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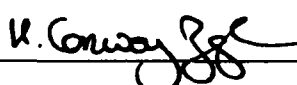
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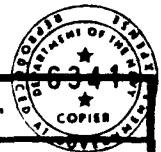
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GULF SECURITY AND THE GULF ARAB CONTRIBUTION

by

W. Jack Dees

Major, United States Army



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W. Jack Dees

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The defeat of Iraq in the 1991 War was so decisive that it appeared that the correlation of military power in the Gulf had been fundamentally altered. However, the six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) remain incapable of meeting the external military threats posed by the various hostile states in the region, and are limited by a number of immutable factors in the degree to which they can modernize and expand their armed forces to counter these threats. This inherent and unstable balance of military power in the Gulf between Iraq, Iran, and the GCC states led by Saudi Arabia was the proximate cause of the two U.S. led external interventions in 1987 and in 1990-91. In both instances, the stronger, anti-western states of Iraq and Iran threatened the independence and well-being of the GCC states, who proved incapable of guaranteeing their own security and the interests they shared with the West.

In the aftermath of the Second Gulf War, conventional wisdom held that a new Middle East order might emerge, one in which tensions were greatly reduced and such considerations of military power would be of less relevance in establishing regional stability. Unfortunately, many longstanding and contentious issues remain unresolved, and the war itself produced more subtle and equally dangerous forces. These problems guarantee a high level of instability in the Middle East, and insure that the potential for the use of military force remains high.

The military capabilities of potential GCC adversaries are significant. Iran can carry out a number of short-duration, limited objective operations in the Gulf and along its southern and western littoral. Tehran is in the process of reorganizing its military establishment, and undertaking a rearmament program for its military forces. Iraq, despite the pummeling taken

during the war, retains a tremendous residual inventory of military equipment, and has reconstituted a major portion of its military capability. Newly united Yemen owns the largest armed forces on the Peninsula, and can threaten Oman, southwestern Saudi Arabia and the Bab el Mandeb. Jordan and Israel are less likely threats, but complicate defense planning for northwestern Saudi Arabia.

The GCC states have engaged in a number of cooperative efforts in the security arena in recognition of this threat, albeit with limited success. The military establishments of these countries have undergone a dramatic expansion and modernization in the past two decades. Components of these armed forces, such as the Saudi Air Force and the Omani Army are professional, high quality forces, but despite modernization, on the whole they remain incapable of defending their countries without external support. Significant shortfalls are noted in the following areas:

- * Inadequate heavy maneuver forces for the defense of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Oman.
- * Ineffective air-to-ground attack capability
- * Insufficiently integrated air defense network
- * Inadequate naval forces for the conduct of ship escort operations and mine countermeasures.
- * Inadequate capability to conduct maritime patrol or strike missions.
- * Inadequate capability to preempt or respond to SSM attacks

Deeply entrenched and widely applicable factors limit both current capability and the potential for improvement. Such factors include manpower shortages, cultural traditions which limit military effectiveness, long-term economic constraints, interstate rivalries in the GCC, and different threat perceptions in the GCC states, among others. These factors essentially cap the extent to which the GCC militaries can expand and modernize.

These limitations become dangerous when viewed in the context of the threats that must be

dealt with. The GCC's larger, hostile and ambitious neighbors insure an unstable balance of military power, which in turn presages further outbreaks of violence and the necessity for future Western military intervention. The resolution of this problem places Western and Gulf Arab leaders on the horns of several dilemmas, and requires a delicate balancing act on the part of all players interested in a secure and stable Gulf.

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GULF SECURITY AND THE GULF ARAB CONTRIBUTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the British withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971, the search for stability in the region has been elusive. The nations of the Gulf sit atop a veritable ocean of oil, but that geologic accident is both a blessing and a curse for their peoples. Oil has brought with it vastly improved living standards, modern health care and compulsory education. It has also brought about a rapid almost dizzying pace of modernization, an enormous increase in personal and national wealth, the introduction of modern weapons in vast numbers, enormous societal upheaval, and a revival of militant Islamic fundamentalism. These and other forces were set in motion when oil prices skyrocketed in 1973, and their consequences have transformed the region's political, economic and social landscape.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran was the first major outward manifestation of these changes. The fall of the Pahlavis overturned the tenuous regional security regime-a strong Iran serving as the bulwark of Western interests- that had followed the British presence. The ensuing vacuum of power led directly to two devastating wars, as Saddam Hussein sought to impose an Iraqi hegemony on the Gulf.

Both wars became internationalized as the Western interests in maintaining the flow of oil and the security of friendly regimes were threatened. In early 1987 Saddam Hussein's first

attempt at establishing regional hegemony appeared to have backfired as radical, theocratic Iran seemed on the verge of defeating Iraq and emerging as the Gulf's dominant power. When Tehran expanded the war to include attacks on international shipping in the Gulf bound to and from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the West, led by the United States intervened. In 1990, Saddam's second reach for hegemony threatened the very survival of the same two countries, as well as the de facto independence of the other Gulf states, prompting another Western intervention.

The inherent and unstable balance of military power between Iraqis, Iranians, and Gulf Arabs was the proximate cause of these interventions. In both instances, the stronger, anti-western states of Iran and Iraq militarily threatened the independence and well-being of the monarchical Gulf Arab regimes, jeopardizing vital Western interests. On both occasions those states proved incapable of guaranteeing their own security and the interests they shared with the West, necessitating Western intervention. However, the results of the Second Gulf War were so decisive that it appeared initially that the unstable regional balance of power had been altered, leaving the Gulf states more able to defend themselves against a changed threat, and the region less prone to the upheaval that has engulfed it over the past twenty years.

While it is true that the 1991 War significantly altered the correlation of military capability in the area, the basic unstable balance of power remains. In this paper, I will contend that the six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council remain incapable of meeting the external military threats posed by the various hostile states in the region. Both Iraq and Iran, and to a lesser extent Yemen, Jordan and Israel, retain the capacity of conducting a variety of military operations, ranging from full scale war to limited air attacks, that the GCC states cannot

adequately defend against. Of perhaps more importance, these same states are effectively limited in the extent to which they can modernize and expand their armed forces to counter these threats.

In this paper, I will proceed by examining the following four questions:

- 1) To what extent has the Second Gulf War reduced tensions in the region, making considerations of military force less relevant?
- 2) What are the residual military threats to the GCC states?
- 3) What are the military capabilities and shortfalls of the GCC states, and to what extent can these states defend their vital interests against threat capabilities?
- 4) To what extent can those capabilities be upgraded?

A word on problems of internal security is in order. In the course of researching this topic, the clear consensus amongst most regional experts was that internal security posed a far greater challenge to the GCC's monarchical regimes than did external threats. There is no intent herein to either support or refute this assertion. Beyond an early and brief examination of the political landscape with the intent of establishing that the region remains exceptionally volatile and that military force is still relevant, the focus of this paper is narrowly on the military aspects of *external* security of the GCC states.

CHAPTER II

REGIONAL INSTABILITY AND THE RELEVANCE OF MILITARY POWER

Gulf stability was one of President Bush's four announced goals in August 1990 as he ordered the Gulf buildup that culminated five months later in war. Many in the Bush Administration appeared to believe that the cathartic effect of the war on the Middle East's various problems and the deterrent effect of the huge American commitment would secure that lasting stability. In such a regime, decreased regional tensions would make considerations of military power and balance less relevant. While the disarming of Iraq and the liberation of Kuwait have contributed to a better neighborhood, the Middle East as a whole and the Gulf in particular are still intensely volatile areas. Longstanding and intractable issues, resistant to the most engaging and imaginative solutions, remain little affected by the outcome of the war. Combined with more subtle forces set in motion by the conflict, these issues will serve to sustain continued instability in the region, and may prove to be the spark which will ignite some future outbreak of violence.

The first of these problems is the instability which stems from the asymmetry in the Gulf's triangular equation of power, the three players being Iran, Iraq, and the GCC states led by Saudi Arabia. The two Gulf Wars can be directly attributed to the loss of equilibrium brought on in the wake of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the collapse of the Shah's military. The destruction of Saddam Hussein's military machine in the long run may tip the balance back in favor of Iran. However, it is the inherent weaknesses of the GCC states, detailed in later chapters, which is the principal factor in keeping the Gulf explosive.

The Arab-Israeli conflict continues as a source of tension throughout the greater Mideast. Its impact on stability in the Gulf is manifested in a number of important ways. First, the constant danger of military action between front-line Arab states and Israelis bring with it the possibility that Gulf Arabs, especially Saudi Arabia, could be drawn into it in a substantive way. This danger in turn affects the very high military force levels in the region. All of the states of the Gulf can point to Israel's attack on the Osirak reactor and its bombing of PLO headquarters in Tunis as evidence of Tel Aviv's reach and threat. Public attitudes in the Gulf states are heavily influenced by the Israeli issue. The antipathy of Gulf Arabs toward the PLO leadership in the wake of 1991 war, and even the distrust of Palestinian expatriates in the Gulf states has not substantively altered the basic support for the Palestinian cause. The continued Israeli occupation of Jerusalem and the Islamic holy places is a major concern in the Muslim World, but strikes a specially sensitive chord in Saudi Arabia, the self-proclaimed guardian of the Islamic Holy places. ¹

The Palestinian expatriate issue in the Gulf is a question of internal stability that could prove to be a particularly destabilizing problem in Kuwait, where the taint of collaboration touches all the Palestinians that remained during the occupation. The tensions that result from the current state of distrust will be replaced in the event of a mass exodus of Palestinians from Kuwait by the difficulties that will ensue when an effort is undertaken to replace these professionals and skilled workers, fluent in Arabic. Saudi Arabia faces a similar problem, in that many of the

¹. Erik R. Peterson, The Gulf Cooperation Council, (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1988), p. 187.

Jordanians which were expelled during the war were Palestinian.

Amongst the social factors which will influence regional stability, the most important is perhaps the potential pressure in the Gulf states for political reform. A dormant issue before the war, it took on new impetus especially in Kuwait. There is little evidence to suggest reform in any of the other GCC states is imminent, but it is clear that the Kuwaiti experiment will influence the course of events in those other states. The Sabah family has promised greater participation, and if the road to this goal in Kuwait is sure and steady, pressure in the other GCC states for similar measures is bound to increase. If, on the other hand, the Kuwaiti experiment goes awry, the ruling families of the Gulf are sure to react by backing away from any reforms. The Kuwaiti experiment is sure to set off destabilizing alarms throughout the area.

Radical Islamic fundamentalism remains a problem. In the conservative, Islamic oriented Gulf states, especially Wahhabist Saudi Arabia, radical Islamists are of two persuasions. Radical Sunni fundamentalists attack the ruling families for their ties to the West, their efforts at social reform, for their alleged hypocrisy in indulging in Western vices and for corruption.

Shi'ite fundamentalists point to many of the same arguments, but look to theocratic Iran as a model, as well as carrying on their struggle as disenfranchised minorities. As the pressure for political and social reform grows, so will the threat of a militant Islamic backlash.

More secular, but equally dangerous sources of discontent exist. Resentment of the West, tied to Arab resentment over the colonial past, is widespread in the Middle East. This perspective naturally focuses its anger at those regimes closely linked to Western partners, and the GCC states are most vulnerable on this point. The anti-western dogma of pan-Arabism was dealt a deadly blow in the war, and the most fervent of its devotees will undoubtedly turn their anger

at the Arab states of the coalition. Again, this is a point of great vulnerability for the Gulf Arabs.

The issue of economic stratification, it can be argued, had much to do with the war, and it will continue to split the Arab World, as it has since the mid-1970s, into rich, oil producing states and poor, overpopulated states lacking any such precious resource. An underlying current of hostility and envy exists amongst the publics of the have-not states, and constantly makes its mark on inter-Arab relations. As a source of instability in the post-war Middle East, there may not be a greater contributor than this one.

Reconstruction itself has some disturbing implications for stability, especially in regard to regional economic consequences. The impact of the loss of oil income in Kuwait and Iraq, combined with costs associated with rebuilding the two countries, is obvious. What is not so obvious, and yet perhaps even more dangerous, is the wider loss of income due to reduced remittances by guest workers, and the reduction in aid available to non-Gulf Arab states. In Kuwait domestic fallout can be expected, as the government seeks to maintain its welfare state while distributing what will be a smaller economic pie.²

Tied closely to the problems of reconstruction is the extent to which the war's Arab winners attempt to punish the war's losers.³ Like Germans after WWI, Iraqis will come to view reparations as an attempt to exact a severe punishment, and will come to greatly resent those

². Jo-ann Hart "The Gulf in the Aftermath of the War," paper presented at Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Washington D.C., 18 April 1991.

³. Michael Hudson, "Washington's New Middle East Order," paper presented at Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Washington, D.C., 19 April 1991.

states that imposed the reparations. Palestinians, Jordanians and Yemenis will also come to see themselves as victims of an effort to punish the losing side. These losers will certainly undertake to destabilize the winners, in an effort to seek retribution for the humiliation of defeat and the requital of the victors.

The war did in fact set in motion changes in the region. While the coalition achieved much of what it sought to do, stability in the Middle East as a whole, and in the Gulf in particular remains as elusive as it has been since 1971. With its wide variety of conflicts and problems, the region remains an especially explosive area. Military power remains relevant in such an environment, where the threat of violence is never far away.

CHAPTER III

THREATS TO THE GCC STATES

Iran

More so than any other state in the Middle East, Iran emerged as a clear winner in the Second Gulf War. Saddam Hussein's desperate attempt in the fall of 1990 to shore up the security of his eastern border brought about an Iraqi-Iranian agreement in which Tehran achieved much of what it had sought from Baghdad since the 1988 cease-fire. The continuing threat posed by the Iraqi military was greatly reduced and the balance of power in the Gulf has shifted perceptibly toward Tehran. In the war's aftermath, the Iranian regime appeared as the very symbol of moderation. Almost overnight, the Islamic Republic shed its image as a pariah state, and basked in the glow of newfound international respectability.

Most importantly, the war's aftermath brought widespread recognition of Iranian claims to legitimate and vital interests in the Gulf. The Gulf Cooperation Council in December 1990 in Doha, and again in April in Kuwait, explicitly acknowledged the necessity of Iranian participation in any postwar Gulf security arrangement.¹ US Secretary of State James Baker also acknowledged the need for an Iranian role in postwar security arrangements in a speech to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on 6 February:

"We would expect the states of the Gulf....to take the lead in building a reinforcing network of new and strengthened security ties. No regional state should be excluded from these arrangements. Post-war Iraq could have an important role to play, and so could Iran, as a major power in

¹. "The Doha Declaration", translated with commentary in Mideast Mirror, 2 January, 1991, p.16.

the Gulf.²

It is difficult to determine in which direction Iran will now proceed. The pragmatic faction in Tehran headed by President Rafsanjani is ascendant, and this faction would appear to desire to maintain the image of moderation and accommodation as it pursues the benefits of Western technology and investment. Nonetheless, many cautions are in order. The Iranians have a perhaps inflated image of their role in the Gulf. They remain deeply suspicious about American intentions, and deeply hostile to both an American military presence in the Gulf and to the ties of the Gulf Arab states to the United States. Iran still holds the Arab monarchies to its south in contempt, viewing them as corrupt, reactionary regimes, "pitiable examples of countries unable to rely on themselves."³ Despite the moderate tones of men like Rafsanjani and Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, radicalism in the defense of the goals of the revolution is not easily cast aside.⁴ The pragmatists must constantly be concerned with their radical opposition, who retain the capability of independent action, and have available a number of tools at hand to support their agenda and undermine that of the pragmatists.⁵

The Iranian military was routed in the last months of the war with Iraq, its army humbled by Saddam Hussein's might, and its navy driven from the Persian Gulf by the United States. In August 1990 it was so weak that Saddam Hussein could simply ignore it as he embarked on his invasion of Kuwait. Yet all evidence points to persistent and steady effort underway aimed at

². James Baker, "Opportunities to Build a New World Order", US Department of State Dispatch, February 11, 1991.

³. Chubin, p.34.

⁴. Chubin, p.35.

⁵. Stephen Pelletiere, Interviewed at the Army War College, 1 April 1991.

the reconstitution of the Iranian military. Begun prior to the beginning of the Second Gulf war, the rebuilding may have received further impetus with the opening created in the military balance by the rout of the Iraqi military.

TABLE 3-1: IRANIAN ARMY

Active Manpower: 305,000

Reserve Manpower: 350,000

MAIN BATTLE TANKS	INFANTRY FIGHTING VEHICLES	ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS	SP ARTILLERY	TOWED ARTILLERY	SSM	ADA GUNS	SAM
500	150	500	85(+)	480(+)	UNK	1,500	230 (+)

Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 1990-91, London: Brassey's, 1990.

The Iranian Army suffers from a shortage of modern main battle tanks, rendering it incapable of conducting a large-scale mechanized operation. Approximately 100 of its 500 tanks are 40 years old M47/48 tanks which have not been upgraded. The remaining 400 vehicles, variously Soviet T-54/55 and T-62, Chinese T-59, British Chieftain, and US M60A1, would be sufficient to outfit not more than 10-12 armor battalions.⁶

Furthermore, the mix of spare parts and ammunition required to sustain this force would render any such large scale operation a dubious undertaking. One source implies that Tehran has committed itself to a buy of up to 1,000 more T54/55 tanks from the Soviet Union.⁷ Such a

⁶. International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 1990-91, (Oxford; Nunfield Press, 1990), p.104.

⁷. US Naval Institute, "Nations/Armed Forces/Order of Battle", USNI Military Database, March 1990.

buy would represent an attempt on the part of the regular army to rectify the shortfall in its armored corps.

The Iranian surface-to-surface missiles account for a significant strike capability. The missiles appear to have been purchased from either the Soviet Union or North Korea the Scud 1C, a more accurate missile than the variants used by the Iraqis. In addition to SCUD-1Cs, the Iranians claim to be undertaking indigenous development of several other ballistic missiles. While the numbers of missiles in Tehran's inventory remains unclear, experience in the First Gulf War indicates that the Iranians need not fear for lack of sources.

The Revolutionary Guard ground forces number perhaps 150,000. They are loosely organized into battalion sized units with no fixed organization. The great majority of the units are infantry, but some mechanized, airborne, special forces, artillery and combat support units exist.⁸

The Iranian Air Force lacks any significant strike capability, and is virtually devoid of a first-line air defense aircraft. The toll taken by attrition in the war with Iraq and by the lack of parts for its American equipment is still in evidence. The numbers of high-performance aircraft listed in Table 3-2 represent only 1/3 of total aircraft in the inventory, the balance non-operational. If more doors are opened to the Iranians in the aftermath of the more recent war, it may be that they could expect to increase the availability rate of their multi-role aircraft, the F-4 and F-5, since many nations operate those aircraft. However, the marginal increase in combat capability would be minimal. Since only the US Navy flies the F-14, no similar improvement could be expected without American assistance.

⁸. The Military Balance, p. 104.

TABLE 3-2: IRANIAN AIR FORCE
Active Manpower: 35,000

Multi-Role	Counter-Air	Strike	Attack Helicopters	Tactical Transports
55	15	--	100	20

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p.104.

Tehran is reported to have acquired up to 14 MIG-29s from the Soviet Union in the past year, a clear indication of the Air Force's desire to upgrade its counter-air capability, although the operational status of those aircraft is unclear.⁹ Likewise, the Iranians are reported to have purchased 34 Chinese F-6 and F-7s, multi-role aircraft based on the MIG-19 and MIG-21 respectively.¹⁰ The large number of Iraqi aircraft flown to Iran during the second war, over 120, is widely seen as a bonanza for the Iranians, but this is true only in the long-term if at all due to problems with integrating these aircraft into the air force.

The 100 AH-1J attack helicopters and 20 tactical transports represent a significant potential capability, but no information is available on the readiness of these aircraft. Since this is American equipment, there is no reason to believe the availability of these aircraft differs from the high-performance fighters. Helicopters could be of use in threatening shipping, and the tactical transports could deliver up to 64 paratroopers per aircraft.¹¹

⁹. James Bruce, "Treading a Narrow Path", Jane's Defence Weekly, 16 February, 1991, p.222.

¹⁰. USNI Military Database, "Iran Air Force".

¹¹. John R. Taylor, ed., Jane's All the World's Aircraft 1988-89, (Surrey, UK: Jane's Information Group Limited, 1988), P.415.

The Iranian Navy, despite the bruising inflicted upon it during the 1987-88 mini-war with the US, remains a capable force. Its three destroyers carry SM-1 Standard SAMs which represent a real AAW and ASUW capability. Two of the three destroyers are US Sumner Class which are outfitted with torpedo tubes, and reportedly carry the MK 44 torpedo, representing a meaningful ASUW threat. The 3 Vosper class frigates, carry Sistel Sea Killer SSMs, a slower missile which nonetheless could threaten the GCC navies and commercial shipping, although there is some question as to the extent of the Iranian inventory of these missiles.¹²

TABLE 3-3: IRANIAN NAVY
Active Manpower: 14,500

Destroyers	Frigates	Corvettes	Missile Fast Attk Craft	Mine Warfare	Amphib	Marines
3	4	2	11	3	7	3 bns

Source: The Military Balance, p.104.

The 10 Kaman class fast attack craft are French la Combattantes and represent the greatest potential sea-based ASUW threat in the Navy, since they are outfitted for Harpoon SSMs. The Iranians are believed to have no Harpoons in their inventory, however.¹³ The seven amphibious ships are in addition to several landing craft and numerous hovercraft. With three Marine battalions, this capability also represents a threat to the GCC states.

The Revolutionary Guards Naval Forces remain a potent weapon in Tehran's arsenal. Outfitted with Boghammer speed boats, variously armed, the threat posed by this force remains

¹². Jane's Fighting Ships 1988-89, (London; Jane's Publishing Co., Ltd, 1988), p.268.

¹³. Jane's Fighting Ships, 1988-1989, p. 269.

very much as it was in the 1987-88 time frame. The Revolutionary Guards also control the coastal artillery, to include at least three Silkworm SSM batteries.¹⁴ This huge missile, although very old, is nonetheless a very lethal weapon system. The Iranian minelaying capability, demonstrated with great effectiveness by the Guard and regular Navy in 1988, has not changed.

Two recent developments are worth noting. First, the Iranians have undertaken to merge the regular forces and the Revolutionary Guards. The ministries have already been merged, and the merger of the naval forces is underway. The merger of the far larger ground forces will be more problematic, but is expected.¹⁵

Secondly, it is clear that the Iranians have made a decision to rearm, and to do so with Soviet and Soviet derivative equipment. Tehran has allocated \$10 billion over the next five years for arms purchases, and those made so far indicate they will clearly be looking to the Soviet Union and the former East Bloc states.¹⁶

In summary, the Iranians can threaten Gulf shipping and offshore oil facilities with its land-based Silkworms, its relatively large number of surface combatants, and by mining. Its SSM inventory gives it the capability to conduct strikes against population centers and large economic or military targets all along the Gulf coast, and its significant amphibious lift gives its marines the capability to conduct limited amphibious raids along the coast as well. Those same amphibious units, in conjunction with its airborne forces could threaten the Musandum

¹⁴. The Military Balance, p.104.

¹⁵. Bruce, p.222.

¹⁶. Ibid, p.222.

Peninsula. In each of these scenarios, however, very limited air support would be available.

Iraq

Iraq, clearly dominant in the Gulf prior to the war, emerged in total defeat. Its huge military machine suffered tremendous losses in men and materiel. Its infrastructure suffered enormous damage. The electricity grid was greatly reduced, its telecommunications system disrupted, and its road and bridge network extensively damaged.¹⁷ Recovery will be problematic, since the financial credits and foreign firms needed for the task will not be readily available as long as Saddam Hussein remains in power.

Politically, it appears that the regime has weathered its first post-war crises, that of the Sh'ite and Kurdish rebellions. Three likely scenarios emerge for Iraq's political future:

1) Saddam remains in power. This is considered most likely in the near-term due to the success of the counter-rebellion.

2) Sadddam is replaced by a like-minded Ba'athist from his inner circle. The impetus for such a move would be to remove Saddam as the stumbling block to external assistance.

3) Saddam and potentially much of his Ba'athist inner circle is replaced by a military coup. The nature of such a regime is impossible to predict, since that depends entirely on who could carry out such a feat.

Regardless of who controls the reins of power, the demands of reconstruction will limit their

¹⁷. Phoebe Marr, "Iraq's Uncertain Future: Strife and Regional Retrenchment," paper presented at the Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 19 April 1991.

political freedom of maneuver in the short-term. Cooperation with neighbors, and openings to Kurds and disaffected Shi'ites are likely as the regime attempts to reenter the international mainstream, begin its economic reconstruction, and insure its own survival. Nonetheless, scarred by reparations and harboring a grudge over its destruction in the war, Iraq is likely to emerge in the long term even more radical, assertive and dangerous.

While it is clear that the greater part of the Iraqi military machine was destroyed in the war, a tremendous military capability emerged unscathed. During the course of the rebellions the regime managed to substantially reconstitute the residual capability. The military, to include the Shia dominated regular Army, held and did not collapse. The vast Iraqi military-industrial complex was weakened but not destroyed.¹⁸

TABLE 3-4: IRAQI ARMED FORCES

Active Manpower: N/A

Reserve Manpower: N/A

Main Battle Tanks	Fighting Vehicles/ Personnel Carriers	SP/Towed Artillery	SSM	ADA Guns	Combat Aircraft
2,200	2,000	500	N/A	200*	430(+)

*Numbers of ADA guns are author's estimate only, derived by assuming same level of destruction of ADA guns as that of infantry fighting vehicles and personnel carriers. All these figures should be used with caution, since residual Iraqi strength is the subject of debate even among US intelligence agencies. The numbers here are well within the range of various unclassified print sources also used by the author. Regardless of the exact figures, these estimates are accurate in their portrayal of an Iraqi military establishment which retains a tremendous post-war inventory of equipment.

Source: US Naval Institute, "Nations/Armed Forces/Order of Battle", USNI Military Database, March 1990 updated by author from various other sources.

The Iraqi Army retains an armored and mechanized capability that far exceeds the capabilities of any potential Gulf adversary. The tank inventory is greater than that of US forces in

¹⁸. Marr, Lecture, 19 April 1991.

Germany, enough to outfit some 50 battalions. Of the remaining tanks some 300-400 are estimated to be T-72, with the majority of the balance T54/55 or their Chinese variants. The numbers of armored fighting vehicles and personnel carriers is large, but data is unavailable on types retained. The bulk are certain to be BMP 1 and 2s and BTR 50 and 60s in numbers sufficient to organize large armored and mechanized combat forces. Artillery and air defense guns, both central to Iraqi tactical doctrine, took heavy losses.¹⁹ In a reconstituted army, shortage of this equipment would be most problematic for the Iraqis in view of their traditional doctrinal reliance on both weapons systems.

The Iraqi Air Force was pummelled in the 1991 war. The residual air force strength is entirely speculative, as it impossible to know if an attacked shelter harbored an aircraft, and if so, what kind of aircraft was destroyed. It is fair, however, to speculate that Iraq's top-line aircraft, the MIG23s, 25s, and 29s and the Mirage F1s were priority targets and suffered the greatest losses. However, as with artillery and tanks, the original inventory was so great that loss rates approaching 75% would leave a capable and dangerous residual force, one that continues to threaten Kuwait, northeastern Saudi Arabia, and the northern Gulf.

The Iraqi navy took the greatest relative losses of the three services, since the ships and patrol boats made for a limited number of easy targets. The Iraqi capability to project conventional naval power into the Gulf, always limited by its access to the waters, is now virtually nil. However, the mining threat continues. Iraq produced its own indigenous mines before the war, and either should retain an inventory or be able to resume production in the near

¹⁹. For an in-depth analysis of Iraqi military performance in the war with Iran, see Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, The Lessons of Modern War; Volume II, The Iran-Iraq War, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990).

term. Covert mining by non-naval vessels continues to be an Iraqi capability.

Several factors stemming from the defeat in the Second Gulf War will severely limit the potential of the Iraqis to fully exploit the large military establishment under their control. First, command and control was severely degraded in the allied air campaign. Second, the damage to the road and bridge system will affect their capability to rapidly move large forces, and to sustain them for any period. Third, the allied air campaign also took a toll on the strategic air defense network, as evidenced by the air supremacy which allied aircraft enjoyed in the latter stages of the war. Lastly, the cease-fire terms, if fully implemented, will disrupt the Iraqi unconventional warfare capability, and preclude the further use of long-range surface-to-surface missiles and chemical weapons.

Nonetheless, the Iraqi capacity to reconstitute a dangerous, if smaller, military establishment cannot be dismissed. Despite the costs of reconstruction, the regime will find that some resources will have to be diverted from that effort if only to keep the military content.²⁰ The reluctance of most nations to supply Iraq with military hardware will preclude Baghdad from equipping another million man army, to be sure. However, with equipment on hand serving as a nucleus, the Iraqis should be able at some point to purchase enough equipment to flesh out a force small by Iraqi standards, yet one which could easily outgun the Gulf Arab states. There are reports that such an effort is already underway.²¹

In summary, the Iraqi army today retains the capability to attack and seize large areas of

²⁰. Marr, 19 April 1991.

²¹. Peter Beaumont and Julie Flint, "Saddam Begins Rebuilding Military", The Washington Times, April 29, 1991, p.1.

Kuwait and northeastern Saudi Arabia. The Iraqi Air Force is still capable of carrying out attacks on land and sea targets in the area north of Qatar, and until they are destroyed as prescribed by the United Nations, its SSM force can still carry out wide ranging attacks as far south as Bahrain. The effects of the war on the national infrastructure, and of the cease-fire accords on its weapons of mass destruction would obviously limit the scope and duration of such attacks for some time.

Yemen

Newly united Yemen is of major concern to GCC defence planners. The former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, South Yemen, was the only avowedly Marxist state in the Arab World. Due to its close relations with the Soviet Union and its support for the Dhofar rebels it was always considered a great threat to Saudi Arabia and Oman. The union of south and north has both ameliorated and intensified the concerns of those countries, because while the radicalism in Aden has been curbed, the combined armed forces of these two states constitute a far more significant military capability.

The Yemeni tilt toward Iraq during the recent war is indicative of the type of policy one might see in the future from Sana'a. The government condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait but as a member of the Security Council failed to support most of the enforcement resolutions. It does appear the current regime has curbed the worst excesses of the PDRY and in the short-term represents little threat to its neighbors. However the history of instability in the South, the still substantial Soviet presence, and the large number of active PDRY radicals that opposed the

union all point to a potential for trouble that cannot be ignored.²² There is much popular antagonism in Yemen toward Saudi Arabia. Yemeni irredentist tendencies towards much of southwest Saudi Arabia, the perception of arrogant behavior on the part of Saudis in Yemen, and the treatment of Yemeni workers in Saudi Arabia, especially during the recent war are some of the sources of this hostility.²³

Information on the status of the unification of the two Yemeni armies is sketchy. For the purposes of this analysis the figures are totals of the two separate forces combined, although one can expect some reduction in manpower as redundant functions are eliminated. In analyzing the combined force, several key points emerge. First, in terms of size and equipment alone, a unified Yemeni army would be impressive by Peninsula standards. It would be the largest army on the Peninsula, have the most tanks, most infantry fighting vehicles, and the most artillery. However, even when combined, the air forces of the two countries are small and suffer from a lack of any first-line equipment. Six OSA class patrol boats of the old Adeni navy constitute the only moderately sophisticated ASUW capability of the combined navy, although the five Soviet made amphibious vessels provide a lift capability of up to an armored or mechanized battalion. Problems of integration stemming from merger certainly place limits on the Yemeni military potential, and the low levels of literacy must present obstacles to the maintenance and servicing of equipment.

The long distances involved in operations on the Arabian Peninsula would mean that any

²². Alan George. "Unified Yemen: New Power in the Arabian Peninsula", International Defense Review, November 1990, p.1227-1229.

²³. J. E. Peterson, "Security Concerns in the Arabian Peninsula", The Gulf and International Security, M.E. Ahrari,ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), p.120.

Yemeni aggression would be localized, confined to the Saudi province of Asir, the Dhofari region of Oman and the Bab El Mandeb and its approaches. The ground forces could conduct short-duration, limited objective attacks across the borders which those countries' ground forces would have difficulty in turning back, although air support to such an operation would be limited and easily countered by the Saudi Air Force. The threat posed by the Yemenis to the Bab el Mandeb and its approaches is more problematic. Through mining, the employment of its small navy or its helicopters, Yemen could easily disrupt commercial shipping, and challenge the transit of any Gulf state naval force through the region.

TABLE 3-5: COMBINED YEMENI ARMED FORCES:

Yemeni Army

Combined Active Manpower: 66,000

Reserve Manpower: 85,000

Main Battle Tanks	Infantry Fighting Vehicles	Armored Personnel Carriers	SP Artillery	Towed Artillery	SSM	ADA Guns
1195	300	720	--	557	18	572

Yemeni Air Force

Combined Active Manpower: 3,500

Multi-Role	Counter-Air	Strike	Attack Helicopters	Tactical Transport
58	66	45	12	24

Yemeni Navy

Combined Active Manpower: 1,500

Missile Fast Attack Craft	Mine Warfare	Amphibious Ships
6	3	5

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p.120-121.

Although the Yemenis are limited by economics, literacy, a probable lack of cohesion in the military, and by much domestic uncertainty stemming from the merger, the unified country poses serious problems for Saudi and Omani defense planners. For the Saudis in particular, the threat from Yemen requires a division of Saudi military effort between the Gulf and the South that it cannot afford. While the "southwestern front" is manageable under most scenarios, it would become an enormously difficult problem for the Saudis and Omanis if Saudi Arabia was faced with a simultaneous threat to its eastern province. In such a case, a Yemeni land attack would only be limited by shortfalls internal to the Yemeni military establishment.

Israel

The Israeli military threat to the Gulf states manifests itself in two ways; counterforce strikes against limited targets in Saudi Arabia and violations of airspace and territorial waters. In the event of a wider conflict between Israel and the front-line Arab states, Saudi forces and military related facilities in the northeast of the country , as well as the CSS-2 ballistic missile facilities in the south, might be subject to preemptive attack. As Saudi Arabia proceeds with modernization and the perception of Saudi threat increases in Jerusalem, such action on the part of the Israelis becomes more plausible.

The second manifestation of the Israeli threat to Saudi Arabia is Israeli violations of Saudi airspace and territorial waters. Such actions might occur in the event of limited Israeli strikes against Iraq, Jordan or Yemen, as they did during the 1981 raid on the Osirak reactor. The Saudi dilemma is to position ample capability in the northeast to deter such violations without provoking Israeli attacks in the event of a wider war.

Jordan

Until the recent war, it would have been inconceivable to consider Jordan as a military threat to the GCC. Despite old family antagonisms between Hashemites and Sauds, Jordan shared with the Gulf states its form of government, its pro-West orientation, and its moderate course vis-a-vis the Israeli problem. In fact, one American sponsored plan in the early 1980s, derailed because of Congressional opposition, was to use Saudi money to arm and equip a Jordanian rapid reaction force for the Gulf.

Nonetheless, events during the Kuwait crises, and forces at work even prior to that, have substantively changed the GCC threat assessment of Jordan. Jordan's failure to support the coalition against Iraq, the various reports of covert Jordanian support for the Iraqi military effort, and the widespread popular sentiment in Jordan in support of Saddam Hussein have combined to seriously damage relations between Amman and the Gulf states. This is especially true of Saudi Arabia, which expelled most, if not all, of its Jordanian expatriate workers. In addition, the widespread consensus regarding the precarious nature of the Hashemite throne brings into question the nature of future Jordanian governments and places on Saudi Arabia an urgency regarding planning against a new threat axis.

The Jordanian armed forces have not modernized as rapidly as many of its neighbors, but it is nonetheless well-equipped. It is also generally considered to be the most professional military establishment in the Arab World. The Army relies heavily on armored and mechanized formations, and tank, APC, and AIFV holdings are large as a result. The Air Force is equipped with 72 F5s and 32 Mirage F1s, and is well suited for air defense of the northern portion of the country, and support to the army's combat formations.

The Jordanian border with Saudi Arabia is over 700 kilometers long. However, strategic depth and the Israeli and Syrian threat to Jordan are Saudi Arabia's best guarantees that despite its length, the border is likely to remain quiescent. Only the Saudi military facilities at Tabuk represent a viable strategic target for any potential Jordanian action. Since a major ground action would require a wholesale shifting of forces from the Syrian and Israeli frontiers, the most likely military threat posed by Jordan is an air attack against targets in northwest Saudi Arabia.

The Horn of Africa

The geopolitical importance of the Horn lies in its location on the southern and western littoral of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Control of Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia would provide a belligerent the capability to exert military influence over the key shipping lanes in these waters. Saudi Arabia places great importance in the maintenance of friendly regimes in these countries, and its defense planners must consider the threat posed by these states and any other military forces operating from their territory to Saudi activities in the lower Red Sea and the Bab El Mandeb.

In the 1970s and 80s, superpower competition in the Horn was extensive, in recognition of the region's vital geopolitical importance. In the late 1980s as the Soviet Union reduced the scope of its rivalry with the US in the Third World, it reduced its role in the Horn. Strategic competition in the Horn in recent years has taken on an Arab-Israeli character, as the Israelis supported the Ethiopian central government in the country's civil wars in a possibly futile effort to preclude a Eritrean victory and the establishment of an "Arab Lake" in the Red Sea. For its part, Saudi Arabia must be concerned about not only Israeli influence, but also radical Arab

meddling, particularly Libyan.²⁴

To be sure, the threat posed by unfriendly forces in the Horn is minimal, if only because unrest has precluded the domination of the area by any one party. However, in such a volatile area civil wars and upheaval may be replaced by the establishment of more stable but more radical regimes, or an Ethiopian regime with a significant Israeli presence. The Horn is certainly an area in which overnight developments could change its strategic complexion, and jeopardize the Saudi military position in the Red Sea.

The Soviet Union

Clearly, the Soviet threat to the Gulf has eased. The constructive role played by the Soviet Union during the recent war points to a apparent change in attitude in Moscow regarding their goals in the Gulf. Certainly, the danger of a Soviet thrust out of the Caucasus toward the Gulf and Arabian Sea, never taken so seriously in the Gulf states as in Washington, has diminished substantially, with little likelihood of resurgence.

If the direct Soviet military threat has receded, other less menacing aspects of the Soviet activity still require vigilance on the part of the GCC. The true Soviet threat must be evaluated in terms of Soviet presence in and support for such potential adversaries as Yemen or Iran, and the extent to which such support increases the military potential of these regional adversaries. A change of regime in Baghdad and subsequent relaxation of the UN imposed sanctions, for example, would sorely tempt Moscow to reclaim its special relationship with Iraq. As was

²⁴. Richard B. Remnek, "The Horn of Africa: Retrospect and Prospect", Strategic Review. Fall 1990.

widely noted during the period just prior to and during the Second Gulf War, there remains in Moscow a strong lobby for retaining close relations with its more radical former client states.

Threat Summary

The threat summary detailed in Table 3-6 is intended to reflect actual current military capabilities. It does not take into account the capacity of the threatened states to conduct a defense-that is the subject of a later analysis. Threat to population, economy and infrastructure refers to attacks limited in location and time, but directed against the population, and land-based economic production and infrastructure targets. The threats to territorial integrity means precisely the act of seizing, with intent to retain.

TABLE 3-6: SUMMARY OF MILITARY THREATS TO GULF ARAB STATES

***TO GULF SHIPPING AND OFFSHORE OIL FACILITIES**

- 1) Iraqi Air
- 2) Iraqi Minelaying
- 3) Iranian Land-Based Anti-Surface Warfare (ASUW) (Silkworm)
- 4) Iranian Naval ASUW (Large Combatants, Patrol Craft, Revolutionary Guard Boghammers)
- 5) Iranian Minelaying

The threat to Gulf shipping and offshore oil facilities is very similar to the threat posed to the US Navy in the Gulf in 1987. Only the Iraqi Air Force, which still retains some capability, has been substantially reduced since that period. Both Iran and Iraq can conduct minelaying operations, although Iraqi efforts are likely to be conducted covertly from commercial shipping. The Iranian Silkworms still pose a major threat, and the Iranian naval forces are not inconsequential.

***TO TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF KUWAIT AND NORTHEASTERN SAUDI ARABIA**

- 1) Iraqi Army

Despite the destruction of much of the Iraqi army, its enormous residual capability leaves it as the preeminent military power in the Gulf. Measured strictly in terms of capability, that military machine dwarfs that of the Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the GCC Peninsula Shield force

and could repeat its August operation on a smaller scale were it not for political limitations.

***TO POPULATION, ECONOMY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF KUWAIT, BAHRAIN, QATAR, AND NORTHERN SAUDI ARABIA**

- 1) Iraqi Strike Air
- 2) Iraqi SSM
- 3) Iranian SSM
- 4) Iranian Amphibious Units

Despite their limited numbers, Iraqi strike aircraft could still carry out strike missions in the area. The SSM threat to population centers is substantial, but implementation of the cease-fire accords should erase the Iraqi potential. Iranian amphibious units could easily conduct amphibious raids of a special operations nature, especially against economic and infrastructure targets along the coast. Such raids would of necessity be small and especially limited in duration due to the very limited air cover and naval gunfire support which the Iranian military could provide.

***TO POPULATION, ECONOMY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF OMAN, UAE, AND SOUTHERN SAUDIA ARABIA**

- 1) Iranian Amphibious Units
- 2) Iranian SSM

Essentially the same parameters guide this threat category, except that the geographical location, the Southern Gulf, excludes the Iraqi threat. While the Iraqis demonstrated in the First Gulf War their ability to conduct strike operations in the lower Gulf, their reduced air capability would almost certainly preclude similar operations today.

***TO TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF OMAN-MUSANDUM PENINSULA**

- 1) Iranian Amphibious Units
- 2) Iranian Airborne Units

The amphibious and airborne units of the Iranian military comprise a not inconsequential power projection capability. The threat that this capability poses to the Musandum must not be underestimated. Nonetheless, it is limited by their ability to provide air cover and naval gunfire support to such an operation.

***TO SOUTHWESTERN BORDER AREAS OF SAUDI ARABIA AND WESTERN BORDER AREAS OF OMAN**

- 1) Yemeni Army
- 2) Yemeni SSM

This threat stems from the ability of the Yemeni armed forces to conduct operations localized to the border areas in Asir province in Saudi Arabia, and the Dhofar region in Oman. Such operations would not only be localized to border areas, but could not be conducted on more than one or two axes at the same time. The Yemeni SCUD and Frog missiles are capable of hitting population centers deeper in both areas.

***TO RED SEA SHIPPING AND BAB EL MANDEB**

- 1) Yemeni Air
- 2) Yemeni Naval ASUW
- 3) Any Hostile Mining

The threat posed by the Yemenis to the Bab el Mandeb and its approaches, as noted, is not insignificant. Through mining, the employment of its small navy or its helicopters, Yemen could disrupt commercial shipping, and challenge the transit of any Gulf state naval force through the straits.

***TO MILITARY FACILITIES, ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF NORTHEASTERN SAUDI ARABIA.**

- 1) Israeli Air
- 2) Israel Special Operations
- 3) Jordanian Air

Israel unquestionably is capable of attacking whatever targets it desires in Northeastern Saudi Arabia, although its targets will likely be limited to military facilities aimed at reducing what it perceives as a threat to its south. The Jordanian Air Force could also conduct wide ranging strikes in the area using its Mirage F1s.

CHAPTER IV

THE MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL

The decision to establish the GCC was taken at a meeting of the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Bahrain in Riyadh on February 4, 1981. This decision, formalized in a series of further agreements over the next four months, represented the culmination of a pattern of cooperation that had begun in the 1970s in areas such as aviation, shipping, trade, and economic policy coordination.¹ At the Riyadh meeting, the states professed their desire to undertake the formation of the GCC in recognition of their:

".... special relations, common characteristics and similar regimes that govern them; out of the feeling of the importance of establishing close coordination in all spheres, especially the economic and social domains;...." ²

The Iran-Iraq War appears to have been the spur to culminating the cooperative efforts with the establishment of a formal organization more explicitly committed to integration. The concern over the Soviet threat to the region was also a motivating factor following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. However, the Iranian revolution was the greatest impetus for the Gulf Arab states. For them, the fall of the Shah created three problems. First it eliminated the Gulf's strongest bulwark against communism. Second, the Khomeini regime itself was especially

¹. William L. Dowdy, "After Desert Storm: The Gulf Cooperation Council's Potential Role in a Regional Security Regime", Unpublished Paper for the U.S. Army War College, February 1991.

². Cited in R. K Ramazani, The Gulf Cooperation Council, (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1988), p.13.

antagonistic toward the monarchical Gulf Arab states. Thirdly, the popular passion inflamed by the Islamic Revolution threatened the internal stability of the Six.³

The basis of the organization, then as now, was the great number of characteristics which these six states had in common. They shared a language, a religion, a form of government, and a record of historical interaction. Their economies were based foremost on the production and export of petroleum, and their citizens enjoyed substantially better living standards than other Third World states. Each state had faced-and continues to face-the dilemmas posed by rapid modernization in conservative societies. Each was underpopulated, and was forced to rely extensively on expatriates in its labor force. Their conservatism, their commitment to Western style capitalism, their distrust of secular Arab dogmas that threatened their monarchical regimes, and their loathing of communism led them to pro-Western orientation and close relations with the United States and Europe.

The GCC charter, signed by the heads of state in May 1981, details an extensive organizational structure, including a Supreme Council composed of the six heads of state, a Ministerial Council, which consists of the six foreign ministers and forms the working policy group, and a Secretariat based in Riyadh. The Secretariat has "much the power and style of the United Nations Secretary-General" in the accomplishment of its duties. Dr. Abdullah Yacoub Bishara, an able and articulate former Kuwaiti ambassador to the United Nations, has held the post since its inception. The charter is an exceptionally ambitious document, speaking as it does of an eventual confederation of Gulf states. It was also careful to cloak itself and the

³. J. E. Peterson, "The GCC and Regional Security," American-Arab Affairs, Spring 1987, p.70.

organization in the greater pan-Arab framework, claiming to conform with, "the national aims of the Arab Nation as expressed in the Charter of the Arab League...".⁴

The GCC did not initially emphasize external security concerns. Within weeks of the signing of the charter, the Supreme Council approved the Unified Economic Agreement, in which substantive arrangements in the fields of trade, free movement of capital and people, technical cooperation, transport and communications were confirmed. An attempted coup in Bahrain in 1981, and a series of terrorist acts in Kuwait over the next several years served as a catalyst to improved internal security coordination. A draft internal security arrangement failed to win approval of the Supreme Council, but bilateral and multilateral cooperation was substantially improved.⁵

Nonetheless, the first meeting of GCC chiefs of staff was held in September 1981, and the defense ministers held their first meeting the following January. This low key pattern of collaboration soon took on urgency as the First Gulf War reached a turning point. In a series of offensives in the spring and summer of 1982, the Iranians drove the Iraqi army out of Iran, and proceeded to invade Iraq proper.

Nine more meetings at the Chief of Staff and Defense Minister level were held between the summer of 1982 and October 1984, during which the specifics of increased defense and security cooperation were agreed upon, thus initiating a pattern of cooperation which has continued and strengthened in the ensuing decade. Areas of cooperation include:

⁴. John Christie. "History and Development of the Gulf Cooperation Council: A Brief Overview", The Gulf Cooperation Council, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), pp. 10-12.

⁵. Ramazani, pp. 38, 106-108.

- * development of a joint defense strategy
- * conduct of joint exercises
- * formation of a unified military force

- * establishment of an integrated air defense system
- * equipment standardization and common arms acquisition
- * standardization of training ⁶

Despite an Omani preference for linking Gulf security to the West, it was the Kuwaiti preference for non-alignment and self-reliance that prevailed as a the basis of GCC security in the early 1980s. The GCC policy came to hold that responsibility for Gulf security should rest with the states of the region. Further refinements included : an attack on one country would be considered an attack upon all; the defense of their territories was to be accomplished with no outside intervention; beyond the territories and territorial waters of the states the Six had no exclusive responsibility for defense.⁷ This latter point was recognition of a wider international responsibility for securing the Gulf's international waterways. The GCC's strategy essentially called for the creation of a deterrent capability through the implementation of the various cooperation schemes noted above.⁸

The strategy of self-reliance was constructed more on the basis of appealing to wider Arab and regional concerns regarding the role of external powers than to any realistic assessment of threat and capability. In the 1987 Gulf Crisis and again in 1990 the strategy proved inadequate and ill-advised. Perhaps in recognition of this fact, the GCC Supreme Council adopted a plan

⁶. Erik R. Peterson, The Gulf Cooperation Council, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p. 202.

⁷. Laura Guazzone, "Gulf Cooperation Council: The Security Policies", Survival, March/April 1988, p.140.

⁸. Erik Peterson, p. 203.

in December 1990 to upgrade the defense capabilities of the member states, although no details were provided.⁹

In November 1982, the Supreme Council authorized the conduct of the first Peninsula Shield joint military exercise, which took place the following October in the UAE. The exercise was designed to test the viability of a GCC rapid deployment force, with forces from all six countries under a unified command. Following a similar exercise in northeastern Saudi Arabia in October 1984, the Peninsula Shield force was formally constituted at King Khalid Military City in Hafr al-Batin, Saudi Arabia. Though all six countries participated, some sent only token contingents and the force, two mechanized brigades when fully mobilized, was predominantly composed of Saudi and Kuwaiti units.¹⁰ The force principally served as a political statement regarding the GCC commitment to self-reliance, and later served as the nucleus of the GCC units participating in the Second Gulf War.

The Six also undertook to upgrade and integrate their air defense. The centerpiece of the integrated system was to be Peace Shield, an air defense C3I upgrade in Saudi Arabia, which was to be linked to national air defense systems in the UAE, Kuwait, and perhaps Oman and Bahrain.¹¹ The implementation of these plans ran into technical problems in connecting the various national systems, and despite some progress, is still far from completion.¹²

The GCC states also sought to upgrade their maritime patrol capability through the joint

⁹. The Mideast Mirror, 2 January 1991, p. 16.

¹⁰. Erik Peterson, p. 205.

¹¹. Guazzone, p.143.

¹². Anthony H. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p.184.

purchase of ten P3 Orions from the United States. The Saudi AWACS were suitable for maritime reconnaissance, but lacked an anti-ship weapons capability and were too expensive to commit for daily maritime reconnaissance missions. Funding, a lack of aircraft in the American inventory and the prospect of resistance in the US Congress led the GCC to drop the notion before submitting a formal request.¹³

Equipment standardization and common arms acquisition are related areas of cooperation that have also not met with great success. As of 1988, the Six operated eleven different types of fighter aircraft, nine different types of tanks and twelve different types of air defense missiles. This has enormous impact on interoperability in logistics and communications, and in the words of one Omani military logistician, "the development of a common strategy depends on the implementation of a common arms acquisition policy."¹⁴ While the principle of common arms acquisition met with approval by the Six, "full-scale coordination remained more of a goal than a reality."¹⁵ The problem is complicated by the need to diversify sources to preclude dependence on a single supplier. The states still seek improvement in this area, and are looking more at consensus and agreement, not a unified procurement mechanism.¹⁶

The development of an indigenous arms industry has been identified as a priority by the defense ministers.¹⁷ In this regard, the Arab Military Industrialization Organization, a

¹³. Ibid, p. 155.

¹⁴. Col. Abdullah Al-Marhuby, Sultan of Oman's Land Forces, Interviewed at the U.S. Army War College, 1 April 1991.

¹⁵. Guazzone, p. 141.

¹⁶. John Duke Anthony, interview 17 April 1991.

¹⁷. Erik Peterson, p.203.

manufacturing partnership between Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar has been revived. It is expected to receive an infusion of funds from Gulf states to manufacture equipment under US licenses.¹⁸ Of the many areas of potential cooperation, this one appears to be fraught with enormous difficulties, given the level of economic development in these states.

Standardization of training was a goal far simpler to implement on paper than in fact. Nonetheless, this is an area of cooperation in which the Six have been more successful. During the last six years, the military academies of the six states have used similar programs of instruction in teaching a single doctrine.¹⁹

¹⁸. Nemir A. Kirdar, "The Business Outlook After the War", unpublished paper presented at the Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 19 April 1991.

¹⁹. Anthony, Interview.

CHAPTER V

GCC MILITARY CAPABILITIES SAUDI ARABIA

The viability of the GCC hinges on the continuing role of Saudi Arabia. With more land, people and oil than its other five colleagues combined, Saudi Arabia is the "superpower" of the organization, giving it political, economic and military credibility. Without Saudi Arabia, there would be no GCC, or if it existed it would be an obscure organization whose international relevance would be insignificant.

The Second Gulf War may have forever altered the Saudi view of itself, its role in the world, and its method of conducting its international relations. In the past, Saudi Arabia carried out its foreign and defense policies in a low-key style, emphasizing diplomatic and economic solutions over military ones. The Saudis were unafraid to revert to appeasement, and would often forego the advancement of long-term interests for the sake of avoiding short-term dangers.¹

However, a Saudi official interviewed after the war with Iraq indicated that "future Saudi policy would be based on a continued alliance with the United States [and] the abandonment of old policies of conciliation and appeasement with neighboring hostile governments like Yemen..."² Recent Saudi actions in its relations with Yemen, Jordan and the PLO support this claim.

There are limitations to this new assertiveness that are sure to continue to govern Saudi

¹. Nadav Safran. The Ceaseless Quest for Security. Ithaca, N.Y.:Cornell University Press, 1988.

². Youssef M. Ibrahim. "Triumph at Hand, Saudis Prepare to Step Gamely to the Arab Fore", New York Times, March 2 1991, p.1.

policy. Despite its enormous wealth, Saudi Arabia shares many of the vulnerabilities of its smaller neighbors and can not alone be considered the protector of the Gulf as was the Shah's Iran. Its security, in the words of Anthony Cordesman, can be guaranteed "only through a combination of cooperative defense efforts with its neighbors and the West."³ The constraints imposed on the development of Saudi military capabilities are immutable, and frame the context in which Saudi leaders must make decisions regarding foreign policy and national security.

The special relationship with Washington has intensified in the wake of the invasion of Kuwait. The speed with which King Fahd accepted the deployment of American soldiers, despite apparent opposition from right wing religious conservatives, startled most Mideast observers. However, the SCUD attacks that came during the war had the effect of crystallizing popular support behind the King's decision.⁴ The popular approval of the role of the West in the Second Gulf War bodes well for a defense policy dependent in the last resort on the American over the horizon presence.

Still, the Saudis did lose influence in the wider Islamic World, a crucial consideration in view of the image the country cultivates as the home to Islam's holiest sites. The relationship with the United States conflicts with this special preeminent position in Islam. Although the religious establishment may have grudgingly accepted an American and Western presence during the war, domestic political considerations will always limit the extent to which Riyadh can be seen to openly cooperate with Washington, in turn limiting the American presence to "on the horizon".

Political reform is a key issue in Saudi Arabia, and potentially a key element in influencing

³. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p.193.

⁴. Ibrahim, p. 4.

Congressional opinion regarding forthcoming arms sales to Saudi Arabia. The pace of reform, if it comes at all, will be determined by King Fahd. Liberal, western -educated members of the Saud family are supportive of the reformers, who recently aired their own calls for limited change in an open letter to the King published in Cairo. Certainly, the experience of Kuwait will be a key influence on not only the Saudi decision to accept reforms, but on the attitude of the other Gulf states as well.⁵

Saudi Military Capabilities

At the pinnacle of the Saudi defense establishment is the King, the Supreme Commander of the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces. His control is exercised through the Minister of Defense and Aviation(MODA), and the Head of the Saudi Arabian National Guard, (SANG). Presently Prince Sultan, a brother of King Fahd controls the MODA, and Abdullah, the Crown Prince and a half-brother, heads the National Guard. The MODA consists of the regular armed forces, and is charged with external defense. The National Guard, on the other hand is predominantly concerned with the maintenance of internal stability.

In the development of its armed forces, Saudi Arabia's great oil wealth is its blessing, while its limited manpower is its foremost handicap. This has brought about a Saudi defense strategy which relies on the acquisition of expensive, high-technology equipment for the nation's armed forces to balance the overwhelming manpower advantages enjoyed by its potential adversaries. This strategy has had unique impacts on the shape of the Saudi defense effort. Although high-

⁵. David Ottaway, "Saudi Liberals See Reforms Unlikely", The Washington Post, April 16, 1991, p. 1.

technology was affordable for the Saudis, its integration in the defense forces of a less-developed country led to a reliance on foreign expertise. Further, the Saudis have invested enormous sums of money in support and infrastructure projects to help sustain the high-technology weapons systems, to the decrement of equipping combat units.⁶

The Saudi Arabian Land Forces(SALF) were created in 1934 after King Abdul-Aziz's victory over the Yemen which completed the expansion of his realm. It remained smaller than the National Guard and relatively unimportant until the contemporary modernization effort got underway in the 1960s. The SALF action in the recent war was the first significant operation it has seen been involved with since its creation.

There is a general consensus that the modernization effort undertaken in the army prior to the Second Gulf War was unsatisfactory. Anthony Cordesman reports that the quality of contractor advice was low, and that the "French and U.S. advisory efforts often seemed to have accepted problems rather than trying to solve them."⁷ That assessment may in part explain the lackluster performance of the SALF in the Second Gulf war, when it "proved sluggish in its initial response to the crises and slow in its movements during the ground war".⁸ An anonymous source allowed that in August 1990, nearly two weeks elapsed before the first SALF unit was able to deploy to the border area, *after the arrival of the greater part of the 82d*

⁶. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p.194.

⁷. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, pp. 205-206.

⁸. David B. Ottaway, "For Saudi Military, New Self-Confidence", The Washington Post, April 20, 1991, p. A1.

*Airborne Division from the United States.*⁹

Major army bases have been built in the five major deployment areas; Tabuk, Khamis Mushayt, Sharura, Hafr al-Batin, and al-Kharj. In the past, the largest Saudi combat formation was brigade sized, but two division level organizations and a corps headquarters are reported to have been formed just prior to the war, and deployed to the northern bases.¹⁰

TABLE 5-1: SAUDI ARABIAN LAND FORCES

Active Manpower: 40,000 (no conscripts)

Reserve Manpower: None

Main Battle Tanks	Infantry Fighting Vehicles	Armored Personnel Carriers	SP Artillery	Towed Artillery	SSMs	ADA Guns	SAMs
700*	500(+)	1530	275	176	30	420(+)	317**

* Includes 150 M60A3s transferred just prior to war

** Does not include an undetermined number of Stingers and Redeyes.

Units

1 Corps Headquarters
2 Division Headquarters
2 Armored Brigades
4 Mechanized Brigades
1 Infantry Brigade
1 Airborne Brigade
1 Royal Guard Regiment
5 Artillery Regiments

Source: Adopted by the author from The Military Balance 1990-91, p.115-116, and USNI Military Database 1991.

Manning is the most serious problem for the SALF, one which has several dimensions. First, the size of the Army when fully manned is insufficient to deal with all but minor ground force

⁹. This information was obtained in April 1991 from an anonymous source with first hand knowledge regarding initial Saudi reactions to the Kuwaiti invasion.

¹⁰. USNI Military Database. "Saudi Arabia-Army".

incursions. Second, the existing ground combat formations are seriously undermanned, up to perhaps 30-50% in some units.¹¹ Third, the national demography contributes to the problem in limiting the manpower pool. In late September 1990, reports from Riyadh held that the Saudis had decided to double the size of the armed forces, to more than 120,000 men. The same reports also indicated that MODA officials were considering establishing five to seven divisions, in recognition of the need to increase ground combat strength.

Equipment diversity also presents significant problems, for both American and French made equipment is in use. This of course presents the usual logistic and training problems. The Saudis have attempted to rectify the problem by consolidating their French-equipped units at Tabuk and Sharurah, and the U.S. equipment at Hafr al-Batin, with a mix of equipment at Khamis Mushayt.¹²

TABLE 5-2: APPROVED US ARMS TRANSFERS TO SAUDI ARABIAN LAND FORCES

	Date of Approval		
	1988-89	October-November 1990	Total
M1A2	315	150	465
M2 Bradley	200	200	400
Patriot	--	6 Fire Units 384 Missiles	6 Fire Units 384 Missiles
MLRS	--	9 Launchers	9 Launchers
155mm SP Howitzer	27	27	54

Source: Adopted by the author from various issues of Jane's Defence Weekly, 1988-1991.

¹¹. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p.217.

¹². Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p. 213.

The Saudis appear to have determined to resolve the problem by committing to a land force modernization effort with predominantly American weapons. Currently approved American arms transfers are listed in Table 2. It is clear from this list that the modernization of heavy ground forces has taken on a new urgency for the Saudi leadership. A Department of Defense Review team is to visit Saudi Arabia in the spring of 1991 to assess further Saudi and other regional requirements, and further arms sales proposals should be forthcoming.

Saudi Arabian heavy maneuver forces are clearly inadequate, in terms of either quantity or quality. The 700 tanks on hand are only adequate to outfit 12-16 tank battalions, less than that required to carry out a credible defense against even Iraq's residual capability, and less than the total tank force of Yemen. 300 of its tanks are French AMX-30S systems, with relatively light armor, no advanced optics and a 105mm gun, making it not competitive with the T-72 and M60A3.¹³ Anthony Cordesman also notes that the AMX-30 "lacks the power, cooling and filtration for the desert." The remainder of the Saudi tank fleet are M60A3s, including a large number that were recently converted from the A1 model, and 150 that were shipped during the Kuwaiti crises from US stocks in Germany. While the A3's advanced optics and fire-control system help Saudi crews make up for their inexperience, the crew compartment lacks an adequate cooling capability, an important consideration for an army that is likely to fight in the daytime in the searing heat of the Gulf.¹⁴

¹³. Jane's Information Group, Jane's Armour and Artillery 1988-89, 1989, pp. 16-20.

¹⁴. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p. 218.

In keeping with their reliance on high technology and their emphasis on air defense, the Saudi Air Defense Forces are separate from the Land Forces. The Army is responsible for low-level air defense. Stinger and Redeyes provide the air defense umbrella for forward maneuver units, but gun systems are needed to ensure a more effective gun/missile mix for tactical air defense.

The National Guard had traditionally served as the praetorian guard of the Saudi regime. It traces its roots back to the "White Army" that Abdul-Aziz used in the 1920s to defeat the fanatical Ikhwan that had turned on him. The National Guard has been greatly criticized for employing such a large percentage of Saudi Arabia's scarce military manpower in a force whose primary mission was not external defense. The Guard has also been criticized for existing only as a means for the transfer of funds from the Royal Family to various tribal leaders.¹⁵

TABLE 5-3: SAUDI ARABIAN NATIONAL GUARD

Total Active Strength: 35,000

Tribal Levies: 20,000

Armored Personnel Carriers	Towed Artillery	Anti-Tank Weapons	Air Defense Weapons
700	50	106mm/TOW	60 (Vulcans & Stingers)

Units: 3 Mechanized Brigades
(Eastern Province, Riyadh, Jeddah)
Other Smaller Units

Source: Adopted and Updated from USNI Military Database.

Nonetheless, the Guard proved itself in the war with Iraq. It was a Guard brigade stationed in the Eastern province that had units on the Kuwaiti border within 48 hours of the invasion, well ahead of the Army. Western military observers were highly complimentary of the Guard's

¹⁵. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p. 227.

performance at the Battle of Khafji, a performance that clearly demonstrated the Guards utility in the external defense role.¹⁶

Still, the lightly equipped Guard would have been hard pressed to have conducted such an operation outside the confines of a built-up area and without total air superiority. Its lack of mechanized equipment necessitates relinquishing the external defense mission to the Army, and continuing in its internal defense role. However, an order for 1100 Light Armored Vehicles, used by the U.S. Marine Corps should provide the Guard with additional capability to conduct external defense operations, but more combined arms equipment such as artillery, air defense and perhaps helicopters is essential.

The Saudis are thought to have 30 Chinese made CSS-2 intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM) launchers operational at a base or bases in the southern part of the country. These non-cryogenic liquid-fueled missiles, first flown in 1966, have a estimated range of 1650 miles, potentially bringing Greece, Libya, India, and the Soviet Union into range. Its circular error of probability is estimated at 1.5-2 kilometers, compared to 1 kilometer for the SCUD-1B, and it is capable of carrying a payload of over 3,500 pounds.¹⁷ The weapons sale, apparently kept secret for over two years, caused an uproar in Washington, and King Fahd allegedly wrote President Reagan assuring him that the weapons would not be fitted with chemical or nuclear warheads.¹⁸

¹⁶. Ottoway, "For Saudi Military, New Self-Confidence", p. A14.

¹⁷. Yitzhak Shichor. East Wind Over Arabia, (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1989), pp. 29-31, 50.

¹⁸. John Felton, "Complaints Fail to Thwart New Saudi Arms Sale", Congressional Quarterly, May 14, 1988, p.1297.

With their poor CEP and large conventional warhead, the Saudi IRBMs can serve only as a counter-value weapon. Although unused in the war with Iraq, when the air campaign made them superfluous, they could be of value in deterring counter-value strikes from any quarter. In the case of Israel, however, they serve more as a magnet to Israeli preemption and in that sense detract more from national security than promoting it. More recent reports indicate that the Saudis may be interested in purchasing the Chinese M-9, a missile more akin to the SCUD-1B in range, but substantially more accurate.¹⁹

Saudi Arabian Air Force

The realities of Saudi security which drive the country toward its high-technology strategy a large land mass, a vulnerable petroleum infrastructure, a shortage of manpower, and the blessing of immense oil reserves - also drive the Saudis to place a high premium on air power in national defense. "The Saudi Air Force is the only way Saudi Arabia can create a defense capability that can deter its larger neighbors, and make up for its limited supplies of skilled manpower."²⁰ In fact, Saudi Arabia has been quite successful in building an air force that is a major factor in the regional power equation.

Within the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF), it is the air defense role that predominates. This stems from the following factors:

- 1) The large Saudi land mass is too large for a comprehensive air defense
- 2) Much of that land mass is unpopulated, so only key population centers and economic areas

¹⁹. George Leopold. "China Markets Missile to Middle East Buyers", Defense News, April 8, 1991, p.1.

²⁰. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p.239.

need be defended.

3) Much of the petroleum industry is in the Eastern Province, short flying time from Iraq or Iran.

4) Saudi Arabia was, and still is, faced with a high-performance air threat from all axes.

5) The options for an aggressor in most instances is limited to the air, due to the deserts and the two seas that bound the country.²¹

To cope with these problems, the Saudi Air Force of necessity must emphasize the counter-air role in its training and operations. This emphasis is clear in the percentage of Saudi aircraft dedicated to the counter-air mission. The F-5 squadrons, while multi-role capable, are most often employed as interceptors. The Saudis also generally assign their most capable pilots to the F-15 air defense squadrons.²² Of the 12,000 sorties flown by the Saudis in the war with Iraq, the vast majority were air defense missions. One of these produced a Saudi war hero in Capt. Ayedh Shamrani, who shot down two Iraqi F-1 Mirages over the Gulf before they could carry out an attack on Allied naval forces. In the counter-air role, the RSAF is indisputably the best in the Gulf, and arguably the best in the Middle East outside of Israel.

TABLE 5-4: SAUDI ARABIAN AIR FORCE
Active Manpower: 18,000(+)

Multi-Role	Counter-Air	Strike	Attack Helicopters	Electronic Warfare	Airborne Early Warning	Tactical Transports
53	84	30	--	--	5	72

Source: Adopted and updated from The Military Balance 1990-91, and "The Defence of Saudi Arabia", Jane's Defence Weekly, 20 October 1990, p.757.

²¹. See Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, Chapter 8, "The Regional Role of the Saudi Air Force," for a superb analysis of the various factors influencing force and operational planning for the Saudi Air Force.

²². Interview with LTC Walt Cooner, former U.S. Air Attache to Saudi Arabia, 2 April 1991.

The interdiction and close air support functional area is one in which the Saudis are less capable. Training is minimal, especially in conjunction with ground troops. Perhaps more importantly, the Saudis generally have less confidence in their primary strike aircraft, the Tornado IDS.²³ They are now actively seeking the F-15E advanced strike aircraft rather than more Tornados or, failing that, the slightly less capable F-15F.²⁴ It is clear the Saudis understand their shortfall and are seeking a solution.

The CAS shortfall is also being addressed through the purchase of the US AH-64 Apaches. The sale of 12 aircraft received Congressional approval in the fall of 1990, and the sale of 22 more was proposed and withdrawn pending the outcome of the review team.²⁵ While there is great potential for these aircraft to bring improvement to the CAS mission area, their substantial maintenance requirements and the combined air-ground training necessary for their effective employment cast doubt as to how much improvement will take place.

The Saudis possess a substantial airlift capability, as befits a country its size. Of the 72 tactical airlift aircraft, 37 are various models of the C-130, and 35 are the smaller C-212. Some external strategic airlift also exists, as an adjunct to Saudi Airlines. The evacuation of Pakistani soldiers manning the Tabuk armored brigade was accomplished over a short period of time by this means.

The E-3A AWACS aircraft, now fully operational in the RSAF, represented a logical buy

²³. LTC Walt Cooner, 2 April 1991.

²⁴. Barbara Starr, "The Right Degree of Support", Jane's Defence Weekly, 6 October 1990, p.649.

²⁵. "Major US Defense Deals With Gulf 'Being Delayed', Defense and Foreign Affairs Weekly, May 5, 1991, p.1.

for an air force whose principal role is air defense, and whose principal shortfall is personnel. The five aircraft provide air defense coverage that otherwise would have required a more cumbersome and manpower intensive, and yet less capable network of ground-based radars.²⁶ The Saudis have had difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified surveillance officers, the most qualified officers preferring the prestige and financial incentives of pilots. The RSAF has undertaken steps to rectify the problem.²⁷ During the first weeks after the invasion of Kuwait the Saudi E3s surged, providing 24 hour coverage for a sustained period of time, a worthy performance which brought praise from various US military circles.²⁸

The Saudi Air Defense Forces operate some of the finest air defense equipment in the world. The 33 mobile air defense batteries operate 128 I-Hawk firing units and 68 French made Shahine firing units. A further 73 Shahine units are dedicated to static defense.²⁹ Made especially for the Saudis, the Shahine is a track-mounted version of the highly regarded Crotale system. Six Patriot firing units with 384 reload missiles were approved for purchase in the fall of 1990³⁰

The need to integrate the AWACS and the superb counter-air aircraft and land-based air defense systems gave rise to the Peace Shield C3I/Battle Management System. The Peace Shield connectivity remains essential to insure the most effective utilization of the various components of the air defense system(See Table 4). The system as envisioned would allow a Saudi command

²⁶. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, pp. 256-257.

²⁷. Cooner, Interview, 2 April 1991.

²⁸. Various anonymous sources.

²⁹. The Military Balance, p. 116.

³⁰. John Boatman, "Saudi Arms Deal May be Revised", Jane's Defence Weekly, 6 October 1990, p.624.

center in Riyadh to simultaneously fight an air war over the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Arabian mainland.³¹ Contracts were let in 1985 to a consortium of companies led by Boeing, and initial operating capability (IOC) was scheduled for 1988. However the system has been plagued by delays and by January 1991 IOC had slipped to 1995. The U.S. Air Force, as executive agent for the contract, canceled Boeing's role and began searching for a new contractor.³²

TABLE 5-5: MAIN FEATURES OF PEACE SHIELD

- * Fully integrated network of control centers, linked to AWACS
- * 17 Seek Igloo radars, used by NORAD in Alaska
- * Upgraded centralized air defense Command Operations Center (COC) in Riyadh
- * Five fully automated Sector Command and Operations Centers at the five major Saudi airbases linked to the Riyadh COC responsible for surveillance, control and management of a given airspace.
- * Data links to the ground based air defense systems and to Saudi naval vessels.

Source: Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p. 263.

The lack of integration stemming from the delays in Peace Shield is the greatest weakness of both the RSAF and the Air Defense Forces. At the time of the contract cancellation, only half of the Seek Igloo radars had been installed, and software problems have apparently precluded the integration of AWACs data into the network. While the individual components of the

³¹. Jacob Goldberg, "The Saudi Military Buildup: Strategy and Risks" Middle East Review, Spring 1989, p.5.

³². Barbara Starr, "Peace Shield A Blow for Boeing", Jane's Defence Weekly, 19 January 1991, p.69.

RSAF/Air Defense Force system are superb, the lack of large numbers of aircraft and the great coverage area demand a better integrated system.

Other key shortfalls, aside from the interdiction/attack function, is the lack of electronic warfare and reconnaissance aircraft, and the lack of a maritime attack capability. The lack of an inventory of escort jammers and reconnaissance aircraft represents both a requirement and a shortfall. Both affect the capability to conduct interdiction missions. The RSAF has only a very limited capability to attack naval vessels and shipping with its Tornado IDS. The ability to launch an anti-ship cruise missile from a high-performance aircraft would greatly increase the deterrent effect of the Saudi Navy, and give the Saudis an upper hand in the Gulf naval balance.

Saudi Arabian Navy

The Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) was formed in 1957 as an adjunct to the Army and began functioning as a separate force only in 1969. As the last of the services to emerge it has been the laggard in development. In 1972 the Saudi Naval Expansion Program (SNEP) was launched with American assistance. Anthony Cordesman writes that SNEP allegedly experienced a number of problems, among them the inability on the part of the US Navy "to provide the proper supervision and training personnel", and as a result the Saudis turned to France.³³ A former head of the US naval advisory effort in Saudi Arabia denies this account. According to Captain David Brown, RSNF officers actually preferred to continue with the American effort,

³³. J. E. Peterson, "The GCC and Regional Security", p. 71.

but were overruled by palace politics.³⁴

In any case, France did become the principal sponsor of the RSNF. It is clear that the introduction of the French equipment, language, maintenance and supply systems into the RSNF has detracted from naval capabilities by once again introducing "competing and often-incompatible equipment, concepts and training methods".³⁵ As a result, the RSNF despite its impressive and growing order of battle, still cannot adequately defend Saudi Arabia's 1350 miles of coastline and protect the country's vital interests in the Gulf and Red Sea.

The 25 combat ships, patrol craft, and torpedo boats of the Royal Saudi Naval Force (RSNF) are divided between the Eastern Fleet, headquartered at Jubail, and the Western Fleet, headquartered at Jiddah. Other naval bases are located at Yanbu in the Red Sea and Al Dammam, Ras al Mishab, and Ras al-Ghar in the Gulf.³⁶

TABLE 5-6: SAUDI ARABIAN NAVY
Active Manpower: 9,500 (Including 1500 Marines)

Frigates	Corvettes	Missile Fast Attack Craft	Mine Warfare	Amphibious Ships	Anti-Ship Helicopters	Torpedo Boats
4	4	9	5	Craft Only	20	3

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p. 116.

The capital ships of the Saudi Navy are its four Medina class guided missile frigates. These

³⁴. Written comments provided by Captain David Brown, U.S. Naval War College, 24 May 1991.

³⁵. Ibid, p. 71.

³⁶. The Military Balance 1990-91, p. 116.

French built ships were placed in service in the 1985-86 time frame, and displace 2, 600 tons, full load. They are modern, well armed combatants, carrying a full range of defensive weapons. They are outfitted with the Italian made Otomat anti-ship cruise missiles(ASCM), the longest ranging cruise missiles in the Gulf. For anti-air warfare, they operate the Crotale, making the naval air defense arm compatible with the land-based Shahine SAMs. The ships are fully ASUW capable, outfitted with a modern sonar system and four torpedo tubes. They also embark the French Dauphin 2 helicopter which carries ASUW sensors and is armed with torpedoes and the French AS15T, a short-range anti-ship missile. The class is also outfitted with one 3.9in gun.³⁷ However, the number of frigates is inadequate, even in view of the other surface combatants, to conduct an escort operation in one fleet without seriously detracting from the capability of the other fleet.

Four US supplied guided missile corvettes are also in service with the Navy, since 1981-82. An excellent ASUW/ASW platform, the corvettes are armed with twin-quad launchers for the Harpoon, a Phalanx system for point defense, and a 76mm gun and anti-submarine torpedoes. They are not outfitted with a surface-to-air missile, which of course detracts from their ability to operate in an anti-air role. The nine US supplied patrol boats were brought into service between 1980 and 82. They are outfitted similar to the corvettes, carrying two twin-tube Harpoon launchers as opposed to the corvettes' quad-launchers, but have no sonar or ASW torpedoes. The three torpedo boats are able to handle only surface threats, are very old, and may not even be

³⁷. Couhat, Jean and Prezelin, Bernard, ed., Combat Fleets of the World, (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1988), p.469.

in service.³⁸

Mine warfare is a serious Saudi vulnerability. Its four US supplied Addriyah class craft incorporate old technology, are not deep water capable and their basic gear is not effective for bottom influence mines.³⁹ The Saudi deficiency in mine countermeasures was highlighted during both Gulf wars. Although Saudi ships participated in mine-clearing operations, the scope of the problem on both occasions far exceeded Saudi capabilities. The first of four British Sandown class minesweepers has been delivered to the RSNF as part of a modernization effort. While the full complement will represent a quantum leap in Saudi mine warfare capability, the number will be insufficient in countering the substantial mining threat.

The Saudis have been in the market for some time for a maritime patrol aircraft. The AWACS does have an ocean surveillance mode, but it has no provisions for anti-ship weapons, cannot discern the type of ships, and is too valuable of an asset to be used in a visual surveillance mode. The search has included an effort to acquire P3 Orions, and more recently French made Atlantiques. In view of the smaller size of the Atlantiques, and the apparent Saudi commitment to outfit the preponderance of its naval force with French equipment, it is likely that when the purchase is made, it will be made with Atlantiques.

Saudi Arabia, in 1986 extended a request for bids on six to eight diesel-electric submarines, although to this point none have been purchased. Designs under consideration included very modern and capable deep-sea boats from the Netherlands, Britain, Germany, Sweden and Italy, all armed with torpedoes and anti-ship missiles. The effectiveness of submarines in the Gulf is

³⁸. Ibid, p.470-471.

³⁹. Captain David Brown, 24 May 1991.

limited due to its shallow waters, and this capability would only be efficiently employed in the Gulf of Oman and Red Sea. In view of the shortfalls in manning, submarines appear to be a luxury which Saudi Arabia could not afford.

Data links between the AWACS and the larger naval ships would greatly increase naval capabilities. As noted earlier, the AWACS principal limitation in the maritime role is its lack of an effective ASUW weapon. A naval downlink to the frigates, programmed as part of Peace Shield, would provide an critical additional capability, and perhaps make an Atlantique/Orion purchase superfluous.

In summary, the shortfalls of the Saudi Navy are its lack of frigate-sized ships to carry out a sustained escort operation in one sea without dangerously exposing the other, an insufficient number of mine-countermeasure vessels, the lack of a long-range and long duration maritime patrol aircraft, and no AWACS downlink to naval vessels. In most cases, these shortfalls have been recognized, and programs are underway to correct these deficiencies. However, manpower shortages are the service's most pressing concern. With its current equipment mix, it requires a force of up to 15,000.⁴⁰ There may be limitations, therefore imposed on the size of the service simply from that perspective, and that in turn may drive procurement decisions like the submarine question.

⁴⁰. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p.230.

CHAPTER VI

GCC MILITARY CAPABILITIES THE SMALLER STATES

The strategic environment in which the smaller Gulf states function as they shape their security policies is determined by two factors, demographics and geography. The demographic problem is manifested in a manpower shortage that is even more acute in the smaller states than that in Saudi Arabia. Except in Oman, the citizens of each of these countries are in a minority in their own state, outnumbered by expatriate workers. Geography is important in that all of the states border the shallow, narrow Gulf, and four of them lack strategic depth. This makes them extremely vulnerable to Iranian air and sea attacks.

Oman

Oman has played a special role within the councils of the GCC since its inception. It was the earliest promoter of cooperation in the security arena, while other states were emphasizing the organization's political and economic roles. Oman also quietly supported a role for external powers in the Gulf, and in the early 1980s it was maintaining its strong links with Britain, and strengthening its ties to the United States. In the meanwhile, the other Gulf states, particularly Kuwait, were stressing the need to minimize superpower involvement in the region.

Oman's unique views of GCC interests and strategy stemmed from its unique geographic position. To its south lay the PDRY, avowedly Marxist, entrenched in Moscow's orbit, and onetime supporter of the Oman's Dhofari rebels. To its north lay Iran, just across from the Musandum Peninsula, with whom Oman was required to work to manage shipping through the Straits of Hormuz. It was the closest GCC state to South Asia-in fact Baghdad is twice as far

from Muscat as is Karachi. These factors led Sandhurst-educated Sultan Qaboos to adopt policies often quite at odds with the GCC consensus, arising out of what one leading expert on Oman termed, "a more macrostrategic view" than his GCC partners.¹

The 1987 and the 1990 American interventions in the Gulf have brought the other Gulf states a long way toward this view. Yet Oman's attitude toward GCC military integration has also cooled to some extent. While reports in early September indicated it was hosting a squadron of American F-15Es, its role on the ground in the recent war was very limited.² There are several reasons for this, to include Muscat's desire to both further Omanize its armed forces, and to attain a greater degree of technological and economic parity with its GCC partners.³

The issue of parity is relevant only insofar as technology is concerned. The Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) has long been considered the most professional military force on the Peninsula. Until the action in Kuwait, it was the only GCC military establishment to have seen action, having waged a successful war against rebels in its southernmost province of Dhofar. It has also undergone perhaps the most radical expansion of any Gulf state military. At the time of Sultan Qaboos' accession in 1970, the entire armed forces numbered only 2,500. By 1974 this had grown to 12,500, and to 25,00 in 1984.⁴

¹. Interview with Dr. John Duke Anthony, President, National Council on US-Arab Relations, Washington, D.C., 17 April 1991.

². "Use of Gulf Bases Widens", Jane's Defence Weekly, 15 September 1990, p.461.

³. Ibid, p.461.

⁴. Dale F. Eickelman, "Oman's Next Generation: Challenges and Prospects", in Crosscurrents in the Gulf, H. Richard Sindelar and J.E. Peterson, ed., (New York: Routledge, 1988), p.160.

The SAF benefitted from having a large number of seconded officers, largely British, in its ranks during the rebellion and during the years of expansion. The process of Omanization of the armed forces has been underway for some time now, as the education reforms introduced at the beginning of Qaboos rule have begun to produce a new generation of better educated citizens. The percentage of Omani nationals in the officer corps increased from 51% in 1981 to 62% in 1985, and has continued apace. In the Army, the percentage is much higher than the military as a whole, equalling 82% in 1985. ⁵

TABLE 6-1: OMANI ARMY

Active Manpower: 20,000 (includes 3,700 foreign personnel)

Main Battle Tanks	Fighting Vehicles/ Personnel Carriers	Light Tanks	SP Artillery	Towed Artillery	ADA Guns	SAMs
39	8	30	12	63	18	28

ARMY UNITS: 1 Div HQ

2 Bde HQ

1 Armd Bn

8 Inf Bns

2 Arty Bns

1 Abn Bn

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p.115.

The Sultanate of Oman Land Forces (SOLF) is essentially a light infantry force, far more suited to counter-insurgency operations than the modern, technologically sophisticated combat that has characterized the two Gulf wars. Its 33 Chieftains, six M60A1s and 30 Scorpions are sufficient to outfit only one heavy and one light tank battalion, and its self-propelled artillery is

⁵. Ibid, p.170.

inadequate to support even that. Nonetheless, its light forces are highly mobile, a necessary asset in view of the size of the country and the multiple threats.

TABLE 6-2: OMANI AIR FORCE

Active Manpower: 3,000

Multi-Role	Counter-Air	Strike	Attack Helicopters	Tactical Transport
18	--	25	--	27

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p.115.

The Sultan of Oman's Air Force has been the principal recipient of new equipment purchases, but it is still small even by Gulf standards, and in some need of both modernization and expansion. The air force, like the Army, seems well equipped to operate in a counter-insurgency environment. It is fashioned foremost for ground attack, and is equipped with 13 aging Hunters and 12 aging BAC-167s Strikemasters for that purpose. It also has a squadron of multi-role capable Jaguars which can be used in the ground attack mode, but which also represent the only Omani counter-air capability. The large number of transport aircraft in the inventory is in keeping with the light, highly mobile nature of the SOF. This capability is not to be overstated, as 21 of the 27 transports accommodate 19 or less passengers, and seven are outfitted with an ocean surveillance radar.

The strike aircraft are in need of replacement. The Hunters and Strikemasters would be hard pressed to carry out either close air support or battlefield air interdiction while operating against the Yemeni or Iranian battlefield air defense systems. The counter-air Jaguars are essentially too few in number to provide effective air defense over such a large country and against likely threat scenarios. In recognition of the latter shortfall, Muscat in 1985 placed on order eight air

defense versions of the British Tornado, but the sale was soon postponed due to funding shortfalls and appears now to have been canceled altogether.⁶ Also, the level of Omanization in the Air Force is well behind that of the Army, and it remains heavily dependent of foreign technical expertise, and to some extent, foreign pilots.

The Sultan of Oman's Navy (SON) faces perhaps the most daunting challenge of all the services. It must defend the approximately 1800 miles of coastline, including the strategic Strait of Hormuz. Oman's location places it squarely in the middle of the world's great petroleum artery which runs through the Straits and into the Gulf of Oman.

TABLE 6-3: OMANI NAVY

Active Manpower: 2,500

Missile Fast Attack Craft	Fast Attack Craft (Gun Only)	Amphibious Ships	Mine Warfare
4	4	2	--

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p.115.

To carry out its mission, the Omanis have only four fast attack missile craft, two amphibious ships, and a number of smaller coastal patrol vessels in the Navy and the Police Coast Guard. The missile boats are modern, capable platforms. They are outfitted with Exocet missile, six launcher tubes on some boats, eight on others. The two amphibious ships can embark either 188 or 240 combat ~~loaded~~ troops, along with a number of tanks or APC, and give Oman a capability "well-suited for ~~seizing~~ an oil platform or a small island."⁷ For maritime patrol, the Omanis

⁶. Peterson, GCC and Regional Security, p. 75.

⁷. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West. p.185.

make use of a number of transports with a maritime reconnaissance radar installed. Although the range of the radar and the duration of the aircraft is limited, this was certainly a reasonable and relatively inexpensive means of conducting maritime air patrol.

SON shortfalls are in its insufficient number of capital ships, its limited maritime air patrol capability, and its lack of mine warfare vessels.⁸ Like the Air Force, the Navy still has a disproportionate number of foreign military personnel and technicians. The slow process of Omanization affects the number of platforms that can be put in service, and the pace at which more sophisticated functions such as mine warfare can be undertaken by the SON.

In summary, the SAF is a highly professional, well trained force, but lacks the overall size and modern equipment to conduct an adequate self-defense against its likely threats. Its navy and air force are no match for the Iranian navy, and are incapable of adequately securing the Straits and the Gulf of Oman. The SOLF would be hard pressed to fend off anything but a border skirmish with more heavily armored Yemeni forces unless Saudi air power could be brought to bear. Oman has no real capacity to retaliate for, and therefore deter an SSM attack nor to preemptively destroy such a site.

United Arab Emirates

The history of the armed forces of the UAE dates back to 1951, when the British formed the Trucial Oman Levies, later renamed the Trucial Oman Scouts. When the UAE was formed, the Scouts became the Union Defense Force. Nonetheless, the individual Emirates still retained their armed forces, Abu Dhabi boasting a 15,000 man force as late as 1975. In 1976 were these

⁸. Ibid, p.185.

forces were united on paper-but in fact the forces of the larger Emirates retained their unit integrity and remained in place, ostensibly becoming regional commands of the federal armed forces. The individual Emirates continued separate arms purchasing policies for these "regional commands."⁹ Dubai to this day maintains an independent brigade sized force, and arms purchasing policies are still conducted without serious centralized planning. One result of this lack of centralized control and focus is apparent in the incongruity of a large, mechanized army in a country that shares borders only with allies, and an undermanned and poorly equipped navy in an essentially maritime state.

On paper at least, the UAE military establishment is a potent force. Its defense budget, army and air force are the second largest in the GCC. Yet effective defense of the federation depends on integrated defense, and that, as J.E. Peterson points out,"depends directly on the success of the federation experiment."¹⁰

TABLE 6-4: EMIRI ARMY

Active Manpower: 40,000 (incl Dubai--6,000)

Main Battle Tanks	Infantry Fighting Vehicles	Armored Personnel Carriers	SP Artillery	Towed Artillery	ADA Guns	SAMs
131	30	510	24	77	60	180

Units: 1 Mech Bde

1 Armd Bde

2 Inf Bde

1 Arty Bde

1 ADA Bde

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91 p.120.

⁹. Peterson, "GCC and Regional Security", p.80.

¹⁰. Ibid, p.81.

95 of the 131 main battle tanks are AMX-30s, and are in service with the UAE Western Command (Abu Dhabi). The AMX-30s suffer from the same power, cooling and filtration problems noted with the Saudi Arabian tanks. The balance are Italian OF-40s, a system designed for export that was purchased only by Dubai for service with the UAE Central Command. Both armored forces have difficulties operating their tanks effectively.¹¹ The UAE has reportedly requested the purchase of 337 M1A1 main battle tanks.¹²

The combined UAE inventory of 540 infantry fighting vehicles and personnel carriers is substantial, and includes a number of excellent systems. However, there are seven different types in the inventory, making cost-effective logistics and training virtually impossible. The anticipated buy from the US includes 164 Bradley fighting vehicles, which would further complicate the picture. Artillery has been seriously neglected and is substantially understrength. However, the Emiris recently purchased 70 South African G6 self-propelled howitzers, one of the world's finest artillery pieces, for the Abu Dhabi units.¹³ Another report indicates that the UAE may have purchased an additional 220 M198 SP howitzers from the United States.¹⁴

The UAE has concentrated on building its Air Force as the pillar of its defense. Based on its numbers and types of platforms, the Emiri Air Force is formidable by Gulf standards. The recent purchase of 35 Mirage 2000s for counter-air and reconnaissance greatly added to the

¹¹. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p.173.

¹². David Silverberg, "UAE Wants Major Arms Package", Defense News, April 22, 1991, p.1.

¹³. "UAE Orders South African SPG", Jane's Defense Weekly, 11 August 1990. These 70 guns are not included in the corresponding table due to uncertainties over delivery dates.

¹⁴. "United Arab Emirates", USNI Military Database, 1991.

TABLE 6-5: EMIRI AIR FORCE
Active Manpower: 2,500

Multi-Role	Counter-Air	Strike	Attack Helicopters	Electronic Warfare	Tactical Transports
14	39	26	19	4	6

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p.120

service's capabilities. In view of the extensive area of the Gulf with which the Air Force must be concerned, this was a wise and necessary purchase. The Emiris insisted on the installation of special features on the aircraft to make them interoperable with other GCC aircraft, another encouraging move. Nonetheless, the Air Force suffers from a shortage of native pilots and a array of aircraft nearly as bewildering as its armored fighting vehicles.¹⁵ Eighteen Apache helicopters were included in the arms sales request discussed above.

TABLE 6-6: EMIRI NAVY
Active Manpower: 2,500

Corvettes	Missile Fast Attack Craft	Small Patrol Craft (non-missile)	Mine Warfare
2	6	9	--

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p.120.

In view of the large coastline of the federation, the fact that the history of the Emirates is so intertwined with seafaring, and the large number of offshore oil facilities, it would seem reasonable to suspect that the UAE would boast a large navy. This is not so, principally because among the Emirates only Abu Dhabi has undertaken to build a naval force. Its eight small

¹⁵. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p.177.

missile craft are modern and capable, but insufficient to defend the Gulf interests of an essentially maritime state. The lack of mine warfare vessels and an amphibious capability also point to the lack of emphasis given to the Navy. That the federation would undertake a large buy of armored vehicles when its naval requirements are so compelling is testimony to the inadequacy of defense integration in the UAE and especially to the lack of focus and direction in federation force planning.

In addition to the political divisions, insufficient indigenous manpower also diminishes the federation's military potential. The federation's armed forces are heavily dependent on not just foreign technical experts, but foreigners in the ranks as well. The preponderance of the army's manpower and non-commissioned officers are Omanis, Baluchis and Moroccans, and some 30% or more of the total military manpower is expatriates. Jordanians, Pakistanis, and even some Britons fill most of the technical staff positions, and as noted earlier, the air force is heavily dependent on foreign pilots.¹⁶

In summary, the UAE military potential is greatly circumscribed by weaknesses in the federation itself. A lack of central planning has resulted in military forces that appear to be far more capable of conducting mechanized warfare between Emirates than in defending the federation against its real threats. The capability of the federation to protect its interests is limited to the capability of the well-equipped Air Force to extend its influence into the Gulf. The Army is well-equipped, but it is not clear what specific threat it is organized to go against. The Navy is the force that requires the most in terms of modernization and expansion, unless the

¹⁶. Malcolm C. Peck, The United Arab Emirates: A Venture in Unity, (Boulder: Westview Press), 1986.

Emiris are willing to forego a role in securing their own coastal waters.

Qatar

With a population of only slightly more than 400,000, 75% of which are expatriate, Qatar is simply incapable of defending itself, much less contributing in a significant way toward GCC collective defense. The Qatari government maintains close relations with Saudi Arabia, and for its security it lies "snugly under the Saudi defense umbrella".¹⁷

While Qatar has sought to upgrade its military forces, they have remained relatively modest in size. This policy is driven by the same manpower issues that affect all the Gulf states, but even more so in Doha. Only 30% of the nation's army is native.

TABLE 6-7: QATARI ARMY
Active Manpower: 6,000

Main Battle Tanks	Fighting Vehicles/ Personnel Carriers	SP/Towed Artillery	SAMs
24	198	14	12

Units: 1 Tank Bn
3 Mech Inf Bns
1 Artillery Bn

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p.115.

The Army is essentially the size of a mechanized brigade in a Western military. Its armored battalion is equipped, like Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, with the AMX-30 and its attendant problems. The tank battalion was engaged along with the Saudi Arabian National Guard at the

¹⁷. Twinam, p.30.

Battle for Khafji, and acquitted itself exceptionally well.¹⁸ The mechanized infantry force is also French equipped, with AMX-10s and VABs. The artillery battalion-the Qataris call it a regiment-is little more than two batteries. Although this is a weakness, the assertion must be viewed in relative terms; perhaps two more batteries of 6 guns each would be adequate to support the maneuver force. The most glaring deficiency is the Army's lack of an anti-aircraft gun, the planners in Doha having chosen instead to rely on the Blowpipe hand-held missile for coverage over maneuver units.

TABLE 6-8: QATARI AIR FORCE
Active Manpower: 800

Counter-air	Strike	Attack Helicopters	Tactical Transports
12	6	20	4

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p.115

The Qatari Air Force is of necessity small, but has a good mix of aircraft, most modern and capable. The squadron of F1s provides the emirate with an excellent counter-air capability that complements the Saudi Arabian air force very well. Its six Alpha jets serve dual roles as trainers and light attack. The 20 attack helicopters include French SA-342s with anti-tank missiles, and British Westland Sea Commando outfitted with Exocets, a superb combination. Even the lack of fixed wing tactical transports is not a problem, in view of the small size of the country, and the number of helicopter transports available.

¹⁸. Ottaway, "For Saudi Military, New Self-Confidence", The Washington Post. 20 April 1991.

TABLE 6-9: QATARI NAVY
Active Manpower: 700

Missile Fast Attack Craft	Other Patrol Craft	Mine Warfare	Coastal Defense Batteries
3	6	--	3

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p.115.

The three fast attack craft are la Combattantes, modern, capable and outfitted with dual four-tube Exocet launchers. The six patrol craft were launched in the mid-1970s, and will soon require replacement.¹⁹ The coastal defense batteries are equipped with land-based Exocets, an excellent choice of weapons platform in view of the limited manpower and money available in the small state, its lengthy coast and prominent geographic position in the Gulf. Like its other GCC partners, the Qatari navy suffers from a lack of mine countermeasures capabilities.

Bahrain

Anthony Cordesman calls Bahrain the most vulnerable of the Gulf states, with good reason. The country was long claimed by Iran, and is 60% Shi'ite. Its ruling family is Sunni, creating some problems of legitimacy. The regime was the object of a 1981 Iranian sponsored coup, the only GCC country so threatened. Nearly 40% of the population is expatriate, including a large number of Iranians.²⁰

Like Qatar, Bahrain possesses little real or potential military capability. Located next to huge

¹⁹. "Qatar: Silent Sentinel-Country Survey-Gulf States," Jane's Defence Weekly. 31 March 1990, p.591.

²⁰. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p. 157.

Saudi Air Base at Dhahran, Bahrain, like Qatar, is included in Saudi Arabia's eastern defense perimeter. One senior Saudi official has said "We consider the defense of Bahrain to be the defense of Saudi Arabia."²¹ Nonetheless, its military establishment has undergone relatively substantial growth recently, the Army doubling in size in the past four years and the Air Force picking up two types of top-line fighters since 1986. Bahrain participated extensively in the war with Iraq, its F-16s flying a substantial number of air defense missions, and the country was itself a target of at least one Iraqi SCUD.

TABLE 6-10: BAHRAINI ARMY
Active Manpower: 5,000

Main Battle Tanks	Personnel Carriers	Towed Artillery	SAMs
54	103	22	100 (hand-held)

Units: 1 Tank Bn
2 Inf Bn
2 Arty Btry
1 SF Bn

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p.101.

The Bahraini Army is also brigade strength. Its single tank battalion is well-equipped with M60A3s, although the mechanized infantry units are French equipped. The Army's main mission is clearly internal security, although it did participate in a limited fashion in the ground war in Kuwait. The SAMs are Swedish Bofors RBS-70 and US Stingers and point to a well-chosen priority for air defense.

²¹. Twinam, Reflections on Gulf Cooperation, p.29.

TABLE 6-11: BAHRAIN AIR FORCE

Active Manpower: 450

Multi-Role	Counter-Air	Attack Helicopters
12	12	12

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p.101.

The Air Force, though very small, is well-equipped. Its 24 high performance aircraft include 12 F-5s delivered in 1986, and 12 F-16s. The first F-16s arrived in May 1990, just in time for the invasion of Kuwait. The helicopters include three German BO-105s equipped with maritime surveillance radar. The Air Force is highly dependent on foreign expertise, although its small corps of pilots is native.²²

TABLE 6-12: BAHRAIN NAVY

Active Manpower: 600

Corvettes	Missile Fast Attack Craft	Other Patrol Craft	Mine Warfare
2	4	2	--

Source: The Military Balance 1990-91, p.101

Bahrain is building an impressive small navy, as befits an island state. The two corvettes, brought on line in 1987-88, are modern German vessels, outfitted with two twin Exocet launchers, five guns of various caliber, and a Dauphin II helicopter. The four missile boats are similarly equipped with Exocet launchers, but carry fewer large caliber guns and no helicopter. In a nation of several islands, a capable small navy indicates wise force planning. However, the lack of even a modicum of an amphibious capability is a serious shortfall.

²². Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p.161.

Kuwait

Kuwait after the war is likely to suffer from more instability and political uncertainty than any other Gulf state in recent history. The pressures of reconstruction, the loss of oil income and the health hazards posed by the massive oil well fires, the internal push for reform and participation, the resentment felt by Kuwaitis toward Palestinians, and the divisions between the Kuwaitis who stayed and those who left-these influences combine to form a dangerous recipe for upheaval.

The strategic environment in which Kuwait will conduct its external security planning is not encouraging either. The country's military was humiliated during the Iraqi invasion, and despite some rebuilding, it retains little capability for self-defense. Kuwait, long the most vociferous GCC opponent of a Western role in Gulf security, has with good reason come completely across the spectrum. In post-war councils, it has vigorously lobbied for a visible US presence, and the Administration has agreed to leave a cavalry regiment in Kuwait for some undisclosed but not indefinite period of time.

The pre-war Kuwaiti defense force was not negligible, despite its humiliation in August. Its army was equipped with 245 main battle tanks, including 150 top-of-the-line Chieftains, and 245 BMP-2s, perhaps the best infantry fighting vehicle in the world. The navy had 23 patrol and coastal combatants, including eight missile boats, as well as two marine companies. Its air force was small, but was in the process of modernization, and its land based air defense employed first rate equipment. The Kuwaitis invested heavily in infrastructure, although it is difficult to gauge

to what extent it remains intact. The country also had initiated conscription, the only state of the six to have done so, and had gone to great lengths to recruit citizens for the Army, coaxing them through high pay and benefits.²³

Kuwait's major problem was its enormous diversity of arms sources. The Kuwaiti military inventory included British tanks, Soviet AIFVs, US surface-to-air missiles, German patrol boats, and French interceptors. Post-invasion additions include Yugoslav M-84 tanks, and American F-18 aircraft. Other problems included rampant disregard of merit in promotions, difficulty in absorbing the various weapons systems and maintaining them, and like all the other Gulf states, an extensive reliance on foreign technical support.²⁴

TABLE 6-13: KUWAITI ARMED FORCE
Active Manpower:?

Main Battle Tanks	Counter-Air Aircraft	Strike Aircraft	Attack Helicopters
200	15	19	16

Source: Adopted from several sources by author, to include The Military Balance; USNI Military Database; Air International, January 1991; and Jane's Defence Weekly, 20 October 1990.

A substantial number of Kuwaiti aircraft escaped after the invasion, and form the nucleus of a capable, well-balanced force at a strength compatible, in the short-term, with the country's requirements. The 15 F-1s, and 18 A-4s are currently being supplemented with the first of 40 US F-18 multi-role aircraft. The F-1 and A-4 squadrons played a major role in the war against Iraq, integrated with the Saudi Air Force and carrying the legend "Free Kuwait" in English and

²³. Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p. 165.

²⁴. Abdul-Reda Assiri, Kuwait's Foreign Policy, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p.87.

Arabic on their fins.²⁵ The multi-role F18s add a tremendous capability, particularly in its counter-air capacity.

The Kuwaitis have expressed an interest in the long-term purchase of other first-line US equipment, but no sale has been formalized. Included in the discussions were M1 tanks and Apache helicopters.²⁶ To the extent that Congressional sentiment allows, it is likely that Kuwait's diversity of arms sources may be replaced by a greater reliance on the U.S.

The Kuwaiti military may stake a special role for itself in the turbulent post-war politics in the country. Most of its officers were trained in the West, many remained on and fought in the Resistance, and several have even spoken out in criticism of members of the Royal family that played a role in the August 1990 debacle. By one account, 15% of the pre-war armed forces, officers and ranks, had participated in training in the United States. Direct, overt military interference in the politics of the Gulf Arab states is unheard of, but certainly the Kuwaiti post-war maelstrom will test that taboo.

²⁵. "Kuwait", Air International. January 1991, p.20.

²⁶. Barbara Starr, "USA Delays Kuwaiti Package," Jane's Defence Weekly, 23 March 1991, p.421.

CHAPTER VII

SHORTFALLS IN GCC MILITARY CAPABILITIES: NET ASSESSMENT

Having reviewed the military threats to the GCC states, and having discussed in detail their own military capabilities and shortfalls, it is necessary to undertake the task of analyzing the one in conjunction with the other. In the paragraphs below, the most significant shortfalls of the GCC are evaluated in light of the summary of military threats developed in Chapter 3. It should be stressed that the areas noted below are ones where major deficiencies exist.

I. Ground force component capable of defending Kuwait and northeastern Saudi Arabia against the residual Iraqi threat and/or a resurgent Iranian threat.

One of the longstanding requirements of the Gulf Cooperation Council has been the need for ground forces capable of defending Kuwait and northeastern Saudi Arabia from either a major invasion by Iraq or Iran or a combination of both. The need for such a capability is obvious after the invasion of Kuwait, but it was also readily apparent in early 1987 when Iranian troops threatened a breakthrough on the southern front in Iraq. The Gulf Arabs have three indigenous forces to draw upon in conducting the defense of this area; the Saudi Arabian Land Forces(SALF), the Kuwaiti Army, and the Peninsula Shield rapid deployment force.

Of the three, the SALF has the most credibility, but remains hopelessly outgunned and outmanned by even the remnant of the Iraqi army. The new Saudi emphasis on modernizing the heavy maneuver arm of its ground forces, and its avowed intent to double the overall size of its armed forces is laudable. However, the receipt and integration of any new equipment will take

a decade, while the ability of Saudi Arabia to carry out its proposed expansion is doubtful. As for the Saudi Arabian Air Force, it could, in conjunction with the Air Defense Force, neutralize the hostile air threat supporting such an attack and achieve localized air superiority. However, it lacks the air-to-ground capability to exploit that superiority and influence a ground battle.

The Kuwaiti Armed Forces, now and for perhaps a decade, will be unable to achieve the capability to carry out even a token defense of its territory against Iran or Iraq. The need to reconstitute while undergoing almost certain political upheaval guarantees a long and arduous path ahead for its military establishment. The manpower equation works greatly to Kuwait's disadvantage, as does its lack of defensible terrain.

The answer, perhaps, lies in cooperative efforts, with an invigorated Peninsula Shield force as the nucleus of an alliance defense. This is an unlikely solution for two reasons. First, there are questions as to whether the political will exists in the other four Gulf states to commit more soldiers to the defense of Kuwait and the Saudi Arabian oil fields. In any event, those states cannot contribute to the RDF in a way that could substantively add to Saudi military capabilities. Any increase in Qatar and Bahrain's contributions would obviously be minimal. As for Oman, its military lacks the armored and mechanized capability required for the northeastern "front", and Oman has sufficient threats to contend with on its own borders. While the UAE has a sizable body of manpower under arms now and is undertaking a modernization program, the many and substantive weaknesses in its military establishment would work to limit its effective contribution.

II. Ground force component capable of defending against Yemen and an aggressor in the

northeast simultaneously.

A worst-case scenario for GCC defense planners is one of cooperation between Yemen and Iraq or Iran or both. Self-reliance would dictate that the armed forces of the GCC, particularly those of Oman and Saudi Arabia, be able to conduct a credible, simultaneous defense against both.

While the inadequacy of the GCC states in defending in the northeast has been clearly established, under normal circumstances the armed forces of the Saudi Arabia and Oman could contain Yemeni aggression. Defending against the Yemeni armed forces alone, they would be able to limit such aggression to localized border areas, and by bringing air power to bear, defeat it. Despite an order of battle balance that stacks itself in favor of the Yemenis on the southwestern "front", the limitations of Yemeni capabilities, the quality of the Omani land forces, and even the very limited Saudi air-to-ground capability should tip the military balance in favor of the two GCC states. The Saudi armed forces should be capable of carrying out the defense of its territory alone, but Oman would be heavily dependent upon the Saudi Air Force for support.

However, these calculations are not relevant in the event of a simultaneous hostile operation in the northeast. The Saudi need to protect the more valuable oil fields would result in a swing in military capability away from the southeast, and would present the Yemeni military with more opportunities, **especially** in a drive aimed north into the Saudi province of Asir. Likewise, an Omani defense against a determined Yemeni attack would be hard pressed without the support of the Saudi Air Force.

III. Air Force component capable of conducting air-to-ground missions.

The air forces of the Gulf states need an robust, effective air-to-ground capability for several reasons. First, the lack of satisfactory close air support and battlefield air interdiction detracts from the capabilities of an already weak ground force component. Secondly, a deep strike capability is necessary as a retaliatory option in the event of an air strike or, more likely, a surface-to-surface missile attack. Thirdly, the states of the Gulf should be able to conduct offensive counter-air missions to reduce the air threat in a wider war, especially against Jordan or Yemen. The Six are currently unable to satisfactorily meet this requirement due to a number of contributing shortfalls in capability.

The first shortfall is in type of aircraft. Even such ostensible multi-role aircraft as the Mirage F1s and 2000s were designed as air-superiority fighters, and in the F1s they lack any special attack avionics. Those aircraft specifically dedicated to the strike missions are in few in number, and other than the Tornados, do not employ modern attack avionics. The Saudis are actively seeking the F-15E, but concern in the US Congress over the threat posed by such "offensive" aircraft to Israel is likely to preclude such a sale.

The second contributing deficiency is in a lack of dedicated electronic warfare aircraft to escort air interdiction missions, an essential requirement in the sophisticated, high-density air defense environment of the Middle East. Of course the effective utilization of such aircraft requires a high degree of technical expertise and detailed planning, especially when compared to the relatively easier task of training pilots in the use of on-board self-protection jammers. Even if purchased, such aircraft would require a substantial period of time for effective integration. A third contributing deficiency is a lack of reconnaissance platforms and experience

in the targeting and bomb damage assessment process. The latter is difficult for even the most advanced air forces.

Except for Oman and Saudi Arabia, the militaries of the Gulf have to a great extent placed their faith in close air support on rotary wing aircraft. In the smaller countries, the number of helicopters employed in the attack mode is nearly equal to the number of fixed wing aircraft.¹ The interest in Apaches expressed by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the UAE further reinforces this trend. Here, however, joint training with the land forces is prescribed, and currently lacking.

IV. Integrated air defense system to draw on full range of GCC capabilities, and to extend coverage throughout the area

The factors which guide Saudi air defense planning apply to the GCC states as a whole, dictating an emphasis on air defense and integration. What is required is a system of hardware and established procedures that maximizes the effectiveness of the impressive array of interceptor aircraft and land-based air defense systems held by the GCC states, while extending the effective coverage to all key parts of the peninsula.

The current system does not fulfill those requirements for Saudi Arabia, much less for the Peninsula as a whole. There is widespread recognition of this shortfall, and remedial efforts have been underway for some time. Nonetheless, a lack of equipment interoperability in conjunction with other problems which constrain security integration seems to dampen the possibility of ever completely fulfilling the requirement.

¹. A substantial proportion of these attack helicopters are outfitted for anti-ship operations.

V. Naval forces capable of conducting mine-countermeasures in the Gulf or Red Sea.

Virtually every state in the Gulf is threatened with the prospect of mines. The Six desperately need an in-house capability to conduct mine countermeasures operations, for mining is a very effective, low-tech means of conducting economic warfare. Mine warfare can be conducted covertly or clandestinely, an additional reason why the Gulf states are likely to see this threat again.

The mine countermeasures capability of the navies of the Six is grossly inadequate to deal with this threat. Only Saudi Arabia, alone among the Six, has commissioned any mine countermeasures vessels. Its current capability is to be upgraded, but an insufficient number of mine warfare craft will be available, and in the hands of too few states. Virtually any hostile mining would require external assistance.

VI. Air forces capable of conducting maritime patrol and maritime strike missions in the Gulf or the Red Sea.

The requirement for the Gulf states is an integrated system of procedures and hardware that would facilitate the detection and identification of shipping in the Gulf of Oman, allow for the tracking of that shipping through the Straits and into the Gulf, and, if necessary, support engaging it with anti-ship weapons from high performance aircraft. Saudi Arabia needs a similar capability in the Red Sea.

Bahrain and Oman have outfitted rotary-wing and tactical transport aircraft, respectively, with maritime reconnaissance radars. However, the limited range of the radars and the airframe make the solutions inadequate to fulfill the requirement described above. As for maritime strike

capabilities, the GCC states rely on rotary-wing assets, a number of which -- those carrying the Exocet or Harpoon -- pack quite a punch. The problem is in the limited range of helicopters, which precludes any maritime strike missions by land-based air in the Gulf of Oman or the Bab el Mandeb, and limits strike options in the Gulf and Red Sea.

VII. Naval forces capable of providing secure escort to shipping in the Gulf, or the Gulf and Red Sea simultaneously.

The six need a capability to pick up shipping in the Gulf of Oman and escort it into the Gulf. Saudi Arabia needs a similar capability in the Red Sea. Currently, inadequate numbers of long-duration ships, problems in naval interoperability, and the multiplicity of low-tech threats mitigate against such a capability. Solutions would require the acquisition of more frigate-sized ships, a maritime patrol and strike aircraft, and a more robust mine countermeasures capability.

VIII. Response to Surface-to-Surface Missile Attacks.

The great threat posed by surface-to-surface missiles was amply demonstrated in both Gulf Wars. There are several means by which a state can undertake to defend against such missiles. First, it can employ an anti-missile missile in order to defeat such an attack while it is in progress. Second, it can seek to take out the threatening missiles on the ground, prior to launch, with an air strike or a raid by special operations forces. Lastly, it can seek to deter an attack by obtaining the capability to respond in kind, either with another missile, or with a long-range strike aircraft. The Gulf Arab states have a very limited capability to carry out any of these types of responses, and are largely defenseless against the surface-to-surface missile threat.

The American Patriot air defense missile was largely successful in defending sparsely populated Saudi Arabia from Iraqi SSMS. Saudi Arabia has purchased six firing units and 384 missiles, but this purchase will not satisfy all of Saudi Arabia's requirements. First, the integration of those missiles into the Air Defense Forces will take a great deal of time, and will invariably require more foreign technical experts. Second, six firing units is equal to slightly more than one US battalion, and at least one full brigade and perhaps more were employed in Saudi Arabia for point defense. So even when operational, such coverage will not be comprehensive. Lastly, a Saudi anti-missile system not capable of complete coverage of Saudi Arabia, would not cover, except incidentally, locations in other GCC countries.

The ability to preemptively attack such missiles, whether by air or special operations forces, depends on good targeting information. With their inadequate reconnaissance capability, the GCC would not be able to plan and direct such attacks. Even if they did, the lack of a deep-strike capability in the air-forces, and the lack of highly trained special operations forces would preclude the option of pre-emption.

Likewise, the option of deterring attack by establishing a credible retaliatory capability is limited by the weak air-to-ground arm of the GCC air forces. The Saudi CSS-2 IRBMs do in fact constitute a clear signal of intent to respond. However, the inaccuracy of the missile at range clearly limits its role to attacks on population centers. Yet the thirty or so missiles in the Saudi inventory are insufficient to have much of an effect in that capacity. Missile attacks in the Iran-Iraq war had little effect on the war's development until the Iraqis were able to launch nearly 200 at Tehran in a sixty day period, only then throwing the Iranian people into a panic.

CHAPTER VIII

CONSTRAINTS ON IMPROVING MILITARY CAPABILITY

The Gulf Arab states are constrained by a host of factors in their various efforts at modernization and expansion. These limitations establish an effective ceiling on military potential. Beyond this cap demographic, cultural, political or economic forces come into play, forcing would be force planners back into the realms of reality. The limitations are so deeply entrenched and widely applicable that self-reliance in the security arena is beyond the realm of possibility.

Proponents of GCC self-reliance often call for a greater defense effort on the part of individual countries, and for increased cooperation between countries as means to achieve that goal. Much of the previous analysis dealt with both of these issues, examining the threat, military capabilities, force expansion and modernization planning, and cooperative efforts. In this chapter, the focus is on the factors which limit modernization, expansion, and cooperation, in effect leaving the Gulf Arab states enormously dependent on Western military effort for their security, and to a great extent explaining the two Western interventions in the region in the past four years.

Constraints on Modernization and Expansion

1. Demographic and Cultural Factors.

The total manpower pool available in the Gulf Arab states is insufficient to meet the manpower requirements for self-defense. Only Saudi Arabia has a population base that would support a significant increase in its military manpower, depending upon which Saudi population

figures are used. This potential is deceptive in that the Saudi manpower pool still pales in comparison to those of its potential adversaries. Estimates of the Saudi native population range from 9-14 million.¹ That compares to an Iranian population of over 55 million, an Iraqi population of approximately 19 million and a Yemeni population of nearly 10 million.

There is virtually no capacity in the smaller GCC states for increasing their manpower. In any event, the marginal increase in military capability stemming from, say a 30% increase in military manpower in all the states is minimal, since the establishments are so small to begin with. Further, the number of expatriates in all the states except Oman is so great that any increase would of necessity have to include more foreign soldiers and more foreign technicians.

The military manpower shortage is compounded by two factors. In the Bedouin culture, from which much of the social traditions of the region have evolved, manual labor is viewed as demeaning. Military service as a recruit is equated with manual labor, the result being great difficulty in recruiting qualified personnel. The second is the literacy deficit. The states of the Gulf have invested wisely in education facilities, and literacy rates in the younger age groups is rising. Despite the favorable trend, overall literacy is nonetheless abysmal, 50% and below in all the states but Kuwait and the UAE. Intense competition develops between the military and other economic sectors for the limited pool of skilled manpower, a problem intensified by the widespread exclusion of women from the labor force. In view of the aversion to manual labor, one can understand the difficulties faced by the Gulf Arab states in recruiting the soldiers needed to man their high-tech military establishments.

¹. Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook 1990, (Washington, D. C.: US Government Printing Office, 1990), p.274, and The Military Balance, 1990-91, p. 115.

Conscription is a solution with its own limits. While reasonably successful in Kuwait, the other states have scrupulously avoided adopting such a policy. While the political costs are uncertain, it seems that conscription would be highly unpopular, and would lead to resentment on the part of the lower classes that inevitably bear an unequal share of the burden of military service. In any event, the results would likely be disappointing regardless of the political cost. Only 160,000 Saudi males reach 18 each year. Conscribing 75% for a one year period would only marginally increase manpower above current levels in the regular forces and National Guard.² Lengthier periods of duty would of course bring higher political costs.

Another cultural constraint to the expansion and maintenance of a professional military establishment is the predisposition to promote based on favoritism. The reward of merit is a sometimes novel concept in traditional societies, where family ties and economic status may have far more impact in determining who is promoted and placed in key positions. This is exacerbated by the emphasis on internal security in the Gulf states, political and tribal loyalties becoming additional factors taking precedence over merit in the advancement of key individuals.³ An offshoot of this trait is the reluctance on the part of supervisors and trainers to relieve below-par performers from duty positions and dismiss under-achieving students from training courses.⁴

². The World Factbook, p.274.

³. Shamlan Y. al-Essa, "Implications of the Gulf Crisis for the Internal Dynamics and State Systems of the GCC Countries", unpublished paper presented at the Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Washington, D.C., 18 April 1991.

⁴. Cooner, Interview, 2 April 1991.

2. Large Forces as Threats to Regimes.

The rulers of the Gulf Arab states are likely to determine that military expansion, while increasing external security and international influence, would present if not a threat to their regimes, impose limits on their domestic political flexibility. Gulf Arab militaries have historically not posed significant threats to regimes. This is so for several reasons. First, members of the ruling family often hold key positions within the defense establishments. Secondly, those positions not held by members of the ruling family have been carefully filled with officers based on loyalty, rather than merit. Thirdly, the officer corps are generally well taken care of, and threats to established regimes also threaten the personal well-being of the officers.

Substantial increase in force structure would tend to dilute the ability of the ruling families to control their military establishments through appointments. It is also conceivable that as force structure is increased and these countries seek economies in their defense budgets, compensation to the officer corps would be threatened. Lastly, as militaries in Third World countries increase in size, they also tend to become politically powerful in their own right. Rulers should realize that in expanding their military establishments, they potentially create another political force which must be obliged in the sharing of national resources and the setting of the national agenda.

3. External Political Factors.

A political factor that will continue to limit the military potential of the Gulf Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia, is the reluctance of the United States to provide the armaments necessary for a sustained expansion. Driven by concerns over threats to Israeli security, and

pressured by a powerful Israeli lobby that fears the deepening of the U.S. strategic partnership with Saudi Arabia, the US Congress has consistently and successfully sought to limit arms sales to the region.⁵ Despite the recent war, or in some views, because of it, sentiment in Congress has not substantially changed.

As a consequence, the Saudis are forced to purchase inferior equipment for lack of alternative, and as a policy choice to reduce dependence on U.S. sources. Experience with French armor and ships, as well as the British Tornados appear to have left the Saudis with a preference for American equipment as superior, but they are often rebuffed in their attempt to acquire it by Congressional sentiment. On the other hand the Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, actively pursue a policy of maintaining various sources of supply as a hedge against any disruption. The resulting hodge-podge equipment inventory brings with it the many problems discussed in detail in previous chapters.

An associated issue emerging from the war with Iraq is the great pressure for regional arms control. Secretary Baker, in his February 6, 1991 testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said that one of the American objectives in the post-war period would be to , "work with others to encourage regional restraint in the acquisition and use of both conventional armaments and weapons of mass destruction."⁶ Reporting on the Administration proposal for Middle East arms control indicates the plan focuses on weapons of mass destruction, but clearly calls for some limits on conventional weapons. A moratorium on conventional weapons remains

⁵. See A. Craig Murphy, "Congressional Opposition to Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia," American-Arab Affairs, (Spring 1988, pp.100-112) for an excellent summary of the history of this problem, and an analysis of the sources of Congressional sentiment.

⁶. Text quoted in full in Middle East Economic Survey, 11 February 1991, pp. C1-C3.

highly popular in Congress. The Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Dante Fascell has said, "The end of the war with Iraq cannot signal a return to business as usual, especially arms business as usual."⁷ While the likelihood of establishing a successful arms control regime in the Middle East is improbable at best, such a popular notion will certainly have the effect of reducing arms flows to the Gulf Arab states.

3. Economic Factors.

Improved military capabilities depend on money. In the Gulf, the amount of money available for military expansion and modernization is dependent entirely on the price of oil. Despite the temporary spike in oil prices in the fall of 1990 caused by the Kuwaiti crisis, the prospects for major increases in the price of oil is not great in the short-term nor even out into the long-term. OPEC output of approximately 23 million barrels a day for the first two months of 1991 exceeded forecast summer demand by 1.5 million barrels, and this was without Iraqi or Kuwaiti production. In the short term, Kuwaiti production, and a drive by Iran to increase its capacity by 50% or more will keep prices soft.⁸ The resumption of Iraqi production will lend itself to mitigating long-term upward pressures on the market. Before the invasion of Kuwait, conventional wisdom held that increased demand on OPEC oil would not begin to substantially affecting prices until early in the next century.⁹ This prognosis may have been too optimistic

⁷. Charles Lane, "Arms for Sale," Newsweek, April 8, 1991, p. 27.

⁸. Edmund O'Sullivan, "The Prevention of Future Conflict," Middle East Economic Digest, 15 March 1991, p.5.

⁹. Phillip Robins. The Future of the Gulf: Politics and Oil in the 1990s, (Aldershot, UK: Dartmouth Publishing, 1989), p.69.

from the oil-producer's point of view.

What this means for the Gulf is that government revenues will remain flat, leaving little money for both modernization and expansion. Table 8-1 points to the dramatic decline in oil revenues since the early 1980s. It should be remembered that the data shown is not adjusted for inflation, so the actual buying power of Saudi Arabia, and the other Gulf states as well, has dropped dramatically. In fact in 1990, prior to the temporary oil price increase, the Saudis were expected to run a budget deficit of roughly 22% of revenues.¹⁰ With no long-term upward pressures in the oil market to alter these budgetary constraints, simultaneous modernization and expansion in the GCC states appears to be out of the question.

TABLE 8-1: SAUDI ARABIAN OIL REVENUES AND MILITARY SPENDING

	Oil Revenues	Military Spending
1980	\$102.2	\$16
1984	\$43.7	\$21.9
1990	\$25.5	\$12.3

All figures are current billion dollars, not adjusted for inflation.

Source: Adopted by author from Cordesman, The Gulf and the West, p 17; CIA, The World Factbook, p.275, and US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1987, p.75.

Constraints on Increased Cooperation

1. Interstate Conflict.

Despite the great similarities between the GCC states, the outwardly warm ties between the regimes, and the various examples of cooperation cited in Chapter 5, sources of tensions exist which continue to place limits on the extent of security cooperation. These points of friction are

¹⁰. CIA, The World Factbook 1990, p.274.

unlikely to spark open conflict between states, or cause a irreparable break in the GCC. Rather, they contribute to "the inter-state suspicions which pervade and thereby handicap the work of the organization."¹¹

For the most part, these conflicts stem from historical border disputes. The issue of borders was long unimportant in the sparsely inhabited region, but became so when the question of oil concessions entered the picture. The conflict between Bahrain and Qatar over the disputed Hawar Islands almost came to a shooting war in 1986 when Qatari forces occupied an islet in the chain claimed by Bahrain after the latter state undertook the building of a coast guard station. Other points of territorial contention include the Buraimi Oasis, between Saudi Arabia, Oman and Abu Dhabi, the border between Oman and Ras al-Khaima, and the Saudi-Kuwait neutral zone. Within the UAE itself, conflicts and meddling in the internal affairs of other Emirates has been common since independence.¹²

Economic conflict revolves around the production of oil. The predominant point of contention has been the assignment and violations of OPEC quotas, a source of friction likely to worsen before it improves. Other economic sources contribute to discord and distrust as well. Oman has maintained import barriers to protect new industries. Bahraini merchants complained bitterly when the causeway to Saudi Arabia opened, fearing cheaper Saudi competition. Dubai built an aluminum smelter and dry-dock in the 1970s after the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting countries had authorized Bahrain to build one. The result was that both enterprises proved

¹¹. Robins, p. 65.

¹². Ibid, p. 66.

unprofitable.¹³

2. Fear of Saudi domination.

Saudi Arabia is recognized as the "superpower" of the six by virtue of its greater size, population, oil reserves, and military capability and potential. Its five neighbors suffer from what one former US diplomat in the region describes as "a weakness beyond remedy, tininess."¹⁴ In light of these circumstances it was only natural that the smaller Five would come to fear the potential for overlordship by Saudi Arabia. Membership in an organization where Saudi Arabia was the preeminent power was preferable to going alone in the early 1980s, but the Five have steadfastly avoided the perception of Saudi dominance in the affairs of the GCC.

The Saudis, for their part, have not been heavy-handed in coercing the Five accede to their leadership. Nonetheless, this has been achieved only at the cost of slowing integration and retarding cooperation, for in virtually every cooperative venture the Saudi role was dominant. One observer stated that as a result, the GCC has continued as a " 'coordination of convenience' rather than an emerging alliance."¹⁵

3. Different Threat Perceptions in the GCC countries.

One key advantage enjoyed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization up until the late 1980s was a common agreement on who the threat was, and that the threat was as serious for one as

¹³. Peterson, J.E., "Security Concerns in the Arabian Peninsula," p.115.

¹⁴. Joseph Wright Twinam, "Reflections on Gulf Cooperation, with Focus on Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman," American-Arab Affairs, Fall 1986, p.21.

¹⁵. Robins , p. 65.

it was for another. Such is not the case for the GCC. The states hold widely varying views on which countries pose threats and how those threats should be countered. The war with Iraq only galvanized GCC opinion for a short-time, and now in the post-war period, the strategic views of the individual states may be as far apart as ever.

The most serious difference in these views in the past lay between Kuwait on the one hand, and Oman on the other. Kuwait, laying exposed as it was next to powerful Iraq, the subject of an Iranian inspired terror campaign in the mid-1980s and having faced an attempt at naval economic strangulation in 1986-86, viewed the two larger states as the organization's principal security concern. Kuwait being very wealthy, its leaders could envision the establishment of a viable, and integrated ground force contingent in the northeastern Saudi desert. For Oman, on the other hand, Iraq was far away, while Iran was a necessary evil with which Muscat had to do business regarding the affairs of the Strait. Its more immediate security concern was radical, Marxist South Yemen. Not as rich as Kuwait, and unburdened with a Palestinian population, Oman was much more open to a Western role in the Gulf. Aden, in turn, was a very long way from Kuwait, and of little concern for the Kuwaitis. For the Saudis, Aden, Tehran, and Baghdad were all causes for grave concern, but so was North Yemen and the African threats to the Red Sea.

The lack of a common threat assessment has stymied the search for a common strategy, which in turn would give rise to such things as common arms acquisition, establishment of an equitable and reasonable division of military responsibilities and more integrated command structures. The war has changed little in that regard. Only Kuwait has done an about face on the necessity of a Western presence.

These constraints are not new. In fact, the current weaknesses of the Gulf state military establishments can be traced directly to the operation of these checks on military potential over the lifespan of these states. The combined effect of their influences should be viewed as powerful limitations on the growth of military capabilities. Perhaps the change in attitude in Kuwait after the war is due less to a reassessment of the threat, but to a realistic appreciation that self-reliance and integrated security programs were and remain insufficient to insure the survival and stability of the Gulf states.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

In the opening pages of this effort, several questions were raised regarding the nature of post-war regional stability, the military threats to the GCC states, and various aspects of the military establishments of the GCC states themselves. The questions subsequently served as the analytic framework employed to evaluate the thesis that the Gulf Arab states are incapable of defending themselves even in the post-war environment, and that the military potential of these states is limited by such deeply entrenched and widely applicable factors that self-reliance in the security arena is inconceivable. In conclusion, it would be prudent to review those questions and the answers that were forthcoming from the analysis.

1) To what extent has the Second Gulf War reduced tensions in the area, making considerations of military power and balance less relevant?

In examining this question, the intent was to briefly determine if the war had been a "war to end all wars", or if the Middle East and the Gulf remained the same tinderbox that is has been in recent memory. The determination that many longstanding and contentious issues remained unresolved, and that other more subtle destabilizing forces were set in motion by the 1991 War, brought the conclusion that enough factors were at work to sustain a high level of instability for a very long time. In such an environment, the potential for the use of military force is high, and considerations of military power and balance remain relevant.

2) What are the residual military threats to the GCC states?

Iran can still threaten Gulf shipping, and offshore oil facilities, can conduct long-range SSM strikes against GCC population centers and large economic targets, and can use its significant amphibious lift capability and airborne units to carry out sizable, though limited duration raids all along the southern and western Gulf coasts. It is unable to mount sustained ground force or amphibious attacks, and its ability to carry out effective air operations of any type is sorely limited. Iran has undertaken a rearmament, expansion, and military reorganization effort. In view of the Revolution's great hostility toward the West and the monarchical Gulf Arab regimes, and Iranian nationalist attitudes toward the Gulf, Iran is best described as an emerging military threat.

The Iraqi military, despite the crushing blow it received in the Gulf War, remains a dangerous force. Even after the great losses it suffered, it retains the capability to seize large areas of Kuwait and northern Saudi Arabia, and to conduct attacks against land and sea targets in the northern Gulf. The demands of reconstruction and the effects of the UN imposed cease-fire accords will detract from military rebuilding, but Iraq's ability to reconstitute a smaller, but nonetheless dominating, military establishment cannot be dismissed.

Newly united Yemen is a major factor in GCC, especially Saudi and Omani, military planning. A unified Yemeni army would be the largest on the Peninsula and have more tanks than the six GCC states combined. The Yemenis have the ability to conduct limited, localized border attacks against Saudi Arabia and Oman, and in the event of Saudi involvement in hostilities elsewhere on the Peninsula, to exploit any initial success. Through mining, the employment of its small navy, or its small fleet of attack helicopters, it could disrupt shipping

in the Bab el Mandeb and its approaches. The nation is limited by its poverty, illiteracy, lack of technological sophistication and probable issues of cohesiveness in its newly united government and military.

Israel is capable of using air, naval, or special operations forces to carry out attacks against virtually any target it desires in northwestern Saudi Arabia. The Israelis would likely limit their attacks to targets to military facilities in order to reduce a perceived threat to its southern flank. The Jordanian Air Force could also conduct wide-ranging strikes in the same area.

3)What are the military capabilities and shortfalls of the GCC states, and to what extent can these states defend their vital interests against threat capabilities?

The GCC was formed in early 1981 in response to fallout from the Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Its initial emphasis was cooperation in the economic and political fields, but its six members soon turned to military and security cooperation. The Six have undertaken a number of cooperative efforts, aimed at increasing their combined military capabilities and their military potential. Included were efforts at:

- development of a joint strategy
- conduct of joint exercises
- formation of a unified military force
- establishment of an integrated air defense system
- equipment standardization and common arms acquisition
- standardization of training¹

The GCC has met with some success in each of these areas, but perhaps only in the last have its members achieved their ambitious goals. The modest results in security cooperation are of

¹. Erik R. Peterson, The Gulf Cooperation Council, p.202.

more importance politically than in effectively increasing overall military capability or potential.

Saudi Arabia is the superpower of the Six in virtually every area, including military. The air force is a capable, technologically sophisticated force. Its counter-air arm is probably the best in the Arab World. The emphasis on that mission has reduced its effectiveness in other mission areas, especially the air-to-ground role. The force structure of its regular army is too small, and its units so undermanned, that it is incapable of conducting a credible defense of the country. The small Saudi Navy lacks sufficient platforms to conduct a sustained escort operation in one sea without dangerously exposing the other, it suffers from a lack of a maritime patrol aircraft, and is in need of a more robust mine-countermeasures capability.

Amongst the southern Gulf states, Oman has a highly professional military that is well-suited to low-intensity conflict, but lacks the mechanized forces and technologically sophisticated air force necessary for modern warfare in the Middle East. The UAE has a large force on paper, and in fact has a sophisticated air force, but its army lacks centralized control and its navy is far too small for its important missions. Overall military potential is greatly circumscribed by weaknesses in the federation itself. Bahrain and Qatar have modern, well-rounded military establishments, but these are too small for anything but internal defense and the two countries must fully rely on the Saudi security umbrella. Kuwait's military will take a decade to rebuild, and even then its small size and lack of defensible terrain will leave the country as vulnerable as always. All of these countries suffer serious manpower problems, and rely to varying degrees on great numbers of expatriate soldiers and technicians.

In the course of the analysis, eight major deficiencies in GCC military capabilities were noted. The shortfalls were:

- I. No ground force component capable of defending Kuwait and northeastern Saudi Arabia.
- II. No ground force component capable of defending against Yemen and an aggressor in the northeast simultaneously.
- III. No air force component capable of conducting effective air-to-ground missions.
- IV. An insufficiently integrated air defense system which could draw on full range of GCC capabilities, and to extend coverage throughout the area.
- V. Insufficient naval forces capable of conducting mine-countermeasures operations in the Gulf or Red Sea.
- VI. No air force component capable of conducting maritime patrol or maritime strike missions in the Gulf or Red Sea.
- VII. No naval force capable of providing secure escort to shipping in the Gulf or Red Sea.
- VIII. An inadequate capability to respond to surface-to-surface missile attacks.

4) To what extent can the military capabilities of the GCC states be upgraded?

GCC self-reliance in the military arena would require the modernization and expansion of the military establishments of the individual countries, as well as more effective cooperative efforts among the Six. There are almost immutable limitations on the extent to which either of these can be achieved, limitations that essentially place a ceiling on the military potential of the Six.

Constraints imposed on the modernization and expansion of individual military establishments include manpower shortages; considerations of literacy; cultural traditions which look down on military service and favor nepotism over merit; the threats posed to monarchical regimes by large militaries; the political influence of Israel in US arms transfer decisions; the post-war attractiveness of arms control in arms-exporting states; and economic shortfalls due to weak oil revenues. Constraints that limit the likelihood of more effective cooperative agreements include: interstate rivalries and conflicts; fear of Saudi domination in any cooperative undertaking; and differing threat perceptions in the various states.

Implications

The inability of the GCC states to defend themselves has wide-ranging implications that pose a series of dilemmas for Western and Gulf Arab policy makers. While I will briefly address those questions here, their answers require further study, and are beyond the scope of this effort.

For the Gulf as a whole, the continued asymmetry in the military balance would not appear to auger well for future stability. Iraqi and Iranian ambitions, combined with the inherent weaknesses of the Gulf Arabs guarantees an opening for conflict, if the recent past serves as a good example. Further external interventions are to be expected.

For the Gulf Arabs, their dilemma is how far to go in accepting a permanent US presence in order to bring balance to the military equation. Such a presence carries with it certain dangers as well, such as loss of Saudi credibility in the greater Islamic world and increasing vulnerability of Gulf Arab regimes to the various political and religious movements that oppose a Western role in the region. The dilemma requires a careful balancing act so as to preclude external aggression or coercion on the one hand, and to not invite domestic unrest on the other.

For the West, and the US in particular, the dilemma is twofold. The first predicament is how to employ military forces to guarantee the access to the region's oil, without bringing about a regional backlash that would threaten friendly regimes. The second predicament, in recognition of the limitations of the military potential of the Gulf states, is to determine when arms transfers actually contribute to the defense of these states, and when it is better to accept a shortfall and plan on providing the capability with European or American forces.

Another plight faced by US policy makers is how to reconcile the great public and Congressional sentiment for arms control with the legitimate security needs of the Gulf Arab

states. While commendable, unilateral arms control could have the effect of locking in an unstable military balance. Further, by precluding arms transfers that legitimately contribute to the military capabilities of the Gulf Arabs, proponents of arms control may be unknowingly forcing an eventual commitment of US military resources to carry out missions that could have otherwise been achieved with minimal American involvement. The contradiction of guaranteeing Israeli security while meeting legitimate Arab defense needs leads to a similar dilemma.

For US force planners the dilemma will be how to tailor US force structure to provide capabilities in theater early in those mission areas where the GCC faces major shortfalls. In an ideal world, American operational planners would have available rapidly deployable capabilities that fill in where GCC capabilities leave off. Resource constraints and competition from other theaters will keep force planners from achieving that ideal, and the resulting choices will be difficult.

The Gulf will continue to present challenges to its peoples and to the rest of the world. If regional stability depends upon a equal balance of power amongst the region's three major players, then the area is likely to continue to be marked by upheaval. Unrest and conflict in an area where so much is at stake is dangerous indeed. Whether through an increased Western military presence, arms transfers to Gulf states in those areas where improvements can be made, multi-lateral arms control regimes externally enforced, a wider program of reducing Middle East tensions in general and therefore making the military balance less relevant, or some combination of all these efforts must be undertaken to reduce the potential for upheaval.

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