

There was a dispute over borders. You might say that greedy politicians are always trying to push out their borders, but that's a little oversimplified when we talk about the Middle East. None are what anybody would call natural borders; they are borders that were drawn up in the course of years in London and in Paris and then imposed upon the region. It is generally recognized that there are mistakes, to be generous about it, in almost all Middle East borders and as a result it is not unusual for countries, perhaps both of them, to argue over the same border. There was a dispute over the line between Kuwait and Iraq which was drawn by a British diplomat in the 1920s. The Iraqis have never accepted this border. The Kuwaitis have always tried to have it reaffirmed by Iraq and it has refused to do so. And now I find that the path passed through some reasonably valuable oil territory. But more importantly, it gave to Kuwait a couple of islands which happened to be simply sandpits in the Persian Gulf. From Kuwait's point of view nobody can live on them, there is no oil there, there is no vegetation. They are of no value to Kuwait. Iraq wants them because they happen to be situated right in front of an area where the Iraqis have been in the process of building a port on the Persian Gulf. As you know Iraq, in the course of the decolonization period, got dished out of a decent port on the Persian Gulf. The Kuwaitis have said they are not going to turn these islands over.

There was a dispute over forgiveness of the debt, another legitimate question. According to the Iraqis, they fought the long Iraq-Iran war during which Kuwait and Saudi Arabia lent Iraq something in the range of \$30 or \$40 billion. The Iraqis emerged from the Iraq-Iran war rather impoverished and asked that the debts be forgiven, something like the debts that were forgiven by the United States of the European powers after World War II. The Kuwaitis stonewalled and did not agree to forgive those debts. Finally, this last small item: some accusations that the Kuwaitis were drilling across the lines into the Rumaila oil field. The oil people I talked to in Kuwait indicated that there was good reason to believe that maybe the Kuwaitis were stealing in effect, what might be called Iraqi oil. These were not total fabrications, they were eminently negotiable issues on which Kuwait failed to give any ground at all.

We weren't paying very much attention to it in the United States, but Saddam warned repeatedly, that if Kuwait did not take a more reasonable position, it really