

There was the famous incident about our poor Ambassador April Glaspie who is now teaching school in San Diego the last I heard. The orders that she was under were that if Saddam came to her and said why doesn't the United States do something in this extremely dangerous situation that is building up between our two countries, between Iraq and Kuwait, why doesn't the United States intercede because this situation is becoming inflamed, she was to say we regard this an Arab-Arab problem, it is not our affair, you must deal with this yourself.

In fact, far from telling Saddam Hussein that he had the United States' authorization to attack Kuwait, in fact what she was saying was that the United States was telling Saddam was to go to hell. And so I think the situation got worse and worse and what happened? Saddam made the blunder of occupying Kuwait, all of Kuwait, not just the small disputed areas of the north. It's rather interesting that it's generally acknowledged by the Kuwaiti government and other governments including, if you look at the record, our own government, that if Saddam had simply occupied that disputed area in the north, we would have had to handle the question entirely differently.

The Iraqis had done this before in disputes with Kuwait. They had occupied some border posts, and the Kuwaitis would go about their business and then the Arab League or someone would come along and they would have a little negotiation and work it out with a payment and a movement there, and the Iraqis would leave.

And it was clear, if you look back at the record, that in the first few days Saddam himself was confused about what he was up to. The first couple of days you remember he looked around with a great deal of effort to find a puppet government that he might set up in Kuwait and that failed. Over the course of the first few days, he said publicly that he was going to withdraw some time during the following week and obviously he didn't do that. He talked of several things, and meanwhile there was a rather frenetic effort being undertaken by some Arab powers, most notably King Hussein, to work this whole thing out in the traditional Arab fashion, if I can use those terms, which is to give everybody a little something in order to avoid a catastrophe. Apparently, Mubarak concurred in this effort and there are even some signs the Saudis and the Kuwaitis were willing to go along with it.