

Kuwaiti students' scholarships frozen

(CPS) - Life has gotten hard for Raed Alfulaj, a Kuwaiti studying at Florida International University.

Since the Aug. 2 invasion of his homeland by Iraq, Alfulaj has gone broke. His parents, who support him, can no longer withdraw money from Kuwaiti banks to send to him.

His fellow Kuwaitis at FIU are in similar binds. Here on scholarships from their government, they no longer have a government to send them the tuition money they need to start classes.

To make ends meet, Alfulaj

says he and his friends are selling their cars, moving in together and trying to line up part-time work.

Such monetary concerns, however, pale beside the worries about family at home for many of the 2,280 Kuwaiti students who enrolled at U.S. campuses in 1989-90.

"My main concern is the Gulf," said Mohammad Boshari, a student at Marietta College in Ohio. "I would like this Saddam Hussein to go out. My family and my people are in Kuwait."

About 1,200 of the Kuwaitis

at U.S. campuses are on government-sponsored scholarships, reported Bill Carroll of the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, based in Washington, D.C.

But since the government was ousted by Iraq's invasion, the students are stranded with no money.

And because of the freeze ordered on Kuwaiti assets, Kuwaiti students cannot draw money or credit on any account based in Kuwait.

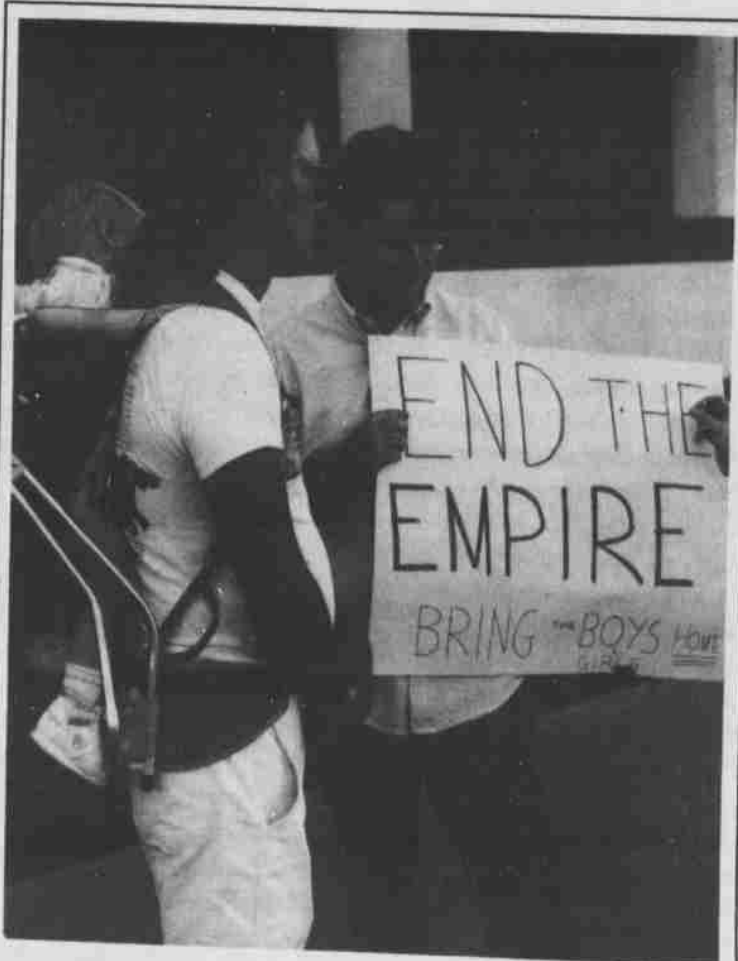
As a stopgap measure, Carroll said, the Kuwaiti embassy is trying to convince the U.S. government to unfreeze those assets earmarked for study in the U.S.

"It's a problem we hope will be solved soon," Carroll said.

The freeze on assets also affects the 770 Iraqi students studying here, Carroll said, although the "Iraqi embassy hasn't been as specific" in detailing how many of them might need financial help.

At Marietta College, Petroleum Department Chairman Bob Chase said he is trying to convince the school to temporarily waive tuition for the school's 12 Kuwaitis.

For the students, the potential financial problems make a horrible situation even harder to bear.



Yell Photo / Robert Anderson

No U.S. involvement - Demonstrators protest the U.S. involvement in Middle East in downtown Las Vegas.



Yell Photo / Robert Anderson

Iraqi crisis - Protesters showed their displeasure with the U.S. Government in front of the Foley Federal Building.

"It's had a great effect on my schooling," Alfulaj said, who added during his final exams, made studying seem unimportant. Consumed by following the news, he took incompletes in his classes.

Marietta student Boshari hoped the financial burden will be lifted easily when, and if, the Iraqis are expelled from Kuwait. "After the problem is solved in the Gulf, the school will take the money from our treasury," he said.

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