

Opinion editorial (op
ed article) on how oil
production affects the
society behav...



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Oil: A blessing or a curse? By: Athba M. Al-Dkhaiyel Kuwaitis know very well the blessings of oil discovery in Kuwait and how it changes our living standards today, but unfortunately oil is killing my beloved Kuwait and our people. The adverse impact of oil on Kuwait should be obvious to individuals. Since its discovery and development in 1952, oil has become the only source of revenue for the country. This degree of dependency is dangerous because oil is a resource that is not inexhaustible and it will not hold forever.

Unarguably, oil pours in wealth for Kuwait, and the wealth it generates has adverse consequences on the values and behavior of our citizenry that can lead to the destruction of Kuwait's competitiveness. Kuwaitis' yearly income per individual is around \$40, 000 to more than \$100, 000, which is considered high. Citizens do not worry about taxes, employment, health care, and education. People can afford to not work and this has adverse effects on our values and behaviors. Kuwaitis expect money without working hard for it. In addition, they would rather work in public sector that can assure them high salaries with much less effort than the private sector. This weakens the private sector business in Kuwait. Mr. Mohammad Al-Sanousi, former minister of Information, said in an interview, he laid off around 600 employees who do not even come to work. He also said, they constitute a heavy burden on government's budget. Citizens become more interested in prestigious jobs, so that Kuwait is forced to import foreign workers to fill the gap in the labor force. In the end, Kuwait will find itself with unbalanced economical situation. Certainly, there are those ambitious Kuwaitis who work hard and do care about Kuwait's economy. Their efforts are not enough if the government is not doing its part. Kuwaitis want to see the wise spending and

management of wealth, because the way it is being used negatively affects our chances today and most importantly in the future. In Norway, when they first discovered oil, the government did not sit on their good fortune. They pondered what to do next, identifying all possible consequences they may face when they exhausted their oil, and how it will affect their domestic industry. As a result, they were able to achieve a stable economy even after they reach the point of very low amount of oil production. If the Norwegians can do it, so can we. As Dr. John Hayes says, the fish stinks from the head. Government should start the reform era by redesign its strategy regarding oil production. They also should increase the interest in industrial sector, by motivating citizens and businessmen and offer them the attractive incentives. Moreover, Kuwaiti government must upgrade its educational system especially by hiring highly trained teachers not just to enable the acquisition of top-notch knowledge but also change values and behaviors. Individuals must also do their part. They should take it upon themselves to go back to our strong moral values in addition to learning ideal principles such as good work ethic.