape productions. Recently, the Ministry of Information opened a television studio to broadcast news bulletins. This is considered the biggest news studio in the Middle East. The facilities used in television stations



were the most modern in the Arab world (p. 42).

Al-Rashid (1995), states that the Ministry of Information is working on a study to establish a new station for deaf people. It will be supplied by summaries of the three channels with an interpreter. Broadcasting will be from 4-6 hours daily (p. 6).

Kuwait broadcast media are considered one of the most used and useful communications media in Kuwait. They provide educational, cultural, entertainment, and sports programs. The new Minister of Information, Sheikh Saud Nasir Al-Sabah (former ambassador to the U.S.), has improved the broadcast media to become competitive with other TV stations in the region. He took positive steps to improve the old system. Since he took over in 1992, he created a new image of the broadcast media using foreign experts and modern technology. He has broadcast media running for 24 hours a day, seven days a week (Jurdi, 1993).

The Information Minister's concern, according to Jurdi (1993), is how to compete with other satellite channels such as the Egyptian Satellite Channel (ESC) and Middle East Broadcasting Center (MBC). He seriously adopted new strategies and communication policies in the state of Kuwait and abroad to be



implemented, but many obstacles such as administrative, experienced staff, training, etc., remain a barrier to achieving his goals. Television programs are still not considered among the best in the region. The Ministry of Information owns one of the most advanced TV technologies known in the Middle East in the form of studio equipment, cameras, control room, and special effects equipment, but it lacks the experienced staff to operate this new sophisticated equipment. Most of the people working in the television station lack the basic knowledge of how to write, edit, produce, or direct programs, and they are not directly involved in re-writing the news. They are merely present the news as it is written to them by news editors. Therefore, the character and personality of the newscasters (anchor-person) don't exist like the ones available on European and American radio and television stations (p. 50).

In a research conducted in 1994 by the Council of Ministers (Diwan of following up the performance of the administrative) on a sample size of 604, to measure the veiwership on the Kuwaiti Television Channels, Egyptian Satellite Channel (ESC) and Middle-East Broadcast Center (MBC), show that Channel One had the highest viewership. But ESC is in a real competition with Channel One (P. 27). The fallowing table will show the percentage.



Viewership on Kuwait  
Television Channels, MBC, and ESC

Viewing Time	Channal One	Channal Two	Channal Three	Channal Four	MBC	ESC
First Period 8:00am -12:30pm	140 27%	-	-	-	-	90 17%
Second Period 12:30 - 5:00 pm	160 31%	10 2%	89 17%	-	21 4%	101 20%
Third Period 5:00 - 9:00 pm	185 36%	73 14%	52 10%	-	68 13%	60 12%
Fourth Period 9:00 pm- Midnight	310 60%	22 4%	5 1%	-	210 41%	160 31%
Fifth Period Midnight - end of broadcasting	193 37%	43 8%	-	85 16%	163 32%	200 39%

Since the liberation, Kuwait Television has been in the process of developing and creating a new positive image regarding its programs to serve Kuwaiti society. This is very hard to achieve quickly when you have other television channels you can switch to. More time and research are needed to judge and evaluate the future performance of Kuwait Television.

Forrester (1996) states that, terrestrial television is rapidly losing out to satellite, and that TV ad-revenue is barely sufficient to keep one station going, let alone half-a-dozen in the region.

Kuwait TV suffers the same problems. While Kuwaiti viewers are no less loyal to their local TV station than any other Arab national, they have caught the satellite "bug". Hard numbers are near-impossible to come by, but



dishes are as popular in Kuwait as elsewhere and there is no reason to doubt that much the same arguments apply: declining ad-revenues, and audiences showing increasing loyalty to the new breed of satellite broadcasters.

With terrestrial broadcasters being increasingly squeezed of income, the question must be asked, how can they possibly survive without increasing State subsidies? Forrester said that he posed a question to a senior staff at Kuwait TV - and they were reluctant to be quoted, although all recognized the huge problems faced by the terrestrials. He adds that asking them whether they saw the need for Kuwait TV to provide fresh, innovative programming to challenge satellite only caused further anxieties.

The simple fact is that satellite is making all the play. The terrestrials are seen by most as lumbering dinosaurs, plodding on but oblivious to the imminent threat of extinction (P. 17).



## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### **CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

#### **I. Conclusion**

From the foregoing discussion, it can be seen that Kuwait, a small country in the Gulf, has had dynamic mass media since early this century. Individual Kuwaitis have excelled in pioneering journalistic work, and have led the way for many others, especially in the Gulf.

The government of Kuwait - under the suzerainty of its Amir - has always been aware of the importance of the mass media as strong components in the quest for national development. Therefore, the government has encouraged the establishment of the print media and participated in establishing the broadcast media, of which it is the sole owner.

A watershed in the history of Kuwait was August 2, 1990. On that day, Iraqi forces rolled into Kuwait, thus beginning a seven-month occupation which only ended when the multinational forces ejected the Iraqis in February 1991.

For the Kuwaiti mass media, the invasion was a double tragedy. First, the tragedy was that the Iraqis had destroyed the country's infrastructure, including



the advanced equipment assembled in Kuwait for printing, radio, and television broadcasting. The equipment destroyed and looted was some of the best in the Arab world. The Kuwaiti mass media was pushed back to its beginning. The second tragedy for the Kuwaiti mass media, and the most painful, is that it was going side by side with the Iraqi media in singing praises of Saddam Hussein.

The government of Kuwait - especially during the Iran-Iraq war, and after - dissolved the National Assembly in 1986, and the government added new articles to the Press Law to give the Information Minister the power to censor the press. The Kuwaiti mass media become mere cheerleaders for the Iraqi strongman. There was no greater embarrassment for the Kuwaiti media than to wake up in the morning to realize that its best friend - in fact its idol and hero - had overnight become its worst enemy and nightmare. The mistake was realized too late.

McDanold (1996), stated that the Minister of Information said that people think that problems Kuwait had faced in the past when the Assembly was dissolved had come back to haunt the country and its people. He continued to say that the country had passed a test stage inside Kuwaiti society and in the area as well. He said that it was a "mistake experience, and the country would not go



back to that again" (p. 1).

In order to serve the society, it is important to connect the policy of mass media with the present and the future needs of that society. To have this kind of communications between the mass media and the society, there should be a precise, clear, and acceptable media policy. Implementing this media policy requires honest facts about mass media and their relations to the society. Without understanding the society, the mass media more likely will be the servants of those who control them.

The constitution in Kuwait has provided a safeguard for the press to be free, but the government stripped this power to keep its control over the press. Since the establishment of the press law in 1956, the press has never escaped government censorship. Even when there is a period of freedom, the press practices selfcensorship to prevent future obstacles with the government.

The National Assembly is the other safeguard of the press beside the constitution, but not always. The opinion of the National Assembly is a reflection of its members' points of view. Not all members would like to give the press an absolute freedom. On the other hand, the National Assembly is an unstable institution which the government can dissolve any time it sees it as a source of



danger for its power as it did two previous occasions.

During the first few days of the invasion, Kuwait Radio continued clandestine broadcasting, only to later transfer to Saudi Arabia. However, by far the most active arm of the resistance inside Kuwait was the underground press. Many pamphlets appeared to take over from where newspapers and magazines left. Ingenious ways of distribution and production were invented, and people were kept informed.

The traditional forms of mass communication (Mosques, *Dewaniyyah*, the They-Say-News-Agency) all took on a new life, becoming the means by which the Kuwaiti people exchanged information under siege. The artistic-minded took to writing graffiti on walls.

*Dewaniyyah* today, as it was always been, comprise very strong informational centers; they are also called small assembly. People of Kuwait (men only) gathered in different *Dewaniyyahs* everyday and exchanged information and ideas on all aspects of Kuwaiti society, especially politics. If a Kuwaiti missed reading a newspaper or watching the news, it was not a problem because in the *Dewaniyyah* it became possible to hear all about events taking place in Kuwait and abroad from all the different sources of news. *Dewaniyyahs*



become more important during elections days and other crises.

Censorship laws had been the undoing of the Kuwaiti press before the occupation. Therefore, when the country was liberated, the media practitioners vehemently protested that the press laws were moribund and had to be repealed. They were subsequently eliminated, but are Kuwaitis the better for the cancelling of the censorship laws? This is an area that continues to be debated.

True, the press today reports the misdeeds of the high and mighty, but it still is very selective. An example is the trial of Shaikh Ali Khalifa on charges of embezzling public funds. All newspapers reported the case consistently - except Al-Watan newspaper, which is owned by Khalifa.

The print media has more freedom than the broadcast media because of the ownership. The broadcast media is still under the government control, while print media are mostly family owned businesses. Even though the newspapers claim objectivity of their reporting, they still reflect their elite ownership views and interests. Now, there is a move to give permission to any one who wants to establish a newspaper or a magazine without prior permission from the Ministry of Information. This will strip the power from the elitist owners, and increase the competition among various publications (Jurdi, P. 47).



According to Jurdi, to illustrate the freedom of the press in Kuwait we can picture the press components as a soccer (football) game. The rules of the game are set by the constitution. The referees are the Supreme Executive Authority who can control the game for their own benefits. The coach of the team is the Information Minister who can view the game from the outside and sets the plans for the game. He can scream at the players, and substitute them any time he wants. The players are the press who play the game according to rules set by the three. Most of the time, the players (press) take the responsibility of losing or winning. Whenever the government is in trouble with the public, it tries to throw the ball into the press court to escape public criticism (P. 46).

The Kuwaiti press has, since the liberation, replaced its idolizing of Iraq with a passionate hatred. Even though this is understandable, the mistake of the past should not be repeated. The press should not suddenly be caught unawares of Iraq should it again become a friend (a very distant possibility actually). In any case, reporting should be objective.

After the liberation, the mass media, helped tremendously by heavy doses of government funds, bounced back. The dailies, many of which were publishing abroad, soon reestablished themselves. The Radio and television also returned -



and improved.

Jurdi states that many foreign journalists left the country after liberation, leaving a gap for unexperienced Kuwaitis to take over the press. Therefore, the print media switched heavily to news agencies for news, especially KUNA. Before the invasion, most newspapers focused more on international news than local due to high population of Arab nationalities (Palestinians and Jordanians) living in Kuwait. Now, the focus has switched more to local news (P. 48).

As the pre-invasion press had relied heavily on foreign staffing, the post-liberation mass media today try to ensure that their staffing is overwhelmingly Kuwaiti. What is gained in loyalty makes up for what is lost in professionalism.

## **II. Recommendations**

The Kuwaiti press was much ahead of many other Arab presses. Similarly, Kuwaiti Radio and Television were the first in the Gulf area. The press now enjoys relative freedom and diversity, but the broadcast media - even though massive in its equipment and programming - is still not competitive. Because of the government's tight hold. Liberalization of broadcasting in Kuwait would go a long way toward establishing the country as truly innovative as it had always



been.

The Kuwaiti press must realize that they are not fighting the Iraqi people but its leadership. Therefore, care should be taken in the way government and people are addressed, so that friendship could be cultivated with possible like-minded people on the other side.

Al-Hashim (1992), reported that since the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war the Kuwaiti mass media have led the whole Kuwaiti people towards Saddam Hussein. Both government and private Kuwaiti media have set the Kuwaiti people on cruise control toward Baghdad (with love). And when Saddam placed his army on the border of Kuwait, and started spreading lies about Kuwait, the writer asked a government official about the Iraqi lies, the official told him that this was politics that you don't understand.

After liberation, the Kuwaiti media failed by making the same mistake by directing the Kuwaiti people, but this time the media set the Kuwaiti people on cruise control toward Baghdad (with hate). Even though the media realize that yesterday's friends can become today's enemy, there will be also be today's enemy and tomorrow's friend. Then the media will be caught unaware if Iraq again becomes friend, and then step on the brakes to cancel the cruise control and



direct the Kuwaiti people somewhere else (p. 16).

The way some of the Kuwaiti press omit important publication information is inexcusable. For example, the weekly newspaper Al-Sabk, a new publication, does not provide history of publication, name of publishers, editors, or publication address anywhere on its pages. How could one ever discuss such a publication in an essay?

Kuwaiti writers who have discussed the history of the country's mass media sometimes leave gaps which are difficult to fill. It is hoped that this research would be of some assistance in collecting useful information in one piece as well as trying to fill in the blank spaces left by the writers mentioned above.

Kuwait, along with its fellow Middle Eastern, Arab or Islamic nations, has learned much from the Gulf War. John Petrie (1994) has pointed out that one consequence of the Gulf War was global recognition of the growing political force of Islamic resurgence throughout the region. With Islam comes conflict not only in religious matters but in the attempt to use it as a political force (P. 150).

The Islamic threat in the Middle East increasingly is shifting to forces within individual states, rather than the traditional disputes between regional



activists. In this context, Petrie (1994) argues that one method of ameliorating the potentially disruptive political, social, and economic effects of a militant, resurgent Islam, is to foster the development of "democratic" institutions such as those represented by a free press and an expanded information dissemination infrastructure (P. 298). This recommendation certainly is applicable in the present context, given the capacity of the Kuwaiti media to serve as a locus for the dissemination of information necessary to maintain the political autonomy and integrity of the country as a whole.

Similarly, Cronin (1993) makes note of the fact that new perceptions of the potential role of the United States of America within the region are a consequence of joint U.S.-Arab cooperation in the war against Iraq. Many Kuwaitis perceive the United States as a potential friend and supporter. To an extent, Kuwait would be well advised to explore the possibilities of drawing upon the technological expertise of American mass media in its own infrastructure redevelopment process. The interstate threat posed by Iraq in 1990 and to the present remains a significant political and economic concern within the region (P. 106).

As the foregoing discussion has demonstrated, the Kuwaiti media was



instrumental in lionizing Saddam Hussein prior to his invasion and equally instrumental in denigrating his role and position following the invasion. With the defeat of Iraq, all friendly Mideast countries enjoyed an improved security environment; maintenance of this environment inevitably will depend upon the creation of an information exchange system that fosters the free flow of relevant

White (1986) long before the Gulf War pointed out that logic dictated that the conservative Arab littoral states should band together and move toward closer cooperation in terms of economic matters, including development and infrastructure construction (P. 158). In the present context, this comment suggests the following:

- That Kuwait explore possibilities for media infrastructure enhancement in tandem or cooperation with other friendly states in the region;
- That Kuwait consider cooperative arrangements or ventures with regional powers or with Western allies with respect to such critical issues as technology transfer, training and education of Kuwaiti nationals in technology-rich professions, and other similar aspects of information dissemination and control;



- That Kuwait position media expansion and development as a top priority for its governmental and military redevelopment program.

Issues such as censorship and governmental control of media can and should be resolved at the national level in Kuwait. Given the overwhelming importance of the mass media in the Gulf War, it is clearly critical that Kuwait move ahead aggressively in the coming months and years to ensure the integrity of its media.



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