

OE Threat Assessment: Kuwait



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Complex Operational Environment and
Threat Integration Directorate (CTID)





Introduction

Kuwait is an important strategic country in the Middle East due to its friendly relations with the United States and its petroleum reserves. The country serves as a staging area for American military personnel in the Middle East before they deploy to Afghanistan, Iraq, or other countries. Kuwait is a significant member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) as the country holds 7% of the world's known crude oil reserves. In addition, Kuwait has promised to increase its oil production from 2.5 million barrels per day (bbl/day) in 2010 to 4 million bbl/day by 2020. The U.S. continues to assist Kuwait improve and professionalize its military capabilities to make its defenses stronger.

Political

Kuwait is a constitutional emirate ruled by the al-Sabah family from Kuwait City. The family has been in power since their return in 1991 after the first Gulf War in which a coalition of countries forced Iraq military forces under Saddam Hussein out of the country. There are three branches of government. The chief of state is the emir, a hereditary position, who appoints a prime minister and several deputy prime ministers. The legislative branch consists of a unicameral national assembly called the *Majlis al-Umma* with 66 seats, 50 elected by popular vote and 16 cabinet ministers appointed by the prime minister with voting rights. There is a judicial branch that culminates with the High Court of Appeal. Political parties are considered illegal, but are not technically forbidden by law. Since 2005, Kuwaiti women have had the right to vote. Voters must be 21 years of age and have been citizens for 20 years. Males in the military or police are not allowed to vote. The legal system is a combination of English common law, French civil law, and Islamic law. Almost half (1.2 million) of the people that live in Kuwait are non-nationals and cannot vote. The *Bidoons*, as the stateless people are called, are increasing their demands for the Kuwaiti government to grant them citizenship.

Military

Kuwait maintains all three branches of the military—army, air force, and navy. The emir maintains authority over all the armed forces, but he delegates the daily operational control of the army and air force to the Minister of Defense (MOD) and the navy to the Minister of Interior (MOI). The Kuwaiti military, despite the different chains of command, is capable of conducting joint operations. Approximately 16,000 active duty personnel and 23,700 reserve personnel serve in the Kuwaiti military including non-Kuwaiti nationals. All reservists must serve until they reach 40 years of age and must participate in one month of training each year. Since 2001, service in the Kuwaiti military has been voluntary but there are discussions in the legislative branch to bring back conscription for 6-12 months. Other sources indicate that conscription has already returned with mandatory two years of universal service for all males,



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but reduced to one year for university graduates. Officers must attend Ali Al Sabah Military College to obtain a commission. Kuwait spent about \$4.05 billion for defense spending in 2011, a drop from \$4.41 billion in 2010, and \$4.33 billion in both 2008 and 2009.

Army

The Kuwaiti army numbers about 12,000 active duty personnel with its headquarters in Kuwait City. Other major army bases include Al Jabah and Mina Abdullah. The Kuwaiti army uses mainly Western equipment including M1A2 Abrams main battle tanks. If invaded, the Kuwaiti army would most likely be able only to delay the enemy for up to 48 hours to allow other countries to come to their rescue. Units include:

- 3 Armored Brigades
- 2 Mechanized Infantry Brigades
- 1 Mechanized Recon Brigade
- 1 Artillery Brigade
- 1 Engineer Brigade
- 1 Amiri Guard Brigade
- 1 Air Defense Command
- 1 Military Police Battalion
- 1 Commando Battalion
- 1 Special Operations Unit
- 1 Logistics Group
- 1 Field Hospital
- 1 Reserve Mechanized Brigade

Air Force

The Kuwaiti air force operates with approximately 2,500 active duty personnel from three major air fields: Kuwait IAP, Ahmed-al-Jaber, and Ali-al-Salem. The Kuwaiti air force uses primarily American air frames and equipment supplemented by other Western equipment. Kuwaiti pilots average about 210 flying hours each year. High readiness Patriot air defense missile batteries are scattered throughout the country, but especially around Kuwait City. Units include:

- 2 Fighter/Ground Attack Squadrons
- 1 Fixed-Wing Transport Squadron
- 1 Attack Helicopter Squadron
- 1 Transport Helicopter Squadron
- 1 Fixed-Wing Training Squadron
- 1 Training/Attack Helicopter Squadron
- 1 Air Defense Command

Navy

The Kuwaiti navy, under the MOI, patrols the country's 310-mile coastline to protect both the sea line of communication and any offshore infrastructure. Approximately 1,500 active duty personnel serve in the navy, 500 additional personnel in the coast guard, and about 600 civilian employees. The Kuwaiti naval base is located at Ras al Qalaya while coast guard bases are located at Shuwaikh (Kuwait City), Umm Al-Hainan, Al Bida, Verba, Al-Qulaya (Ras al-Qalaya), and Al-Harian.



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ARMY (As of May 2012, U.S. origin unless otherwise noted)					
Armored Equipment in Service		Artillery Systems in Service		AT/SAM Weapons in Service	
M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tank (MBT)	218	Howitzer, 155-mm GCT SP (France)	18	Recoilless Rifle (RR) 84-mm M3 Carl Gustav (Sweden)	200
M84 MBT (Yugoslavia-in storage)	75	Howitzer, 155-mm M109A3 SP	23	Air Defense (AD) Gun 35-mm Oerlikon (Switzerland)	12
Desert Warrior Armored Infantry Fighting Vehicle (AIFV) (United Kingdom (UK))	254	Howitzer, 155-mm F3 (France-in storage)	18	Anti-Tank (AT) BGM-71A TOW	2127
M113A2 Armored Personnel Carrier (APC)	230	Howitzer, 155-mm PLZ45 (China)	51	AT BGM-71F TOW IIB (on order)	1000
M557 Armored Command Post Vehicle	40	Mortar, 10-mm RT-F1	12	AT M47 Dragon	UNK
TH 390 Fahd APC (Egypt-in storage)	40	Mortar, 107-mm M30	6	Surface-to-Air (SAM) FIM-92A Stinger MANPADS	UNK
BMP-3 AIFV (Russia)	120	Mortar, 81-mm L16 (UK)	60	SAM Starburst MANPADS (UK)	48
BMP-2 AIFV (Russia)	76	Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) 300-BM-30 Smerch SP (Russia)	25	SAM Hawk III	24
HMMWV TOW	66			SAM Aspide 2000 (Italy)	12
HMMWV M901 Improved Tow Vehicle (ITV)	8				
TPz-1 Funchs NBC Vehicle (France)	11				
AIR FORCE (As of May 2012, US origin unless otherwise noted)					
Fixed Wing Aircraft in Service		Rotary Wing Aircraft in Service		Missiles in Service	
Fighter/Attack (F/A) F/A-18C Hornet	31	AS 332 Super Puma (Naval Aviation-France)	5	Air-to-Air (ATA) AIM-9L Sidewinder	UNK
F/A F/A-18D	8	SA 330F Puma (Search & Rescue (SAR)/Transport-France)	5	ATA AIM-7F Sparrow	UNK
F/A Hawk Mk 64 (COIN/Training)	11	SA 342L Gazelle (Attack)	13	ATA R550 Magic 1 (France)	UNK
Transport L-100-30 Hercules (C-130)	3	AH-64 Apache (Attack)	16	ATA AIM 120C AMRAAM (60 also on order)	60
Douglas DC-9	1			Air-to-Surface (ATS) AGM-84A Harpoon Anti-Ship	UNK
Boeing B-737-200	1			ATS AGM-6G Maverick	UNK
Airbus A319	1			SAM MIM-104D PAC-3	UNK
Training Tuscano T Mk52 (UK)	8			SAM MIM-23 I Hawk III	24
				SAM Aspide (Italy)	12
				SAM Patriot	6
				SAM Starburst MANPADS (UK)	50
				SAM Skyguard/Aspide (Italy/Switzerland)	12
NAVY (As of May 2012, French origin unless otherwise noted)					
Vessels		Missiles		Coast Guard	



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Combattante-II Class Guided Missile Patrol Craft (GMPC)	8	Anti-Ship MM40 Exocet	UNK	ASI OPV 310 Class Patrol Craft (Australia)	4
German Lurssen TNC Design GMPC	1	Anti-Ship AM39 Exocet	UNK	Al Shaheed Class Patrol Craft (Unknown)	3
German Lurssen FPB 57 Design	1	Anit-Ship Sea Skua (UK)	4	Type 46 Fast Patrol Boat Patrol Craft (Unknown)	16
Haiya-Class Logistics Support Service Craft	2	STA Mistral	UNK	SY 24-M Sea Gull Class Patrol Craft (South Korea)	UNK
Fareed Logistics Support Ligheter Service Craft	1			Mark V Pegasus Class Patrol Craft (US)	2
Sawahil 35-Class Service Craft	1			Thornycroft 27-m Design Patrol Craft (UK)	UNK
Al Saffar Class Auxiliary	2			Subahi-Class Patrol Boat Patrol Craft (Unknown)	10
				Cougar Enforcer 40 Class Patrol Craft (Unkknown)	6
				Australian 22-m Patrol Boat Patrol Craft	3
				FB Design Patrol Craft (Italy)	4
				Manta Class (Unknown)	12
				UFPB 1300 Class Cougar Type Patrol Craft (Unknown)	3
				UFPB 1200 Class Cougar Type Patrol Craft (Unknown)	4
				UFPB 1100 Class Cougar Type Patrol Craft (Unknown)	3
				UFPB 1000 Class Cougar Type Patrol Craft (Unknown)	3
				Cat 900-Class Catamaran Cougar Type Patrol Craft (Unknown)	3
				PVF 512 Sea Truck Patrol Craft	1
				Loadmaster Mk II Logistics Support Landing Craft	1
				Singapore SSE Design Amphibious Landing/Supply Craft	2

American Forces in Kuwait

The U.S. currently uses Kuwait as a staging area for military personnel entering and leaving Afghanistan. The American Army has a forward deployed maneuver brigade headquarters that operates out of Kuwait. The number of U.S. military personnel in Kuwait is ever changing dependent on the rotation cycle of units. The U.S. is also considering staging American troops in Kuwait on a rotational basis as the drawdown in Afghanistan continues. Military bases used by the U.S. include:

- Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait City
- Camp Arifjan, Afrifjan
- Camp Buehring, Udairi
- Camp Patriot, Southeast Coast



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- Camp Spearhead, Shuaiba
- Camp Virginia

Government Paramilitary Forces

The Kuwaiti National Guard is the largest paramilitary organization in the country and numbers about 5,000 active duty personnel. The National Guard is responsible for Kuwait's internal security. The National Guard's units include three paramilitary battalions, one armored car battalion, one military police battalion, and one special forces battalion. Military style equipment used by the National Guard includes 20 VBL armored reconnaissance vehicles from France, 70 Pandur armored vehicles from Austria, and 22 Shorland armored reconnaissance vehicles from the UK. The National Guard also operates three SA 342K Gazelle helicopters produced in France.

Besides being responsible for the Kuwaiti coast guard units, the MOI contains a paramilitary police unit including a small helicopter fleet with four AS 36N Dauphins (France), two Eurocopter 135s (International), and one SA 330H Puma (France).

Kuwaiti Military Functions

Mission Command

While the Kuwaiti military does have the capacity to conduct some joint operations, the MOI controls naval assets including the coast guard while the MOD controls the army and air force. This separation of the chain of command will always cause more problems than if all three military services were under the same leadership. With assistance from the U.S., the Kuwaiti officer corps is becoming more professional each year, increasing their ability to lead their units in operations.

Maneuver

Almost the entire Kuwaiti army is mechanized infantry or armor allowing it to maneuver freely in the country's desert terrain. The absence of light infantry, however, may be detrimental for any military operations in an urban area.

Information Warfare

The Kuwaiti government operates four television networks, a single satellite channel, and Radio Kuwait. While the Kuwaiti government does not have a monopoly on the media in the country, it does have the ability to shape public opinion.

RISTA

The Kuwaiti army does have a mechanized reconnaissance brigade and is form a special operations unit. These units give the military the ability to conduct reconnaissance operations



at various depths on the battlefield. The Kuwaiti air force, however, possesses limited aircraft to conduct aerial reconnaissance operations.

Fire Support

The Kuwaiti military possesses over 100 tubes of 155-mm howitzers including some in storage. This should be sufficient to provide fire support to its five active and one reserve maneuver brigades. Limited radar capability, however, would make the Kuwaiti artillery vulnerable to counter-battery fire.

Protection

The Kuwaiti military has adequate equipment to protect its personnel. Maneuver units would primarily operate from tanks or other armored vehicles. The Kuwaiti military operates 11 TPz-1 Fuchs NBC vehicles to provide reconnaissance on a chemically contaminated battlefield. Support vehicles, however, may be soft-skinned and vulnerable to aerial attack.

Logistics

The Kuwaiti military has one logistics group, a type of unit often overlooked by militaries in favor of more maneuver units. Almost continual advisement by both military and civilian personnel since the first Gulf War has improved the capabilities of the Kuwaiti military to sustain its maneuver forces.

Threat Actors in the OE

Non-State Paramilitary Forces

Insurgent Forces

There are currently no known major insurgent forces operating in Kuwait. Government forces have put down minor demonstrations by the use of water cannons. The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism lists 45 countries where al-Qaeda operates, but Kuwait is not one of them.

Guerrilla Forces

There are currently no known major guerrilla forces operating in Kuwait.

Criminal Organizations

The Kuwait government denies that there is any organized crime in their country. According to the Deputy Director of the Capital Security Directorate, most crime is non-violent, but there are instances of robberies, fights, or domestic conflicts. There appears that there is some



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organization to the kidnapping of foreign women who come to Kuwait to serve as maids, housekeepers, or other domestic jobs to force them into prostitution.

Private Security Organizations

There are private security organizations in Kuwait. They take jobs from the protection of high profile individuals to security guards. The U.S. military even hires local security to man the gates at their various facilities to conduct vehicle inspections and other routine security tasks.

Non-Military Armed Combatants

There are foreign advisors to the Kuwait military and Kuwaiti National Guard throughout the country. Some of these advisors may be armed. Most will be friendly at best and neutral at worst.

Force Protection Issues

Kuwait is a relatively safe environment for most foreign military in the country. Crime is low and violent crimes against expatriates rarely occur. The U.S. Embassy advises all visitors to take the same precautions in Kuwait that one would practice in any large American city.

There have been some attacks on U.S. military personnel in Kuwait, but none recently. In October 2002, two assailants in civilian clothes shot two Marines as they trained on Failaka Island in the Persian Gulf and then attempted to escape in a civilian pickup truck. U.S. Military Police chased the pickup down and killed both of the attackers. One of the two wounded Marines later died. Two days later, armed assailants fired on Marines in a convoy without any casualties. A few months later, gunmen fired on two American military contractors while they were travelling in a car outside an American military base in Kuwait. One of the contractors was killed and the other severely wounded. There were no more attacks on Americans in Kuwait until the Kuwaiti government in August 2009 arrested six suspected al Qaeda members who were planning an attack on a U.S. base. Since this last incident, Kuwait has been fairly quiet regarding attacks on U.S. personnel.

Economic

Kuwait's entire economy revolves around the petroleum industry that accounts for almost half of the country's GDP, 95% of its export revenues, and 95% of the government's income. This small country possesses about 7% of the world's known crude oil reserves and expects to increase its oil production to 4 million barrels per day (bbl/d) by 2020 from 2.5 million bbl/d in 2010. While Kuwait does possess an estimated 63 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of proven gas reserves, this is not a truly significant number. In fact, Kuwait needs to import natural gas to generate electricity, desalinate water, and to manufacture petrochemicals. Exploration continues for additional natural gas fields that may make the industry more important to the country.



Social

Unlike many other Middle Eastern countries, Kuwait is quite liberal. Women received the vote in 2005, and four women were elected to the National Assembly in May 2009. Due to the high price of crude oil, most of the people live quite comfortably with an estimated per capita income of \$41,700 in 2011. Ethnic Kuwaitis comprised about 45% of the people in the country. Other Arabs account for 35%, South Asians for 9%, Iranians at 4%, and all others make up the final 7%. The country's official religion is Islam. Of the 85% who practice the Muslim faith, 70% are Sunnis while 30% are Shias. The Christian, Hindu, and Parsi religions comprise the other 15% of the population. Due to the country's wealth, little unrest occurred in Kuwait. Since March 2011 with a rally to oust the prime minister and his cabinet due to a corruption scandal, regular anti-government demonstrations have occurred with occasional clashes between the protestors and Kuwaiti security force personnel. While Arabic is the official language, English is widely spoken throughout Kuwait.

Information

Compared to many other countries in the Mideast, Kuwait is operating in the communication age. By 2010, in a country of only 2.6 million people, there were 566,300 landline telephones and 4.4 million cellular phones for an almost 200% saturation level. As of June 2012, 74.2% of the population or about 1.963 million people were Internet users. Just less than one-third (31.2%) of Kuwaitis were Facebook subscribers. The Kuwaiti government operates four television networks, one satellite channel, and one radio station. The radio station broadcasts programs in both Arabic and English. Since 2003 when they became legal, several private television and radio stations have emerged in Kuwait.

Intelligence Services in the OE

Kuwait does maintain an intelligence service, but open source information on it is scanty. In 2004, the former speaker for the Kuwaiti parliament charged that the intelligence agency was monitoring 25 lawmakers. In the past several years, Kuwaiti security agencies have uncovered a number of spy networks and arrested several individuals operating for other countries, mostly Middle Eastern neighbors. The individuals caught supposedly confessed that they were recruited by foreign agents to cause havoc and destruction in Kuwait, received training outside Kuwait on how to make explosives, and received financial incentives for their work.

Infrastructure

Almost 98% of all Kuwaitis live in urban areas in modern infrastructure. Over 99% of all the people can access clean water, modern sanitation facilities, and the electrical grid. Installed electrical capacity in 2008 was 9,400 megawatts (MW) produced 63% by oil and 37% by natural



gas. Kuwait intends to add another 11,500 MW of electrical generation capacity by 2015 through five additional gas and steam turbine plants. Much of the country's water comes from desalination plants that convert salt water into fresh water.

Kuwait also possesses an excellent transportation infrastructure network. In a small country, there are seven airports, four with paved runways, and four heliports. There are 3,573 miles of roads in Kuwait with 85% or 3,037 miles of the roads paved. Unpaved roads account for only 536 miles. While there is currently no railroad service in Kuwait, the government plans to construct a \$7 billion metro system in Kuwait city that will operate 106 miles of track over four different lines in an effort to reduce road congestion around the city.

Physical Environment

Kuwait is almost an all desert climate with extremely hot summers, and short, cool winters due to its position on the Persian Gulf. The terrain ranges from very flat to slightly undulating desert plain. The highest point in the country reaches only 1003 feet in elevation. Less than 1% of the country is arable for farming.

Time

Kuwaitis will often be more relaxed regarding time than Westerners. Foreigners are expected to be on time for meetings, but Kuwaitis may arrive late. The work week in Kuwait varies between 40 and 48 hours dependent on the business. Office hours normally start at 0830 or 0900 and go to 1730 or 1800 in both the summer and winter months. In Ramadan, the working day usually goes to only six hours. Friday is the Muslim day of rest and for companies that work a 5-day workweek, the other day off will be either Thursday or Saturday. For most international companies, the second day off is usually Saturday to avoid missing two work days with the rest of the world. For local companies, the second day off is usually Thursday as the school workweek is Saturday to Wednesday.

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