

Where is Kuwait?!

Back in 1975, I was a fresh graduate from Adiliya's high school and began applying for a scholarship to the US. Before my trip, I met a student who had also studied in the US. He gave me some words of advice. The first is that after two weeks I would feel unmeasurable nostalgia for my home and all I would want is to come back. This was the first I ever heard of the term “homesick.”

The second thing was how to contact Kuwait, which I already knew was by phone. He laughed and said, "Of course by phone but let me make it easier for you. As soon as you arrive to Kuwait Cultural Office in Washington, you will find that the embassy has arranged for each group of students to attend a language school in one of the states. The moment you get to that school you will enroll in a student dormitory there. In the dormitory you will find a payphone, call the operator, and request a call to Kuwait. She's going to ask, 'Where is Kuwait?!' Don't bother trying to explain it, just give her this code and she will know. She will ask who will pay, you or the receiver. Tell her the receiver.”

Of course, everything my friend said at that time was nothing but gibberish, so he wrote the dialogue down, transliterating the English words into the Arabic alphabet so I wouldn't forget! Anyways, I put that piece of paper in my pocket. Indeed, in my first attempt to call Kuwait, the operator didn't know where Kuwait was, I immediately remembered my friend's advice and fetched the paper out of my pocket, followed the directions, and everything went well.

It is true that Kuwait was not known before the Iraqi invasion. They knew of Saudi Arabia and Iran, but rarely did they hear about Kuwait. During the Gulf War, Kuwait became the focus of the world, but soon after lost its recognition because the new