

Issue Date: *March 31, 1973*

Middle East: Iraq-Kuwait Border Dispute

The long-standing dispute between Iraq and Kuwait over their ill-defined borders erupted into violence when troops of both sides clashed at the frontier March 20. Each side blamed the other for shooting first.

Iraq said two of its soldiers were killed and two wounded in a clash near the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr on the Persian Gulf. Kuwait said an Iraqi force had occupied a police post at Sameta, two miles inside Kuwaiti territory, and that four guards were wounded and several others were missing.

Kuwait immediately closed its border with Iraq and declared a state of emergency. It sent reinforcements to the frontier March 21. The government claimed that Iraqi MiGs violated Kuwait's air space March 24.

Arab League Secretary General Mahmoud Riad sought to settle the dispute by holding separate meetings in Cairo March 21 with the Iraqi and Kuwaiti ambassadors. League officials, joined by representatives of Egypt and Sudan, met with Kuwaiti officials in Kuwait March 26 and informed them that Iraq had agreed to pull its forces out of Kuwait's territory. An Iraqi delegation was to arrive in Kuwait April 8 to discuss the situation, the mediators said.

Army troops March 22 had begun a round-up of Iraqi citizens in Kuwait to prevent what a government spokesman called "possible acts of sabotage."

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