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14. ABSTRACT Building Partner Capacity is a strategic objective stated in the United States' National Security Strategy, Maritime Strategy, Quadrennial Defense Review and nested in United States Central Command's theater strategy. Stability in the Middle East and the steady flow of Arabian Gulf oil to global markets is a vital national interest of the United States. With United States maritime forces stretched thin globally, it is critical that we rely on coalition partners to carry an increased burden in securing the maritime commons. As our presence in the Arabian Gulf continues to wane, our reliance on friendly regional organizations, like the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), to contribute to regional stability increases. The United States military's program to build the maritime capacity of the GCC must be improved in order to be effective. This paper recommends six changes to United States Naval Forces Central Command's (USNAVCENT) maritime capacity building effort. Implementation of these recommendations enables USNAVCENT to more effectively build the capacity of partners, which will better address the maritime security shortfall in the Arabian Gulf.					
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Newport, R.I.**

**Critical Maritime Infrastructure Protection: A Catalyst for
Attaining U.S. Central Command's Strategic Objectives for
Building the Maritime Capacity of the Gulf Cooperation Council**

by

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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: _____

26 APRIL 2010

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Abstract

Building Partner Capacity is a strategic objective stated in the United States' National Security Strategy, Maritime Strategy, Quadrennial Defense Review and is nested in United States Central Command's theater strategy. Stability in the Middle East and the steady flow of Arabian Gulf oil to global markets is a vital national interest of the United States. With United States maritime forces stretched thin globally, it is critical that we rely on coalition partners to carry an increased burden in securing the maritime commons. As our presence in the Arabian Gulf continues to wane, our reliance on friendly regional organizations, like the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), to contribute to regional stability increases. The United States military's program to build the maritime capacity of the GCC must be improved in order to be effective. This paper recommends six changes to United States Naval Forces Central Command's (USNAVCENT) maritime capacity building effort. Implementation of these recommendations enables USNAVCENT to more effectively build the capacity of partners, which will better address the maritime security shortfall in the Arabian Gulf.

Introduction

In accordance with strategic guidance set forth in the United States' National Security Strategy, Maritime Strategy and the Quadrennial Defense Review, the United States should seek to build the capacity of allied militaries worldwide. Although United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) conducts a mature theater security engagement program aimed to build the capacity of regional partners, this effort fails to develop capacity to the full potential of regional organizations, such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). This paper argues that the U.S. can improve efforts to build the capacity of the GCC, which will allow this organization to reach its military potential and provide a meaningful contribution to maritime security. Further, Critical Maritime Infrastructure Protection (CMIP) provides an ideal opportunity to build the capacity of the GCC to meet regional maritime threats.

Background

Stability in the Middle East is a long-standing U.S. vital national interest;¹ and “ensuring the secure, uninterrupted flow of gulf oil to global markets may be the most significant reason.”² To achieve stability in this region, we must build “the capacities of partners as the basis for long-term security.”³ U.S. Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) initiatives aim to develop partner capacity to respond to regional threats through engagement with regional powers.

General Petraeus stated in his USCENTCOM posture statement before the House Armed Services Committee that “Security cooperation, which focuses on common interests, inclusivity and capacity-building, can best advance security and stability in the region and these cooperative efforts in focused endeavors create a synergistic effect between forces that

¹ Blanchard and Grimmer, 1.

² Chapman and Khanna, 12.

³ Gates, 9.

can lead to an increased capacity for cohesive and effective operations in other endeavors.”⁴

Although military capacity alone will not ensure regional stability, a cohesive GCC that displays military effectiveness against viable regional threats, increases its potential to deter threats and properly handle threats should deterrence fail.⁵

The central question is what improvements can be made in the implementation of USCENTCOM’s TSC strategy that would yield better results in Building Partners’ Capacity (BPC), thus enhancing regional stability. The GCC’s capacity to execute CMIP is critical to advancing U.S. strategic objectives in the Middle East. Building capacity in this critical maritime skill can serve as a catalyst for improved GCC military effectiveness across the spectrum of potential threats in the region and the full range of military operations. This paper proposes six key improvements to the U.S. effort to build the maritime capacity of the GCC through CMIP:

1. Prioritize CMIP capability for GCC
2. Assign Destroyer Squadron 50 as USNAVCENT’s planning authority for GCC capacity building efforts
3. Balance GCC exercise frequency with GCC operational capacity
4. Embed U.S. surface combatants with GCC squadrons during deployments
5. Utilize “Bullpen Approach” for GCC staff in preparation for command of CTF 152
6. Rotate command of CTF 152 between GCC countries and CTG 152.1 between the United States, United Kingdom, Australia or other allied country as appropriate.

The concept that global economic instability is the gravest threat to national security is gathering support in Washington and illuminates the importance of regional stability in the

⁴ Petraeus, 7.

⁵ The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established in an agreement concluded 25 May 1981 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia between: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Based on their conviction about the connected nature of their security and that an aggression against one of them is deemed an aggression against all of them, cooperation in the military field has received the attention of the GCC states. Moreover, the security challenges in an unstable regional environment, like the gulf area, imposes on the GCC states coordination of their policies and mobilization of their capabilities. The GCC seeks to build their defense forces according to common conception. In this context, they have unified operational procedures, training and military curricula. They also endeavor to accomplish compatibility of their military systems. Global Security, 1.

Arabian Gulf.⁶ When one considers that “no one could have imagined that the director of national intelligence would appear before Congress to argue that the principal threats the U.S. faces today are linked to the global economic crisis,” it is apparent that the changing global security environment requires new strategies to meet emerging challenges.⁷ As one of the world’s primary oil providers, a major interruption in Arabian Gulf oil supplies would have an immediate negative impact on the global economy, which poses a serious national and global security threat.

At present, the Arabian Gulf accounts for roughly sixty percent of the world’s proven oil reserves and thirty percent of all oil that is traded globally. By 2010, gulf exports will meet roughly half of all global oil consumption needs and will become the predominant source to which the Asia-Pacific region will turn to fill its burgeoning energy demands. Consequently, the perception is likely to arise that a serious interruption of gulf oil supplies would cause severe economic and financial dislocation as well as political and social instability in the developing world, and this in turn could generate pressure for western military action.⁸ One can clearly see that an increasing global demand for Arabian Gulf oil, combined with the resource requirements of emerging powers like China and other Asia-Pacific states, offers new and dynamic challenges for the U.S. and GCC countries who endeavor to provide regional stability.

Threats to Arabian Gulf oil are significant because organizations that desire to undermine western influence understand how devastating a major disruption in Arabian Gulf oil would be to the global economy. Regional conflicts in past decades centered on domination of Arabian Gulf oil, such as Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the Tanker

⁶ Sokolsky, xv, 7.

⁷ Rothkopf, 8.

⁸ Ibid, 7.

Wars in 1987 and 1988. Today “Iranian attacks on or seizure of critical oil facilities cannot be ruled out.”⁹ Moreover, Al-Qaeda demonstrated resolve to disrupt regional oil production and global supply in the October 2002 attack against the oil tanker MV LIMBURG in the Gulf of Aden and the May 2004 attack against a compound housing oil company personnel in Saudi Arabia.¹⁰ In short, as the global demand for Arabian Gulf oil increases, the strategic importance of regional stability also increases.

The United States cannot sustain a stable international system alone. In an increasingly interdependent world, challenges to common interests are best addressed in concert with likeminded allies and partners who share responsibility for fostering peace and security.”¹¹ This national strategy of strengthening alliances to enhance regional stability has remained relevant since World War II, arguably before then, and is ever increasing in importance as challenges become more complex and the demand for global maritime presence grows. Secretary Gates addresses the Middle East specifically, noting “we will support a regional security architecture focused on strengthening defense capabilities and posture networks and on advancing regional stability.”¹²

Concurrent with the strategic implications of an increase in global demand for Arabian Gulf oil, a shrinking and globally dispersed U.S. maritime force provides the impetus for improving regional alliances with alacrity. As a result of the 2006 QDR, the Secretary of Defense directed the “Building Partnership Capacity Execution Roadmap” in order to focus efforts toward the successful execution of the strategy. This roadmap states that, “the United States will work with or through others; enabling partner capabilities,

⁹ Ibid, 19.

¹⁰ Chapman and Khanna, 16.

¹¹ Ibid, 57.

¹² Ibid, 67.

building their capacity and developing collaborative mechanisms to share decisions, risks and responsibilities of today's complex challenges."¹³ In May 2006, the U.S. launched the Gulf Security Dialogue (GSD) to revive GCC security cooperation with "the core objective of the promotion of cooperation to meet common perceived threats."¹⁴

Despite clear strategic guidance and prioritization of improving the maritime capacity of organizations such as the GCC, U.S. efforts continue to fall short of achieving meaningful capacity commensurate to maritime security challenges. Indeed, considering that GCC security cooperation is "in need of a revival after twenty-eight years" evokes doubts about its effectiveness and legitimacy.¹⁵ A recent Rand study concerning building a better Arabian Gulf security system proposes that "GCC states are a long way from living up to their theoretical military potential" and that "the best evidence of this is the fact that Saudi Arabia, after decades of massive military investment, had essentially no operational capability to defend itself when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990; nor could it do so today."¹⁶ To date, our GCC policy favored perfunctory arms sales decoupled from essential training and maintenance support, which produced well-armed GCC partners lacking capacity for effective military operations. The reasons why the U.S. attempted GCC development "on the cheap" are subject to debate, but the growing attractiveness of gulf oil as a strategic target, the ability of aggressors to attack oil infrastructure and the U.S. military's inability to provide persistent security demand a stronger GCC capability.

The most recent QDR, promulgated in February 2010, reiterates the strategic imperative to build partner capacity in order to assure security and stability in key regions

¹³ England, 5.

¹⁴ Blanchard and Grimmett, 1.

¹⁵ Rathmell, Karasik and Gompert, 6.

¹⁶ Ibid, 6.

like the Arabian Gulf. Indeed this new document stresses that the “United States assumed the role of a leading security provider after the end of World War II and the Department of Defense has worked actively to build the defense capacity of allied and partner states.”¹⁷ Moreover, it affirms, sustaining existing alliances and creating new partnerships are central elements of U.S. security strategy.

Critical Maritime Infrastructure Protection Defined

By now the need for building the maritime capacity of the GCC to contribute to the regional security of the Arabian Gulf is clear. What requires clarification is what we mean specifically by CMIP as a critical maritime skill set and why this capability is so critical to enhanced regional stability in the Arabian Gulf.

Critical Maritime Infrastructure refers to offshore oil platforms (OPLATS) and associated infrastructure. CMIP is the layered defense of these OPLATS by maritime forces. The execution of CMIP requires clear and effective command and control and collective Pre-Planned Responses (PPRs).¹⁸ Figure 1 shows a notional layered defense scheme commonly employed in the defense of critical maritime infrastructure. The scheme typically relies on sectors assigned to surface combatants with a Scene of Action Commander (SAC) assigned either on the OPLAT itself or aboard the most capable surface combatant. The SAC is responsible for positioning assets within the sectors, maintaining the recognized maritime picture in the immediate vicinity of the OPLAT, controlling oil tankers during loading, designating contacts of interest and managing the execution of PPRs in response to potential threats.¹⁹ The speeds with which adversaries can attack the OPLATs require the use of

¹⁷ Gates, 2010, 26.

¹⁸ Williams, 3-3.

¹⁹ Ibid, 3-3.

“PPRs in order to allow timely and proper responses by subordinate units in the absence of higher guidance.”²⁰

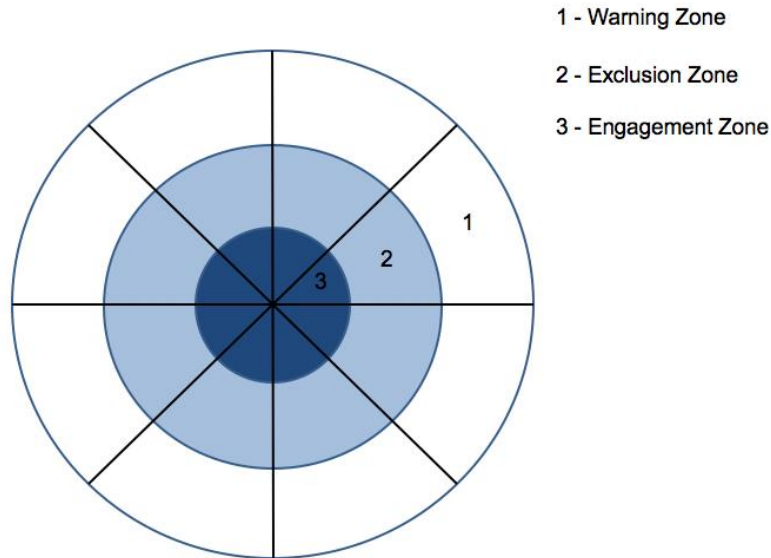


Figure 1: Notional Layered Defense of CMIP Vital Area.

One can clearly imagine the complexity of effective CMIP when operating amid dense shipping in confined water space with coalition forces. Although the task to provide CMIP is challenging, with proper training, command and control and common procedures, GCC maritime forces can accomplish this critical mission.

Where We Struggle

It is encouraging that our government recognizes the urgent need to develop GCC capacity. General Petraeus stated “a new architecture for cooperative security is emerging in the region from what in the past has been a relatively loose collection of security relationships and bi-lateral programs.”²¹ By developing the capacity of GCC countries in CMIP, we will achieve great advancements in regional security through interoperability and

²⁰ Ibid, 3-6.

²¹ Petraeus, 7.

strong relationships and synergies that enable greater capacity in the full range of military operations and contingencies.²²

The advantage of USCENTCOM's strategy is that it realizes cumulative growth in building capacity through developing proficiency in response to common regional threats. Developing key relationships with GCC leaders enables greater flexibility and cohesion when reacting to emerging challenges. Demonstrated interoperability and capacity contributes to regional stability through deterrence and crisis response.

Although USCENTCOM's new regional security architecture is a step in the right direction, it relies on flawed mechanisms for military training. The strategy aligns TSC objectives with GSD pillars for regional security and identifies "shared interests."²³ The premise of this strategy is to develop various GCC networks that can be leveraged to defeat threats and achieve desired operational effects, such as enhanced trust and confidence among neighbors, collective deterrence and defense, and enhanced security.²⁴ Difficulty in achieving these desired effects stems from systemic problems during execution, which precludes maximum return in achieving nested strategic objectives.

During a recent USNAVCENT deployment, I focused on GCC maritime exercise planning and execution within the Arabian Gulf and noticed several factors that impede progress in building capacity of GCC partners. One impediment is the practice of tasking the

²² To this point, GEN Petraeus, in his statement before the House Armed Services Committee on 2 April 2009, adds "this network [GCC] of cooperation is both effective and sustainable because it creates synergies and, as it grows, strengthens relationships. Each cooperative endeavor is a link connecting countries in the region, and each adds to the collective strength of the network. The mechanisms put in place to coordinate efforts in one area, such as piracy, smuggling or littoral security, can often be leveraged to generate action in other areas, such as a rapid response to a major oil spill in the gulf or in the aftermath of a typhoon or earthquake. Moreover, progress made in generating cooperation in a set of issues can serve as an opening for engagement on other issues, thereby promoting greater interdependence. As a result, a growing network not only works to improve interoperability and overall effectiveness in providing security; it also builds trust and confidence among neighbors and partners (Ibid, 7).

²³ Beck, 5.

²⁴ Ibid, 6.

deployed Carrier Strike Group's Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) with leading USNAVCENT's TSC maritime exercise program. This is problematic because it tasks a transient command with engagement and relationship building.

Strong relationships, vital to the success of our strategy, are based on trust and confidence, which can only be attained with continuity over significant time. Essentially, USNAVCENT rotates a new command into the TSC maritime exercise engagement role every four to six months, which undermines our ability to build trust and confidence with GCC partners. Indeed, this process, bereft of continuity of leadership, precludes the very "synergies and strong relationships" that GEN Petraeus endeavors to cultivate with our GCC partners.

In navy parlance, frequent rotation of key personnel is known as churn. Churn inhibits corporate knowledge in maritime exercise engagement. Continuity, however, enables the application of lessons learned from previous exercises to future exercises. I recall multiple conversations during maritime exercises with GCC commanding officers that complained that our rotation policy negatively impacted these exercises. The exercises fail to progress in complexity and depth because of inexperienced USNAVCENT planners, which ultimately limits our potential for capacity building.

Another problem is an overly aggressive exercise routine, which taxes planning and operational limits of GCC partners - another common concern voiced by GCC commanding officers. This also impacts USNAVCENT planners because time constraints prevent developing meaningful exercises that incorporate lessons learned and challenge participants.

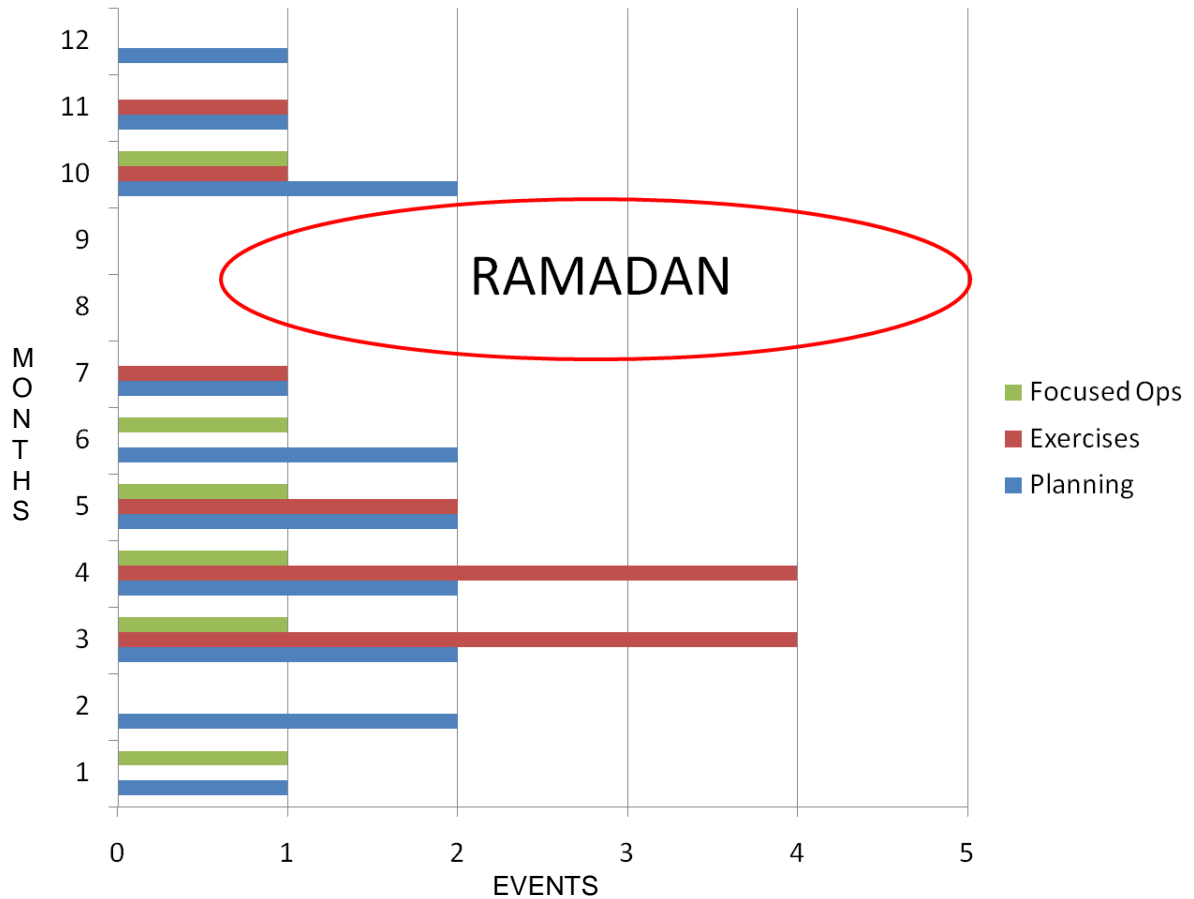


Figure 2: Notional GCC Surface Exercise Engagement Annual Load.

Figure 2 shows a notional, but typical, annual exercise and focused operation schedule of surface engagement between a GCC nation and CTF 152. Focused operations are multi-lateral GCC and Coalition Maritime Force (USNAVCENT’s coalition command) operations in the Arabian Gulf (CTF 152’s Area of Operations) that focus on missions along any of the Commander’s key Lines of Operation. These events are typically 7-14 days in duration and require as much, if not more, planning and preparatory staff work as exercises. When one considers that Islamic cultural requirements prevent any planning or exercise events by the GCC partners during Ramadan, it is clear that the operational tempo increases in the months surrounding August and September to compensate.

From experiences with both GCC mid-grade and senior level officers and their USNAVCENT counterparts, this high tempo of exercises and focused operations is ineffective. This is evidenced by frequent last minute cancellations from GCC ships assigned to exercises and focused operations and a persistent inability to incorporate lessons learned from previous exercises due to limited planning time for the USNAVCENT staff.

There are 18 major events at sea (exercises and focused operations) and 16 planning events in this notional year. The detailed analysis of the correct number of major events and planning events that USNAVCENT and each GCC country can effectively execute is beyond the scope of this paper. However, based on knowledge of U.S. ship and staff planning capacities for exercises and operations at sea, while simultaneously managing myriad other requirements inherent in running a ship or staff, it is clear that 1.5 major events per month sustained for an entire year is far too aggressive. I contend that the quantity of exercises dilutes the quality of preparation, training value and therefore, the potential for building partner capacity, which is the paramount strategic objective.

How We Can Improve

Changing our approach to GCC exercise engagement is required to achieve greater partner capacity.

1. Because CMIP is vital to assuring the free flow of strategic resources to global markets, USNAVCENT should prioritize CMIP capability among other maritime capabilities for urgent development with our GCC partners. The aforementioned strategic importance of the uninterrupted flow of Arabian Gulf oil to global markets and the viability of threats against the oil industry demands competency in this maritime skill of the ships stationed in the region charged with assuring regional stability. Moreover, the synergies gained from

working together with GCC navies to develop this capacity translate well to other required maritime skills such as maritime interdiction operations, search and rescue, crisis response and traditional surface warfare competencies.

Indeed, common procedures for conducting layered defense of a high value unit in traditional surface warfare have many similar concepts with defense of an OPLAT. The detailed procedures for gaining and maintaining maritime awareness, command and control of forces aligned against a common threat, utilization of reconnaissance assets, voice procedures, execution of pre-planned responses and common rules of engagement are synergies that can be leveraged when operating together in the full range of military operations and crisis response options. Improving proficiency in CMIP alone will not approach the full potential of GCC military capability.

Some might argue that prioritizing the CMIP maritime capability as the foundation of GCC capacity building efforts is not the optimal approach. Perhaps focusing on more traditional naval capabilities such as air defense or surface warfare would be more beneficial in building GCC maritime capacity. The argument in support of prioritizing CMIP is that it is a legitimate regional challenge, with potentially global economic impact, that each individual GCC state must be prepared to protect. Moreover, U.S maritime forces have more than ten years of expertise and experience building the capacity of Iraqi maritime forces in CMIP in the Northern Arabian Gulf and can leverage that experience to rapidly build GCC capacity.

2. Strong relationships, which provide the foundation for interoperability across the full range of military operations, cannot be achieved if we utilize transient commands as engagement teams. The need for continuity drives the recommendation to assign DESRON

50 with planning authority for GCC exercise engagement. DESRON 50 is permanently assigned to USNAVCENT in theater and has personnel with tour lengths between one and two years. Without any further changes, assigning DESRON 50 to this task would increase continuity in exercise planning and execution and relationship building by 100-125% based on tour lengths alone. Conversely, the short tenure of DESRON staffs taken from the deployed Carrier Strike Group prevents continuity.

DESRON 50 affords the best opportunity to leverage corporate knowledge and enable stronger relationships through persistent engagement with key GCC counterparts. Increasing tour lengths for DESRON 50 billets to a minimum two years is also recommended. Although increasing tour lengths overseas presents challenges for military families and morale, it achieves greater dwell time with our partners, which further bolsters relationships and sustains corporate knowledge.

3. Reducing the frequency of GCC exercises allows adequate time for planners to develop meaningful exercises that increase in complexity and depth to challenge participants and advance capabilities. This also reduces the operational burden on GCC partners which encourages exercise participation and allows greater growth. At first glance, fewer exercises may appear to impede building GCC partner capacity, but we must first endeavor to improve the quality of exercises instead of relying on quantity. Figure 2 showed a typical annual workload for bilateral, multilateral surface exercises and CTF 152 focused operations. One can see that the amount of planning and preparation required to execute these exercises and focused operations may exceed the capacity of GCC navies and their staffs. The GCC staff organization alleviates some of this planning burden, as does embedding U.S. Navy ships in GCC squadrons.

By executing GCC surface exercises at a pace that is barely sustainable by both USNAVCENT planners and GCC counterparts, the quality of exercises and the resultant return on investment is capped at a level of mediocrity in BPC. Because planners do not have proper time to develop exercises that incorporate previous lessons and react to analytic trends based on measures of performance and measures of effectiveness, GCC surface exercises never progress beyond the most basic levels of competency. This could explain Rand's assertion that GCC states are a long way from living up to their theoretical military potential. In order to change the paradigm, USNAVCENT must not accept the status quo with respect to its GCC maritime exercise program.

It is likely that USCENTCOM and USNAVCENT possess metrics that substantiate the current number of exercises and focused operations, which would appear to support a counterargument to a call for a reduction in the overall quantity of engagements with GCC maritime forces. One must consider that despite what these metrics may suggest, the bottom line is that the status quo program, which has been executed for at least the past ten years, results in a basic level of capacity with limited effectiveness against challenges in the maritime domain. Recent strategic guidance, such as the QDR Execution Roadmap for BPC and the reinvigoration of the Gulf Security Dialogue, debunk any assertion that the status quo is sufficient to develop a GCC capable of meeting the challenge of maritime security in the region.

4. Embed U.S. ships in GCC squadrons during deployments. These ships would assimilate into GCC squadrons and operate from their homeport for six months. This persistent engagement would demonstrate how we train, educate, maintain and prepare for maritime operations. This process would improve relationships, interoperability and

preparedness for CMIP. The ships of choice are the U.S. Navy's Patrol Coastal class and the U.S. Coast Guard patrol ships traditionally assigned CMIP duties. These platforms are the U.S. maritime experts at CMIP because they have been assigned these duties in support of Iraqi oil platforms in the Northern Arabian Gulf since the first Gulf War. We can leverage their expertise and the lessons learned from more than a decade of operations with Iraqi maritime forces and apply them to our efforts to build the capacity of the GCC in this critical maritime skill.

Instead of limiting valuable engagement to short duration planning events and exercises at sea, assimilating U.S. maritime forces into GCC squadrons offers persistent engagement over significant amounts of time. This contributes to building stronger relationships, improving preparation for exercises and focused operations at sea, and translation of maritime skills across the full range of military operations by sharing experiences and learning together. Imagine the possibilities for building capacity if USNAVCENT dedicated a Patrol Coastal ship and its crew to a GCC squadron underway and inport for six months. This would offer increased opportunities to share procedures and lessons across the maritime operations discipline outside of the narrow constraints of typical exercises at sea. Key disciplines such as maintenance, planning, training, damage control, seamanship, command and control, and communications could be shared, observed and cross-trained. This provides an excellent opportunity to strengthen our relationships with GCC partners and improve capacity and interoperability.

Although opposition from the Task Force Commander of those U.S. forces might be anticipated, assigning DESRON 50 as the planning authority for GCC engagement eliminates that resistance since Patrol Coastal Craft are assigned to his task force already. In other

words, DESRON 50 will not lose any operational or administrative controls by assigning his ships to GCC squadrons. Indeed, on the contrary, DESRON 50 would have a vested interest in supporting such a measure because as the planning authority, he is charged with building the maritime capacity of the GCC.

5. Assign GCC staff officers to CTF 152 for tours of two-year duration. These officers should fill important staff positions and progress through those positions (intelligence, operations, plans, chief of staff) for professional development and improved interoperability. These staff officers would be integral to GCC exercise planning, coordination and execution; their regional expertise, language skills and cultural awareness provide great advantages to improving the realism and effectiveness of USNAVCENT's maritime exercise program as well as execution of focused operations within the Arabian Gulf. Persistent engagement inherent in permanently assigned GCC staff members will have similar positive effects within USNAVCENT as U.S. ships assigned to GCC squadrons.

As Figure 3 shows, upon full integration of GCC staff officers, CTF 152 will be commanded by the lead GCC nation, with key support from the U.S., U.K., AUS or other NATO forces in the CTG 152.1 role. GCC officers will fill the critical lead roles for each principal department while being supported by U.S., U.K., AUS, and NATO counterparts. It is vital to put GCC officers in lead positions within the command, supported by non-GCC forces in order to cultivate GCC confidence and develop lasting capacity and relationships within the GCC.

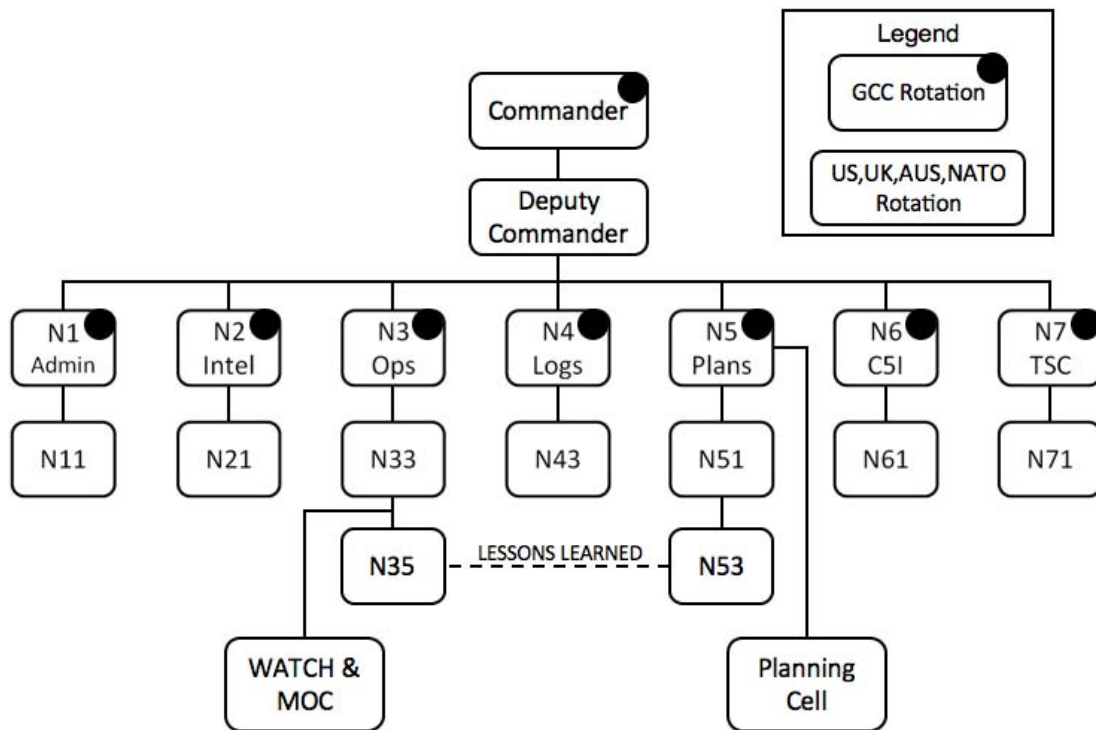


Figure 3: Notional CTF 152 Staff Structure with Full GCC Integration.

The process centers on building individual GCC maritime staff capability culminating in command of CTF 152. GCC staff officers enter into key assistant positions within the staff in the months leading up to their nation taking command. The intent is to assimilate new officers during an introductory period of on-the-job training as a key staff assistant in order to prepare them for lead roles while their nation commands.

The aim is to develop capable staff officers ready to fill key roles on the staff upon the command of CTF 152 by their country. One can see the value in this gradual process of moving up within the hierarchy of the command structure leading up to the command period. Not only will this ensure the preparedness of the individual country’s staff for command, it inherently fosters team-building within the GCC because other GCC country staff officers

will be absorbed into the organization continually as their country approaches the command period.

Envision the United Arab Emirates in command for six to twelve months with Bahrain on deck, followed by Kuwait then Saudi Arabia. The rotation continues with each GCC country commanding in succession for six to twelve month periods. The U.S., U.K., AUS, and NATO staff will rotate on a two-year basis in order to maintain staff continuity during the GCC command rotations. Likewise, it will be important to stagger U.S., U.K., AUS, and NATO rotations in order to maintain continuity of the core support structure within the staff.

One must consider the possibility that GCC nations may not be able to support two year tours to CTF 152 for their officers. Reaching an agreement to increase tour lengths for CTF 152 is something that will need to be addressed with each individual country during TSC staff talks with USNAVCENT. The bottom line is that increasing tour lengths supports continuity within the command and sustained engagement with GCC officers, which contributes to building stronger relationships and developing multinational synergies that strengthen the GCC.

6. Organize the CTF 152 staff with a rotation of the GCC nations in command and a rotation of U.S., U.K., AUS and NATO countries in the key planning and support role as CTG 152.1. This construct allows GCC nations the opportunity to command maritime operations in the Arabian Gulf as well as lead the key maritime exercise and focused operations program. A key aspect in developing effective interoperability as a staff, as well as units at sea, is to fill key support roles within CTF 152 with U.S., U.K., AUS and NATO

partners that provide persistent presence in the Arabian Gulf. These allied nations have a vital national interest in regional stability.

Moreover, this staff construct mitigates disruptions in staff proficiency inherent in frequent changes of command. Complemented by the aforementioned “bullpen approach” to easing a GCC staff into command, staggering the rotation of supporting staffs into the CTG 152.1 role achieves continuity in the staff.

It could be argued that the U.K., AUS and other NATO nations would desire an opportunity to command CTF 152 instead of always playing a supporting role as CTG 152.1. This is a valid concern for U.S. planners and should be considered on a case by case basis. Circumstances may support command of CTF 152 by a non-GCC nation, however every attempt should be made to keep command of the Arabian Gulf coalition force in the hands of GCC nations in order to enable their leadership development and ability to operate at the highest levels of coalition maritime operations.

Final Remarks

The need for a strong regional alliance competent in maritime security operations remains urgent in the Arabian Gulf; yet our inability to help develop an effective GCC military capability over the past 28 years compels a new approach. An opportunity exists to implement change in order to achieve this strategic objective. Enhancing USNAVCENT’s maritime exercise program with the aforementioned recommendations can increase GCC capacity and allied interoperability. Developing GCC CMIP capacity improves capacity in other maritime skills, which will contribute significantly to regional security. Consequently, a more capable GCC commands the attention of regional powers and potential adversaries, which improves regional stability through legitimacy and deterrence.

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