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The Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsular Shield Force

by

Glenn P. Kuffel, Jr.  
Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: GL P. Kuffel, Jr.

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Professor Paul Romanski  
Department of Joint Military Operations  
Faculty Advisor

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Abstract of

THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL'S PENINSULA SHIELD FORCE

In response to the escalation by both participants during the Iran-Iraq war, the six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council enjoined to conduct joint military exercises. As a result of these experiences, and out of a need to further increase the Gulf Cooperation Council's collective security, the Peninsula Shield Force was created. The Peninsula Shield Force is a land force, comprised of infantry, armor, artillery, and combat support elements from each of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. Tasked with the defense the Gulf Cooperation Council nation-states, it has amassed a less than spectacular record of performance during several Arabian Gulf crisis, most notably during the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Political limitations have been the greatest hindrance to the Peninsula Shield Force's development. As a result, the Peninsula Shield Force faces challenges in material readiness, combat system and combat support interoperability, and appropriate manning. Despite its shortcomings the Peninsula Shield Force has achieved some success including the establishment of a permanent Headquarters staff, yearly exercises, and two deployments to Kuwait as a show of force during the Iran-Iraq war and in 1994 in response to an Iraqi troop buildup on the Iraq-Kuwait border.

The Peninsula Shield Force must be permitted to more fully develop its capabilities as a military force before it is able to unilaterally defend the Gulf Cooperation Council member-states' borders. Until then, reliance on foreign intervention, namely from the United States, will continue to be required to support the Gulf Cooperation Council's security needs.

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## **Introduction**

United States (U.S.) military presence and commitments in the Arabian Gulf have increased dramatically over the past 25 years.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. military mission in the region has supported a two-pronged national policy that seeks to: 1) prevent any one regional or external power from disrupting the region's balance of power, and 2) guarantee the uninterrupted flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz. In many instances, U.S. military force has been able to accomplish its mission in conjunction with bilateral or multi-lateral agreements among the region's nations. There is, however, an Arab military force indigenous to the Gulf region, the Peninsula Shield Force, operating under the auspices of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that may be able to play a larger role in the region's defense.

This paper analyzes the Peninsula Shield Force and its implications for the U.S. military within the region. Can the Peninsula Shield Force be a force multiplier or enabler within the Arabian Gulf? Can the Peninsula Shield Force adequately defend its member nation's interests and lessen U.S. military involvement? Can the Peninsula Shield Force assume a greater burden of defense within the region?

It is this author's belief, based on extrapolating observations from several bi- and multi-lateral exercises with several GCC navies during a 1999 Arabian Gulf deployment, that the Peninsula Shield Force lacks the unity, combat material, and ability to adequately defend the GCC borders. Further, this author believes U.S. military presence will continue to be required in the Arabian Gulf for the foreseeable future, that the commitment for U.S. Central Command will remain substantial, and that the Peninsula Shield Force should not be factored into any U.S. military plans.

This paper begins with a brief historical synopsis of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the Peninsula Shield Force (PSF). This author will then provide insights into the PSF force structure, command relationships, training, military capabilities and limitations, and political limitations. This author will then provide alternatives for the U.S to strengthen the PSF, and conclusions.

## **Historical Overview**

### **The Gulf Cooperation Council:**

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a loose confederation of six Arab countries: Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Qatar. It was formed on May 25, 1981 by charter agreement with each head of state acting as his country's signatory. For the founding members the GCC was another demonstration of Arab unity.<sup>2</sup> To other Arab states the GCC was an affront, an "exclusive club of traditional and benevolent autocracies..." whose membership lacked the Gulf's two largest nations, Iran and Iraq.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the GCC's genesis and in the years following the end of the Gulf region's "Pax Britannia," numerous efforts were undertaken by various Gulf States to form a regional alliance.<sup>4</sup> Iran, Iraq, Oman, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia each undertook initiatives during the 1970s to forge regional cooperation and security alliances among the Arabian Gulf states, but without success. The Gulf State's inherent mistrust of one other paralyzed regional cooperation discussions in the meeting rooms. As the 1980s began, however, a series of events unfolded that posed a challenge to the region's stability and balance of power. The Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan (1979), the Iranian Revolution (1979) and the threat

of its spread to other Gulf State monarchies, and the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) were the catalysts that galvanized the six smaller Gulf States to form the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The Council's Charter did not create a defensive alliance. In fact, not once is the word "defense" used, nor is any reference made to "collective security." The Charter addressed more benign issues such as agriculture, economics, finance, commerce, and culture. Diplomats went to great pains to advertise that the GCC was not a military alliance so as not to incite Iran or Iraq. Additionally, there was tension within the GCC over how to organize defensively.<sup>5</sup> At the onset, the threat to their security was sufficient to bring the six states together, but the threat's amplitude lacked the strength needed to generate a security pact.

#### **The Peninsula Shield Force:**

The Peninsula Shield Force was a direct outgrowth of the GCC's efforts at a collective defense designed to protect the vulnerable peninsula monarchies from Iran, which seemed to be making good its promise to export its Islamic revolution and began to turn the tide in 1982 against the Iraqi army through a series of battlefield triumphs.

In December 1981, a coup plot against the Emir of Bahrain was uncovered. 73 Shiites with ties to the Iranian government were convicted; six were executed by hanging.<sup>6</sup> The implications of a pro-Iranian government on the western side of the Arabian Gulf were a severe threat to the GCC monarchies. A pro-Iranian Bahrain would be a threat exacerbated by the geography of its 34 islands and its location in the coastal mid-half of the western Gulf. For Saudi Arabia, the threat was particularly acute. A Shi'a-ruled Bahrain would be knife pointed at the belly of Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia.

Iranian successes on the battlefield broke a near two-year stalemate. It also put to rest any belief that the chaos of revolution would prevent Iran's military from launching a



coordinated, albeit crudely orchestrated, set of offensives. By the end of 1982, Iranian attacks culminated in the recapture of more than 800 square miles of Iranian territory, and for the first time saw the ground war take place in Iraqi territory. In November 1982, The GCC Supreme Council ordered GCC military forces to conduct their first, although modest by western standards, joint exercise, Peninsula Shield I.<sup>7</sup> As if a signal of exasperation at having to begin joint military maneuvers, GCC Secretary General Bisharah stated, "There was no alternative to cooperation in matters of security and defense."<sup>8</sup> At the 4<sup>th</sup> GCC summit in Doha, Qatar, and on the heels of the Peninsula Shield I exercises, a two-pillar strategy seemed to emerge for the defense of the peninsula and its vital waterway, the Strait of Hormuz. According to the Bahraini Chief of Staff, defense for the Strait of Hormuz should be "the joint responsibility of all countries of the world," while a newly authorized GCC Rapid Deployment Force, a precursor to the PSF, would be "the first repellent of any aggression, playing the role of shock absorber to prepare the groundwork for the participation of the main forces of the GCC countries."<sup>9</sup>

In 1984, Peninsula Shield II was held at Hafr al-Batin, Saudi Arabia, with a force of nearly 10,000 men from all six GCC nations.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, the Iran-Iraq war went through a mutation in strategy. Saudi and Kuwaiti tanker ships became the targets of both Iranian and Iraqi air forces. The Iraqi engagement envelope became extremely compressed over the Gulf as Iraq employed, for the first time, fixed wing F-1s to bomb tanker ships, and Saudi Arabia shot down at least one Iranian F-4 that had violated its airspace. By the end of 1984, at the 5<sup>th</sup> GCC summit in Kuwait, the creation of a joint army force called the Peninsula Shield Force, was approved.

It would take another year before all GCC forces were in place, a total of 7,000 men. They were to be housed at a Headquarters created at the King Khaled Military City, Hafr al-Batin, Saudi Arabia under the command of a Saudi general. At two-brigade strength the PSF composition was principally Saudi. Kuwait was the second largest contributor providing two battalions, one of which was armor.<sup>11</sup>

### **Peninsula Shield Force Mission**

The Peninsula Shield Force is expected to be the first line of defense against any external aggressor and then augment itself into the chain of command of follow on host nation forces.<sup>12</sup> As a result of its very narrow mission, homeland defense, and force allocation the PSF is an expeditionary coalition land force that operates almost exclusively of naval and air forces.

### **Peninsula Shield Force Structure**

#### **Current Force Structure:**

The assignment of troops by the GCC countries to the Peninsula Shield Force has always been a source of friction within the GCC. Historical distrust, debates over roles and missions, and concerns regarding the command and control of the Peninsula Shield Force have been, and remain, some of the critical weaknesses crippling the Peninsula Shield Force structure. Even in the aftermath of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and despite several meetings by the GCC's Ministers of Defense and Chiefs of Staff, the Peninsula Shield Force is not a standing force of dedicated units.

Two separate force structures exist in the PSF; one exists on paper and is used by the PSF Headquarters for planning, the other is a small standing force at Hafr al-Batin. Table 1 represents the PSF forces that currently exist on paper contrasting the 1999 PSF to the one that existed in 1986. The 1986-1999 increase in notional strength is related directly to the poor showing of the PSF during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War, and reflects the 1993 decision of the GCC Supreme Council to increase the PSF's troop strength.

In time of crisis,

and after the GCC's  
Supreme Council has  
authorized the PSF to  
deploy, each country sends  
its obligatory contribution  
to the PSF. The specific

<b>Table 1: Peninsula Shield Force Structure<sup>13</sup></b>		
<u>Country</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1999</u>
Saudi Arabia	1 Brigade	2 Brigades
Kuwait	1 Battalion	2 Battalion
Qatar	1 Company	1 Battalion
UAE	1 Battalion	1 Brigade
Bahrain	1 Company	1 Battalion
Oman	1 Company	1 Battalion
Note 1: Kuwait provides at least 1 armor battalion		

types of forces, whether infantry, signals, armor, artillery, engineers, combat support, etc., are coordinated in advance through the PSF Headquarters Staff, and the GCC Ministers of Defense and Chiefs of Staff. A country's responsibility, in terms of the specific forces it is to provide, may change from year to year based on the requirements of the PSF and the GCC countries.

The standing PSF, which resides at Hafr al-Batin, is made up of two Saudi Brigades and advance parties from the promised force of each GCC country. The size of these forward elements varies from country to country, but is generally company strength and under the command of a senior military officer. The pre-positioned forces from Qatar, Bahrain, UAE, and Kuwait are assigned for one year and are, on average, allowed to take 10 to 14 days leave

every 45 days.<sup>14</sup> The forces from Oman rotate every 6 months and do not take leave while assigned to the PSF. The PSF standing force participate in military personnel exchanges, and spend most of their effort conducting unit level and individual training.

### **Future Force Structure: The Past is Prologue?**

The future size of the PSF remains unknown. Collectively, the GCC members do not know what they want the PSF to look like, although most GCC members have their own blueprints for its composition. The GCC's quandary is there is both little urgency to improve the PSF and no political will to disband it. If the past is prologue, then the debate, when there is debate, over the PSF will continue to languish without resolution.

Figure 1 illustrates the differences that have occurred within the GCC over the past six years regarding the PSF. Compiled from press reports, Figure 1 shows the month/year of a key GCC meeting, who attended, and the meeting results.

**Figure 1: Highlights from Key GCC Defense Meetings Regarding the PSF**

December 1993: GCC HOS	GCC leaders agree to form unified PSF Headquarters and expand PSF from 10K to 25K
December 1994 GCC COS	GCC Chiefs of Staff meeting "deal with steps to increase GCC Joint Defense Force." <sup>15</sup>
December 1995 -----	PSF improvement "was sidelined before the Summit began when Saudi Arabia , which dominates the alliance, and Kuwait convinced their partners that only a limited expansion of the Peninsula Shield is necessary as Western powers are committed to defending them under defense agreements." <sup>16</sup>
November 1997 -----	GCC military leaders ready to integrate command and control defenses. Sovereignty issues remain over PSF.
November 1997 GCC MOD	GCC Defense Ministers discuss PSF troop increase from 4,000 to 12-15,000 but do not reach final decision.
December 1997 GCC HOS	"No mention was made of prospects to expand a 4,000 strong regional defense

		force, Peninsula Shield, to about 15,000 members." <sup>17</sup>
May 1998	GCC MC	GCC General Secretary Military Committee meets to complete Peninsula Shield Forces.
October 1998	GCC COS	Bahraini Chief of Staff LGEN Shaykh 'Abdallah Al Khalifa says there is a plan to increase PSF troops to 100,000 but it will take time.
October 1998	GCC COS	Kuwait's Defense Minister "points out the main problem of the Council's force lies in the build-up of its military capabilities on the basis of joint cooperation." <sup>18</sup> No reference made to PSF.
November 1998	GCC MOD	At beginning of 17 <sup>th</sup> GCC Ministers of defense meeting, agenda includes review of PSF development. Final communiqué stresses only cooperation, no reference to PSF.
November 1999	GCC MOD	18 <sup>th</sup> meeting of GCC Ministers of Defense, increasing the PSF from 4,000 to 5,000 on agenda.

Note 1: HOS = Heads of State, COS = Chiefs of Staff, MC = Military Committee, MOD = Ministry of Defense.

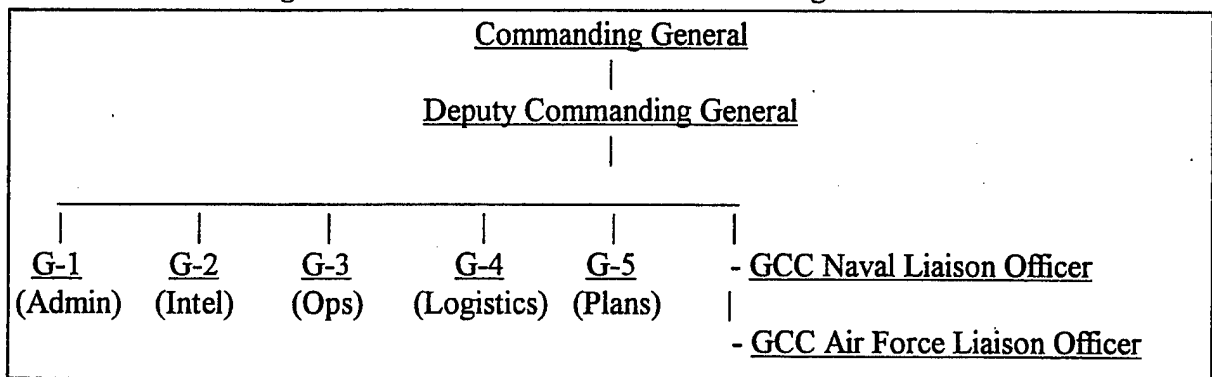
As the press reports and communiqués reveal, there is no coherent strategy for the PSF's amelioration. From year to year issues over PSF strength and calls for further military cooperation go unresolved. Reports on PSF manning alone illustrate the GCC's incongruousness: In 1993 the GCC agrees to a PSF buildup of 25,000, by 1997 it is 15,000, and by 1999 what was advertised as a 10,000 man strong force in 1993 is being expanded to 5,000. As the reports suggest, there is a range of debate within the GCC over the PSF, but the end result has been to hold the PSF "in Irons" rather than propel the PSF's development forward.

## Command Relationships

### PSF Headquarters:

The command organization of the PSF is modeled “after an American Army’s staff,” and is represented in Figure 2.<sup>19</sup> The Commanding General, by GCC agreement, is always a Saudi Arabian General Officer with a prescribed tour length of four years. In November 1997, Reuters reported the GCC had agreed to “the periodical rotation of leadership of the Saudi-based Peninsula Shield among its members,” but Colonel Zamil Al-Shahrani of the Qatar Army said this policy was never formally adopted by the GCC Supreme Council. A Saudi General Officer will always be in command of the PSF, he went on to say, because Saudi Arabia contributes the most forces to the PSF and provides the PSF basing facilities. The Deputy Commanding General and the supporting staff officers are assigned from the other GCC countries with two-year rotations. The Deputy Commanding General rotates from among the GCC countries,

Figure 2: Peninsula Shield Force Staff Organization<sup>20</sup>



excluding Saudi Arabia. Staff heads from each country may bring an entire supporting staff, or they may be provided by other GCC countries. Approximately 30 officers are assigned to the PSF with an undetermined number of enlisted staff. There are naval and air force liaison

officers assigned to PSF Headquarters to advise, but there is no naval or air force integration within the PSF. Though not represented in Figure 2, the Commanding Officer of each GCC country's assigned forces reports to the Deputy Commanding General.

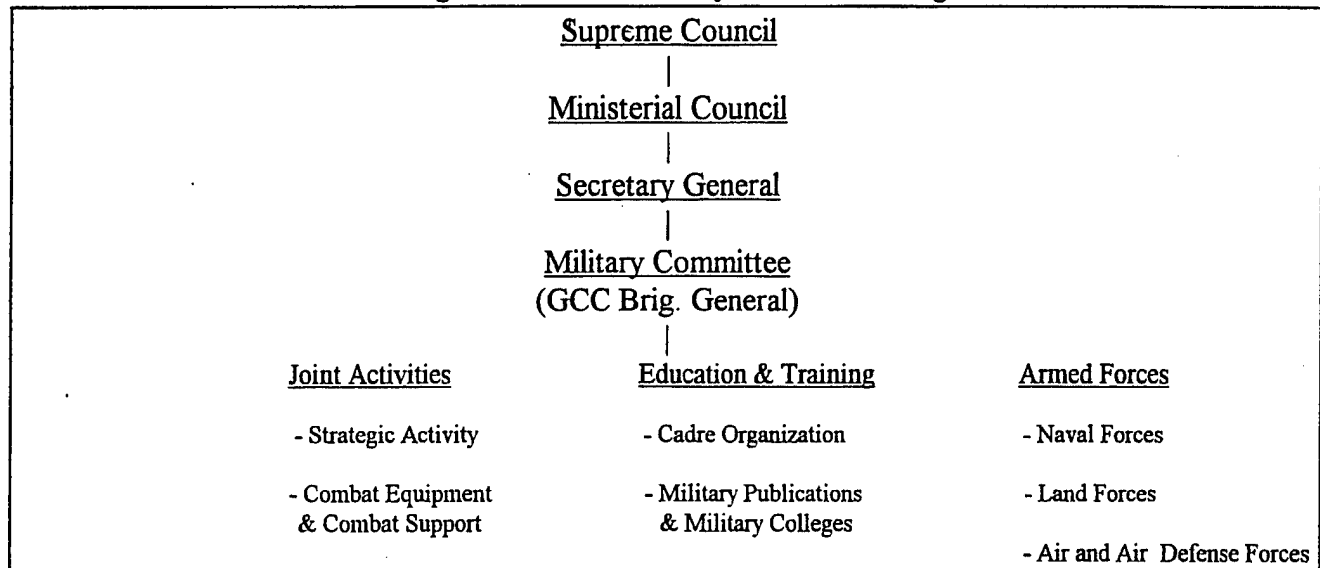
Activation of the PSF requires the unanimous approval of the GCC Supreme Council, which is comprised of the Heads of State of the GCC countries. In the past, gaining unanimous consensus has been one of the greatest impediments to employing the PSF, as was demonstrated during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. When the PSF is activated, whether it is deployed in an exercise or actual operation, the PSF Commanding General reports to and works directly for the host country's Chief of Staff.

#### **The GCC Military Committee:**

The GCC Military Committee is an advisory committee to the Secretary General and comprises approximately 100 officers from throughout the GCC. The GCC Military Committee is the closest organization the GCC has to a Joint Staff. Although not empowered in any way similar to the U.S. Joint Staff, it has, according to Colonel Zamil Al-Shahrani, Qatar Army, standardized "90 to 95 percent of the GCC country's army doctrine."<sup>21</sup> The GCC Military Committee also has worked to standardize training among the GCC's armies.

Although the GCC Military Committee does not exert any direct influence over the PSF, it does seek to standardize the military doctrines of the GCC countries. In this regard, the PSF has benefited. Further, the Military Committee may one day develop into a more strategic and operationally orientated body that does directly order and influence the PSF. Figure 3 details the GCC Military Committee.

**Figure 3: GCC Military Committee Organization**



## Training

### Peninsula Shield Force Training:

There are three separate levels of training within the PSF: unit level training conducted by the GCC forward elements, an annual PSF training exercise, and the Peninsula Shield exercises.<sup>22</sup>

Unit level training occurs in the classrooms at Hafr al-Batin and, to limited degree, in the field. Religious instruction is integrated with the military arts and sciences. Annual training exercises are held for the PSF forces stationed at Hafr al-Batin, and any additional forces a country may provide. Generally, GCC countries do not send their full complement of dedicated PSF forces to the annual exercises. The annual exercises rotate among the GCC countries, and the number of combined arms using the air force and navy vary from year to year. These annual exercises receive very little press.

The Peninsula Shield exercises are the capstones for the Peninsula Shield Force, and are a combined arms event, incorporating the GCC navies and air forces. (See Table 2). The



Peninsula Shield exercises are widely reported in the Arab press, but, as expected in autocratic governments, the articles lack meaningful substance and debate about the exercises. Every exercise is reported a success and another demonstration of the strong ties of cooperation within the GCC. When a schism surfaces, such as when Oman withdrew its forces from the Peninsula Shield 5 exercise, regrets were issued and concerns brushed aside. In the absence of any meaningful unclassified comments on the Peninsula Shield exercises, readers are referred to the classified intelligence reports available on the SIPRNET.

**Table 2: Peninsula Shield Exercises**

<u>PS Exercise No.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Host Country</u>
1	1983	UAE
2	1984	Saudi Arabia
3	1987	Oman
4	1990	Kuwait
5	1996	Kuwait
6	1998	UAE
7	1999	Saudi Arabia

Note: Peninsula Shield 7 did not occur as scheduled.

**Observations from a United States Army Officer on the State of Saudi Arabia's Army Training:**

In the absence of any meaningful unclassified reports on Peninsula Shield Force training, observations from a former American military advisor to Saudi Arabia on Saudi Arabia's state of training may provide some insights into Peninsula Shield Force training.<sup>23</sup> Saudi Arabia exerts the greatest influence of all the Council's members by virtue of its size and position. The PSF is based in Saudi Arabia, commanded by a Saudi General, and contains the full complement of the Saudi Arabian promised forces. Given the Saudi influence in the

PSF, one may draw PSF conclusions from observations of its most influential member. Such observation paints a less-than-optimistic picture of Saudi and PSF proficiency.

- + Combat power is equated to numbers, whether tanks, artillery, troops, or trucks, without regard to its operational capability. No casualty reporting system exists so a commander must rely on his subordinate's verbal reports, and subordinates are hesitant to tell commanders their deficiencies.

- + Medium and large caliber gunnery exercises are conducted once per year, and are biased to reward time vice accuracy. Shooters are graded based only on their ability to get ammunition out of the muzzle. The number of target hits is ignored.

- + Illiteracy within the enlisted ranks is not uncommon. In fact, the military advisor witnessed soldiers signing for their pay with a thumbprint because they could not sign their name. The ability to read and write directly affects training and mission readiness by limiting methods of training. It also adversely impacts the ability of the army to maintain its arsenal, much of which is highly sophisticated and imported from the United States, Great Britain, and France.

- + Exercises are scripted. In one exercise with anti-tank TOW missiles, the military advisor observed only 4 of 25 target hits. At least 19 of the 21 failures were due to operators "flying the missile." In other words, operators did not keep the sight on the target but kept the sight on the missile thereby directing its flight. When the exercise was completed, observers gave the firing team a nearly perfect score, and credited the failure of their U.S. made missiles to "heat, damage in transport, mechanical failure," anything other than human failure.

### **Peninsula Shield Force Capabilities and Limitations**

#### **Capabilities:**

The most significant and perhaps most important capability of the Peninsula Shield Force rests within its Headquarters and assigned staff. The PSF staff creates a foundation for stability within an organization that is minimally constituted and rarely works together. The relatively long tour lengths and established facilities at Hafr al-Batin establish both a feeling of permanency and a mini-bureaucracy. The staff is able to concentrate on plans, logistics, and coordination issues.

The Peninsula Shield Force benefits four of the six less powerful GCC countries: Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and UAE. The deployment of the PSF to any one of those countries

provides a significant enhancement to that country's land forces. Further, the complete deployment of the PSF puts bite, albeit symbolic, into any political decision taken by the GCC Supreme Council.

#### **Limitations:**

The most significant PSF limitation is the nearly complete lack of interoperability among the various units. Nearly 24 billion dollars were spent by the GCC countries on arms purchases between 1990 and 1997 (See Table 3), but little consideration was given to how these purchases should fit together or complement each other on a regional scale. This is also

**Table 3: Gulf Arms Purchases from the West (1990-1997) (in millions of dollars)<sup>24</sup>**

Country	Bahrain	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	S. Arabia	UAE
Australia		0004				
Austria					0005	
Canada					0944	
France		0021	0132	0462	0690	1891
Germany	0005				0004	0279
Italy		0043				0043
Netherlands	0018		0019	0036		0228
Spain			0025			
Sweden						0048
Switzerland			0010		0122	
UK		0706	0749	0249	2494	0760
USA	0261	3451	0090		9813	0549
Total	0284	4225	1052	0747	14072	3798

a force planning issue for the U.S. military and has been addressed by the U.S. Central Command during at least two annual security issue seminars.<sup>25</sup> There is nothing equivalent to a "NATO MILSPEC," and even the most basic requirement such as secure communication is lacking. Hence, equipment compatibility is a negative planning factor for the PSF Headquarters staff. Contributing forces may be asked to provide equipment based on

interoperability vice firepower. Colonel Al-Shahrani, Qatar Army, stated that when he deploys forces to the PSF, he tries to take equipment that he knows will be compatible with the other forces so that he may be able to "use another GCC country's ammunition or oil filters." A telling example of the lack of interoperability comes from the beginning of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and not without a bit of irony. After Kuwait's air force retreated to Saudi Arabia, "Kuwait's American navy supplied A-4's needed different spare parts and technicians than Saudi Arabia's American air force supplied F-15's (could provide). Coordination among the states on air force basing facilities and command structure was patched together only after (the) invasion" <sup>26</sup>

A lack of force cohesiveness is another limitation hindering PSF development. The current exercise schedule helps units familiarize themselves with one another's strengths and weaknesses, but it falls short of creating any extended bonds of fighting unity.

A lack of centrally stored equipment by each of the GCC countries at Hafr al-Batin prevents the facility from acting as an immediate Base of Operations. This could work to the PSF's advantage if it needed to respond to a crisis in the southern half of the Arabian Peninsula, but it may also be a serious complication if the PSF were needed in the Northern or Eastern half of the Arabian Peninsula.

Finally, language may be a limitation. According to one GCC military officer, the armies of the GCC operate using Arabic for their verbal and written orders. The navies and air forces, however, use English. While the GCC's navies and air forces are not part of the PSF, they do provide support in exercises and operations. This officer, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, could not provide a complete assessment of how that difference would impact joint operations.

### **Political Limitations**

There is near unanimous within the GCC's leadership to permit the Peninsula Shield Force from fully developing into a unified regional defense force. This stems from concerns that such a military force would dilute a GCC member's sovereignty by using its troops in a coalition mission that a contributing state finds at odds with its national interest. There is also a concern about placing non-Saudi troops under Saudi command.

The GCC also has been influenced by its concern over the balance of power within the Gulf, and the effect a powerful Peninsula Shield Force would have on regional equilibrium. The GCC sensitivity over its defense pre-dates the PSF's birth, and has been a critical factor in the PSF's development. When the GCC was created, defense was purposefully omitted from the GCC Charter so as not to provoke Iraq and Iran. When the Peninsula Shield Force was formed, its purpose and mission were deliberately downplayed so as not to agitate Iraq or Iran. The application of this policy was seen in 1986 when the GCC refused Kuwait's request to place the PSF on Kuwait's Bubiyan Island in response to Iran's seizure from Iraq of the nearby Al-Faw peninsula.<sup>27</sup> As a compromise, the PSF was deployed to Kuwait, "demonstrating its symbolic usefulness."<sup>28</sup> In 1990, the GCC's rigid conservatism on regional defense and the PSF's ineffectiveness were clearly demonstrated in the face of Iraq's attack on Kuwait.

Another telltale sign of the political limitations that hinder PSF development is observed in the frequency of the GCC's Ministers of Defense meetings. During the GCC's first 13 years, the Ministers of Defense met 14 times. By comparison, the Ministers of Finance, Commerce and Economics, and Petroleum held 69 more meetings. This disparity

between defense and economics, measured by the number of ministerial meetings, reflects the GCC's cautious approach to collective defense.

### **Alternatives for the United States**

Options for the United States to influence the training and development of the Peninsula Shield Force, so that it might accept a greater portion of the defense burden in the Arabian Gulf region, are extremely limited. As a result, the United States should plan on remaining in the Arabian Gulf at current military force levels, and should not plan on a vigorous contribution by the Peninsula Shield Forces. Nevertheless, there are options for the United States to explore that might improve the Peninsula Shield Force's combat effectiveness. All require considerable funding by the GCC and the United States, as well as the explicit cooperation of the GCC countries.

1. Invite the PSF Headquarters Staff to exercise at the Joint Warfighting Center in Suffolk, Virginia, or at any of the War Colleges. Engaging the PSF Staff officers with U.S. military officers would provide them an opportunity to game their plans away from the microscope of their respective countries. Further, it would allow an opportunity for unhindered critical analysis.
2. Invite the key members of the PSF Staff to visit the United States with an emphasis on military resources (highlighting interoperability) and culture. Offer them the opportunity to speak at some of the U.S. think tanks and War Colleges.
3. Invite the PSF to exercise against Opposition Forces at the Army's National Training Center. Perhaps every two years, the PSF might visit the United States for a "free" chance to face an unbiased opposition force.
4. Endeavor to provide Foreign Military Assistance to a GCC military capability fund for the express purpose of PSF enhancement. Here the emphasis should be on equipment that is interoperable and dedicated for the PSF. Negotiations for such assistance would be undertaken between the U.S. and the GCC for the express purpose of enhancing their collective defense.

5. Offer to assign U.S. or other friendly nation military liaison officers to the Peninsula Shield Force Headquarters staff.

6. The United States may desire to broker a series of symposiums that puts GCC military equipment interoperability on the table. Such a series would have the goal of deconflicting the current interoperability issues resident in the GCC's armed forces, and developing a roadmap to improve equipment interoperability either through new system purchases or upgrades. This could be a united venture between the U.S., other GCC allies, the GCC, and arms dealers.

7. Encourage the GCC to develop a unified military doctrine, applicable to all the GCC services and the PSF. To facilitate a unified GCC military doctrine, joint bi- and multi-lateral U.S.-GCC military exercises could be turned into doctrinal testbeds for the GCC military. The focus of such an endeavor should be to allow the GCC Military Committee staff full participation in exercise development, allowing them to use the exercises as a forum for doctrine concept development and testing. From such a forum, it would be hoped the GCC Military Committee could publish a unified GCC military doctrine agreeable to all GCC nation-states.

### **Conclusions**

For the foreseeable future, the Peninsula Shield Force will remain a "virtual" force, impeded in its ability to fully execute its mission by the political debate which surrounds it in the GCC. The lack of sustained manning, irregular total force training, and uncoordinated weapon and hardware purchases by the GCC member-states have also stymied the PSF from achieving its fullest potential.

However, under the right circumstances, the Peninsula Shield Force, despite its readiness and material challenges, could be a force multiplier in a limited Arabian Gulf crisis. As a function of Time-Force, the more time an adversary offers, obviously the more advantageous it is for the PSF to fully mobilize and deploy. In a compressed time conflict, similar to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the rapid deployment of the PSF to the scene remains questionable.

For United States military planners, they should view with caution any plans to incorporate the PSF into operational plans. In addition to the readiness, training, and material shortfalls, there are just too many political factors involved to make adequate assumptions about the PSF's use in conflict. Therefore, the current deployment cycle for U.S. forces can be expected to remain unchanged, and U.S. military forces can anticipate future call ups to guarantee peace and stability within the Arabian Gulf region.

Lastly, any future success between the GCC, the PSF, and the United States hinges on the United States achieving some resolution with respect to Iraq. Over the past several years, the GCC countries appear to have become ambivalent towards the United States policy vis-à-vis Iraq. The enjoyment of the security and protection the United States provides the GCC shows signs of erosion due to a feeling of empathy towards the Iraqi people that is rooted in a common Arab heritage. What the GCC countries seem to increasingly perceive is a United States policy that does not target Saddam Hussein, but the Iraqi people whom they view as their "Arab cousins."<sup>29</sup>

Achieving a long-term less bellicose strategy with Iraq increases U. S. maneuverability with the GCC countries. It suspends criticism of the United States by certain GCC country radicals and fundamentalists, who believe the United States should be expelled from the Gulf. Further, the impression may be left in the minds of the GCC leadership that the United States is "lessening" its commitment to the Gulf or revoking the Carter Doctrine. The carryover effect of such an impression may be to cause the GCC into fully developing the PSF.

In the end, the United States must not let itself become a hostage to its own policy. If GCC popular sympathy towards Iraq gains momentum, if a GCC government is overthrown by a radical organization that does not support United States presence in the Gulf, if a pilot is



captured in Iraq, the United States will find itself "constrained by her draft in a narrow channel with no room to maneuver." That is a situation the United States can ill afford to be in.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper the term Arabian Gulf will be used instead of Persian Gulf.<sup>4</sup> The distinction in the naming of this geo-strategic body of water highlights one of the key differences between Iran which borders the eastern half of the Arabian Gulf and is Persian, and the remaining seven states which border the western half of the Arabian Gulf and are considered Arab.

<sup>2</sup> In announcing their decision to establish the GCC, the GCC's Foreign Ministers communiqué of 4 February 1981 stated "This step comes in conformity with the Arab nation's national objectives and within the framework of the Arab League Charter, which urges regional cooperation that is aimed at strengthening the Arab nation ..." see R.K. Ramazani, The Gulf Cooperation Council Record and Analysis (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988), 12-13.

<sup>3</sup> John A. Sadwick, ed., The Gulf Cooperation Council: Modernation and Stability in an Interdependent World, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), 13.

<sup>4</sup> The Arabian Gulf, once considered a "British lake," witnessed the complete withdrawal of Great Britain from the Gulf region by the late 1960s. Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates achieved independence in 1971. Saudi Arabia achieved independence in 1932 and Kuwait in 1961.

<sup>5</sup> Only Oman, gravely concerned with the threat to the freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, sought to engage the GCC in a defensive alliance. Oman's proposal to create an organization that sought "the closest military cooperation among the member states, leading to an eventual objective of full military integration in command, communications, supply, and strategy" was rejected. Sandwick, ed., 11.

<sup>6</sup> Iranian claims to sovereignty over Bahrain predate 1783, when the Arab al-Khalifa family gained control of Bahrain from the Iran. The Shah of Iran ceased all territorial claims in 1970 but calls for annexation were revived in 1979 by the Ayatollah Khomeini. Erik R. Peterson, The Gulf Cooperation Council: Search for Unity in a Dynamic Region. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 18-20.

<sup>7</sup> "Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE are estimated to have committed some 1,000 men to the exercises. Bahrain and Qatar supplied forces of some 300, while Oman provided 350. Air support was provided by UAE Mirage fighter aircraft and Ghazal helicopters." Ibid., 217, footnote 33 citing Joseph Albert Kechichian, "The Gulf Cooperation Council: Search for Security in the Persian Gulf," unpublished dissertation, August 1985.

<sup>8</sup> Ramazani, 61.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 62. This view may represent a purely military reality that the GCC states cannot, by themselves, provide for the myriad defense options required of the region, and runs counter to the view expressed by the GCC Ministers and Heads of State to be able to conduct affairs within their region without "foreign" assistance.

<sup>10</sup> Hafr al-Batin is the site of the King Khaled Military City. It is 400 km north of Riyadh, approximately 40 km southeast of the Saudi Arabia-Iraq neutral zone, and nearly 80 km southwest of the Kuwait border. Peterson, 217, footnote 35.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 204-5. Gulshan Dietl, Through Two Wars and Beyond. (New Delhi, India: Lancers Books, 1991), 168. Ramazani, 64-67. Joseph Wright Twinam, The Gulf, Cooperation, and The Council: An American Perspective. (Washington, D.C.: Middle East Policy Council, 1992), 124.

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<sup>12</sup> Colonel Zamil Al-Shahrani , Qatar Army, telephone interview by author, 12 January 2000, Newport, RI. Colonel Al-Saharani served in the PSF in 1986 and was his country's representative to several GCC military meetings regarding the PSF while assigned as a Army Headquarters G-3 (Operations).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> "Top Army Chiefs of the Gulf to meet in Saudi Arabia," in Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe [database online] (Newport, RI.: Naval War College Library, 1999, accessed 05 December 1999)

<sup>16</sup> Barbara Conry, "Time Bomb: The Escalation of U.S. Security Commitments in the Persian Gulf Region" CATO Policy Analysis No. 258 (29 August 1996) quoting James Bruce, "GCC Leaves Collective Defense to the West," Jane's Defense Weekly, January 3, 1996, 14. <<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-258.html>> (08 December 1999).

<sup>17</sup> "Gulf Leaders End Summit with Calls to Iraq, Israel, and Iran" in Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe [database online] (Newport, RI.: Naval War College Library, 1999, accessed 05 December 1999).

<sup>18</sup> "Defense Minister Urges GCC to Build Military Capabilities" FBIS, Document ID: FTS19981014001027 14 October 1998, Version 1, page 1.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Shahrani, telephone interview by author . Colonel Al-Shahrani acknowledged the staff diagram he provided may be incomplete but "was the best" he could remember.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. Al Shahrani's statement run counter to published statements made by Major General Fahad Al Amir, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces who stated "Common doctrine and standardization in procurement is certainly not yet a reality." Major General Fahad Al Amir, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces, in a speech made to The Washington Institute For Near East Policy, 10 November 1998, titled "Kuwait and the Gulf Cooperation Council: Military Trends and Challenges." <<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/media/alamir.htm>> (05 December 1999).

<sup>22</sup> Al-Shahrani, telephone interview by author, 18 January 2000, Newport, RI. and Colonel Ali Al-Oteeqi, Kuwait Army, telephone interview by the author, Newport, RI., 16 January 2000. Colonel Al-Oteeqi has served in the Kuwait Army (Armor) and as a G-3 at the Kuwait Army Headquarters. Also see James Bruce, "Special Report," Jane's Defense Weekly, April 01, 1996, np.

<sup>23</sup> The U.S. military advisor referenced is Major Oscar Hall, USA, who served as a military advisor to the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Saudi Arabian National Guard, 1986-1987. The observations he provided are his opinions and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the United States Department of Defense or the United States Army. The interview with the author was conducted in Newport, RI., January 6, 2000.

<sup>24</sup> Gawdat Bahgat, "The Gulf Monarchies: Economic and Political Challenges at the End of the Century," The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies. Summer 1998 in ProQuest [database online] (Newport, RI.: Naval War College Library, 1999, accessed 08 December 1999), ISSN: 0278839X.

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<sup>25</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Changing Military Balance in the Gulf." Middle East Policy Council. June 1998 in ProQuest [database online] (Newport, RI.: Naval War College Library, 1999, accessed 05 December 1999), ISSN: 10611924.

<sup>26</sup> Colonel Ahmed M. Al-Azemi, Kuwait Army, "Prospects For a Gulf Cooperation Council Security Structure" (Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., 1997), 7.

<sup>27</sup> Twinam, 137.

<sup>28</sup> Dietl, 168.

<sup>29</sup> The author has heard the Iraqi people referred to as "Arab cousins" or Arab brothers" on three separate occasions when discussing U.S. policy towards Iraq. The first was by a mid-grade Bahraini military officer during a social event onboard the destroyer USS Stout (DDG 55) in March 1999. This term was used again by several GCC country senior military officers during a forum on "Regional Security Organizations: The Future of Cooperative Security" hosted at the Naval War College by the Naval Staff College on 13 December 1999. Finally, this term was used by Colonel Zamil Al-Shahrani , Qatar Army, during a telephone interview with the author on 18 January 2000.

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