



Sabah al-Salim Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait, 1965-77: A Political Biography

Robert L. Jarman

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This biography of Sabah al-Salim Al-Sabah assesses his contribution to the political history of Kuwait. Relying on documents from the British and US archives, as well as frank reminiscences of former colleagues within Kuwait, it covers his entire career, from his entry into public life in 1939, to his reign as Amir from 1965 to 1977. In domestic affairs, particular attention is paid to his growing public stature through the 1950s and early 1960s, leading to his appointment in 1962 as Kuwait's first-ever Crown Prince. His handling of the 131 constitutional crisis of 1964-5, when the National Assembly challenged the ruling family for the first time, is described in detail, drawing on participants' reminiscences as well as reports by foreign diplomats. In external affairs, Sabah al-Salim's attitude towards the Palestinian issue and his contribution to the stabilization of relations with Iraq are extensively documented. He masterminded the secret negotiations in 1962-3 which resulted in Iraq's acceptance of the independence and borders of Kuwait. The full story of these is told here for the first time in English, as is his handling of the subsequent 1973 crisis in Kuwait-Iraq relations. Britain's withdrawal from the Gulf in 1968-71 necessitated a fundamental rethink of Kuwait's foreign policy, and Sabah al-Salim's leading role in Kuwait's realignment towards the USA is documented in full.

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