History of Iraq's Claims to Kuwait

What is the historical background to past Iraqi government claims that Kuwait should be a part of Iraq?

At the end of World War I, there was a secret agreement between England and France when the two countries divided up the Arab world into spheres of influence. The secret agreement was called the Sikes-Picot agreement, basically making most of the Middle East into colonies for the two nations.

With a careless stroke of his pen, Great Britain's representative in the region, Sir Percy Cox, created modern Iraq. His map included the provinces of Baghdad, Basra and the Kurdish regions in the north, despite the fact the 1920 Ottoman-Allies Treaty of Sevres had promised the Kurds a country of their own. At the same time, Sir Percy Cox "created" Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The people living in Iraq believed that their borders should have extended to the Gulf (the Shatt-al-Arab parkway), which included Kuwait.

As soon as Iraq achieved independence from England, the government made an effort to restore Kuwait to Iraq. The government of Iraq was unsuccessful.

After Kuwait became independent in 1961, Iraq's president Abd al-Karim Qassim renewed Iraq's claim to Kuwait. The British responded to the claim by sending in troops and enlisting the assistance of the Arab League. Iraq later ended its boycott of the Arab League and formally recognized Kuwaiti independence two years later, in 1963.

Although Iraq has claimed Kuwait as a part of their nation since the early days of modern Iraq, Saddam Hussein was the only Iraqi leader whose military formally occupied the small country.

The dispute continues. Several times I have heard prominent Iraqis privately complain that Kuwait should be a part of their nation. They say that the borders of Iraq and Kuwait were drawn in colonial times, by colonial powers, and that the decision for Kuwait to be a sovereign nation should not stand.