

mind, however, after he'd apologize and invite me over for more of Um Abeer's cooking. That problem was Kuwait. Yes, this man insisted that Kuwait is part of Iraq, and before returning to Kuwait I visited him for the last time. He said: "Listen to me carefully and don't get angry, I'm telling you this because you are important to me. Kuwait will return to Iraq and it's a matter of time before Saddam takes the lead in Iraq. So listen to my advice and go back to America because within ten years there will be no such thing as Kuwait." I answered him firmly: "Within ten years there will be no such thing as Iraq." He ended the discussion and said sincerely: "If an Iraqi ever tells you that Kuwait doesn't belong to Iraq, you can't believe anything he says. This belief is part of our culture." This incident was in 1980, and I never saw Bu Abeer after that, but I thought often about what he said. The lesson to learn here is that we have to deal with Iraq, but not with absolute confidence, and that caution should be our main characteristic. The latest demonstrations in Iraq demanding to annex the port in Khawr Abdullah are more than enough to keep our heads up. As Bu Abeer said, and perhaps he was being honest, Iraqi ambitions in Kuwait are culturally ingrained, and they disagree with each other on everything but this!