

2

# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL Monterey, California

AD-A261 822



DTIC  
SELECTE  
MAR 15 1993  
S B D

## THESIS

A Strategic Plan for the Persian Gulf Region:  
Options for Deterring and/or Defeating an Emerging Threat

by

Michael W. Ward

December 1992

Thesis Advisor:

CDR R. Mitchell Brown III

Second Reader:

Ralph Norman Channell

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

98 3 12 046

93-05319  
 504

Unclassified

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS Unclassified		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION/ AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release: distribution unlimited		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE					
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION Naval Postgraduate School		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If Applicable) NS	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION Naval Postgraduate School		
6c. ADDRESS (city, state, and ZIP code)  Monterey, CA 93943-5000			7b. ADDRESS (city, state, and ZIP code)  Monterey, CA 93943-5000		
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If Applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		
8c. ADDRESS (city, state, and ZIP code)			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS		
			PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.
			WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.		
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) A Strategic Plan for the Persian Gulf Region: Options for Deterring and/or Defeating an Emerging Threat					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Michael W. Ward					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Master's Thesis		13b. TIME COVERED FROM TO		14. DATE OF REPORT (year, month, day) 1992 December 17	15. PAGE COUNT 134
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)  Persian Gulf, Arms Proliferation, Strategic Planning, Gulf Cooperation Council, GCC, Regional Deterrence, Middle East, Arms Control, Scenario Development, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Regional Security Strategy.		
FIELD	GROUP	SUBGROUP			
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)  The Persian Gulf region is, in all likelihood, going to remain crucial to American interests through the next several decades. The world depends on the petroleum reserves of the Gulf region to fuel its economic engine. The recent history of the region has been rife with conflict, and the U.S. has had to intervene militarily on several occasions to ensure its vital interests were protected. This thesis examines the strategic circumstances in the Gulf region and ways in which American political, diplomatic, and military policy can shape the environment to conform to its interests. Several scenarios are developed which attempt to forecast the results of different environments on regional stability. The thesis reaches the conclusion that the United States must take a proactive role if its short- and long-term interests are to be protected. The short-term goal of U.S. policy must be to maintain a balance of power and regional correlation of forces which serves to deter any would-be aggressor nations. In the long run, the United States must seek a comprehensive regional peace. Various methods of achieving these goals are examined.					
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL R. Mitchell Brown III, U.S.N.			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (408) 656-2521	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL Code NS Br	

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

A Strategic Plan for the Persian Gulf Region:  
Options for Deterring and/or Defeating an Emerging Threat

by

Michael W. Ward  
Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy  
B.B.A., Ohio University, 1978

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

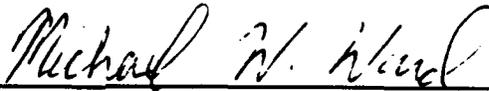
MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

December 1992

Author:



Michael W. Ward

Approved by:



R. Mitchell Brown III, Thesis Advisor



Ralph Norman Channell, Second Reader



Thomas C. Bruneau, Chairman  
Department of National Security Affairs

### ABSTRACT

The Persian Gulf region is, in all likelihood, going to remain crucial to American interests through the next several decades. The world depends on the petroleum reserves of the Gulf region to fuel its economic engine. The recent history of the region has been rife with conflict, and the U.S. has had to intervene militarily on several occasions to ensure its vital interests were protected. This thesis examines the strategic circumstances in the Gulf region and ways in which American political, diplomatic, and military policy can help shape the environment to conform to its interests. Several scenarios are developed which attempt to forecast the results of different environments on regional stability. The thesis reaches the conclusion that the United States must take a proactive role if its short- and long-term interests are to be protected. The short-term goal of U.S. policy must be to maintain a balance of power and regional correlation of forces which serves to deter any would-be aggressor nations. In the long run, the United States must seek a comprehensive regional peace. Various methods of achieving these goals are examined.

Accession For	
NTIS GRA&I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DTIC TAB	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unannounced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Justification	
By _____	
Distribution/	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
A-1	

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II.	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: 1979 - 1992 . . . . .	3
	A. THE FALL OF THE SHAH AND THE BEGINNING OF THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR . . . . .	3
	B. THE TANKER WAR . . . . .	8
	C. OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD AND STORM . . . . .	14
	D. THE GULF REGION AFTER DESERT STORM . . . . .	26
	E. CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	34
III.	ARMS PROLIFERATION . . . . .	36
	A. BACKGROUND . . . . .	36
	B. NUCLEAR ARMS PROLIFERATION . . . . .	38
	C. CONVENTIONAL ARMS PROLIFERATION . . . . .	44
	D. OTHER ARMS PROLIFERATION DEVELOPMENTS . . . . .	52
	E. U.S. ARMS TRANSFER POLICY OPTIONS . . . . .	57
	F. DEMOCRATIC REFORM AND U.S. ARMS TRANSFER POLICY . . . . .	60
	G. CONCLUSION . . . . .	66
IV.	SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT . . . . .	68
	A. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	68
	B. THE STATUS QUO SCENARIO . . . . .	80

C.	THE IRAN-IRAQ COALITION SCENARIO . . . . .	92
D.	IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY . . . . .	100
E.	CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	107
V.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	115

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thesis argues that the United States must take a proactive role if it is to protect its vital national interests in the Persian Gulf region over the next several decades. Recent American efforts to maintain regional stability, while simultaneously protecting U.S. national interests, have tended to be reactive in nature. Only by taking political, diplomatic, and military actions in periods of relative peace can the United States ensure that regional deterrence remains robust. This thesis develops several scenarios which could possibly result due to U.S. regional policy. The argument is put forth that the goal of U.S. Persian Gulf policy must to shape the strategic environment. An environment shaped by sound U.S. policy will ensure that both the short- and long-term American strategic goals are achievable. Coherent and coordinated U.S. regional policy has the potential of rendering a repeat of the events of 2 August 1992 highly unlikely.

The thesis examines the recent history of the Persian Gulf region from the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979 to the post-Desert Storm period. The United States has been involved in the affairs of the region, in varying degrees, throughout this period. The thesis concludes that U.S. political, diplomatic, and military involvement will continue to be necessary if the United States wishes to advance the twin goals of promoting

regional stability and ensuring continued access to the region's energy resources.

Chapter two examines arms proliferation trends in the Gulf region. The nuclear weapons programs of Iran and Iraq continue to threaten the current balance of power equation in the region. United States policy should continue efforts at preventing these renegade states from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. Various methods of accomplishing this policy goal are examined. The problem of nuclear proliferation has taken on an added urgency with the dissolution of the former Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The fear of the proliferation of Russian nuclear expertise is palpable. Additionally, the apparent willingness of communist autocracies such as the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) to supply nuclear technology to non-aligned states further complicates efforts to control the spread of these dangerous weapons.

In the field of conventional armaments, cash-starved communist and former communist states are making sophisticated weapons systems available to the highest bidder on the open market in exchange for convertible currencies. This trend is troubling for strategic planners the world over. Steps must be taken to curb the sale of conventional arms as well as weapons of mass destruction. There is a large problem, however, in that it is unlikely that any comprehensive arms control regime

can be established before the renegade nations of the Gulf, specifically Iran and Iraq, have rearmed to a degree which would allow them to threaten regional security. It is therefore recommended that the United States pursue a two-pronged approach as regards regional arms control.

The long-term approach emphasizes seeking an eventual comprehensive multilateral arms control regime for all the states of the Gulf region. The framework of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) is suggested as an initial building block. Attaining this goal will require a broad-based multilateral coalition. This coalition would almost certainly involve years of arduous negotiations. There are many competing interests to consider when attempting to form a comprehensive and enduring framework for Gulf security. Still, serious efforts to alleviate tensions in this ever volatile region are needed immediately. Clearly this is not a short-range solution to the problems which plague the Gulf region.

The short-term approach involves ensuring that the Gulf states which are friendly to U.S. interests, specifically the six nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), are supplied with adequate U.S. arms to deter any would-be aggressor nations from attempting to disrupt regional stability by military adventure. In addition to arming our friends in the region, the United States should seek to strengthen military and diplomatic ties with them. The thesis

postulates that a formalized collective security treaty between the United States and the GCC states would significantly bolster deterrence in the Gulf Region. The thesis recommends modeling such an arrangement on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. As a final deterrent to the outbreak of regional warfare, the United States and GCC nations should continue regularly scheduled series of military exercises and strategic planning sessions which emphasize regional security.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The security of the Persian Gulf region is of vital interest to the United States and its allies. This strategic waterway and the surrounding landmass accounts for 23.3% of world oil production. In addition, the United States relies on the Gulf Region for 27.9% of its oil imports.<sup>1</sup> The security of the flow of oil from the Gulf was certainly one of the overriding reasons that the United States and coalition forces acted to eject Saddam Hussein from Kuwait in 1991.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the critical need to guarantee the free passage of merchant shipping through the Persian Gulf, it is in the United States', indeed the world's, interest to maintain stability in this volatile region. With the demise of the Cold War, the United States has refocused its military strategy away from the containment of the Soviet Union and its communist ideology. In the words of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: "Future threats to US interests are inherent in the uncertainty and instability of a rapidly changing

---

<sup>1</sup>Paul Aarts and Michael Renner, "Oil and the Gulf War," Middle East Report, July-August 1991, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>In a Time article of August 20, 1990 an unnamed U.S. official stated:

Even a dolt understands the principle, we need the oil. It's nice to talk about standing up for freedom, but Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are not exactly democracies, and if their principal export were oranges, a mid-level State Department official would have issued a statement and we would have closed Washington down for August.

world."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in the Persian Gulf region. Over the past fifteen years the region has experienced major wars, revolutions which have overthrown established regimes, and numerous other crises. Most of these crises occurred against the backdrop of East-West tensions. Now, given the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, instability in the region must be viewed from a different perspective.

This thesis examines the strategic circumstances in the Persian Gulf. Emphasis is placed on anticipating future shifts in the strategic balance and recommending U.S. strategies that can maintain both peace and stability as well as the unimpeded flow of resources into and out of the region. The author assumes that the United States will remain intimately involved in the affairs of the Persian Gulf region. A return to the isolationism of the 1930's is deemed highly unlikely given continued Western reliance on petroleum and the increasingly interdependent nature of the international economic and political system. The United States ignores regional stability in the Gulf at its own, and its allies, peril. The region will continue to be vitally important to U.S. interests for the foreseeable future. Thoughtful plans for deterring conflict are imperative. If deterrence should fail, winning war-fighting strategies must be in place.

---

<sup>3</sup>National Military Strategy of the United States, January 1992, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1992)

## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: 1979 - 1992

### A. THE FALL OF THE SHAH AND THE BEGINNING OF THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

In January 1979 the Shah of Iran's government fell and was replaced by an Islamic fundamentalist, anti-American regime. This development severely undermined the American position in the Persian Gulf. The Shah had long been generally friendly to the interests of the United States. In fact, during the 1973 - 1974 Arab oil embargo the Shah continued oil sales to the United States.<sup>4</sup> The U.S. reciprocated by supplying the Shah's regime with millions of dollars worth of military hardware. The loss of a friendly government in Tehran, followed eleven months later by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, motivated a sharp response from President Carter. In his 23 January 1980 State of the Union address, Carter enunciated what later came to be known as the "Carter Doctrine."

Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be

---

<sup>4</sup> Michael A. Palmer, On Course to Desert Storm : The United States Navy and the Persian Gulf (Washington, D.C.: Naval Historical Center, 1992), p. 94. The Iranian navy purchased oil from the Iranian National Oil Company and then sold it to the U.S. Navy, some 1.5 million barrels that the U.S. Navy sources considered "critical" to its operations.

repelled by any means necessary, including military force.<sup>5</sup>

In March 1980 Secretary of Defense Harold Brown outlined the military aspects of the Carter Doctrine. American interests in the region were announced as: "to insure access to adequate oil supplies; to resist Soviet expansion; to promote stability in the region; and to advance the Middle East peace process, while insuring...the continued security of the State of Israel." The Secretary further acknowledged the primacy of Persian Gulf oil to the health and well-being of the world economy: "The hard fact is that there is nothing the United States--or our industrial world partners or the less developed countries--can do in the coming decade, or probably even the next, that would save us from severe damage if the bulk of the oil supply from the Persian Gulf were cut off for a sustained period."<sup>6</sup>

In September 1980 Iraq, apparently emboldened by Iran's loss of sponsorship by its former ally, the United States, attacked its larger and more populous neighbor. The chaotic political situation in Iran in the period shortly after the Islamic revolution proved too tempting a target to Iraq's Baathist leader Saddam Hussein. The new Iranian clerical leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, had previously listed

---

<sup>5</sup>Carter State of the Union Address, 23 Jan 1980, State Department, *Basic Documents, 1977-1980*, #15.

<sup>6</sup>Palmer, p. 98.

Saddam as one of his three enemies, along with his "infidel Baath Party" in an interview given during his exile in France in 1978.<sup>7</sup>

Over half of Iraq's population (at least 55 per cent) are followers of Shiaism, the Islamic sect predominant in Iran. The sectarian split between Shia and Sunni, coupled with an ethnic division which pits Arab against Kurd, contributes to the fractionalization of the Iraqi population. Given Iraq's large Shiite population, Saddam was gravely concerned that the Iranian revolution could spread to his country and threaten his dictatorial regime. This fear was not without grounds, nor was it wholly unprovoked. Iraq actively repressed Shia militants in the period before the invasion into Iran. Tensions seemingly reached a boiling point when, on 8 April 1980, Saddam carried out the execution of Iraqi Shia leader Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir Sadr of Najaf and his sister Bint al Huda.

This action incensed Khomeini, who declared:

The war that the Iraqi Baath wants to ignite is a war against Islam. As the Iranian army joined the people (in their struggle against the Shah), oh Iraqi army, join your people...The people and army of Iraq must turn their backs on the Baath regime and overthrow it...because this regime is attacking Iran, attacking Islam and the Quran...Iran

---

<sup>7</sup>Khomeini listed his enemies as follows: "First, the Shah; then the American Satan; then Saddam Hussein and his infidel Baath Party." The Middle East, 26 July 1982, p. 25.

<sup>8</sup>Dilip Hiro, The Longest War : The Iran-Iraq Military Conflict, (New York: Routledge, 1991) p. 2.

today is the land of God's messenger; and its revolution, government and laws are Islamic.<sup>9</sup>

At this point both Iraq and Iran were actively involved in destabilizing activities which served as precursors to the war. Iran began giving guerrilla training to Iraqi Shias and then sending them back to ply their trade in Iraq. In addition Iran continued its policy of providing assistance to Iraq's Kurdish Democratic Party. Baghdad returned the favor by expelling 16,000 Iraqis of Iranian origin, and increasing aid to the secessionist elements of the Iranian Kurds. Baghdad also provided prominent political and military figures from the ousted Shah's regime with radio stations to broadcast anti-Khomeini propaganda. In the months leading up to the Iraqi invasion into Iran, minor border skirmishes were occurring at the rate of ten per month.<sup>10</sup>

When the time seemed opportune Saddam Hussein invaded his long-time adversary Iran. Hiro speculates that Saddam's calculations were based largely on the assumption of gridlock in American policy brought about by election year pressures:

As the months rolled on the question he increasingly faced was not whether or not to invade, but when. He seems to have decided to act before the US presidential poll in early November. It was likely that a new American president would settle the hostage crisis and re-establish normal relations with Tehran, thus inadvertently robbing

---

<sup>9</sup>Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), 18 April 1980.

<sup>10</sup>Hiro, pp. 35-36.

him of the opportunity to attack Iran during its most vulnerable period.<sup>11</sup>

Saddam Hussein grasped at the perceived opportunity to assume leadership of the Arab world by attacking and defeating the new Iranian regime while it was still in the formative period of its development. Egypt, by virtue of its signing a peace accord with Israel, had been suspended from the Arab League and as such had lost any claim to leadership in the Arab world. Saddam saw the time as ripe for an invasion targeted against the Persians - one which would liberate Arabs and return Arab territory to the Arab Nation. Saddam sought and received backing from the Saudi and Kuwaiti regimes for his ambitious plans. After a series of military and diplomatic clashes in September 1980, Iraq invaded Iran on the twenty-second of that month.<sup>12</sup>

Thus began the longest conventional war of the twentieth century. Over million casualties are estimated to have resulted from this conflict. The cost of conducting this war, and the direct and indirect damage caused by it, is estimated at \$1,190 billion. The war produced no clear winner or loser. Rather, it would seem that both sides suffered unacceptable and, in the author's opinion, avoidable damages. The United States was drawn into the conflict while attempting to ensure the free flow of vital petroleum products from the region.

---

<sup>11</sup>Hiro, p. 37.

<sup>12</sup>Hiro, pp. 38-39.

## B. THE TANKER WAR

In April 1984 a new and dangerous phase of the Iran-Iraq war commenced when Iraq began attacking all ships serving Iranian ports regardless of ownership. As Iraq was transporting none of its oil via maritime vessels due to the wartime closure of its only outlet to the sea, Iran sought indirect retaliation by targeting merchant ships trading with Iraq's allies, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.<sup>13</sup> Within a thirty-five day period ten oil tankers were hit. President Reagan condemned Iran for attacking neutral shipping in the Gulf, while characterizing Iranian vessels as legitimate economic targets for Iraqi attacks.<sup>14</sup> In June 1984 U.N. Security Council Resolution 552 condemned attacks on the ships trading with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, nations which were non-combatants.<sup>15</sup> The Security Council further called on all states to respect freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf. This U.N. action had limited effect on the conduct of the war.

---

<sup>13</sup>Hiro, p. 129. See also Hiro, p. 3:

Not surprisingly, short of declaring war against Iran, both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait aided Iraq materially and logistically. When Iran retaliated by targeting its oil tankers, Kuwait turned to the superpowers for the safety of its vessels, and got a positive response, particularly from the United States. The Pentagon boosted its naval presence in the Gulf region from six warships to 32.

<sup>14</sup>Interview with BBC Television, 31 May 1984.

<sup>15</sup>United Nations Security Council Resolution 552, 1 June 1984.

The tempo of the Tanker war slowed, but there was little move towards peace.<sup>16</sup>

Hiro speculates that it was Saddam's intention to escalate and broaden the war:

The overall Iraqi purpose in initiating and sustaining the Tanker War was to make oil shipments from the Gulf hazardous, thus internationalizing the conflict and drawing in the superpowers - and/or Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to join the hostilities formally on Baghdad's side. The latter development would have opened up a new front against Iran, severely straining its already depleted air force and torpedoing Iranian plans to mount land offensives against Iraq. In the event, Baghdad failed to achieve either of its objectives.<sup>17</sup>

Attacks on oil tankers continued by both belligerents for several years in a sporadic fashion. In 1985 Iran attacked 14 naval targets, increasing this number to 41 in 1986. Iraq's figures were 33 for 1985, and a subsequent doubling to 66 in 1986.<sup>18</sup> In February-March 1986 an Iranian ground offensive targeted against the Fao Peninsula was successful and Iran appeared to be on the brink of military victory.<sup>19</sup> With Iran poised to march on Baghdad, Iraq increased its attacks on Iranian oil tankers. Iran, as it had threatened previously, responded in kind, by stepping up attacks on Kuwaiti and

---

<sup>16</sup>Palmer, p. 109.

<sup>17</sup>Hiro, pp. 131-132.

<sup>18</sup>Hiro, p. 175, citing The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Strategic Survey 1987-1988, London, 1988, p. 131.

<sup>19</sup>Palmer, p. 110.

Kuwaiti- bound ships.<sup>20</sup> In early November 1986 the "arms for hostages" (also known as the Iran-Contra affair) story broke in the American press. This development complicated American diplomatic efforts in the Gulf region.

In December 1986 Kuwait requested information from the U.S. Coast Guard concerning the reflagging of merchant vessels. The Kuwaitis apparently saw flagging ships carrying their oil with the U.S. ensign as a means of protection against Iranian attacks on the vessels. Kuwait also made overtures to the Soviet Union about the possibility of flying the hammer and sickle on its tankers.<sup>21</sup>

As the Reagan administration was considering the Kuwaiti request, the situation in the Gulf grew markedly worse. In February 1987 intelligence indicated that Iran was deploying Silkworm antiship missile batteries in the vicinity of the Strait of Hormuz. In the Reagan administration, there was disagreement between the Secretaries of State and Defense as to the wisdom of reflagging Kuwaiti tankers. Secretary of State Shultz opposed the idea, while Secretary of Defense Weinberger recommended the reflagging.<sup>22</sup>

On 17 May 1987 the USS Stark (FFG-31) was struck by two Exocet missiles launched by an Iraqi Mirage F-1. The Stark

---

<sup>20</sup>Ronald O'Rourke, "The Tanker War," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1988, p.31.

<sup>21</sup>Palmer, p.112.

<sup>22</sup>Palmer, p. 113.

narrowly escaped sinking and 37 American sailors perished as a direct result of the attack. This event sparked an impassioned debate over the wisdom of continuing American naval presence in the war-ridden Gulf.<sup>23</sup>

The Reagan administration wasted little time in signalling U.S. resolve to Gulf allies. On 19 May, a scant two days after the Stark tragedy, the State Department made the following announcement:

Consistent with longstanding U.S. commitment to the flow of oil through the gulf and the importance we attach to the freedom of navigation in international waters, as well as our determination to assist our friends in the gulf, the President decided that the United States would help in the protection of Kuwaiti tankers.<sup>24</sup>

The United States thereby became a more direct participant in defending the flow of oil out of the Persian Gulf. Operation Earnest Will, as the reflagging operation became known, commenced escorting U.S. flagged vessels through the Gulf.

The table on the following page displays the level of violence perpetrated by both belligerents as the Tanker War heated up. The majority of these attacks occurred during the period that the United States had willingly assumed its new role as the protector of navigational freedom in the Gulf.

---

<sup>23</sup>Palmer, p. 114.

<sup>24</sup>Statement by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, 19 May 1987, State Department, *Current Documents*, 1987, #259.

TABLE 1

*ATTACKS BY IRAN AND IRAQ ON SHIPS IN THE GULF, 1987*

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
IRAN	6	3	4	4	10	5	4	5	16	7	10	17	91
IRAQ	6	8	5	7	5	2	3	4	12	13	8	15	88

*ATTACKS BY IRAN AND IRAQ ON SHIPS IN THE GULF, 1988*

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL-AUG	TOTAL	<u>87-88</u>
IRAN	7	7	13	7	5	3	10	52	<u>143</u>
IRAQ	8	5	6	0	7	1	11	38	<u>126</u>

Source: Ronald O'Rourke, "The Tanker War," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, May 1988, pp. 32-33.

On 24 July 1987 the *Bridgeton*, a reflagged Kuwaiti tanker escorted by U.S. naval forces, struck an Iranian-sown mine in the central Gulf. The United States commenced a military buildup in the region in 1987 as the Iranians grew more confrontational. The number of U.S. naval ships in the Middle East Force more than doubled from six to thirteen over the course of 1987. In an effort to provide improved command and control for this burgeoning military presence, the Department of Defense, established the Joint Task Force Middle East (JTFME) in August 1987. USCINCENT was the unified command above JTFME and provided a link to the national command authorities.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup>Palmer, p. 126.

The remainder of the of the Tanker War consisted of a series of Iranian attacks and U.S. retaliatory actions. The near-sinking of the frigate USS Samuel B. Roberts by mine damage spurred JTFME to launch Operation Praying Mantis in April 1988. In the course of this operation and the Iranian counterattack, Iran lost nearly half its operational ships. Shortly after Praying Mantis the United States announced that the Navy would provide direct assistance to neutral vessels that came under Iranian attack and requested help.<sup>26</sup>

The ground war between Iraq and Iran continued. The economies of both states were in a shambles from supporting their respective militaries' activities. The accidental shoot-down of an Iranian airbus with 290 people aboard by the USS Vincennes in July 1988, followed shortly thereafter by a successful Iraqi campaign to recover its lost territories<sup>27</sup>, prompted Iran's acceptance of U.N. Security Council Resolution 598<sup>28</sup> and signalled the beginning of the end of this long, expensive, and bloody war.

---

<sup>26</sup>Palmer, p. 133

<sup>27</sup>Hiro, p. 241.

<sup>28</sup>Resolution 598, which was adopted by the Security Council on 20 July 1987, demanded that: "Iran and Iraq observe an immediate cease-fire, discontinue all military actions on land, at sea and in the air, and withdraw all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries without delay."

After the war, Iraq was deeply in debt<sup>29</sup> and apparently exhausted after eight years of fierce combat. It was hoped that a period of relative peace would prevail in the Persian Gulf region. Many expected that the warring nations would allow a substantial period of time to pass while permitting their deep wounds to heal before embarking on any new military adventures. The efforts of the recently elected Bush administration to welcome Iraq into the "family of nations"<sup>30</sup> would have disastrous consequences for regional peace and security in the post-Cold War Persian Gulf.

### C. OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD AND STORM

On 2 August 1990 Saddam Hussein carried out the invasion of Kuwait and subsequently announced the annexation of that country as Iraq's nineteenth province. In response, a U.S.-led coalition ejected Iraqi forces and liberated Kuwait on 28 February 1991. The history of that recent and widely reported war is well known. This subsection examines issues raised as a result of that war which could provide salient lessons for the planning and conduct of future operations in the Gulf region.

---

<sup>29</sup>Norman Friedman, Desert Victory, (Annapolis, Md: Naval Institute Press, 1991), p. 31. Friedman reports Iraq's post-war debt burden as being approximately \$80 billion.

<sup>30</sup>President Bush used this phrase in the Presidential election debates in October 1992 when attempting to defend his administration's policies toward Iraq in the period leading up to the invasion of Kuwait.

Operation Desert Storm was the first major crisis since World War II that was not constrained by an overriding East-West dimension. Given the collapse of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, this factor will almost certainly continue to affect such conflicts in the foreseeable future. In the "new world order" many strategic maxims concerning deterrence and warfighting must be reexamined given the massive political changes that have occurred in the international system. Forty-five years of formulation and refinement of containment stratagems will have limited application in the new environment. The U.S. national security community is well aware of this altered state of affairs, and this is reflected in the new National Military Strategy. The U.S. post-Desert Storm military strategy is therefore more regionally focused than it had been in the past. The likelihood of a protracted global war is seen as low in the near-term.

In analyzing the events leading up to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait with an eye toward preventing such provocations in the future, it is first necessary to understand the motivations which led Saddam to embark on this dangerous venture. Fred Halliday cites five elements which contributed to Saddam's decision.<sup>31</sup>

First was the failure of Iraq to impose a capitulationist peace on Iran in the wake of their eight-year war. It became

---

<sup>31</sup>Fred Halliday, "The Gulf War and its aftermath," International Affairs 67, 2(1991), pp. 223-234.

increasingly clear that Iraq, after the post-Khomeni government in Tehran consolidated in late 1989, was blocked on its eastern border. Second was the dire financial straits in which Iraq found itself after the war with Iran. The seizure of Kuwait and its oil reserves appeared to offer Saddam a way out of his debt of \$70 billion as well as a distraction from domestic problems of his own making. Third, the end of the Cold War encouraged Saddam to take a more confrontational position towards the United States. Earlier in 1990 Saddam had called for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the region as well as an Arab financial boycott of the United States.

The fourth element which motivated Saddam was his dispute(s) with Kuwait. In addition to a long-standing disagreement concerning border issues, four other problems soured the Iraq-Kuwait relationship: 1) Iraq demanded that all of its war debts owed to Kuwait be canceled; 2) Saddam insisted that Kuwait pay for Iraq's defense of Arab interests in the war with Iran; 3) Saddam charged that Kuwait and the Emirates had deprived Iraq of oil revenues by their unfair pricing and production quota practices; and 4) Saddam contended that Kuwait had unfairly taken oil from the border area, specifically from the Rumaila field.

The final element which seems to have motivated Saddam to attack, in Halliday's opinion, was the stalemate in resolving Arab-Israeli disputes. This condition provided Iraq with an opportunity to reassert its claims to regional leadership. A

lack of progress in settling the Palestinian issue, coupled with the huge influx of Soviet Jews into Israel, encouraged a "climate of frustration" in the Arab world. Saddam believed he could use this climate to his own advantage.<sup>32</sup>

Certainly another reason which influenced Saddam's decision to invade Kuwait resulted from Washington not communicating a clear signal on the consequences of such a rash action. Ambassador Glaspie's consultations with Saddam immediately prior to his launching of the offensive clearly had little if any deterrent effect. In fact, exactly the opposite case can be argued; that this ambiguous signal actually encouraged the Iraqi dictator to invade. The message, at least as perceived by Saddam, appears to have been that this was being considered as an inter-Arab dispute and the U.S. would not get involved. Whether this was a *message*, a *messenger*, or a *perception* problem remains unclear. What certainly is clear is that this can be construed as a failure of tremendous magnitude in American diplomacy.

The conduct of the 'build-up (Desert Shield) to, and the actual fighting of (Desert Storm), the war has been well documented elsewhere. The war accomplished the stated

---

<sup>32</sup>When speaking of Saddam and Iraq, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the man from the nation. This is not unusual in dictatorial regimes. When a megalomaniac seizes control of a state, the aggrieved nation, and specifically its instruments of power (the military, parliament, courts, etc.) frequently become indistinguishable from the dictator. Thus the policies, actions, positions, etc. of Iraq are, in essence, those of its leader.

objectives of ousting Iraqi troops and returning the pre-war Kuwaiti government to power. This war was notable for several characteristics. First and foremost were the new post-Cold War auspices. The five permanent members of the Security Council<sup>33</sup> resisted using their veto powers to make ideological points. This was virtually unprecedented given such a weighty use of the Council's powers granted under Chapter Seven of the U.N. Charter.

In Clausewitzian terms, Desert Shield/Storm was a good example of the proper way to wage war. One of Clausewitz's more popular and enduring constructs is that of the "remarkable trinity" of warfare.<sup>34</sup> The first element of the trinity is the violence and passion which is embodied in the people. The Gulf War, at least once the fighting began in earnest, enjoyed broad-based public support in the United States.<sup>35</sup> It was generally perceived as being a just and

---

<sup>33</sup>The United States, Soviet Union, China, France and Great Britain comprise the permanent membership of the Security Council at this writing. Moves are currently afoot to alter or expand the five permanent memberships.

<sup>34</sup> Peter Paret ed., Makers of Modern Strategy, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 201.

<sup>35</sup>A CBS News/New York Times Poll during 11-13 Jan 1991 asked Americans: "If Iraq does not withdraw by (15 Jan), do you think the United States should start military action against Iraq...?" 47% responded "start action"; 46% answered "wait to see"; 7% were unsure. President Bush's approval rating was 66%

The same poll taken on 19 Jan indicated that 74% thought that the "U.S. did the right thing to begin fighting". The President's approval rating on his handling of Iraq was 80%.

necessary conflict.<sup>36</sup> This sentiment was, for the most part, echoed throughout the world.

The second element of the trinity: "uncertainty and chance, provides scope primarily to the courage, determination, and talent of the commander and his forces."<sup>37</sup> This element manifests itself in the military. From the coalition perspective, the military units of the winning side accounted themselves, with very few exceptions, admirably. In terms of casualties inflicted, the coalition enjoyed an extreme asymmetrical advantage. Although an accurate "body count" of the number of Iraqi soldiers killed has yet to be compiled, estimates run anywhere from 10,000 to over 100,000. And while the glow of the initial military victory has dulled somewhat with the passage of time and the publication of somewhat more critical analyses of the action, most informed observers still generally consider Desert Storm to have been an overwhelming and decisive military victory for the United States and its coalition partners. Thus, the first two legs of the trinity appear to have been anchored firmly.

---

Source: Michael Brenner, "The Alliance: a Gulf post-mortem," International Affairs 67, 4(1991), p. 668.

<sup>36</sup>For arguments (pro and con) on the morality and justice of the war see: David E. Decosse, ed., But Was It Just? Reflections on the Morality of the Persian Gulf War, (New York, Doubleday, a division of Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1992)

<sup>37</sup>Paret, p. 201.

The final element of the trinity, politics, "is the business of government alone."<sup>38</sup> The politics of the Gulf War involved not only the governments of the United States and the other coalition members states, but also, to an unprecedented extent, the United Nations. The U.N. Security Council passed a series of resolutions condemning the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. These resolutions culminated in #678, adopted on 29 November, which authorized U.N. members to use "all means necessary" to enforce previous resolutions if Iraqi forces did not depart Kuwait by 15 January 1991.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the United Nations, as the world's preeminent international governmental organization, took a strong stance in rejecting Iraq's invasion and attempted annexation of Kuwait.

The situation as it concerned the domestic American political debate was dealt with less resolutely. The debate was not formally joined in the Congress until January 1991. The opposing sides argued their respective cases; on the one

---

<sup>38</sup>Carl von Clausewitz, On War, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, rev. ed. (Princeton, 1984), bk. I, ch. I, p. 89.

<sup>39</sup>Of particular note were Security Council resolutions: 660 (2 Aug 90)-condemned invasion, demanded withdrawal; 666 (6 Aug)-imposed embargo on Iraq; 665 (25 Aug)-made naval inspections to verify cargoes legal; 670 (25 Sep)-expanded embargo to include air traffic. Most of these resolutions passed by an overwhelming margin. Cuba and Yemen were notable among non-permanent council members in voting against or abstaining from several resolutions. On the key resolution #678, Cuba and Yemen voted against; while China, a permanent member with veto power, abstained. Source: James F. Dunnigan and Austin Bay, From Shield to Storm, (New York, William Morrow and Inc., 1992) pp. 34-35.

side for giving economic sanctions more time to work<sup>40</sup>; and, on the other, for mounting the counter-offensive against Iraqi forces shortly on or shortly after the U.N. deadline of 15 January.<sup>41</sup> On January 12 the resolution authorizing the President to wage war against Iraq passed in both houses.<sup>42</sup> The tally in the Senate was 52 to 47, in the House it was 250 to 183, to allow the President to use force, if required, to end the Gulf crisis.<sup>43</sup>

To the credit of the Congress, once the war resolution had passed, the members closed ranks and voted unanimously to

---

<sup>40</sup>See: William M. Vogt and Carl A. Gnam eds., Desert Storm, (Leesburg, Va., Empire Press, 1991), p. 41. Senator Paul D. Wellstone (D-MN) insisted:

This cause is not worth fighting for now. We must stay the course with economic sanctions, continue the squeeze, continue the pressure, move forward on the diplomatic front, and, Mr. President, we must not rush into war.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid. On the Senate floor Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) offered the following counter-argument to continuing with sanctions alone:

Sanctions are a blunt instrument which hurt civilians before the military; weak before the strong. Is it more moral to adopt a strategy designed to inflict the most punishment on the poorest, oldest, most infirm elements of Iraq's population? If you think sanctions will work, you must think they will bring terrible destruction on the heads of the Iraqi people themselves. Consider the morality of that result before decrying the immorality of war.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid. The proposal, titled the "Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution," was strongly supported by President Bush. One of the sponsors of the proposal, Rep. Dante Fascell (R-Fla.), termed the resolution the "practical equivalent" of a declaration of war.

<sup>43</sup>Thomas B. Allen, F. Clinton Berry and Norman Polmar, War In The Gulf, (Atlanta, Turner Publishing Inc., 1991), p. 85.

support the President's decision to initiate the war. Minority leader Robert Dole (R-KAN) stated:

As soon as the vote was completed, there was a change across the country. The people realized that Congress has a role to play, and played it in this situation. The American people were waiting for Congress to make a judgement. When the Congress did, then the people swung behind the President.<sup>44</sup>

Whether there was a causal relationship between the Congress's vote to support the war and the public's support for the war is highly debatable. In the author's opinion the public would have supported the war effort whether the Congress had voted to approve it or not.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, it would appear that at the commencement of the coalition counter-offensive (or, in the case of the people, perhaps shortly thereafter) to reestablish by force the sovereignty of Kuwait, all three elements of Clausewitz's "remarkable trinity" were in place. That each of the elements was not perfectly and harmoniously in balance is granted. However, given the end-result of the operation (the overwhelming coalition victory) it would seem that this part of Clausewitz's analysis of war has stood the test of time.

The Persian Gulf war was, in terms of the mobilization involved and the weaponry used, the largest interstate

---

<sup>44</sup>Ibid, p. 85.

<sup>45</sup>Whether the President needed Congressional authorization to commence hostilities is still hotly debated between the executive and legislative branches. The constitutionality of the War Powers Resolution has yet to be tested in a court of law.

conflict since the Korean conflict.<sup>46</sup> Militarily, the war was tremendously successful for the coalition forces. Politically, perhaps, it was somewhat less decisive. Saddam Hussein and his Baathist regime remain in power in Iraq, while President Bush lost his 1992 re-election bid. Participatory democracy does not appear to be significantly on the rise in the region, despite some recent progress.<sup>47</sup> Regional tension is still palpable. A potential power vacuum exists between Iran and the Gulf Cooperation Council nations of the Arabian peninsula.

The Gulf War was notable in that U.S. forces were aligned with combat and support units of 28 other countries when the counter-offensive started during the night of 17 January 1991. For the United States this was the first true experience in coalition diplomacy and warfare since World War II. Saddam chose a deliberate strategy of seeking to lure Israel into the conflict by retaliating for Scuds lobbed into its population centers in an attempt to weaken the coalition aligned against him. Washington employed skillful diplomacy to ensure that

---

<sup>46</sup>Halliday, p. 223.

<sup>47</sup>Chris Hedges, "Kuwaiti Men Elect A Parliament," New York Times, 6 Oct 1992, p. A-5:

The elections are the first since the Emir...closed the Parliament in 1986 and suspended the constitution. They fulfill a promise the Emir made to Kuwaitis when he was exiled in Saudi Arabia during the Iraqi occupation, a promise that earned him the support of opposition groups during the Persian Gulf conflict.

It should be noted all Kuwaiti women were prohibited from voting in this election. Only men who could trace their families in the Emirate prior to 1921, only 13.4% of the population, were allowed to cast their ballots.

this would not happen. Norman Friedman described the perils the Bush administration faced:

It demanded a high order of diplomatic skill. Whatever the balance of contributions to the overall power of the coalition, Washington could never appear to be forcing its partners. Yet the U.S. government always knew that the decisive action which so frightened the coalition partners was exactly what was required to deal with Iraq. Saddam was ever aware of opportunities to split the coalition, and his charge was always much the same: the Arab coalition partners were acquiescing in a projected or actual massacre of the faithful orchestrated by the greatest of the infidel powers. Through the war, his missile attacks on Israel were designed to demonstrate that his Arab enemies were, in effect Israeli collaborators. For its part, the U.S. government always had to fear that any Israel retaliation would cause the Arab members of the coalition to bolt for fear that Saddam's charge would stick.<sup>48</sup>

Some observers speculate that any U.S. military involvement in future Gulf crises will necessarily be as the leader, or at minimum as a member, of some sort of multilateral coalition. They seem to rule out the possibility of unilateral military action by U.S. forces. Michael Brenner speculates:

Looking ahead, it is hard to visualize a situation at all analogous to that in the Gulf where a substantial, direct participation by allies would not be an absolute precondition for American military involvement. While a president might feel compelled to act to protect a threatened national interest without a prior guarantee of a major allied contribution, backing for a sustained commitment will not be forthcoming. One should never say 'Never', but 'Never again' probably does sum up

---

<sup>48</sup>Norman Friedman, Desert Victory, (Annapolis, Md: Naval Institute Press 1991), pp. 50-51.

congressional and popular feeling about a solo response to any future emergency calls.<sup>49</sup>

Vice Admiral William Owens, USN, argues that the United States will have to rely increasingly on combined operations<sup>50</sup> in the future, given planned US force reductions. He makes the case that a burden-sharing and specialization scheme could result in:

"...freeing some of our (U.S.) forces and allowing them to better compensate for reductions....This kind of dependency is in a sense more stable and healthier than the kind that existed during the Cold War."<sup>51</sup>

Owens went on to point out the differences of coalitions as opposed to alliances:

Coalitions differ from alliances. They are issue-oriented and short-term and their membership may include nations that are far from traditional allies. Since they tend to emerge as a crisis unfolds, we need to establish conditions that facilitate building supportive coalitions quickly in time of need before we confront specific crises. The best way of doing this is to establish trust and communications with as wide a range of nations as possible.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup>Michael Brenner, "The Alliance: a Gulf Post-Mortem," International Affairs 67, 4 (1991), p.669,

<sup>50</sup>*Combined* operations involve the forces of two or more nations acting in concert. This contrasts with *joint* operations which involve two or more services (e.g. US Navy and Air Force).

<sup>51</sup>Vice Admiral William Owens, USN, "Mediterranean Fleet A Test-bed for Navy's Future," Armed Forces Journal International, July 1992, p. 35.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid*, p. 35.

#### D. THE GULF REGION AFTER DESERT STORM

The euphoria much of the world felt after the one-sided military victory in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations was decidedly short-lived. The hope that peace and stability would reign in the Gulf region in the aftermath of the coalition victory was crushed in short order by subsequent events. Rebellions within Iraq by Shiite and Kurdish dissident groups were brutally crushed by Saddam's remaining forces. Coalition forces were called into action again after the cease-fire to "provide comfort" to Kurdish refugees that were fleeing northward from ruthless Iraqi repression. Saddam also was successful in crushing the Iranian-backed Shiite uprising in southern Iraq in the aftermath of Desert Storm.<sup>53</sup>

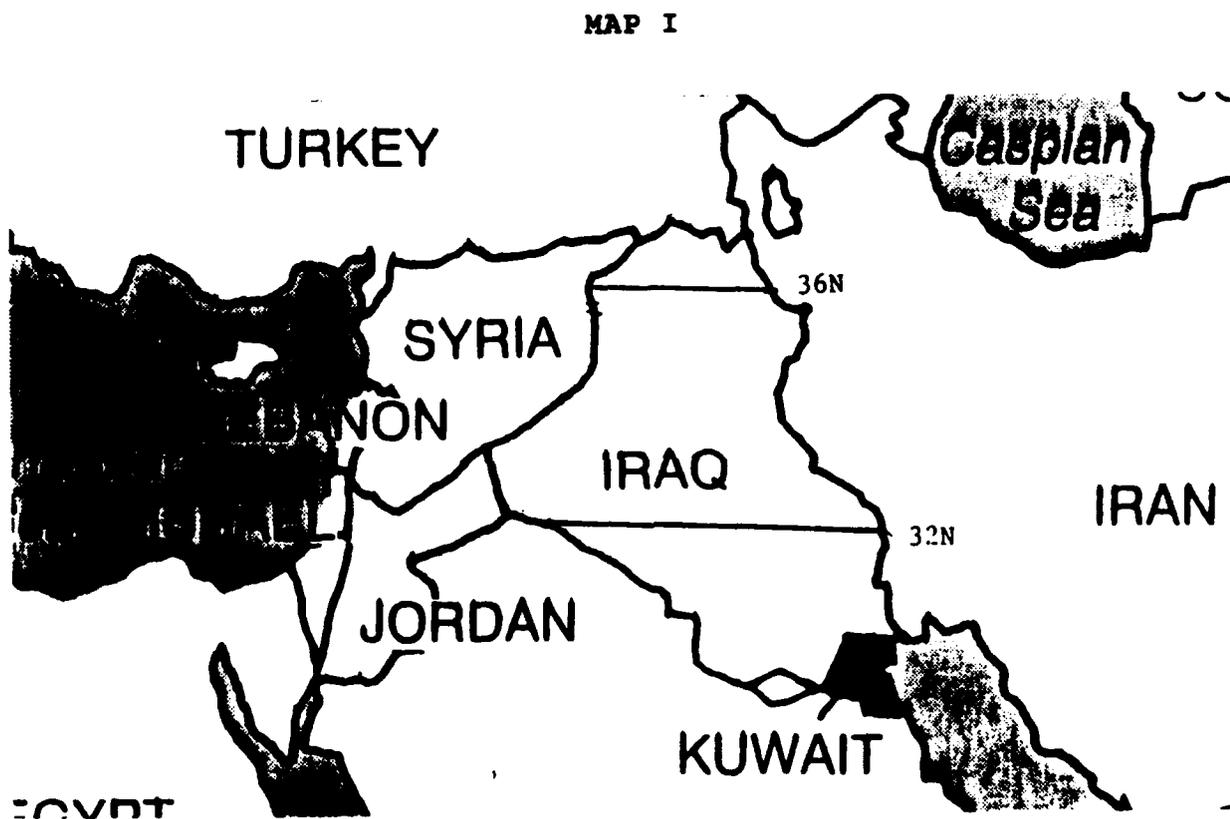
In response, a combined U.S.-British-French sponsored "no fly" zone was established in April of 1991 north of the 36th parallel to prevent Iraqi air attacks on the fleeing Kurds.<sup>54</sup> This restriction on Iraqi flight operations, as of this writing, has been in effect for 20 months. The prolonged presence of coalition protection forces in northern Iraq, and the coalition aircraft which are enforcing the flight ban and staging out of Turkish air bases, offer no promise of a

---

<sup>53</sup>"A Dangerous Game in the Gulf," Newsweek, 21 Sep 92, p. 58.

<sup>54</sup>"Death Every Day," Time, 22 Apr 92, p. 40.

pullout any time soon.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, in response to stepped up attacks on Shiite Moslem rebels, the United States, Britain, and France established a "no-fly" zone in Iraq south of the 32nd parallel on 27 August 1992.<sup>56</sup> (See Map I below)



No-Fly Zones in Northern and Southern Iraq

---

<sup>55</sup>An anonymous source on the J-5 directorate of the Joint Staff offered little hope that Operation Provide Comfort II would cease in the foreseeable future.

<sup>56</sup>Shay S. Wessol, "In the Persian Gulf, peace has a high price," Navy Times, 21 Sep 92, p. 20.

Operation Southern Watch, in its fourth month as of this writing, could also prove to be a long-term commitment. House Armed Services Committee Chairman, Les Aspin (D-Wis), stated he would not be surprised if Saddam were to challenge the flight ban:

I believe the United States and its coalition partners should be ready to use air power to blunt an Iraqi attack in either the north or the south....This would be a significant escalation, but I am not sure we can afford to do otherwise. We should remember that we don't do very well when we are surprised. We must start thinking now about how we might respond to Saddam's countermoves.<sup>57</sup>

With Iraq effectively broken up into three zones (Kurds in the north, a Shiite south, and Saddam's regime appearing, for now, secure in the center region) and its sovereignty challenged by the ongoing and intrusive U.N. inspections which seek to destroy Iraqi weapons of mass destruction<sup>58</sup>, there is fear among many regional nations that a severe power vacuum may occur. Nations other than Iraq, with sizeable Kurdish

---

<sup>57</sup>Quoted in: Rick Maze, "Don't be laid-back about Iraq: Aspin," Navy Times, 21 Sep 1992, p. 38.

<sup>58</sup>Paul Lewis, "New Wave of Iraqi Executions Reported," New York Times, 21 Sep 92, p. A-2:

Next month will also bring a major United Nations search in Iraq for undeclared Scud missiles, which the organization's inspectors are now convinced Baghdad is still hiding, officials say. Earlier this year, Robert M. Gates, the Director of Central Intelligence, told Congress that Iraq might be concealing as many as 200 such missiles.

The United Nations special commission charged with eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction has reached a similar conclusion, officials say, based on new evidence that Iraq had other sources of missile technology besides the Soviet Union.

populations (Iran, Turkey, and Syria) fear the creation of an independent Kurdistan would impinge on their territorial integrity.

Additionally Saddam's grip on power shows signs of weakening. There have been rumors of unsuccessful assassination attempts on Saddam in addition to foiled coup d'etat attempts.<sup>59</sup> If Saddam's Baathist regime were to fall, it is uncertain what would replace it. Many Middle East observers speculate that Iran would attempt to fill any power vacuum created by the dissolution of Iraq as it now exists. A senior U.S. official commented: "Whether under the Shah or the Ayatollah, Iran has always regarded itself, by right, as the dominant power in the Gulf." Martin Indyk, director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy says:

The logical consequence of the no-fly zone, if it persists for long, is the disintegration of Iraq. And if that occurs, the Iranians are better positioned than anyone else to have influence over a new Shiite state in the south.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup>"Saddam reportedly executed army officers to avert coup," Associated Press report in *The Sunday Herald* (Monterey, Ca), 4 Oct 92, p. 2A. This report cites multiple sources which claim Saddam ordered the execution of a Major General decorated for bravery in the Iran-Iraq War and 30 other military officers who were plotting a military coup to overthrow the government. The executions reportedly occurred in September 1992.

<sup>60</sup>Quoted from: A Dangerous Game in the Gulf," Newsweek, 21 Sep 92, p. 58.

A top U.S. official acknowledges that a resurgent Iran could alter the balance of power in the region, but places a more realpolitik oriented spin on the equation:

Saddam is the immediate risk to stability in the region, so getting rid of him has to be the immediate priority. Are we blind to the prospects for greater Iranian influence? Of course not. But we think they are self-limiting - at least for now.<sup>61</sup>

If Saddam is to fall, and this is one of the repeatedly stated policy goals of the current administration, the United States cannot afford to sit idly by and wait for the dust to settle if it is to advance the nation's interests in the region. We must have a clear strategic plan in place to deal with regional contingencies. President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Morton Abramowitz stresses the need for a rational plan in dealing with this region's uncertain future:

...any U.S. administration will have to come to grips with questions bigger than whether Saddam stays or goes. It will have to decide whether it is prepared to break with the political status quo in the gulf. Are we now willing to invest in a long-term effort to create a democratic federated Iraq? Dare we risk the disintegration of this 70-year-old amalgam cobbled together by British colonialism? Or do we simply drift back to acceptance of something like the pre-gulf-war Iraq with a new face but much the same old dictatorship? Or even with Saddam? Regional attitudes make a decision difficult, and one senses an inclination to avoid the tough choices or admit those that have been made.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Morton Abramowitz, "A Kurdish Country: How Long Can It Last," Newsweek, 21 Sep 92, p. 59.

The Iraqi situation is far from the only destabilizing influence in the Persian Gulf region. The latest round of Arab-Israeli peace talks, those brokered by the U.S. State Department after the war, have made only halting progress. Few if any real steps have been taken to bring about a true and enduring peace between the only democracy in the region and its Arab neighbors.

The election of a Labor government on June 23, 1992<sup>63</sup> offers indications that the Israelis could possibly be willing to trade land for peace. Bilateral negotiations with Syria appear to be making a modicum of progress, despite the frequent hard-line rhetoric emanating from both parties. The Israeli government has given strong hints that they could be ready to concede a partial withdrawal from the disputed Golan Heights which were seized in the 1967 war.<sup>64</sup> The Arab-Israeli disputes, while admittedly linked inextricably to Gulf security concerns, lie beyond the scope of this thesis. While the greater Arab-Israeli conflict hangs ominously over all

---

<sup>63</sup>The Economist, June 27<sup>th</sup> - July 3<sup>rd</sup>, p. 14.

<sup>64</sup>Thomas L. Friedman, "Israel Presents Peace Outline But Syria Is Cool," New York Times, 15 Sep 92, p. A-6:

Syria continues to steadfastly press for a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Syria's chief negotiator, Mouwafak al-Allaf, said there could possibly be elements of this Israeli proposal which would appeal to Syria. However, he reiterated Syria's hard-line negotiating position when he said that no offer could be acceptable without dealing with Syria's fundamental desire for a complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.

political and security considerations in the region and has to be factored into any equation attempting to achieve an overall strategic balance, this thesis intentionally limits its scope to those nation-states bordering the Persian Gulf littoral.<sup>65</sup> The security relationship between Israel and the Gulf nations is a subject for further research.

Iran is currently involved in a dispute with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) over three small islands (Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunb) which dominate the western approaches to the Strait of Hormuz. In 1971 the emirate of Sharja, before Britain ceded its protectorate and Sharja became one of the United Arab Emirates, permitted Iran to station a garrison on its long-held island of Abu Musa. Iran has since refused to recognize the UAE's sovereignty over the disputed islands.

In August 1992 Iranian officials on Abu Musa refused to let passengers on a ship from the Emirates disembark on the island. This provoked a condemnation by all 21 members of the Arab League of Iran's attempts to annex the islands. The Arab League gave support to the UAE's "right" to the islands and labeled the Iranian action as "an occupation." The United States has also publicly supported the position of the Emirates vis-a-vis the disputed islands. The U.S. support led the current Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to

---

<sup>65</sup>Iran, Iraq, and the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC-Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Oman) are the focus of the remainder of this thesis.

denounce the dispute as a conspiracy by Washington "to justify its illegitimate presence in the Persian Gulf." Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani raised tensions further by directing the Islamic Revolutionary Guards to assume "decisive popular and military readiness....Committed military readiness is the only solution to the obstacle put in our way."<sup>66</sup>

Tensions also exist within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) itself. In October 1992 a border dispute between Qatar and Saudi Arabia flared up. Qatar accused Saudi forces of illegally occupying a Qatari border post and killing two people. Qatar demanded the withdrawal of the Saudi troops. Riyadh denied that Saudi forces were involved in the incident. Qatar's foreign minister gave the Saudi Ambassador "a protest memorandum...on the unjustified attack by Saudi military forces on Qatar's al-Khofous post." Qatar also demanded prompt negotiations for agreement on final demarcation of the borders.<sup>67</sup> This incident, although minor, could serve to weaken alliance cohesion should the nations be forced to take up arms against a common enemy.

---

<sup>66</sup>"Iran Says Its Critics In Dispute Over Isles Are Part of U.S. Plot," New York Times, 17 Sep 92, p. A-4.

<sup>67</sup>"Qatar Orders Saudi Forces to Withdraw," Associated Press report in The Monterey County Herald, 4 Oct 92.

## **E. CONCLUSIONS**

The Persian Gulf region has a long history of interstate conflict. During the most recent hostilities the United States was involved in varying degrees. From the not so tacit support of Iraq in the Iran-Iraq War and as the guarantor of freedom of navigation through the Gulf during the Tanker War, to America's leadership of the Coalition which ousted Saddam's occupying forces out of Kuwait, the United States has been a major participant in Persian Gulf affairs. In the post-Gulf War environment the potential for conflict remains high. The United States could well find itself embroiled in yet another Persian Gulf conflict in the not so distant future.

The question for U.S. policymakers must be whether or not the United States should continue to play such a large role in the affairs of this region. As long as oil remains the primary fuel for economic growth, the United States has little choice but to protect its interests in this vital region. Short of a drastic reordering of national energy policy, the United States must ensure the free flow of petroleum from the Gulf region if the nation is to continue to prosper economically.

The United States' need to remain involved in this region's affairs is taken as a given in the short- to medium-term. The nation cannot retool its industries overnight to run on alternative sources of energy. Additionally, there is little evidence that America is serious about the frequently stated claims of the need to wean itself from dependence on

fossil fuels. This debate has been marked by much talk and precious little concrete action. For the near-term, America's addiction to oil shows little prospect for rehabilitation. Therefore, America needs a strategic plan to deter regional conflict in the Gulf region. Furthermore, should deterrence fail, the United States must be prepared to end any regional conflict on terms favorable to its national interests.

### III. ARMS PROLIFERATION

#### A. BACKGROUND

In a 21 September 1992 speech before the United Nations General Assembly, President Bush called

...the strategic challenge of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, truly the fastest-growing security challenge....I want to announce my intention today to work with the United States Congress to redirect the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency...to refocus its talents on providing technical support for nonproliferation, weapons monitoring and destruction, and global defense conversion.<sup>68</sup>

The Persian Gulf would certainly seem to qualify as a critical region in which to focus future nonproliferation efforts.

Over the past two decades the Middle East has had the distinction of being the world's largest arms market. In the decade of the 1980s, one third (by value) of the weapons traded internationally ended up in the Middle East.<sup>69</sup> The International Monetary Fund reports that between 1972 and 1988 the nations of the Middle East spent 11.6 percent of their

---

<sup>68</sup>"Excerpts From Address By President to the U.N.," New York Times, 22 Sep 92, p. A-7.

<sup>69</sup>U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers (1989), (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, October, 1990), pp. 72-76.

gross domestic product (GDP) on military expenditures. This is higher than any other region of the world.<sup>70</sup>

In several Gulf states the ratio of defense expenditures during the same time frame (1972-1988) was even more dramatic. Oman had the highest defense expenditure as a percent of GDP of any nation in the world, 23.2%. Saudi Arabia was fourth with 17%. Iraq was sixth with 16.3%.<sup>71</sup> When the level of militarization is expressed in terms of expenditures per capita, Gulf states dominate the list of the top twenty nations. In 1987 behind Israel as the number one per capita spender were; Saudi Arabia (2); Oman (5); the United Arab Emirates (6); Kuwait (9); Iraq (14) and Qatar (18). For purposes of comparison, the primary Cold War combatants, the United States and the Soviet Union, were third and seventh on the top twenty list respectively.<sup>72</sup>

That the Gulf region is highly militarized is beyond dispute. This chapter examines proliferation trends in the region, both nuclear and conventional. The larger question, however, is whether a high level of military expenditure enhances or degrades regional security? This question is akin

---

<sup>70</sup>Yahya Sadowski, "Scuds versus Butter: The Political Economy of Arms Control in the Arab World," Middle East Report, July-August 1992, p. 4.

<sup>71</sup>Daniel P. Hewitt, Military Expenditure: International Comparison of Trends, (International Monetary Fund, May 1991), Table 3.

<sup>72</sup>ACDA, World Military and Social Expenditures, 1991, (1987 data).

to the bumper sticker slogans espoused by the National Rifle Association: "If guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns" and "Guns don't kill people, people kill people." Former Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle, in arguing to Congress that efforts to stem the flow of arms into the Middle East were pointless, made a similar point: "...Wars are made by men--not the weapons with which they equip their armies--and any policy that fails to comprehend that enduring truth is certain to go wrong."<sup>73</sup>

Whether you accept the contention that armed conflict is encouraged by large and modern armament inventories, or not, the fact remains that arms continue to flow into the Gulf region at an alarming rate. Several disturbing trends indicate that the regional arms race is intensifying in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War.

#### **B. NUCLEAR ARMS PROLIFERATION**

Leonard Spector, director of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, saw a new chapter in the nuclear history of the Middle East beginning to unfold in 1991. While Iraq's massive nuclear weapons program was exposed and effectively halted in the

---

<sup>73</sup>Defense News, 6 May 91, p. 16.

aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War<sup>74</sup> , Iran dramatically had begun to accelerate its own nuclear program.<sup>75</sup> At the same time, the level of Iraq's pre-Gulf War nuclear developments raised serious questions about the ability of the intelligence communities of the United States and other concerned states to detect clandestine nuclear weapons programs.<sup>76</sup>

Spector concedes that a majority of Iraq's nuclear weapons installations were destroyed by U.S. bombing raids in the war. He further points out that, in an effort to deceive U.N. inspectors, Iraq itself dismantled many other installations that had been unknown to the United States and its coalition partners. However, Spector postulates that Iraq may have been able to retain some capacity to reconstitute its nuclear weapons program:

Although pressure from the Security Council, the United States, and several other major powers ultimately led Iraq to comply with many U.N. demands for information and access to facilities, Iraq may still have been able to

---

<sup>74</sup>David Makovsky, "Iraqi Shell Game," Newsweek, 5 Oct 92, p.25. While the U.N. has claimed that the Iraqi nuclear weapons program has been effectively eliminated, several senior Pentagon officials are notably less sanguine. A senior military intelligence officer has stated, "He (Saddam Hussein) has Scud missiles. He still has parts of his chemical, biological and nuclear program." U.S. officials assert that, while the U.N. inspections have been largely successful, much follow-up work still needs to be done to prevent Iraq from reconstituting its nuclear weapons program. The senior intelligence officer stated, "We have disrupted Iraq's program, but we have not changed their mind."

<sup>75</sup>Leonard S. Spector, "Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East," Orbis, Spring, 1992, p. 181.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid, p. 185.

withhold some of its nuclear equipment and material from the inspection teams, along with the bulk of the program's technical documents. Thus, the potential clearly remains for Iraq to reconstitute its nuclear program at some future time. Iraq's potential would be greatly enhanced, moreover, if it possessed--and had successfully hidden from the inspectors--weapons-grade uranium or the ability to produce it.<sup>77</sup>

Spector believes that if the United Nations diligently applies its monitoring procedures, it can probably ensure that Iraq will be unable to acquire nuclear arms before the year 2000. However, he is deeply concerned that Iraq may possess an undeclared stock of weapons-grade uranium. He cautions that, as the American electorate increasingly insists that domestic economic issues take precedence over foreign affairs, the administration:

...could become reluctant to risk another crisis over Iraq. As a result, the effectiveness of the U.N. monitoring effort could wane in the months ahead, opening the way to a resurgence of Iraq's bid for nuclear arms.<sup>78</sup>

Iran, according to official U.S. sources, is actively pursuing a nuclear weapons capability.<sup>79</sup> It is becoming increasingly apparent after the Gulf War that Iran has accelerated its efforts to develop nuclear weapons. There are strong indications that Iran has embarked on research which will eventually lead to the production of weapons-grade

---

<sup>77</sup>Ibid, p. 185.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid, p. 186.

<sup>79</sup>Testimony of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, before the Subcommittee on Seapower, Strategic, and Critical Materials of the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives, 22 Feb 89.

nuclear materials. Evidence began to mount in the late 1980s of Iran's desires to field a nuclear weapons capability. Iran's then-president Sayyed 'Ali Kamenei announced in a 1987 speech at the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran:

Regarding atomic energy, we need it now...Our nation has always been threatened from outside. The least we can do to face this danger is to let our enemies know that we can defend ourselves. Therefore, every step you take here is in defense of your country and your revolution. With this in mind, you should work hard and at great speed.<sup>80</sup>

In 1988 the rhetoric concerning weapons of mass destruction was upped a notch. Commander-in-chief of the Iranian armed forces, now President of Iran, Hashemi Rafsanjani exhorted a group of Iranian soldiers to:

fully equip ourselves both in the offensive and defensive use of chemical, biological, and radiological weapons. From now on, you should make use of the opportunity and perform this task.<sup>81</sup>

In 1991 Ayatollah Mohajerani, Iran's deputy president, made the case for a nuclear arms capability in the Islamic world when he declared that "because the enemy has nuclear facilities, the Muslim states too should be equipped with the same capacity."<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup>David Segal, "Atomic Ayatollahs," The Washington Post, April 12, 1987.

<sup>81</sup>"Hashemi-Rafsanjani Speaks on the Future of IRGC (Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps)." FBIS, Daily Report: The Near East and South Asia, 7 Oct 88, from Tehran Domestic Service, 6 Oct 88.

<sup>82</sup>The Washington Post, 30 Oct 91.

Iran has received considerable assistance in its quest to acquire nuclear weapons from China. On 10 September 1992 the Tehran and Beijing governments announced that China would supply Iran with its first nuclear power plant. China had previously supplied Iran with a small calutron. This type of equipment was used by Iraq to produce weapons-grade uranium. Although both China and Iran claim that their cooperation in nuclear matters is for peaceful purposes (the International Atomic Energy Agency has found nothing in their inspections to disprove this assertion), the existence of the reactor, calutron, and the injection of dozens (perhaps hundreds) of Chinese nuclear technicians into Iran does little to dispel suspicions that Iran is serious about acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.<sup>83</sup>

Iran and China signed a ten-year agreement for the transfer of military equipment and technology and scientific cooperation in 1990. During a four-day visit to Beijing in September 1992 President Rafsanjani expressed hope that Iran's already close technical cooperation with China would expand. "Our cooperation with China has constantly been increasing." He further stated that he hoped his visit "will help to enhance our cooperation and make it more comprehensive in many new areas."<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup>Elaine Sciolino, "China to Build Nuclear Plant for Iran," New York Times, 11 Sep 92, p. A-3.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

The United States has actively opposed any nation which has expressed an interest in helping Iran in developing a nuclear capability. Argentina, after urging from the United States, canceled a deal to sell Iran enriched uranium. China, which often appears to receive kid-glove treatment from the Bush administration in an attempt to keep lines of communication open, has resisted repeated White House appeals to stop cooperating with Iran in nuclear matters. The Bush administration's decision to sell up to 150 F-16 fighters to Taiwan would appear to have affected the timing of China's announcement of the nuclear cooperation with Iran.<sup>85</sup>

Other potential suppliers of nuclear technology, or even nuclear weapons themselves, are the republics of the former Soviet Union. Spector worries that the erosion of non-proliferation controls in the C.I.S. could permit:

...Middle Eastern countries with nuclear ambitions to gain access to Soviet nuclear-weapons scientists, weapons-grade nuclear materials, and even nuclear weapons themselves. Iran, Iraq, Syria,...might all hope to use such nuclear assets to accelerate their advance towards nuclear armaments....If nuclear controls break down in the Commonwealth of Independent States, the flow of nuclear know-how and materials to the Middle East could overpower existing mechanisms for curbing the spread of nuclear arms and open an extremely dangerous new era for the region-- and for the international community at large.<sup>86</sup>

Newspaper reports of October 1992 indicated that Iran may have already made a deal to obtain four nuclear weapons from

---

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Spector, pp. 197-8.

the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan. Allegedly the weapons had already been paid for but not yet delivered. This report came only one month after Kazakhstan's prime minister had pledged to Israel that his country would not sell any of the nuclear arms that it took possession of when the Soviet Union broke up. "Nuclear weapons will not be sold to any other country. Kazakhstan is peace-loving," vowed the prime minister to the Israeli president. It should be noted that these allegations of Iranian maneuverings to obtain nuclear weapons were made by the director of a leading Iranian opposition group, the People's Mujahedeen, and have not yet been independently verified. If true, however, and Iran manages to marry up the weapons with a suitable delivery platform, the regional balance of power equations will have to be significantly revised.<sup>87</sup>

### C. CONVENTIONAL ARMS PROLIFERATION

Already highly militarized before Desert Storm, the states of the Gulf region have continued their build-ups in the post-war period. The lesson that Arab brotherhood was no guarantee against invasion by a fellow Arab was not lost on the Gulf sultans. Thus, Iran was already keenly aware that an Arab

---

<sup>87</sup>Nick Ludington, "Former Soviet republic selling nuclear bombs to Iran, group says," *Associated Press* report in The Monterey County Herald, 12 Oct 92, p. 2A.

state such as Iraq would have little remorse in attacking the non-Arab Persians.

Shortly after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, King Fahd announced plans which would effectively triple the size of the Saudi armed forces to roughly 200,000 troops. After the war the Saudi government placed weapons orders in the United States for \$23.5 billion for its ground forces. The Saudis also plan to spend \$4 billion for 72 F-15 fighter jets.<sup>88</sup> On September 14, 1992 the Bush administration formally notified the Congress that it intended to sell the F-15s to Saudi Arabia. The proposed sale, which will provide 10,000 jobs, was expected to be approved by Congress before the November elections.<sup>89</sup>

Yahya Sadowski contends that the Saudi build-up after the war has triggered an arms bazaar amongst states of the Gulf Cooperation Council:

Saudi Arabia's project has undermined hopes for arms control programs for the region as a whole. The smaller Arab Gulf states were naturally alarmed and eagerly began enlarging their own armed forces. US Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney returned from a Gulf states tour in May 1991 with orders for over 200 Apache attack helicopters, almost 400 Abrams tanks, and nearly 1000 Bradley fighting vehicles. Arms procurement officials from the Gulf states swamped the Le Bourget and Dubai Air Shows in the fall of 1991 to bid on aircraft like the Tornado, the (F-15) Eagle and the (F/A-18) Hornet; on helicopters such as the Gazelle and the Apache; and on munitions such as the GBU-

---

<sup>88</sup>Sadowski, p. 11.

<sup>89</sup>Thomas L. Friedman, "U.S. and Israel Working Out Deal To Offset Warplane Sale to Saudis," The New York Times, 15 Sep 92, p. A-6.

28 "burrowing bomb." Kuwait decided to double the size of its airforce and the 1991-92 Kuwaiti budget called for a six-fold increase of defense spending, rising to 43.4% of its total budget....Iran will feel similar pressures to increase its military spending.<sup>90</sup>

In the summer of 1992 Kuwait announced plans to buy 236 American-made main battle tanks. The sale of these state-of-the-art M1-A2s, including spare parts, training, and ammunition could total about \$4 billion. The M1-A2 is an improved version of the Abrams M1-A1 tank which performed so magnificently in Desert Storm. The M1-A2 won out over the British Challenger tank during combat trials in the Kuwaiti desert. The Bush administration, enmeshed in a closely contested election campaign, strongly supported the sale of the American-made tanks to the Kuwaitis. The deal was expected to encounter little resistance in Congress. One Pentagon official, remarking on the unusually strong administration support, commented "Mind you, though, if there were ever a country over which to exercise a certain leverage, it was Kuwait." The UAE has expressed interest in purchasing 390 new tanks and the M1-A2, scheduled to undergo desert trials there in the fall of 1992, was considered to have an inside edge in that competition as well. Kuwait, which is seeking to spread military equipment contracts and reconstruction projects among the members of the coalition which liberated their country in 1991 as a way of repaying its war debts, was expected to

---

<sup>90</sup>Yahya Sadowski, "Scuds versus Butter," p. 11 (emphasis added).

select the British Warrior over the American Bradley fighting vehicle.<sup>91</sup>

Iran has hardly been standing idly by while the other Gulf states have been beefing up their conventional arsenals. Norman Friedman reported that in July 1992 Iran struck a \$2.5 billion deal with the Russian aircraft industry. The sale was the largest to date for Russian aircraft exporters and included 12 TU-22M Backfires for the bargain basement price of under \$100 million each. These highly sophisticated aircraft had never before been exported outside of Russia. In addition to the Backfires "(T)he package also included 24 MiG-31 interceptors (with 2 Mainstay airborne radar-control aircraft), 48 MiG-29 air-superiority fighters, and 24 MiG-27 ground-attack fighters, plus a variety of surface-to-air missile batteries (long-range, fixed-site SA-5s and SA-11 and SA-13 mobile weapons)." Additionally, the Russians have agreed to assist Iran in the rehabilitation of "the large fleet of ex-Iraqi aircraft that fell into Iranian hands during the Gulf War."<sup>92</sup>

Friedman speculated that the package "almost certainly includes AS-6 antiship missiles." He described the characteristics of the AS-6 as follows:

---

<sup>91</sup>Eric Schmitt, "Kuwaitis Will Buy Tanks Made In U.S.," New York Times, 13 Oct 92, pp. A-1, C-5.

<sup>92</sup>Norman Friedman, "Iranian Air Threat Emerging," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, September 1992, p. 123.

The AS-6 is a fast, steep-diving missile, that can be fired from well beyond a (naval) battle group's antiaircraft envelope; it was in part responsible for stimulating intense U.S. Navy interest in what came to be called the outer air battle. Given the geography of the Persian Gulf, the AS-6 could be launched at a target anywhere in the Gulf by an Iranian Backfire flying in its own air space. No Gulf navy has anything remotely like the sort of long-range defensive missile required to provide defense in depth against such a weapon.<sup>93</sup>

Friedman concluded the article by speculating on the post-Cold War naval air threat:

After all, who but the ex-Soviets would challenge us with exotica such as the Backfires and long-range antiship missiles?

Now we have a possible answer. The Iranians may not consider our (U.S.) carriers the likely targets of their weapons, but *it now seems clearer that they want to be able to dominate the Persian Gulf*. The Backfires and the Kilo-class submarines announce that intention. Moreover, the Backfire sale is likely to be repeated elsewhere.<sup>94</sup>

The Pentagon has announced that Iran is purchasing two or three Kilo-class submarines from Russia. Iran will become the first Persian Gulf nation to possess modern diesel-electric submarines. The acquisition by Iran of the Kilos is particularly worrisome to regional naval planners. According to a New York Times report, the U.S. Navy has said "the Iranian submarines will introduce a new threat to naval operations in the sea lanes of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, which carry much of the world's oil." A senior

---

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid, p. 124 (emphasis added).

Pentagon official elaborated on the gravity of the submarine transfer:

This will introduce a significant kind of warfare that has been absent from the region. When you look at the countries around the Persian Gulf, you could end up with some kind of domino effect.<sup>95</sup>

Iran is reportedly paying \$250 million for each of the Kilos. This price is very reasonable for a submarine of the Kilo's capabilities. Diesel-electric submarines have limited speed and endurance when compared to nuclear powered subs. However, in the confined water space of the Persian and Arabian Gulf littorals, the Kilo should prove to be a potent force multiplier. Whether operating in an antiship or in a mine-laying role, the stealthy Kilo will certainly complicate regional naval planning.<sup>96</sup> The Kilo's potential to close the

---

<sup>95</sup>Michael R. Gordon, "Russia Selling 2 or 3 Submarines to Tehran's Navy, Worrying U.S.," New York Times, 24 Sep 92, p. A-6.

<sup>96</sup>See: Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. Sub Checks Gulf's Waters With Iran in Mind," New York Times, 5 Nov 92, p. A-3. This article reported on the first deployment of a nuclear-powered submarine into the Persian Gulf. The article cites an anonymous senior Defense Department official as saying that the Iran's purchase of the Kilo was an "important consideration in the Pentagon's decision" to send in the U.S. sub. The article also reports of U.S. Navy concerns with the Kilo sale:

The Russian sale of submarines worries the United States Navy, which says the Iranian submarines will introduce a new threat to naval operations in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. When operating on batteries below the surface, diesel submarines are extremely quiet and difficult to detect. And the Navy is concerned that the move will encourage other countries in the area to purchase submarines.

Washington repeatedly asked Moscow not to proceed with the sale, but the Russian Government rejected the American

Strait of Hormuz is taken very seriously by maritime strategists.<sup>97</sup> Control of this vital choke point will be crucial in any future regional conflict. The addition of Kilos into Iran's inventory will skew the naval balance of power, on both the tactical and operational levels, in the Gulf.<sup>98</sup>

Russian arms sales to Iran will likely continue to be a sore spot in their still emerging post-Cold War relationship with the United States.<sup>99</sup> In addition to the submarines,

---

protests, saying it was obliged to honor the arms contracts and needed the money.

<sup>97</sup>See: Anwar Faruqi, "U.S. to Monitor Iranian Sub in Gulf," Associated Press report in The Monterey County Herald, 6 Nov 92, p. 14A.

But submarines based in the gulf could operate just outside the Strait of Hormuz in the far deeper waters of the Arabian Sea. About 20 percent of the world's oil supply moves through the strait.

The U.S. naval command has tried to play down the significance of the (USS) Topeka's arrival in the gulf Sunday. But there is little doubt that Iran's purchase of two diesel-electric submarines has worried Washington.

This is the first time the Navy has acknowledged putting a submarine in the gulf. It has declined to say whether U.S. submarines have ever operated secretly in the gulf.

<sup>98</sup>See: "Iran Commissions First Gulf Sub," Associated Press report in The Monterey County Herald, 24 Nov 92, p. 2A.

Iran yesterday commissioned the Persian Gulf's first submarine, *tilting the region's balance of naval power*. Tehran has been spending billions on weapons and is reviving its revolutionary militancy. (emphasis added)

<sup>99</sup>See: Roger Cohen, "West Will Expand High-Tech Sales," New York Times, 25 Nov 92, p. A-5. This article examines post-Desert Storm proliferation trends:

Proliferation has become a highly sensitive issue in both Europe and Washington since the West's failure to detect the scale of Iraq's nuclear program. In recent weeks, the Bush Administration has expressed deep concern over sales of militarily useful equipment and technology to Iran - including fighter aircraft, bombers, submarines

aircraft, and missiles, Russia agreed in September 1992 to sell two 440-megawatt nuclear reactors to Iran. While the Russians insist that the reactors will only be used for peaceful purposes, the United States remains wary, given Iran's track record and public declarations. Referring to the submarine sale, naval expert Norman Polmar commented:

What it all means is that the Russians will sell anything to anybody to earn hard currency and to keep production lines going. *It also shows that Iran again wants to be a regional power.*<sup>100</sup>

---

and tanks from the former Soviet Union.

American officials said they met with a 12-member Russian delegation headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory V. Berdennikov. In the talks, Mr. (Alan) Larson (head of the United States delegation) said the Russians "recognize that their export control regime is not adequate and that there is a serious problem with sensitive technologies, and they expressed an extreme willingness to work with us."

<sup>100</sup>Michael R. Gordon, "Russia Selling 2 or 3 Submarines to Teheran's Navy, Worrying U.S.," The New York Times, 24 Sep 92, p. A-6. Ibid (emphasis added). See also: Michael R. Gordon, "Cash-strapped Russia selling arms to China," New York Times, 18 Oct 92. This article quotes Richard F Grimmett, an expert on the conventional arms trade at the Congressional Research Service:

The Russian focus is on those countries that are willing to pay cash. *There is a tremendous focus on Iran...* (emphasis added)

This article speculates that Russian arms sold to China could be reverse engineered, and that the Chinese versions of the Soviet weapons would end up being exported to Third World nations.

#### D. OTHER ARMS PROLIFERATION DEVELOPMENTS

Despite hope that the successful conclusion of Operation Desert Storm would bring about a lower level of militarization in the Gulf region, there are strong indications that the regional arms race has, in fact, accelerated. Heightened distrust of Gulf neighbors amongst themselves, coupled with a world-wide economic slowdown have fueled the regional military build-up. A cash-starved Russia has made it clear to the world that it will trade sophisticated arms for hard currency.<sup>101</sup> The lingering recession in the United States has made the export of arms, one of the few manufacturing sectors in which

---

<sup>101</sup>Norman Friedman, "It's Dangerous Out There...", Naval Institute Proceedings, October 1992, pp. 122-4. Friedman made the following observations concerning the availability of Russian arms on the world market:

Whoever has the cash will get excellent equipment....Hard cash is what the Russian aerospace industry now needs, and it is offering some very impressive equipment at low prices. U.S. manufacturers may argue that our own support is far better, and that we are probably also better at subtleties as such as electronic counter-countermeasures. The Russian weapons are certainly far beyond what some of our Western competitors are selling, however, and, like our competitors, the Russians seem unlikely to impose any sort of political litmus test on the buyer.

See also: Michael R. Gordon, "Cash-strapped Russia selling arms to China," New York Times, 18 Oct 92. This report further amplifies the Russian need for convertible currency:

What the Russians are after now is cash, not influence. That, plus the Iraqi defeat in the Persian Gulf war, which effectively removed it as a potential client, has limited the number of prospective customers. *Two of the major customers are now Iran and China (emphasis added).*

The report quotes a Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman's justification for the sale of arms to Iran: "Russia cannot in principle, taking into account the economic situation in this country, give up the receipts of freely convertible currency through the sale of arms abroad."

the United States is still globally competitive, particularly attractive to politicians seeking reelection. An additional consideration must be the huge stockpiles of weapons which will be made redundant with the implementation of the treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE). Signatories to CFE may seek to dump their excess weapons on the world market at "fire sale" prices. One can be relatively certain that some of the CFE excess will find its way into the Gulf region.<sup>102</sup>

Yahya Sadowski, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, makes the case that American schemes to control arms levels in the Gulf were poorly conceived and executed:

The Bush arms control proposal of May 1991 proved poorly designed to catalyze Arab interest in arms control. Instead of loosely linking arms control and the peace process, so that progress in either sphere would encourage advances in the other, the Bush administration had sequenced them so that serious arms control concessions could only become practicable after a breakthrough in the peace talks.

If the Bush initiative constructed too strong a linkage between arms control and the peace process, it posited too weak a linkage between arms control and regional security in the Gulf. The question of arms control apparently never came up during the talks between Washington (represented by the Pentagon, not the State Department) and Riyadh about the defense of Saudi Arabia. American negotiators, eager to acquire right to bases or at least to preposition military hardware in the kingdom, consistently tried to "sweeten the deal" by offering to sell the Saudis advanced

---

<sup>102</sup>Ibid, p. 124. Friedman makes the case that the post-Cold War arms market has changed dramatically:

The end of the Cold War has made equipment available wholesale, without any political dickering. Mass demobilization has made trained personnel available on a similar scale. Thus money can equal instant force structure. Strategic warning time can shrink from decades to months.

weapons systems. They made similar offers to Kuwait, Bahrain and the UAE.<sup>103</sup>

Whether the Bush post-war arms control and regional security schemes were poorly conceived or not, the fact remains that the flow of arms into the region continues more or less unimpeded. Given the fact that U.S. forces may once again have to fight in the region to protect national interests, it behooves the planner to monitor the level and quality of armaments present in the potential theater of operations. If successful campaigns are to be conducted in the event of a major regional contingency, it is imperative that we have an accurate picture of the potential enemies' relative and absolute strengths.

The transparency of the arms trade in the post-Cold War period somewhat simplifies the intelligence collection efforts required to construct accurate orders of battle of potential adversaries. This "enemies list", which will require frequent revisions, must include nations which display open hostility to the United States and those with the potential of doing so in the future. United Nations efforts to further increase arms trade transparency will assist the intelligence community in assessing enemy strengths and weaknesses.<sup>104</sup> Additionally,

---

<sup>103</sup>Yahya Sadowski, "Scuds versus Butter," pp. 11-12.

<sup>104</sup>"Security Council Summit Declaration: 'New Risks for Stability and Security,'" (Text of the declaration issued at the Security Council summit meeting at the United Nations on 31 Jan 92). New York Times, 1 Feb 92, p. A-4. This declaration states: "On conventional armaments, they note the General

the decline of the threat from the former Soviet Union allows intelligence efforts, both space-based and on the ground, to be refocused away from the traditional enemy and towards other potential trouble spots. This freeing up of scarce intelligence resources can offer the planner a more detailed snapshot of the field of battle than was available at the height of the East-West conflict.<sup>105</sup>

As more weapons which were formerly unavailable to American buyers are openly traded on the international arms market, it is in the United States' interest to purchase weapons that it could conceivably face in combat and test them under realistic battlefield conditions. These operational tests and evaluations would assist the strategist and

---

Assembly's vote in favor of a register of arms transfers as a first step, and in this connection recognize the importance of all states providing all the information called for in the General Assembly's resolution."

<sup>105</sup>Another option is to sell intelligence-gathering satellites to U.S. allies abroad. See: William J. Broad, "3 Nations Seek to Buy Spy Satellites, Causing Policy Rift in U.S.," New York Times, 23 Nov 92, p. A-4. In this report, the case is put forward that the United States should be very selective about the nations to which it makes available such high-tech spy craft:

Dr. Hans Mark, a former director of the National Reconnaissance Office at the Pentagon, which develops and operates the nation's spy satellites, said in an interview that the spread of such satellites could ease tensions around by substituting realistic appraisals for military speculation. But he said the United States should pick its customers carefully.

"We need to differentiate between the Irans of the world and the South Koreas". Dr. Mark said, "Any nation that puts a price on the head of an author is not civilized, and our political judgements need to be made in that context."

tactician in planning effective countermeasures to anticipated threat scenarios. Additionally, computer simulation of the weapons in hostilities can provide a cost-effective method of training U.S. forces in an austere budgetary environment. While computer simulations can never completely replace fleet and field exercises, they do offer a cheaper alternative to the hefty operations and maintenance (O&MN) costs associated with training maneuvers. Basing future programming decisions on specific, vice generic, threats could also save scarce defense budget dollars in R&D and procurement accounts. As the defense budget continues its downward "glide slope" in the 1990s, innovative and low cost alternatives to the traditional methods of preparing for war become essential.

The voracious demand for arms in the Gulf region shows no sign of diminishing any time soon. It must be assumed that suppliers will continue to meet demand. This is especially true given the spread of free-market capitalism into the formerly-communist lands. American efforts to halt, or at least control, the flow of arms into the region have met with limited success. As America itself continues to rearm its friends and allies in the region, it necessarily surrenders the moral high ground in preaching restraint in the inter-regional arms market. This dilemma facing the United States

must be resolved if it is to maintain its influence in the region.<sup>106</sup>

#### **E. U.S. ARMS TRANSFER POLICY OPTIONS**

The United States has three obvious policy options in dealing with this dilemma. First, it could unilaterally cease its own arms transfers to the region and hope that the rest of the world follows suit. This is an extremely risky proposition given the fact that the former Warsaw Pact nations and those nations still espousing communist ideology (China, North Korea, etc.) are fiscally strapped. Arms sales offer these nations one of the few readily available sources of hard currency. Expecting these arms suppliers to be shamed into following any noble example set by the United States is probably unrealistic. Also, given the recent U.S. arms sales

---

<sup>106</sup>See: William J. Broad, "Concern Raised as Emirates Seek Spy Satellite From U.S.," New York Times, 17 Nov 92, p. A-10. This article (about the possible sale of a U.S. reconnaissance satellite to the U.A.E.) succinctly frames the cost-benefit issues inherent in selling high-tech arms sales to allies:

"The dilemma," said John E. Pike, head of space policy at the Federation of American Scientists, a private Washington group, "is how to promote exports and American jobs without creating new military threats abroad. It's going to be one of the most challenging issues of the decade."

A Federal official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the Government was carefully considering the risks and benefits of the proposed (satellite) sale, which might run to several hundred million dollars.

"There are a number of folks who are not opposed to this kind of thing in principle," the official said. "But it's situational. It depends on which country, the conditions of sale and a number of related factors bearing on the security of the United States."

to its clients in the region<sup>107</sup>, it is unlikely that other suppliers would see such a move as anything but a hypocritical attempt by the United States to shore up a favorable shift in the status quo antebellum.<sup>108</sup>

Secondly, the United States could seek to establish a multilateral framework to control arms sales to the Gulf states. Given recent U.N. initiatives to monitor arms transfers and the unprecedented level of superpower cooperation seen in the Security Council during the Gulf War, this avenue would seem to offer a somewhat better chance for success than any unilateral action by the United States. However, economic factors would seem to mitigate against the realization a "leak-proof" regime. Once again, it is probably unlikely that any cash starved country would voluntarily give up a source of income that, at least in the minds of their leaders, upon which their national survival depends.

---

<sup>107</sup>Michael R. Gordon, "Cash-strapped Russia selling arms to China," New York Times, 18 Oct 92:

Administration officials say that the Russians would be selling weapons to Iran and China regardless of American sales (of combat aircraft to Taiwan and Saudi Arabia). But Russian officials have cited such deals to justify their exports.

<sup>108</sup>"How to Slow the Slaughter," New York Times, 16 Oct 92, p. A-18. This editorial portrays the arms embargo in Bosnia-Herzegovina as one which serves to reinforce an unfavorable status quo. It argues that an arms embargo in the Yugoslavian case is contrary to U.S. interests:

The Serbs and others have all the arms they need, and can circumvent the embargo to get more. The present embargo disarms only Bosnia. The U.S. can persuade the Security Council to drop the embargo, then help arm the Bosnians with big guns to resist aggression.

The spotty record of success seen thus far in enforcing the mandates of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) would seem to give credence to the notion that multilateral arms control schemes have yet to reach a level of maturity that would offer much hope of success in the near-term. A strong argument can be made that an effort should at least be made to institute a multilateral plan. The basis of such an argument is that in setting up and attempting to enforce a multilateral arms control plan, valuable lessons could be learned and applied to similar ventures in the future. However, given the history of past failures coupled with current global financial circumstances, the likelihood of success would appear to be too low to warrant serious U.S. consideration.

The third option is for the United States to continue to arm its regional friends and allies in an attempt to maintain a favorable balance of power that deters future conflict. This approach is attractive for two reasons. First, it ensures that nations friendly to American interests remain regional powers, whether they are involved in a collective security arrangement tacitly allied with the U.S. or they go it alone. It is never a bad idea to have powerful friends (that are indebted to you) when you are forced to do business in a dangerous neighborhood.

## F. DEMOCRATIC REFORM AND U.S. ARMS TRANSFER POLICY

The strategy discussed above, of course, is anathema to those who espouse the unfettered promotion of democratic governments above all else in U.S. foreign policy. Our friends in the Gulf region are unlikely to fully embrace participatory democracy any time soon, regardless of whether or not we supply them with arms.<sup>109</sup> A policy of arming nations with interests similar to ours (regional stability, unimpeded freedom of navigation, free market pricing of commodities, etc,) makes sense irrespective of political persuasion. The ultimate goal of the democratization of Gulf nations is a long-term venture. If our friends in the Gulf are able, with U.S. assistance, to maintain a robust level of national and regional security, thereby assuaging fear of an attack by would-be regional hegemony, they can be gently but persistently prodded to undertake democratic reforms.<sup>110</sup> The

---

<sup>109</sup>Jack Anderson and Michael Binstein, "Kuwaitis Find Selves at a Loss Without Bush," The Monterey County Herald, 27 Nov 92, p. 14A. This article notes that democratic reforms are occurring, however slowly, in post-Desert Storm Kuwait:

Realizing that Bush had been prodded and pushed during the (election) campaign about Kuwait's lack of democracy, many were determined to make reinstatement of the National Assembly a harbinger of their nascent democracy, and a repose to the rest of the world. It was also a chance to deliver a kind of October surprise to the embattled president - something he could point to with accomplishment in the first week of October....But despite their best efforts to support Bush, right down to showcasing of free and fair elections, the president lost.

<sup>110</sup>See: Benjamin C. Schwarz, "Morality Is No Mantra," New York Times, 20 Nov 92, p. A-19. Schwarz offers the following pragmatic advice to the incoming Clinton administration:

use of arms sales to states in the region allows the United States to: 1) wield significant political influence in the target state(s) and; 2) ensure that the regional balance of power is one that is conducive to the protection of U.S. national interests.

Democracies are not built overnight, as the nations of Eastern Europe are finding out. The United States should gently nurture a shift from autocracy to democracy in the region while ensuring a favorable correlation of forces. Granted, this approach could be fraught with danger. Ultimately, skillful diplomacy<sup>111</sup> should be able to achieve the desired results (democratic reforms) while protecting American economic and security interests during the transition period. This approach is not without recent precedents.

---

Rather than pursue the dream of ordering and democratizing the globe, Mr. Clinton should remember that foreign policy primarily serves defense, not ambitions of greatness. It would not be neo-isolationist but realism for him to urge Americans to accept foreign policy's modest but difficult task of enabling us to survive and prosper in the world as it exist. Its purpose is not to transform global politics, nor to change men's hearts, nor to busy ourselves with the alleged cause of mankind.

<sup>111</sup>The author assumes, perhaps generously, that the United States is capable of skillful and sagacious regional diplomacy. The post-Cold War shift in focus outlined in The National Military Strategy of the United States bodes well for future regional diplomatic and military efforts:

Because of the changes in the strategic environment, the threats we expect to face are regional rather than global. We will, of course, deter and defend against strategic nuclear attacks as we have for the past forty years....However, our plans and resources are primarily focused on deterring and fighting regional rather than global wars. (p. 11, emphasis added)

Nicaragua and the Philippines are moderately successful examples of the two-pronged approach. Granted, these two nation's paths toward democratic reform were far from obstacle-free. Many serious problems, both internal and external, had to be overcome during the painful transition. However, with the benefit of these recent experiences, the United States should be able to assist the GCC states in avoiding many of the pitfalls commonly encountered in the transition to democracy.

The second attraction of the strategy of ensuring that our regional friends remain powerful is economic. As previously mentioned, arms sales offer the United States a lucrative export market. The success of American technology in Operation Desert Storm ensured that the world market for high technology weapons will remain firm. Even with top-shelf Russian arms becoming freely available on the open market, most nations would rather purchase the combat-proven American systems that carried the Gulf War, if given the choice. The stagnant U.S. economy needs robust arms exports for several reasons; to improve the balance of trade, to retain perishable defense contracting skills (highly-skilled labor, defense engineering, defense-oriented research and development, management, etc.), and to preserve the defense industrial base in the period of the U.S. defense reductions.

As the Department of Defense begins placing fewer orders for weapons and other military equipment, there exists the

danger that certain defense contractors (some of whom would be absolutely critical to the nation's security in wartime) could convert exclusively to civilian production. Once converted to civilian production, these firms would be hard-pressed to reconstitute their defense-related capabilities in a surge to war.

A solution to this problem would be to allow these firms to compete, with limited restrictions<sup>112</sup>, for overseas defense contracts. This solution offers several benefits. It enables the United States to retain its defense industrial-base, which is the envy of the world. At the same time it saves defense industries the (not insignificant) expenses involved in a substantial conversion to civilian production. While it is unlikely that foreign orders will completely make up for the loss of major U.S. military contracts, this solution offers the opportunity for the nation to retain a sizeable portion of its defense industrial base at a minimum cost to both defense industries and the federal government. The counter-argument posits that the United States has surrendered enough civilian

---

<sup>112</sup>A totally free market approach to arms sales is clearly unacceptable. There must be some government control over arms transfers to prevent, for example, the sale of domestically produced weapons to a nation openly hostile to American interests. In any loosening of the restrictions on the arms trade, the government and industry must work hand-in-glove to ensure that their respective interests are protected. The government's interests are primarily concerned with national security, an expanding economy, and ideological matters. Defense contractors must balance the profit motive with larger security concerns. Japan's MITI offers a model for government-industry cooperation in attempting to attain common goals.

industry to overseas competition already, and we will never recoup these losses if we continue to concentrate our efforts in military production. This argument is analogous to closing the barn door after the horses have escaped. While the United States could conceivably recapture some of the civilian markets it has already lost, the question must be whether or not a massive effort to regain all the lost markets is a wise pursuit given the current economic health of our major competitors? It probably would make economic sense to concede, for example, the lion's share of the consumer electronics industry to Japan. No amount of government intervention is likely to win back this industry. Instead the United States should seek to cut its losses in those civilian industries where it is clearly behind its overseas competitors.

This is not meant to imply that the United States should completely sacrifice the high ground in the high-tech consumer goods battlefield. The United States should seek to position itself to take advantage of its massive research and development infrastructure, and aggressively market products which utilize cutting-edge technologies. With the lessening of East-West tensions, the United States should reorient its R & D efforts to accommodate the new strategic realities. In the post-Cold War world economic strength and diversity could well replace military might as the key characteristic of a superpower nation. The United States should seek to nurture

technologies vital to its economic competitiveness in the next century.<sup>113</sup>

In developing and marketing high technology weapons for export to its allies, the United States should, naturally, avoid overreliance on arms production as an engine for economic growth. Even given the assumption that a market for high tech arms will always be there, the United States must never be solely an arms merchant. The United States should seek to maintain a diverse economic foundation, which can swiftly bring to world markets those goods which incorporate new technologies and manufacturing processes, so that it can adapt to any likely contingency. In the event of an outbreak

---

<sup>113</sup>See: Frank Gibney, "The Selling of What America Should Be Keeping," New York Times, 30 Oct 92, p. B-10. This review of Martin and Susan J. Tolchin's book Selling Our Security: The Erosion of America's Assets, examines the changing security environment and the role that economics plays in the national defense:

"None of America's major trading partners," they (the Tolchins) write, "subscribes to the U.S. vision of free trade. None regard technology with a cavalier notion that ownership doesn't matter - unless they are the owners. Instead, each nurtures technologies it deems vital to its economic competitiveness in the 21st century."

With this as their starting point, the Tolchins go on to show first how American policy makers' trust in a global economy - still piously believed to be based on the laws of comparative advantage - has sacrificed national security considerations to the point where much of our leading technology in the Persian Gulf war, for example was dependent on foreign suppliers. But the problem transcends mere defense concerns. In the post-cold war world, it is almost impossible to disentangle a nation's security from a strong and technology-oriented economy, whether or not the connection with actual defense needs is a direct one.

of peace, the United States must have several fall back positions to ensure its continued economic prosperity.

#### G. CONCLUSION

While the strategy outlined above for dealing with arms proliferation in the Persian Gulf region may seem overly defeatist to arms control advocates, it is based on economic-strategic pragmatism. The goal of reducing arsenals, both regionally and globally, is certainly a worthy one. However, when faced with the practical realities described above, the United States cannot afford to take a holier-than-thou stance if it expects to protect its regional interests.

The United States must aggressively pursue both economic<sup>114</sup> and strategic<sup>115</sup> security as the most pressing of national priorities if it expects to compete in the new world order. While the United States can participate in and

---

<sup>114</sup>See: Frank Gibney, "The Selling of What America Should Be Keeping," New York Times, 30 Oct 92, p. B-10. This review makes the case that the definition of national security should be broadened:

Actually from the 1950's and 60's on, Americans thought of defense in very broad terms. Building roads, improving education and developing technology were all part of building up the national defense posture. But with the 80's...the definition of what was actually security shrank to a narrow, strictly military perimeter. Even in military applications, the idea of keeping a certain amount of technological productivity in this country was often sacrificed to a totally uncritical definition of global interdependence.

<sup>115</sup>See: "National Security, Redefined," New York Times (editorial), p. A-14.

contribute to measures designed to lower regional tensions, including arms control, it must always be prepared to fight and win should deterrence fail. Prudence dictates using American arms to shape the strategic environment in the Gulf. The added bonus of reaping domestic economic benefits while at the same time preserving the national defense industrial base further militates against a hasty cutback in the supply of American arms to our friends in the region.

#### IV. SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT<sup>116</sup>

##### A. INTRODUCTION

The primary reason for the United States' interest in the Persian Gulf region lies in its economic importance to the industrial nations of the world. The region supplies over half of the oil supplies for the economies of Western Europe and Japan and provides a significant portion of U.S. oil imports. The importance of unimpeded oil supplies to support Western economies has been demonstrated repeatedly during the last twenty years. The impact of the 1973 oil embargo, and the economic influence of OPEC in the 1970s provide two excellent examples. The United States has repeatedly stated its commitment to unrestricted access to the Gulf as demonstrated by the reflagging of Kuwaiti oil tankers in 1987, and the United States' reaction to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

During the Cold War, the Persian Gulf region was frequently mentioned as a possible site for superpower conflict. Additionally, the United States remained the principal supporter of the state of Israel. This situation put

---

<sup>116</sup>The author is indebted to the following U.S. Navy officers for their assistance in formulating the scenarios in this chapter: LCDR Sam Perez, LCDR Pat Brady, Lt Hamp All, LT Ken Szczublewski, LT Jim Pitts, and LT Brian Howes.

the United States in the unique position of arms supplier to the Arab countries of the region to counter Soviet influence, while at the same time being the arms supplier to the state of Israel to counter Arab threats to its existence. Now that the Cold War has ended and the Arabs and Jews are at least sitting together at the negotiating table, the strategic context for U.S. involvement in the region has been altered. Yet at the same time the need for uninterrupted oil supplies remains, and as a result the United States cannot nor should not abandon the region altogether.

The scenarios developed for this section concern themselves only with the nations which actually border the Persian Gulf littoral. The states considered include; Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, U.A.E., and Oman (note: the last six states on this list also comprise the entire membership of the GCC). It must be emphasized that these scenarios do not consider the entire Middle East region (e.g. Israel, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, etc.). There are a three reasons for not examining the entire Middle Eastern sector in this analysis.

First, the author believes that with the end of the Cold War, coupled with the election a Labor government in Israel, the intensity of the Arab-Israeli conflict has entered a new, and potentially less dangerous, stage. The likelihood of an Arab-Israeli conflict escalating into nuclear war between the United States and the C.I.S. is considered practically nil

given recent events. The former Soviet military empire has crumbled. Political leaders in what remains of the empire would be loathe to endanger national survival to engage in a regional conflict. It is practically inconceivable that Russia or any of the former Soviet republics would mount a militarily significant Middle Eastern campaign given the economic and social chaos in these fledgling democracies. Now that the Arabs and Israelis can no longer play the role of proxy agents in the greater East-West struggle, there is considerably more impetus for the two parties to reach a negotiated settlement to their hostilities.

The second factor for excluding nations other than those which border the Gulf has to do with the anticipated deterrent effect of Israeli nuclear weapons. Recent accounts credit Israeli with having as many as 200 nuclear devices.<sup>117</sup> For the present, at least, the Israelis enjoy a nuclear monopoly in the region. Although both Iraq and Iran have ambitious nuclear weapons programs, it is unlikely that either nation will reach anything resembling nuclear parity with Israel within the next twenty years. The only conceivable manner in which the Arab states could mount a credible nuclear threat to the Jewish State, at least in the short- to medium- term, would be to acquire a large quantity of advanced nuclear weapons from a third party or parties. Given the breakup of the former Soviet

---

<sup>117</sup>Leonard S. Spector, "Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East," Orbis, Spring 1992, p. 193.

Union and the resultant decentralization of Moscow's control over that nation's nuclear weapons stockpile, this possibility cannot be ignored nor discounted. However, if the safeguards provisions of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) are made more stringent and strictly enforced, a reasonable assumption in the wake of the discovery of Iraq's substantial nuclear programs after the 1991 war, this disposition of former-Soviet nuclear weapons can probably be avoided. It is the author's opinion that the reality of Israel's nuclear advantage, coupled with the rather dismal Arab military performances in their previous wars against the Jewish State, will deter another Arab-Israeli conflict in the short- to medium-term. Another deterrent to Arab-Jew hostilities is the American security commitment to Israel.

The final factor for limiting the scope of this analysis to Persian Gulf states is oil. Since the non-Persian Gulf nations of the Middle East do not possess significant (at least in Gulf terms) oil reserves, nor do they have access to them, it is unlikely that they will play a direct role in affecting future U.S. economic interests in the region. Oil is the lifeblood of modern capitalism. A lack of this vital resource, and the potential to use it as a bargaining chip, necessarily lessens any nation's influence among the economic powerhouses of the developed world.

The importance of Gulf oil to the West in general, and the United States in particular, is made apparent in the following excerpt:

A core of Gulf oil exporters is thus pivotal for the supply of oil to the world economy. This is a key reason for Washington's intervention in the Kuwait crisis. In addition to the increasing dependence of major consuming countries on the oil deposits in the area, important ideological and practical affinities between Gulf monarchies and the West make that reliance tolerable. Faced with rising oil import dependence, the Bush administration has made a strategic decision in favor of shoring up its Gulf allies militarily even while opposing policies at home that would constrain the American appetite for energy.

*These countries-Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates-have by far the most extensive oil reserves in the world, rivaled only by Iraq and Iran, and the ability to expand production capacities to meet growing world demand.*<sup>118</sup>

In broad terms, then, it would appear that the United States has but two plausible courses of action available to deal with its dependence on Gulf oil supplies. The first and most obvious, reducing demand for oil in the United States, is an expensive and long-term proposition. Additionally, recent U.S. energy policy has given little indication that decreasing reliance on foreign oil is taken seriously as a long-range planning goal. Expanded U.S. oil production is not likely in the near-term given the current and anticipated environmental, economic, and political conditions. Assuming, then, that America's love affair with petroleum will continue into the

---

<sup>118</sup>Paul Aarts and Michael Renner, "Oil and the Gulf War," Middle East Report, July-August 1991, p. 26 (emphasis added).

future, the goal of U.S. policy must be to *shape the strategic environment* in the Gulf region into a form amenable to U.S. national interests. "Shaping" operations, almost by definition, have to involve foresight and a proactive U.S. policy in regional affairs and diplomacy. Rather than putting out fires, as the United States has been wont to do in the past, U.S. policy should seek to prevent combustion in the tinder box, which the Gulf region surely is, in the first place.

The regional deterrence strategy outlined in the *National Military Strategy of the United States* would appear to offer planners an excellent framework on which to base future regional military operations:

By examining and anticipating the potential for instability or crisis, the regional CINCs develop plans for the employment of military assets (as well as examining the complementary economic, diplomatic, and political options). These options, used singly or in various combinations, can be carried out with the intent of deterring or averting crisis. They vary widely from large joint and combined operations and the deployment of task forces to small mobile training teams and low level military to military contacts. Forward presence forces...are fundamental to this concept.<sup>119</sup>

Forward military presence is, of course, but one way to shape the regional environment. The "complementary economic, diplomatic, and political options" are equally important shaping tools. Arms sales to allies, as discussed in the previous chapter, offer a means for the United States to

---

<sup>119</sup>National Military Strategy of the United States, January 1992, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1992), p. 12.

signal commitment to regional stability as well as ensuring a balance of power favorable to its national interests, in both geo-strategic and economic terms. The *National Military Strategy of the United States* acknowledges that the use of military force will frequently be the option of last resort: "Prior to committing U.S. forces to combat it must be determined that U.S. vital interests are at risk and that political, diplomatic, and economic measures have failed to correct the situation or have been ruled out for some other reason."<sup>120</sup>

The intention in formulating the following scenarios is to attempt to anticipate plausible futures, and then to chart possible U.S. strategies to shape the future regional environment to its desires by means short of combat. The common underlying factors which would appear to contribute to tension in the Gulf region are: 1) ethnic and religious differences (e.g. Arab-Persian, Sunni-Shi'ite); 2) oil production disputes (or disputes between haves and have-nots); 3) Islamic fundamentalism (or Islamism); and 4) U.S. political and military influence in the region.

The key religious differences associated with the region involve the split between the Sunni and Shia factions of the Islamic faith. Sunni is the predominant faction in the region, however Iran embraces Shi'ism and this, in addition to ethnic

---

<sup>120</sup>Ibid, p. 15.

differences, fuels much of the discord between Iran and the other Gulf states. The region of Iraq closest to the Persian Gulf waterway contains a significant Shia population.<sup>121</sup> This presents an important factor in determining the possibility of future conflicts in the region, especially if a new government were to supplant the Baathist regime in Baghdad.

Oil production disputes are not uncommon to the region. Iraq invaded Kuwait based in part on the pretense that Kuwait was producing too much oil and thus depriving Iraq of much needed oil revenues. This issue is also related to the tension between the haves and have-nots in the region. Iran and Iraq, by having the largest populations, consider themselves to be less fortunate than the other Gulf states, and thus have a general disdain for the opulent lifestyles of their neighbors.<sup>122</sup> This dislike is further exacerbated by GCC

---

<sup>121</sup>Norman Friedman, Desert Victory, (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1991), p. 11:

Modern Iraq has a Shi'ite majority (currently about 55 percent of the population) living in the southern half of the country, down to the Iranian and Saudi borders, and a large Kurdish minority (about 20 percent) in the north (including the oil area around Mosul and Kirkuk). To the extent that Iraqis have a national identity, it is probably concentrated in the Arab Sunni Muslims living around the Euphrates River....The country is ruled by the Sunni minority. However, as the Iran-Iraq War showed, the Shi'ites consider themselves distinct from their religious (but not ethnic) brethren in Iran.

<sup>122</sup>Iran and Iraq taken together comprise between 75 and 80 percent (depending on which census data is used) of the total population of the nations under consideration.

support for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War, and by GCC support of U.S. forces during the Gulf War.

Islamic fundamentalism must be an underlying factor in any attempt to discern plausible scenarios for the region. Iran, for the moment, appears to be drawing back from its embrace of Islamic fundamentalism. The threat of a renewed period of fundamentalism, however, is not too far beneath the surface of everyday life in the region. The Iranians, being non-Arab, are viewed as the threat in the Gulf region today by the GCC Arabs.

U.S. influence in the Gulf region is a significant consideration in the development of the following scenarios. This is due to the importance that the United States so obviously places on the region. The United States has made it clear that the Gulf region is of vital interest, and as such it will seek to maintain considerable military and political influence there. The scenarios presented will consider the impact that U.S. influence, both military and political, can have in this region, a region whose entire past has been marked by volatility. Consistent with the previously stated goal of employing sound policy to shape the strategic environment (with the ultimate aim of the United States achieving its regional objectives without having to resort to combat operations), it is imperative that the United States seek to maintain as much political and military sway in the region as possible. Should a crisis, for whatever reason,

flare up, the United States must take those steps that are deemed necessary to solve the problem on terms favorable to its long-range interests. If the environment has been successfully shaped by U.S. policy in the region, one could reasonably expect that the solution to a crisis lies somewhere short of the need to intervene militarily.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 are adapted and updated from Defending Arabia. This 1986 book by John E. Peterson examined Gulf-specific security issues as well as the greater Middle East conflict (Arab-Israeli). The tables have been adapted by the author to reflect the end of Cold War tensions between the United States and former USSR. Additionally, the focus of the tables has been narrowed to the nations actually bordering the Persian Gulf littoral, while to the greatest extent feasible excluding Arab-Israeli issues.<sup>123</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup>John E. Peterson, Defending Arabia, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), p. 118 and p. 121.

Table 4.1: U.S. Interests in the Gulf in the 1990s

---

Strategic interests

- I. Guarantee continued access to Gulf oil.
- II. Promote stability in the Gulf region

Tactical objectives

- 1. Maintain the capability for military intervention in the Gulf through:
  - a. Maintaining a viable military force for use in the Gulf
  - b. Continuing naval deployments in the Gulf and northern Arabian Sea.
  - c. Increasing efforts to gain contingency access to regional military facilities.
- 2. Deter military attack by regional powers through:
  - a. Stressing U.S. resolve to defend the region through the use of military force, if necessary
  - b. Preventing Iran from achieving regional hegemony
  - c. Continuing U.N. sanctions on Iraq until the Baathist regime is replaced by one more friendly to the West.
  - d. Ensuring through arms sales to friendly Gulf states that imbalances of power do not tempt aggressor nations into preemptive attacks
- 3. Support the status quo in friendly states in the region through:
  - a. Continuing supportive relationship with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), including:
    - i. Strong economic ties
    - ii. U.S. participation in GCC development efforts
    - iii. Continued cooperation on policies regarding the Middle East, particularly the Arab-Israeli conflict
  - b. Expanding military relationship with GCC states, including:
    - i. Enhanced U.S. military presence in the region
    - ii. Regularly scheduled U.S./GCC joint military exercises
    - iii. Increased military to military contacts, port visits, officer exchange programs, pre-positioning of materiel, etc.
    - iv. Opening preliminary discussions regarding the possible establishment a formal military alliance between the U.S. and GCC states
- 4. Promote stability in the region through:
  - a. Continuing efforts for a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.
  - b. Providing a counter-weight to increased Iranian or Iraqi hegemonic aspirations by providing high-profile security assistance to GCC states

Table 4.2: Threats to Gulf Security

- I. Regional threats (arising from the interaction of two or more Gulf states)
  - A. Armed conflict:
    - 1. Border tensions and clashes
    - 2. Full-scale war
  - B. Subversion directed by one state against another or others:
    - 1. Radical Islamic movements
    - 2. Poor versus rich movements
    - 3. Pan-Arab socialist movements
    - 4. Conservative/tribal opposition
  - C. Exacerbation of existing ethnic, religious, and/or social divisions:
    - 1. Arab-Iranian
    - 2. Sunni-Shi'i
    - 3. Ethnic irredentist/separatist movements (e.g. Kurds or Baluch)
    - 4. Iran-GCC tensions
- II. Internal threats (arising from factors within a single Gulf state)
  - A. Replacement of existing governments:
    - 1. Change of government within existing ruling family or power holding elite
    - 2. Coup by secular left
    - 3. Coup by Islamic radicals
  - B. Opposition to existing governments (deterioration of authority):
    - 1. Tensions due to political repression
    - 2. Isolated attacks on government (sabotage or terrorism)
    - 3. Insurrection (due to ethnic, sectarian or ideological divisions)
    - 4. Civil War or other absence of effective state authority or control
  - C. Policy changes in existing governments (conflicting with U.S. policy or interests):
    - 1. Economic issues of oil pricing and production levels
    - 2. 'Oil weapon' (the political use of oil supplies to influence or change U.S. policy)
- III. United States policies:
  - A. Unilateral military deployment to secure oil fields (direct invasion)
  - B. Unilateral military action against a Gulf state or states (similar to Iranian hostage rescue attempt)
  - C. Collaborative military action to restore status quo (similar to Operation Desert Storm)
  - D. Collaborative economic actions (e.g. U.N. import/export sanctions or investment restrictions)

## B. THE STATUS QUO SCENARIO

This scenario reflects a changing set of circumstances which closely follow the current situation in the region and projects it forward ten years into the future (2002). In this scenario, Iran continues to recover from the eight year war with Iraq. Although not possessing formidable *offensive* military power, Iran has the oil revenues and, more importantly, the population to support an army capable of regional power projection. Its regime less driven by rabid Islamic fundamentalism, Iran continues to moderate its foreign policies and moves closer to the political mainstream within the region. Although Iran is no longer a political pariah state, it is viewed with suspicion by the other Gulf states.

Iran's large and growing population, accelerating oil revenues, and an expanding role in regional affairs have given this nation a new perspective in Gulf affairs. Although the bloody war with Iraq ended in 1988 and several alliance initiatives have been made by Iraq, Iran continues to view Iraq as a dangerous military and political power. After coming to the conclusion that Iraq's quest for regional hegemony is in conflict with its own designs, Iran finds itself once again polarized as regards its neighbor to the west. After a series of political confrontations which signal an unwillingness to strengthen political ties, Iran and Iraq drift to opposite ends of the political spectrum within the Gulf region.

At the root of Iran's motives is a strong desire to raise its standard of living and to assume a leadership role in the Gulf region. After a decade of political and economic isolation, Iran finds itself in dire straits. Fanatical Islamic fundamentalism in Iran discouraged Western investment and political contacts. Iran's military has been unable to purchase high technology weaponry from Western sources. Iran was able to purchase considerable quantities of military hardware from Russia and China, but this equipment is technically inferior to the advanced Western systems which the GCC states have acquired. A key goal for Iran is to moderate the radical Islamic fundamentalism, with an eye towards attracting Western investment and eventually rearming its military with state of the art Western weapon systems.

Two significant factors stand in the way of Iran achieving these goals; Arab distrust and Iranian hard-line fundamentalists. Iraq views the situation as a zero sum game. Since Iran has openly declared it has no desire to enter into any type of alliance with Iraq, the Iraqi leadership believes that any gains made by Iran would be at the expense Iraq. Iraq will use any means available, perhaps only short of an all-out war, to deny a further Iranian military build-up and an accompanying increase in its regional influence. The persistent hard-line policies of Iran's religious clerics is the second factor which interferes with the political leadership's goals of increased political and military

leverage in regional affairs. Although the clerics no longer wield the near-absolute power they enjoyed during the reign of Ayatollah Khomeini, they nonetheless exert considerable influence within the government and society. The "religious right" vehemently opposes ties with Western governments. Dealings with the "Great Satan" (the U.S.) are still anathema to the religious leaders. Since the United States continues to wield considerable political and military influence within the region, while at the same time possessing the capital and military hardware which Iran needs to rebuild its armed forces, the issue of Islamic fundamentalism is taken seriously by both Washington and Tehran.

The differences between the moderate and fundamentalist factions are a source of continuous internal turmoil in Iran. Would-be successors to Ayatollah Khomeini have effectively handcuffed the moderate government. The religious leaders' inflexible position on Western investment and assistance continues to discourage outsiders from offering a helping hand to Iran. Although modest amounts of Japanese and European capital have been invested in Iran, it has had little effect on the nation's macro-economic health. Religious leaders and government officials continue to disagree on both external and internal political goals. As a consequence Iran continues to vacillate between progressive/pragmatic policies and the isolation brought about by embracing radical fundamentalism.

Iraq, on the other hand, continues to rebuild after a crippling defeat in the Persian Gulf War. Although Saddam Hussein has been able to maintain power, the political costs have been staggering. Iraq continues to be hampered by the effects of many of the peace treaty conditions which were imposed on it at the end of the war. Oil production has increased only slowly, far below that of all the other oil producing states in the Gulf region. Iraq has been consistently delinquent in making the U.N. mandated payments of war reparations to the Kuwaiti government. Saddam Hussein remains a political pariah. He has lost the support of several key allies in the region.

The Iraqi internal power base is maintained by brutally suppressing all opposition groups. Although Saddam has been able to maintain a grip on political power, it has not been without costs. Military leaders have been purged in Stalinesque fashion. Top government officials who have advocated softening hard-line political positions have been publicly executed. Various coalition elements have unsuccessfully attempted to overthrow the Baathist regime, with horrific results for the coup plotters and their sympathizers. Ethnic minorities continue to be brutalized as a matter of national policy. For the foreseeable future, there appear to be no groups or individuals with sufficient resources to threaten Saddam's grasp on power.

The Iraqi army remains a powerful force. However, they have been unable to rebuild to pre-war levels. Although they have been unable to buy sophisticated Western military equipment, they have been able to buy vast quantities of Russian and Chinese military equipment. This equipment, combined with Iraq's indigenously produced weapons, is slowly bringing Iraq's armed forces to a level where they could once again threaten their neighbors. Iraq's production of weapons of mass destruction, including a resurrected effort to build a nuclear weapon, remains a significant concern. Although post-war agreements stripped Saddam of most of his weapons, he was able to hide or rebuild many of his production facilities. His ability to acquire ballistic missiles and the technology to produce them has been a source of continued frustration to both the United States and the GCC states.

Kuwait continues to rebuild both its government and its petroleum industry. Although Kuwait has purchased sizeable quantities of military hardware and has restructured its armed forces, many of the lessons of Operation Desert Storm appear to have gone unlearned. The government continues to pay lip service to democratic reforms, while taking precious few meaningful steps towards achieving a truly democratic state. The majority of the labor force is imported from the third world nations of Asia and Africa. The threat of an Iraqi re-invasion continues to mount slowly. Kuwaiti efforts to oppose Iraqi aggression are meager at best.

The most significant political issue not directly related to the Gulf states is the Middle East peace initiative. Although the results have been largely insignificant thus far, they have signalled a willingness to communicate. The Israeli position has hardened. Offers to trade land for peace in the Golan Heights and the West Bank have been withdrawn after Arab negotiators attached conditions which were unacceptable from the Israeli negotiators' perspective. The Palestinians continue to generate world sympathy for their plight. Although the majority of Gulf states would prefer to see the Palestinians achieve self-rule, they realize that a compromise solution which legitimizes the Palestinian's claims, while leaving the door open for further negotiations, may offer their best hope for an eventual negotiated settlement. Iraq continues to oppose the peace initiatives and has attempted to subvert the process. A return to Israeli/Arab hostilities would significantly benefit Saddam Hussein by resurrecting Pan-Arabic sentiments in the region.

The region's root of power, petroleum production, continues to be a source of friction between Iraq, Iran, and the GCC states. Iraqi oil production continues to climb, however it remains far below pre-war levels. More importantly, Iraq continues to push for lower production quotas in order to increase the price of oil. Iranian production has increased to near maximum levels. Combined with the heavy Saudi and Kuwaiti production, an overabundance of supply has kept oil prices

below pre-war levels. Low oil revenues have negatively impacted Iraq's ability to rebuild its damaged infrastructure and pay war reparations to Kuwait. Disputes over oil production and pricing have been the most destabilizing factors in the region.

The failure of Iran and Iraq to combine their efforts and work towards a unified political and military effort has left a marked impression on the region. Since neither has been able to exert significant military leverage, the GCC continues as a rather loose alliance. The lack of an overarching threat fails to ignite tight military cohesion within the GCC. Of the GCC states, Saudi Arabia maintains the largest and most technologically advanced military. Acquisition of high technology American hardware has significantly contributed to Saudi's military power. Although Saudi Arabia lacks the population base to field a large standing military, its high technology weapons systems have somewhat mitigated this perceived shortcoming. As long as oil revenues remain stable, the Saudi government should be able to maintain internal political stability.

The remainder of the GCC states continue to modernize their forces. However, their small populations preclude them from being a threat to anyone except each other. They have been able to exert only a minor political influence in the region. The GCC states realize that the weakness of Iran and Iraq increase their relative safety margins. Saudi military

modernization and a continued U.S. presence in the region further contributes to the maintenance of regional security.

The United Nations will continue to monitor the weapons production capability of Iraq through the turn of the century. Periodic inspections by United Nations teams occur to ensure that Iraq is not attempting to rebuild its nuclear, chemical, and/or biological weapons production capability. Because Saddam Hussein has remained in power, the international community harbors a basic mistrust of Iraqi intentions. There is widespread concern that Saddam will use any weapon of mass destruction that he can get control of against one or more of the countries which opposed him in the Gulf War of 1991. In the eight year war with Iran, as well as in attempts to quell his own restive minority groups, Saddam showed no compunction in employing chemical weapons.

Iraq also has internal ethnic tensions and civil disorder that continue into the twenty-first century. In northern Iraq the Kurdish uprising is still a thorn in Saddam's side. Operation Provide Comfort, which the coalition mounted to protect the Kurds that fled northward at the end of the 1991 war, has not been formally terminated. U.S., French, and British aircraft still conduct patrols over Iraq north of the 36<sup>th</sup> parallel as a reminder to Saddam Hussein that further genocide directed against the Kurdish population will not be tolerated. The Kurdish rebels are still pressing for an

independent and autonomous Kurdistan in the northern Euphrates valley.

In southern Iraq, Shi'ite rebels continue to foment revolution against the Baathist regime. The Shi'ites are being supplied with weapons, soldiers, and food from fundamentalist forces within Iran. Iranian support for the Shia uprising in southern Iraq contributes significantly to the high level of diplomatic tension between Baghdad and Teheran. Although Operation Southern Watch<sup>124</sup> was officially terminated in early 1994, the United States and its allies have made it clear to Baghdad that it could be rapidly reconstituted if the Iraqi Air Force resumed attacks on the Shi'ites. This implied threat has, thus far, successfully deterred Saddam from resuming offensive airstrikes directed against Shi'ites in the south of Iraq. In short, continued ethnic unrest threatens Saddam's grip on power in Iraq.

To help maintain stability in the region and to deter any aggressive actions by either Iran or Iraq, the United States has maintained a significant naval presence in the Persian Gulf littoral. The standard U.S. naval presence in the Gulf has consisted of at least five warships and one nuclear attack submarine. Of the surface ships, at least two are advanced

---

<sup>124</sup>The U.S. led operation which in September 1992 created a no-fly zone in Iraq south of the 32<sup>nd</sup> parallel. This operation prevented Iraqi aircraft from making strikes on Shi'ite positions in the southern marshes of that country.

Aegis cruisers. One of the Aegis cruisers is configured for anti-tactical ballistic missile (ATBM) area defense.<sup>125</sup> The other is a conventionally configured CG-47, capable of defending against tactical aviation and cruise missile threats. The Gulf surface action group (GULFSAG) also includes at least one DDG-51 class destroyer with enhanced shallow water ASW capability. The presence of the SSN is intended primarily to deter Iranian Kilo-class diesel submarines from conducting offensive operations.

An aircraft carrier makes at least one trip into the Gulf every six months, or more frequently and in greater numbers if the tactical situation dictates. The GULFSAG provides direct support for the carrier when one forays into the Gulf. If tensions in the region are determined to be low to normal, the remainder of the carrier battle group (CVBG) stays in the North Arabian Sea and remains less than one day steaming time from any scene of action in the Gulf should their presence be required. In periods of heightened tensions, the entire CVBG transits into the Gulf in defensive formation. At least one ATBM cruiser accompanies the battle group and provides area defense against the possibility of a Silkworm missile attack. The Strait of Hormuz must be sanitized of mines before the

---

<sup>125</sup>See: Robert Holzer and Barbara Opall, "Navy Looks for Ship-Based Scud Interceptor," Navy Times, 14 Dec 92, p. 39. This article examines U.S. Navy plans to deploy "ship-based missile interceptor(s) best-suited to protect entire regions from attack by Scud-type tactical ballistic missiles" at the turn of the century.

CVBG transits this chokepoint. Shipboard helicopter mine countermeasures (MCM) are augmented by an MCM craft homeported in Bahrain if it is determined likely that the Straits have been mined. Pre-positioned materiel configured in unit sets (POMCUS) is maintained aboard Fast Sealift Ships (FSS) in Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. The nearest U.S. ground forces are stationed in Western Europe and the nearest U.S. air forces are stationed in Turkey. Saudi Arabian E-3A Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft, with at least one U.S. Air Force liaison officer aboard on each operational mission, still provide the CINC, as well as all data link capable combat units, a real-time air picture. A plot of the real-time air/surface/subsurface picture is fused and broadcast to all subscribers of the theater C<sup>3</sup>I network.

One of the lessons of Operations Desert Shield and Storm was the importance of adequate lift in conducting military operations in far flung locations. The U.S. Congress passed legislation mandating that Defense Department increase funding for, and emphasis on, this often neglected aspect of military operations. As a result, by the turn of the century, the C-17 fleet is nearing completion and the United States is far less reliant on foreign-flagged shipping to conduct military operations in areas such as the Persian Gulf. The Military Sealift Command acquired an additional 20 Fast Sealift Ships (FSS) in the 1990s. These ships are capable of sustained

speeds of 24 knots and greatly increased surge shipping capability.<sup>126</sup> The lift problem, while not solved, has been substantially reduced by 2002.

The GCC is beginning to assume a larger role in regional security. The Saudis have taken the lead role in providing Arabian Peninsula air defenses. The GCC has purchased and deployed upgraded *Patriot* missile batteries from the United States. Furthermore, they are negotiating, albeit very tentatively, with Israel to acquire the *Arrow* missile defense system. The GCC states continue to display reluctance to allowing any permanent basing of U.S. forces within their territorial borders. However, substantial POMCUS in the GCC nations somewhat alleviates this weakness in the combined U.S./GCC deterrence strategy. Additionally, regular military and logistic exercises simulate reinforcing the GCC states in wartime. In short, the United States and GCC should be well positioned to repel a unilateral attack on the oilfields of the peninsula by either Iran or Iraq.

---

<sup>126</sup>See: Robert Holzer, "The Moving Man," Navy Times, 19 Oct 92, p. 36. This interview with Vice Admiral Michael Kalleres, Commander, Military Sealift Command, addresses the major challenges facing the MSC in the post-Cold War era. See also: Eric Schmitt, "Huge Ships Are Carrying Supplies to the Marines," New York Times, 7 Dec 92, p.A-7.

### C. THE IRAN-IRAQ COALITION SCENARIO

This scenario falls under the rubric of "worst case" planning. It is based upon a possible Iran/Iraq coalition arrayed against the nations of the GCC. For the purposes of this scenario, it is assumed that a precondition for any Iran/Iraq coalition would have to be a fall from power of the Baathist regime in Baghdad. Certain conditions could conceivably lead to the fall of the Iraqi Baathist government. A Kurdish/ Shi'ite coalition with Iranian support could possibly overthrow and replace the government of Saddam Hussein. A Kurdish condition for this temporary alliance might be the eventual recognition by Iran of an independent Kurdistan in northern Iraq. In an attempt to win Kurdish support, the Iraqi Shi'ites might be willing to abdicate all claims to territory north of the 36<sup>th</sup> parallel. In return, Kurdish rebels would agree to support the Iraqi Shi'ites in their struggle to overthrow the government of Saddam and his Baathist party. Iran, in this scenario, contributes weapons, financial support, soldiers, and military advice to the Iraqi Shi'ite cause in order to promote Shi'ite fundamentalism in the region.

This scenario envisions that the Iraqi Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), formerly an elite and extremely loyal military entity, would be weakened by purges initiated by Baathist leadership. Several unsuccessful attempts to overthrow the

central government, engineered by high-ranking IRGC officers, induced extreme paranoia in the leadership of the Baathist regime. They tarred the IRGC with an excessively broad brush. In their attempts to stem another attempt at a military coup d'etat, they alienated the rank and file of the IRGC.

The Kurd/Shi'ite coalition with Iranian support would successfully overthrow the Iraqi Baathist regime. As the Baghdad government was overthrown, Saddam Hussein would be deposed. A fundamentalist Shi'ite party would establish a replacement government in Iraq. After the demise of the Baathist regime, it is assumed that Iraqi Sunni Muslims would not be persecuted because of their Islamic cultural heritage. Arab-Persian ethnic difficulties persist, but the autocratic clerics in Baghdad are able suppress overt ethnic tension with pleas invoking the primacy of rebuilding the nation of Iraq. The clerical leadership in Baghdad has established a strong and faithful national police corps to ensure that the populace adheres to their government by decree. Subsequently, Islamic fundamentalist sympathies in both Iran and Iraq allow nationalistic antagonisms between these two nations to be overcome.

More recent differences, such as the defection of Iraqi combat aircraft during the 1991 Gulf War, are resolved by mutual consent of the two nations. Iran donates the aircraft in question to the newly formed Islamic League. This alliance, consisting solely of Iran and Iraq, immediately begins to

attempt to exert influence in the region. The Islamic League makes harsh demands in the areas of foreign policy, oil production and pricing policies, and internal religious practices. In the area of foreign policy it attempts to pressure Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, to sever ties with the West. Particularly severe pressure is directed towards Saudi Arabia. The Islamic League has threatened a Jihad against the Saudis if they do not capitulate to League demands. The Saudi royal family, embroiled in an internecine battle over who will succeed the terminally-ill King Fahd, fails to present a unified response to the League. Specific demands of the Islamic League include:

- The destruction of all pre-positioned American military equipment on the Arabian Peninsula
- An immediate and total pull-out of the American military presence in Bahrain
- An immediate discontinuance of all joint U.S./GCC military exercises
- The establishment of a system of charging user fees for all maritime traffic entering the Persian Gulf via the Strait of Hormuz: a move which would constitute a clear violation of the concept of freedom of the seas.

In the area of oil production, the Islamic League begins to produce the maximum amount of oil possible while simultaneously demanding that GCC states drastically reduce

oil production. The GCC states fail to show firm resolve in the matter of oil production, instead calling for a negotiated settlement. These demands, coupled with a lack of resolve displayed on the part of the GCC states, cause chaos in world financial markets as speculators drive the price of petroleum skyward on the spot market. The United States and European Community (EC) have been engaging in a trade war (sparked by the issue of farm subsidies), and are unable to present a unified and coherent Western response to League oil production demands. Global oil shortages become increasingly common.

Internal religious behavior is also the subject of League demands. The League demands complete control over all holy sites in the Gulf region. Only this, the League argues, will ensure that the holy sites remain pure in the eyes of Allah. To establish League control of the holy sites of Mecca and Medina, Iran and Iraq demand that League troops be granted access to, and allowed to establish garrisons in, the territory of Saudi Arabia.

The Turkish government, weakened by years of unsuccessfully attempting to put down an insurrection by the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK), has overextended its military and alienated large segments of its population. In response to Islamic League demands, Turkey exerts pressure on the West in two ways. First, the Turks deny the use of their airfields for most U.S. military flights. Although U.S. and NATO aircraft are still allowed to take off and land on a limited basis, any

military aircraft which is armed is denied clearance. Secondly, NATO troops stationed on Turkish soil are severely harassed by the local populace. Western soldiers and airmen are jeered and frequently the victims of assault when they dare to venture outside of military bases. The government in Ankara has made half-hearted efforts to reign in the restive Turkish population but has had little success.

In the early 1990s three tactical nuclear weapons mysteriously disappeared during transport from Kazakhstan to Russia. Additionally, while Western efforts to employ high level nuclear scientists left jobless after the collapse of the Soviet Union were generally considered successful, lower level Russian assembly and manufacturing technicians were unemployed and actively sought jobs abroad. Reliable sources in the Saudi Arabian delegation in Washington allege that at least twenty of these technicians have hired on with the Islamic League, enticed by generous salaries and subsidized housing. In response to Western inquiries concerning their nuclear weapons programs, both Iran and Iraq issued publicly stated policies resembling the United States' "neither confirm nor deny" (NCND) policy. Additionally, the Islamic League has refused to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect sites suspected of being nuclear weapons facilities.

The newly formed Islamic League has attempted to establish regional hegemony via four broad areas of influence. The areas

include political/diplomatic leverage, military power, economics, and ideology. All four "pillars of power" are being used in varying degrees in an attempt to establish Iran/Iraq dominance in the Gulf region.

Political/Diplomatic - In this area, the League is pursuing its goal of domination of the Gulf region by attempting to exert diplomatic and economic pressure within OPEC to control the price of oil. The League is attempting to drive oil prices up to increase revenues from their production and to harm Western nations which remain reliant on oil exports from the region. Additional actions in this area would be to attempt to change the orientation of the GCC from a reliance on cooperation with the Western powers towards a more inwardly focused, regional orientation. Islamic League provocateurs have infiltrated Saudi Arabia with instructions to inflame popular discontent and attempt to foment revolution against the ruling family's regime. Although League provocateurs have, thus far, had very limited success in inciting large-scale rebellions, the Saudi government is taking this threat to national stability seriously. In response, the Saudi military has devoted a significant portion of its budget to counter-insurgency operations. Iran and Iraq have also extended invitations to all other Gulf states to join the Islamic League. The intent of the League leadership is the ultimate disestablishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council with,

eventually, all Gulf States allied against the West under the Islamic League banner.

Military - The Islamic League's strongest area of influence lies in the sphere of its military power. It has accelerated the naval build-up in the Persian Gulf in an attempt to control this vital waterway. The League has discovered that the nations of the former Soviet Union are willing to sell any combat system in their national inventories, as well as providing operator training, on either a cash or barter (for oil) basis. Additionally, the People's Republic of China and North Korea have expressed a willingness to sell advanced military equipment to the League in return for hard currency. In an effort to reduce their reliance on third-party suppliers, the League would also undertake to indigenously co-produce ships and armaments as the two nations pursue their goal of regional hegemony. The possession of nuclear weapons by the League further strengthens their military capability. The League might target Kuwait City and Riyadh in an attempt to use the threat of punishment to achieve its objectives.

Should these efforts prove insufficient, a two-pronged offensive could be launched to consolidate control of the region's oil resources. The attack would originate from both the north and the south. League forces would use Kuwait City as a pivot point on the drive along the eastern shores of the Arabian Peninsula. In the south League forces would launch from Bandar Abbas across the Strait of Hormuz to occupy Oman,

U.A.E., Qatar, and the southern half of the Arabian peninsula (with the exception of Yemen). Any remaining Saudi or Bahraini forces would be crushed between the two advancing armies in a pincer move.

**Economics** - The two Islamic League members do not possess any considerable measure of economic power. Their ability to establish hegemony over the region via economic means has been quite limited. The League, after diplomatic pressure in OPEC fails to increase oil prices, attempts to weaken the economies of the GCC states by flooding the world oil market. This action forces the GCC states to increase their output in order to maintain revenues, because the price of oil drops in response to the increased supply. The decrease in marginal revenues associated with higher production levels convinces the GCC states to go back to the pre-crisis output. The resulting net decrease in revenues sends shock waves through the domestic economies of the GCC states. Islamic League strength is enhanced as they fan the discontent of GCC populations and direct it against the royal families of the affected GCC states.

**Ideology** - Ideology has become a more potent force than nationalism in 2002. The power of an attractive ideology which stresses fundamental Islamism is used by the Islamic League in an attempt to attain its goal of regional hegemony. The League encourages and actively supports those political parties which are fundamentalist in orientation in the GCC states. League

propaganda portrays the Saudi royal family as unfit guardians and caretakers of the holy shrines in Mecca and Medina, while proclaiming the itself as the rightful champion and protector of Islamic tradition. In the GCC states, a combination of internal instabilities, disparity in living standards, and demographic pressures, has caused large segments of the GCC states' populations to view the ideological appeals propounded by the Islamic League sympathetically.

#### **D. IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY**

If either of the two scenarios outlined above were actually to unfold, the effect on U.S. regional interests would be widely dissimilar. In the Status Quo case, the U.S. would probably be able to continue to protect its national interests, albeit without exerting an overwhelming influence in the region. The Iran-Iraq Coalition, which conceivably could arise if the United States were to abdicate its roles as guardian of regional stability, would severely threaten U.S. regional interests. Table 4.3 on the following page contrasts the major elements of each scenario.

TABLE 4.3

	Status Quo	Iran-Iraq Coalition
Status of Iraqi Baath Party	Survives, but weakened	Overthrown, replaced by fundamentalist Shi'ite party
Iranian Foreign Policy	Moderate, religious right still exerts influence	Dominated by fundamentalist clerics
Iran-Iraq relations	Continued tensions	Greatly improved, Islamic League formed
Iraq-U.S. relations	Continued poor	Significant deterioration
Iran-U.S. relations	Slight moderation of tensions	Significant deterioration
Kurd-Shia relations with Iraqi govt	Continued Iraqi repression of ethnic groups	Fully co-opted into Islamic League and Iraqi govt
Arab-Persian relations	Ethnic tensions persist/worsen	League suppresses ethnic tensions
Religious differences	Religious tensions persist/worsen	League suppresses religious tensions
Iran-Iraq military strength	Iran seeking high tech weaponry. Iraq still attempting to recover from 1991 war	League rapidly building up military strength. Nuclear capability?
Status of GCC alliance	Assuming a larger role in regional security	GCC fails to show firm resolve in dealing with League
Oil prices	Below 1990 war levels	Spot market prices going ever higher
U.S. regional involvement	High - centerpiece is GULFSAG.	Low - GCC reluctant to turn to West for assistance.
Economic factors	Focus on raising standards of living	League uses oil as an economic weapon
Ideological factors	Religious right still a factor	Ideological warfare waged by League

A far less likely future for the Gulf is one in which regional peace and harmony is seen as an achievable goal. A third plausible future outcome is one in which frictions between Iraq and Iran increase, resulting in a regional stalemate. In the event that any possible coalition between the two largest military powers in the region is effectively nil, the United States and the GCC states could conceivably capitalize on the Iran/Iraq stalemate and seek to effect an enduring peace in the region.

If the U.N.-sponsored economic embargo of Iraq were to be kept in place for many years, it is possible that a desperate Iraqi public would eventually succeed in removing Saddam Hussein from power. Given the security apparatus Saddam has in place, this outcome would only be possible by unconventional means (e.g. a military coup d'etat or an assassination) If the Baathist regime were replaced by a centrist-oriented faction, it is possible that this new Iraqi government would, out of economic necessity, be more responsive to Western and GCC demands for greater regional stability.

A vaguely worded promise to loosen the economic sanctions, on the condition that the new Iraqi government capitulated to the most pressing Western and GCC demands and altered their national behavior to comply with widely recognized norms and conventions, could be offered as an incentive. However, the U.N. would have to make any relaxation of sanctions also contingent upon Iraq making regularly scheduled payments of

war reparations to Kuwait. International pressure could be put on the new Iraqi government to abide by the letter and spirit of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Iraq would still feel a pressing need to maintain conventional forces sufficient for defense of its borders, but the nation's primary efforts could be redirected towards rebuilding its war torn economy.

At the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons 1995 extension conference, the United States and its allies should propose changes which increase the technical obstacles to make undetected acquisition of nuclear weapons more difficult, and to decrease the political incentives for acquiring nuclear weapons. These measures should include: information sharing between intelligence agencies and the IAEA; a new amendment by the United States to its Foreign Assistance Act that prohibits U.S. aid for any nation that does not sign the NPT; all signatories of the NPT pledge the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS); multilateral arms reduction talks occur between all NWS; and the requirement the U.N. sponsored sanctions be enforced against nations which violate the NPT.

If outside powers, with the United States in the lead, could somehow convince the nations of the Gulf that massive expenditures for offensive armaments contribute to regional instability (with the additional disadvantage of serving to deplete national treasuries), a dramatic change could be effected in regional relations. The United States could

continue to sell arms to the nations of the region, but it must emphasize the defensive nature of those weapon systems that are sold. This is not a new challenge for the United States. Israeli objections to U.S. high technology arms sales to Saudi Arabia (particularly the E-3 AWACS) were overcome, in part, by stressing the defensive nature of the systems. Additionally, the United States could attach conditions to weapons sales to ensure that the weapons are not used in an offensive manner.<sup>127</sup>

The long-term goal of U.S. policy must be to replace offensive military power with economic might as the defining symbol of national prestige in the Gulf region. This will be a herculean task, given the region's long and violent history. The task is further complicated by the seeming contradiction of recent U.S. arms sales to its friends in the region. If, however, if U.S. leaders and diplomats are able to successfully communicate to regional actors that these arms sales were intended to shore up the regional balance of power and are strictly defensive in nature, U.S. arms sales could be cast in a different, less threatening light.

---

<sup>127</sup>Several methods (e.g. making spare parts, ammunition, training, maintenance support, etc., contingent upon the buyer-nation not using the American-supplied systems in an offensive mode) are available to the United States to ensure that it retains a modicum of control over the weapons that it sells to its clients. In post-Shah Iran, for example, the cutoff of U.S. materiel support led to several high technology weapons systems (F-14 fighters, P-3 maritime patrol aircraft, etc.) falling into such a state of disrepair that they became virtually incapable of mounting offensive operations.

In concert with supporting regional economic development, the United States and its allies should gently push for an eventual increase in democratization throughout the region. It is hoped that Western efforts to induce similar changes in perceptions of national power in the states of the former Soviet Union can provide a framework for a similar policy in the Gulf.

The United States should continue to press for further implementation of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). Diplomatic efforts designed to persuade the other major suppliers of high technology weapons to the Gulf region (Russia, China, North Korea, U.K., France, etc.) should be given renewed emphasis at the State Department and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA). Another arms control initiative, the U.N. proposal to track conventional arms transfers worldwide, with the stated aim of rendering the international arms market transparent, should receive continued U.S. support, as well as financial and operational assistance.

The possibility of Russian nuclear expertise proliferating to the Gulf region could have profound implications for U.S. national security. It is in the United States' national interest to ensure that ex-Soviet nuclear weapons scientists and technicians are not allowed to sell their expertise to the highest bidder in the international arms market. An international free enterprise consortium should set up an

institute for peaceful research in Russia. This institute could give unemployed nuclear scientists and technicians an opportunity to do meaningful research. These institutes would be commissioned to seek solutions to the most vexing scientific problems of the day.

Similarly, the United States and its allies should seek to aid the Russian arms industry as it converts to commercial applications. Financial aid should be augmented with management expertise to smooth the painful transition from a war economy towards a free market. The ultimate goal of the United States should be to assist the former Soviet lands in the transition to democratic governments and free market economies.

The measures outlined above seek to lower the flash point in the Gulf, as well as in other unstable and highly militarized regions in the world. Granted, none of the measures will be simple to implement. However, as the post-Cold War era progresses and an uncertain world order develops, mechanisms must be put in place that seek to maintain regional peace. The measures discussed above are all long-term in nature. Many may have to be altered in light of unforeseen expediencies. A two-pronged approach in American foreign policy, a short- and a long-term strategy, would appear to offer the best hope of protecting the nation's interests.

## **E. CONCLUSIONS**

Of the two main scenarios presented, the possibility of an alliance between Iran and Iraq presents the greatest threat to United States interests in the region. On the other hand, the status quo scenario provides only limited security for U.S. interests. Using these scenarios for reference, how should the United States tailor its policies in the Persian Gulf region in order to ensure that its vital interests are protected? The vital U.S. national interest in this region is the maintenance of an uninterrupted supply of oil to the industrialized nations of the world. The following U.S. national objectives are postulated to support this vital interest in the Gulf region: deterrence of the use of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction; deterrence of conventional aggression directed against either United States forces or our allies in the region, and; maintenance of pro-Western sentiment among the GCC states. The long-range objective of developing alternative energy sources is postulated in an attempt to eventually reduce Western reliance on petroleum products, thereby reducing the importance of the Gulf region to the United States and its allies. As long as the price of oil remains low, however, it is unlikely that any serious

effort to develop alternative energy sources will be undertaken.<sup>128</sup>

Deterrence of the use of nuclear/biological/chemical (NBC) weapons in the region requires several policy actions by the United States. The purpose of these actions should be to provide incentives through both reward and punishment for Gulf states to abstain from developing or purchasing weapons of mass destruction. On the diplomatic level, The United States should take a proactive role in the 1995 extension meeting for the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. The goal of this meeting should be to provide political, economic, and military incentives for nations to remain nuclear-free. Also on the political level, the United States should make it clear (either implicitly or explicitly, depending on the political circumstances in the region at the time) that it will respond with U.S. nuclear forces to any attempts to coerce or attack the GCC states using weapons of mass destruction.<sup>129</sup> Thus, the United States should extend its nuclear deterrence policy to the GCC states. This policy shift will reduce the incentive

---

<sup>128</sup>See: Aarts and Renner, "Oil and the Gulf War," p. 29, note 12.

On July 27, 1990, just before the takeover of Kuwait, Iraq's intimidation tactics led OPEC to raise its target price from \$18 to \$21 per barrel. U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie reportedly told Saddam Hussein on July 25 that "We have many Americans who would like to see the price (of oil per barrel) go above \$25 because they come from oil-producing states."

<sup>129</sup>A study of the likely effectiveness of such a deterrence policy is recommended for further research.

for the GCC states to develop nuclear arsenals of their own, and perhaps deter further nuclear development programs by Iran and Iraq.

On the economic level, the United States should continue to use its economic power in an attempt to slow or inhibit the proliferation of technology for weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. This can be done using existing regimes such as the MTCR and the Australia Group (concerning chemical weapons technology). Additionally, any U.S. or Western aid or economic development funds could be made contingent upon inspections to insure that recipient nations are not involved in NBC programs. Furthermore, the United States should use its not insignificant power base in international economic organizations (IMF, GATT, G-7, etc.) to exert trade sanctions against potential proliferators and their customers.<sup>130</sup>

The military options to deter the use of weapons of mass destruction could involve designating tactical nuclear-capable military forces, which could be rapidly deployed to the Gulf

---

<sup>130</sup>See: Elaine Sciolino, "U.S. Plans to Appeal to Allies to Broaden Ban on Arms Sales to Iran," New York Times, 18 Nov 92, p. A-7. This article describes preliminary discussions in which the United States is trying to persuade the other six G-7 nations to halt sales of all militarily useful equipment to Iran. The initial results are far from encouraging:

...the Bush Administration has already met considerable resistance from its allies, who are eager to increase trade with Iran. In addition, the United States has pressed for the plan at such a low level that none of the allies have taken it seriously.

region or any other trouble spot, for the purposes of threatening retaliation or punishment to any potential aggressor. Another possible U.S. military option would involve taking preemptive action to destroy weapons manufacturing capabilities prior to actual development of the weapons. Whether a U.S. president would authorize a preemptive strike, such as the bombing raid carried out by Israel in 1981 which destroyed the Osiraq nuclear reactor outside Baghdad<sup>131</sup>, is open to question. The instantaneous nature of modern communications technology (the "CNN effect") could serve to deter a president from pursuing the preemption option. Nonetheless, the national objective of regional nuclear deterrence will only be realized if the United States takes forceful and credible steps at the political, economic, and military levels.

Deterrence of conventional aggression against our allies in the Gulf region also requires a multi-faceted approach by the United States. In order to deter potential adversaries to the GCC states, the United States must demonstrate its commitment to the region. Fortunately, the 1991 Gulf War is a recent and striking example of U.S. resolve and should provide the United States with a measure of credibility for some time. Even so, the United States should ensure that there is no doubt about its commitment to stability in the region. This

---

<sup>131</sup>Leonard S. Spector, The Undeclared Bomb (Cambridge, Ma.: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1988), p. 207.

can only be done by formalizing a comprehensive security treaty with the GCC, increasing the levels of permanently pre-positioned U.S. military equipment in GCC states, and increasing the number of joint and combined military exercises involving U.S. troops on GCC territory.<sup>132</sup>

On the political and economic levels, by reducing the proliferation of NBC arms technology and ensuring that U.S. allies in the region are adequately armed (with conventional weapons) to fend off would-be regional aggressors, the likelihood of conflict can be decreased. Also on the political level, the United States should actively seek to ensure that no political/military alliance or coalition is allowed to develop between Iran and Iraq. U.S. efforts to topple Saddam Hussein from power should continue to be tempered with the knowledge that if Iraq disintegrates, a *de facto* coalition could develop between the Iraqi Shi'ites and Tehran.

On the military level, a number of factors are key to ensuring the long-term deterrence of hostilities in the region. First, allocating significant intelligence assets to the region should provide increased warning time to ensure timely U.S. military force deployments. Such a strong signal of U.S. resolve may deter military aggression directed at our allies, or lead to termination of a conflict prior to

---

<sup>132</sup>Such policies are currently being pursued by USCINCCENT according to RADM P.D. Smith, U.S.N., J-5, USCINCCENT, in a briefing at the Naval Forward Presence Conference in Cambridge, Ma. on 18 Nov 92.

escalation into all-out war. Second, an increased U.S. naval presence in the waters of the Persian Gulf along with a permanent Army and Air Force presence on GCC soil<sup>133</sup>, will strengthen deterrence and provide the United States with immediate crisis response capability. The national objective of conventional deterrence is primarily met by using U.S. military might backed up by political alliances and declaratory policy. However, the use of economic power cannot be discounted. Economic influence can be a powerful shaping tool in the Gulf region.

Maintenance of pro-Western sentiment among the GCC states relies primarily on the progress of the Arab-Israeli peace process, and the effect of Islamic fundamentalism on the moderate Arabs. The United States should continue to use its political, economic, and military influence on both Israel and the Arab states to ensure that the peace process achieves the greatest possible success. The United States would probably be

---

<sup>133</sup>The author realizes that the issue of basing U.S. forces on GCC soil is a politically difficult one for both the United States and the GCC states. Domestic economic concerns further complicate the subject. However, as the requirement for U.S. forward presence to contain the former Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact partners declines, it would make strategic sense to redeploy a portion of these deterrent forces to likely regional trouble spots. The Persian Gulf would certainly seem to qualify as a potential trouble spot. If host nation support arrangements cannot be worked out between the United States and GCC, the option of focusing on joint/combined exercises is a viable alternative to the permanent basing of U.S. land and air forces in the theater of operations. See also: John M. Collins, "U.S. Military Force Reductions: Capabilities Versus Requirements," Washington, Congressional Research Service RPT. No. 90-43 S, 8 Jan 92.

wise not to attempt to influence the affairs of Arab religious movements in too intrusive a manner. The lessons learned by the U.S. experience with Iran provide ample justification for this recommendation.

An additional national objective is the development of alternative energy sources. As mentioned previously, U.S. progress in this endeavor has, thus far, not yielded significant results. This lack of progress, however, should not be taken as a signal that future gains are impossible. The United States must formulate a national energy policy which substantially lessens its dependence on foreign sources of energy. Instituting a modest 50 cent tax on each gallon of gasoline sold in the United States, for example, could spur serious research in the direction of developing alternative fuels.<sup>134</sup> In the meantime, however, the fact remains that the oil reserves in the Persian Gulf region makes its stability vital to United States interests. At the same time the oil fields of the Gulf region provide a tempting target to would-be aggressors. Decreasing the reliance of the United States on this resource would go a long way towards reducing U.S. vulnerability to instability in the region.

---

<sup>134</sup>H. Ross Perot (independent candidate) advocated a similar measure, to be phased-in over five years in ten cent increments, in the 1992 presidential election campaign. While Mr. Perot's motivation for the tax was to reduce the Federal budget deficit, the fact that the proposal was taken seriously (Perot garnered 19% of the popular vote) indicates that the American public may be ready for such modest steps if they are properly informed on the issues involved.

In conclusion, the United States has before it a wide range of regional policy options for the Gulf. Among the possible outcomes of U.S. regional policy actions, or inactions, is a conflict with a nuclear-armed Iran and Iraq. This outcome appears eminently avoidable if the proper course is followed at all levels of political, military, and diplomatic policy.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Broadly stated, the goals of American policy in the Persian Gulf should be to maintain regional peace and security while at the same time ensuring the unrestricted flow of oil through this strategic waterway. The recommended method for achieving these goals is for the United States to attempt to shape the strategic environment (via diplomatic, political, and military means) into one which is sympathetic to American interests. Several potential shaping strategies have already been discussed in previous chapters.

The first chapter of this thesis put forth the case that recent efforts by the United States to exert a steady influence in the region have fallen well short of the mark. The 1991 Gulf War stands as testimony to a failed deterrence strategy. Although coalition forces prevailed rather handily in that war, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the war could have been avoided had the United States pursued more coherent policies (and sent unambiguous signals of U.S. resolve when it became apparent that a failure of deterrence was imminent) in the period leading up to the 2 August 1990 Iraqi invasion and occupation of Iraq.<sup>135</sup> One hopes that

---

<sup>135</sup>A.M. Rosenthal, "Clinton And the Mideast," New York Times, 10 Nov 92, p. A-15: "Saddam Hussein showed that appeasing dictators and encouraging or permitting their military buildup creates the powder of war." See also: "Iran Resurgent," New York Times, editorial, 16 Nov 92, p. A-12:

American policy makers have learned from previous mistakes. The recent history of the Gulf region provides numerous examples of U.S. policy failures from which to glean valuable lessons.

As it is extremely likely that the United States will continue to rely on the Gulf region for a large portion of its energy resources, it is essential that the United States seek to maintain influence in this region. In the past the U.S. military has frequently acted in a fireman role, whether putting out brushfires or fighting full-blown conflagrations. It is the author's contention that in the future, if stability is to be maintained and American interests protected, the United States must assume a more proactive role in regional affairs. Rather than simply responding to calls for help, the United States must become more engaged (politically, diplomatically, and militarily) and take the steps necessary to avert crises before they develop.<sup>136</sup> In addition to

---

New revelations about how Western dual-use exports helped Saddam Hussein turn Iraq into a dangerous military power appear almost daily. It's important not to make the same mistake in Iran.

<sup>136</sup>See: Leslie H. Gelb, "Putting U.S. First--Promises and Pitfalls," New York Times, 17 Nov 92, p. A-19. In this article Gelb argues that the Clinton administration must take a proactive role in world and regional politics:

Clinton is more likely to fall prey to the...far more insidious trap of passivity. World crises will occur no matter what he does, but his chances of containing them will improve if he is constantly trying to head them off. It is not enough for the United States simply to be engaged overseas; it must be engaged actively and imaginatively, and with dollars. Otherwise, crises will

attempting to nip potential crises in the bud, U.S. policy must be geared toward controlling the potential for escalation should a crisis situation, nonetheless, develop. This new role for the United States would be patterned on a police officer on a beat rather than on the fireman model.

The police officer model for U.S. presence in the Gulf is not necessarily analogous to a constant carrier battle group (CVBG) presence in the Gulf with land and air forces permanently based ashore on the Arabian peninsula. Rather, it seeks some form of continuous U.S. military presence in the region with the potential to rapidly reinforce should the strategic situation dictate. A standing GULFSAG, as described in chapter three, might make a good starting point when considering appropriate U.S. force levels for the Persian Gulf.

The model for land and air forces would have to consider anticipated levels of host nation support that military planners could expect to be forthcoming. In view of this planning problem, it would probably be in America's strategic interest to establish a formal security relationship between the GCC and the United States (and possibly other U.S. allies). The ad hoc coalition assembled for the 1991 war took time to become effective--an unlikely luxury the next time

---

explode and devour Clinton's time and political capital....Iran and others will surely acquire nuclear arms unless the United States mounts active opposition.

another one is needed to reverse aggression. A formalized collective security arrangement provides a more compelling deterrent signal to potential aggressors than the vague threat of possibly facing an ad hoc coalition of forces. One could reasonably expect that the leadership of a dictatorial regime, such as those found in Baghdad and Tehran, would probably think long and hard before challenging any alliance to which the United States has formally pledged its allegiance. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization provides a framework for successful deterrence. NATO doctrine states that an attack on any NATO nation will be treated as an attack on the alliance as a whole. Such a determined stance by the United States in concert with the GCC states would significantly bolster deterrence in the Gulf region.

Arguably, Iran poses the greatest potential threat to Western interests in the Gulf in the post-Desert Storm period. The focus of American policy must be to dissuade Iran from further attempts to achieve regional hegemony.<sup>137</sup> This can be

---

<sup>137</sup>Recent reports indicate the United States is pursuing just such a course of action. See: Steve Coll, "U.S. putting up roadblocks in Iran's nuclear quest," Washington Post, 17 Nov 92:

Iran was on the verge earlier this year of obtaining equipment from China and Argentina that would have allowed it to begin its own nuclear manufacturing, but quiet intervention by the United States has blocked transfers at least for now, according to officials involved in the negotiations....CIA director Robert Gates testified earlier this year that Iran was seeking a nuclear bomb and could have one by the year 2000 if the West does not prevent it.

pursued via several policy tracks. First, the United States should continue seeking methods which limit Iran's access to sophisticated weapon systems. This could prove problematic given Russia's stated need for hard currency. Furthermore, Chinese and North Korean intransigence in matters related to arms control is well documented. Efforts to solve these problems must be redoubled. The United States and its allies hold several possible trump cards that have yet to be played. Western economic aid to Russia could be suspended pending a promise not to sell arms to Iran and other hostile powers. The continuation of most-favored-nation (MFN) trading status could be made contingent on obtaining a similar promise from Beijing.<sup>138</sup> A number of methods could be adopted to increase

---

In response to these concerns, the United States has stepped up satellite reconnaissance of Iran's nuclear-related facilities, has passed on intelligence to inspectors at the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency who visit Iran, and is attempting to monitor Iranian nuclear procurement closely.

<sup>138</sup>See: Kenneth R. Timmerman, "Want to Buy the Bomb? No Problem.," New York Times, 25 Nov 92, p. A-18. In this article Timmerman advocates a tough U.S. stance towards Chinese arms sales:

China should be told firmly that continued exports of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons technology to the world's trouble spots will lead to trade sanctions and a suspension of most-favored-nation status. Mr. Clinton's statements last week indicate he may be softening his stance on China. That would be a mistake. A tougher line would cost the taxpayer nothing: we run a \$13 billion trade deficit with China, second only to our deficit with Japan. It would also make the world safer.

Proliferation is the main security problem of the 1990's. The new administration must address the issue immediately, or there is a real risk that we will faced with Desert Storm II and a half dozen more Iraqs before

North Korea's isolation if it continues to supply arms to outlaw states. These could include a United Nations Security Council resolution restricting trade between the DPRK and General Assembly nations if the Kim Il Sung regime continues on its present course regarding arms proliferation. It seems unlikely that the Security Council would pass any resolution of this sort, unless Russia and China were first co-opted into a comprehensive arms control regime.

It is important that the United States not act unilaterally in its pursuit of these policy goals. Even if the notion of America as the sole remaining superpower is accepted, it is doubtful that the United States possesses the requisite political and economic influence it would need if it were to try to alter the course of international arms trade unilaterally. The United Nations and existing security alliances offer fora in which to air arms control proposals in the joint interests of the United States and other states interested in alleviating the dangerous arms buildup in the Gulf region. A framework similar to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which would encompass all Persian Gulf nations, could be promoted by the U.S. delegate to the U.N. Security Council.

If, however, despite concerted U.S. efforts to screen the flow of dangerous weapons into the region, arms control

---

Bill Clinton's first term is up.

measures prove ineffective, the United States must be prepared to take steps to ensure that the regional balance of power does not shift in a manner which is inimical to its national interests. Chapter two discussed using the tool of American arms sales to GCC states in an attempt to offset and deter regional powers which may have territorial ambitions which lie beyond their present borders. This approach seeks to maintain a regional correlation of forces which would deter any potential aggressor by denying it the capability to attain its war aims in the short- to medium-term. Also implicit in this approach is the threat of inflicting unacceptable punishment on any would-be aggressor should it nonetheless decide to press a military offensive.

At first glance the two strategies discussed above, that of seeking an enduring regional arms control regime and of arming those states in the region which are friendly to U.S. interests, might seem to be at odds with one another. In fact, this is not the case. The goal of constructing a comprehensive arms control regime for the region is a long-term one. While the United States pursues this goal it must simultaneously ensure that regional deterrence remains robust in the intervening period. If the United States fails to protect its short-term interests while seeking to achieve lofty long-range policy goals, it runs the risk of allowing another deterrence failure to occur, with possibly disastrous consequences. It is important that a blend of pragmatic immediate policy be

combined with the pursuit of more ambitious long-range policy goals to ensure credibility in the short- to medium-term. A clear separation of the two is required if the United States is to maintain a credible regional deterrence posture. It is essential that U.S. policy not lose focus on immediate problems while striving to shape the future environment. Simply put, past and current achievements cannot be sacrificed in the pursuit of an uncertain future.

## INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

	No. Copies
1. Defense Technical Information Center Cameron Station Alexandria, Virginia 22314-6145	2
2. Library, Code 52 Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California 93943-5100	2
3. N-511, The Pentagon, Room 4D563 Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Washington, D.C. 20318-2000	1
4. Dr. Thomas C. Bruneau Chairman, National Security Affairs (NS/Bn) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California 93943	1
5. CDR R. Mitchell Brown, USN (NS/Br) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California 93943	2
6. Professor Ralph Norman Channell (NS/Ch) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California 93943	1
7. LCDR Michael W. Ward Patrol Squadron Four FPO AP 96601-5901	1