

KUWAITI, IRAQI AND EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES

The following are excerpts from conference presentations by Sami M. Al-Faraj, Mustafa Alani and Antonia Dimou (edited for publication by rapporteur Michael Kraig).

A KUWAITI VIEW

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To combat negative trends in Gulf security since the invasion of Iraq, and to create a new stability with strong regional foundations, Dr. Al-Faraj recommended a holistic, cooperative and comprehensive vision for Gulf security from the standpoint of “small states” in the Gulf, including his native Kuwait. He began his presentation on an extremely positive note, calling for cooperation rather than retaliation for past wrongs:

If the GCC nations were to follow a vindictive strategy vis-à-vis their former and present adversaries, this will surely come to haunt them. . . . As the great Muslim scholar Ibn Khaldun tells us, there are lessons in history for us ‘to emulate.’ For the GCC nations, there is no greater lesson than to follow the example of those who took the hand of former adversaries and worked together with them to build a better future.

However, Dr. Al-Faraj was careful to lay out the myriad obstacles to progress on a multilateral basis. Among other things, he drew attention to the “problem of size,”

that is, the diverse population and financial and military capabilities of the Gulf states. This, in turn, creates a “problem of influence” wherein large states inherently enjoy greater say in the direction of regional policies. This creates a conflict of interests and a persistent lack of trust. Moreover, the pace of current events is outstripping Gulf states’ ability to react to them in a strategic fashion, and there is a shortage of qualified personnel who “can think about and manage change.” Finally, Dr. Al-Faraj criticized the continuing influence of outdated “strategic traditions” and their mistaken application to modern situations.

A Small State’s Viewpoint

What is the view of the small state in the international system? According to Dr. Al-Faraj, the small state “lies at the outer sphere of the regional system, far away from its [geopolitical] centre of gravity.” The small state possesses limited defensive capabilities as well. To make up for this lack of political and military influence, the small state “practices proactive diplomacy,” using “economic power as an intrinsic arm of its defense policy” and searching “for a counterweight power [ally] for its survival,” which in practical terms means that the small state “attunes its grand strategy to the interests of that

[allied] power.” However, despite this picture of dependency and strategic weakness, Dr. Al-Faraj argued that the small state “enjoys a qualitative edge vis-à-vis its would-be aggressors, based on better management of [its] resources.”

Future Threats

Dr. Al-Faraj also outlined the “probable politico-military threats to the security of the GCC in the period 2004-10.” These include

- A continuation of the belief in a strategy of dominance in the thinking of elites in Iran and Iraq;
- Over-reliance on non-Gulf forces in charting a security policy for the GCC nations;
- Lack of alignment between GCC interests and those of other regional players;
- Disharmony between the priorities of the GCC nations and those of the United States as a result of the ramifications of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States;
- Internal instability due to social, economic and political developments; and
- The spillover effect of the Arab-Israeli conflict (the negative consequences of Israeli policies on the stability of the Gulf, despite geographic distance).

Future Economic Threats

Furthermore, Dr. Al-Faraj outlined the “probable economic threats to the security of the GCC in the period 2004-10”:

- A steep fall in oil prices;
- An inability of regional states to adequately meet the challenge of WTO Treaty obligations, thereby undermining real progress toward economic liberalization and economic growth;

- An increase in rivalry among GCC nations over their traditional economic roles;
- Replication of similar economic products and manufacturing across Gulf states for nationalistic reasons, rather than a more efficient allocation of resources across state borders based upon comparative advantage in specific areas;
- An increase of oil production and exportation by Iraq and the Caspian Sea region and the growth of Iraq over time as a new “swing producer” that may not calibrate its policies with the desires of its neighbors; and
- A failure in the management of resources by Gulf states, leading to persistent inflation, deficits and unemployment and continued problems with economic diversification.

Threats from Societal Change

Dr. Al-Faraj also detailed the myriad “social threats to the security of the GCC” during this same period. In particular, Dr. Al-Faraj predicted domestic “instability and tension” due to

- An inability to meet the aspirations of an increasingly younger population;
- A failure to end the current welfare state in most Gulf economies;
- An increase in tribal and sectarian tensions;
- An inability of leaders to balance the national element of the population with the immigrant population;
- The importation of politically inspired violence from adjacent nations (such as Iraq or Pakistan); and
- An inability to adequately fight drug addiction and other social diseases.

Potential Environmental Threats and Costs

Finally, adding to these geopolitical and domestic challenges, Dr. Al-Faraj drew special attention to an often-overlooked issue: the probable environmental threats to Gulf security over the next several years. According to Dr. Al-Faraj, "The long-term impact of conflict-generated pollutants" must be studied more closely. What are the environmental consequences of the latest round of fighting in the region? In addition, Dr. Al-Faraj predicted

- An increase of marine pollution due to heavy maritime traffic;
- A failure to apply standards on a national or regional basis to accurately gauge the environmental consequences of ongoing development projects;
- A failure to raise public awareness of environmental hazards;
- A failure to protect Gulf fisheries;
- A failure to adequately meet the standards of the Kyoto Treaty.

The Collective GCC Perception of the Regional System

Amid all of these challenges, what is the evolving GCC perception of the regional system? According to Dr. Al-Faraj, there is "a general feeling that a continuation of the current unstable conditions threatens national security." Further, there is a general presupposition among Gulf leaders that, despite costs, there will continue to be alliance building with outside powers and increased defense spending "at the expense of national development programs." Hence, traditional interstate security concerns will inevitably fuel a guns-versus-butter attitude that will lead to underfunding of new economic and social initiatives. Accordingly, GCC leaders are

now looking for "a way out of the current situation that not only guarantees national-security objectives, but also furthers national-development objectives." However, this will require a more strategic, better conceptualized planning process from the top down. Dr. Al-Faraj believes that the "general foundations of a new GCC strategy" presupposes "a clear strategic perspective, a conducive regional environment, a window of opportunity, and an affinity of interests with the United States and other allies in the Gulf."

Economically, there are some reasons for optimism. The GCC economic picture in 2002 reveals that small Gulf states will probably continue to be central players in the financial aspects of development and security. While Saudi Arabia had a 2002 economy of \$178 billion, the UAE totaled \$67.8 billion; Kuwait, \$32.8 billion; Oman, \$19.9 billion; Qatar, \$16.2 billion; and Bahrain, \$8.5 billion. Furthermore, within the larger Arab world and the Greater Middle East, Gulf economies represented 44.32 percent of the size of the total Arab economic output in 2002. This is impressive when one considers that the population of the GCC nations only represented 10-11 percent of the entire Arab population in the Greater Middle East.

Amidst these economic patterns among GCC states, what is the direction of Iran? Dr. Al-Faraj claims that current directions in Iranian strategic economic planning, from 1995 to the present, show that Iran is trying to slowly but surely integrate itself with its neighbors in order to fuel its own national development. Iran is working assiduously to breach the economic embargo in the oil sector by endeavoring to have the Caspian Sea pipelines run through Iran to the Gulf. It is expanding its

railway network (at a budget of \$26.5 billion), changing its legal framework for foreign investment, expanding 17 separate economic free zones, importing advanced technology, and developing nuclear power sites for (supposedly) peaceful use.

But is Iran truly ready for a strategic partnership with the GCC? Dr. Al-Faraj believes that due to extreme difficulties Iran is now facing as a result of two decades of a revolutionary economy, the time is ripe for the development of a qualitatively new relationship with Iran:

Revolutionary fervor has . . . marred any serious attempt to modernize its economy. . . . Iran lacks funds for its declared strategic economic objectives. It also lacks would-be investors for its strategic projects. On the social level, Iran suffers from a multitude of ills, as evident in its official statistics. On the political level, there is a state of stagnation in strategic decision making due to internal polarization. . . . This [has] hampered the realization of the aspirations of Iranian youth.

However, Al-Faraj argues, “The Iranian leadership seems to have grasped the lesson of Saddam Hussein; witness their signature on the IAEA Additional Protocol.” His advice: “The GCC must seize this opportunity” to provide badly needed financial capital to Iran so that new, cooperative relationships can become a concrete reality.

In regard to Iraq, Dr. Al-Faraj argues that “there seems to be a window of opportunity for the GCC nations to influence events in Iraq toward stability and security.” If GCC states can forward their own recommendations on a collective basis, then “Iraq could be the corridor to

another economic zone in the Fertile Crescent, while Iran [could] play [a role] as the passage to yet another economic zone in the Caspian Basin and Trans-Asia.” In short, rather than rejecting the Bush administration vision of an economically inter-dependent region with stable, dynamic growth, Dr. Al-Faraj argues that the adoption of purposeful, strategic initiatives by the wealthiest Gulf states could help create the types of networks and connections that already exist in Europe or Asia. As part of this process, Iran and Iraq would be drawn into a positive web of financial interconnections that would create greater regional security. However, his recommendations are not based primarily on contributions and leadership from the United States, Europe or Asia, but rather on the capabilities of GCC states themselves. As stated by Dr. Al-Faraj, “There is an opportunity to restructure the balance of power in the Gulf, not solely by military means, but through a multi-dimensional approach” that utilizes economic, technological and political resources within the region itself.

But what exactly would such a GCC strategy look like? Dr. Al-Faraj divides the initiative into three periods.

1. A Transitional Period.

This period would see agreement on bilateral and multilateral confidence-building measures (CBMs) between the GCC, Iran and Iraq. These would require a major redeployment of Iranian military forces, including rocket launchers and air and naval vessels (especially on and around the three islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs in the Strait of Hormuz). In short, the objective would not be to hamper Iran’s self-defensive

capabilities, but rather restrain its offensive options. For Iraq, there must be “no-ground” and “no-fly” zones in the South and East of the country, with appropriate limits on offensive force structure. Dr. Al-Faraj argues, however, that the GCC “ought not act in a symmetric fashion, because a state of imbalance in size, population and military force already exists between the GCC and Iran and Iraq.”

Also during the transitional period there would be corresponding political actions by all states. On the political level, all parties would enforce multilateral and cooperative internal security measures to combat terrorism, organized crime, money laundering and drug trafficking.

2. A Mid-term Period.

This period of transition to a more cooperative multilateral security framework would require acceptance by Iran and Iraq of long-term commitments such as:

- a) Tying economic assistance packages and financial investments from the GCC nations to substantial shifts in current Iranian and Iraqi military postures. This shift could include limits on force structure, a decrease in defense budgets, abolishing conscription and raising the age of conscripts.
- b) A shift in the defense policies of Iran and Iraq by curbing the procurement of offensive weapons and instead emphasizing defensive systems and technologies;
- c) A declaration that all areas vacated for the purpose of military CBMs would eventually become zones for multilateral economic development, to be open to all regional and international powers. This would mean, for instance, that the three islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and

Lesser Tunb would change into centers for economic activities. The question of ultimate national sovereignty over the islands could be postponed by an agreement between the UAE and Iran to shelve the issue until different circumstances allow a final resolution. In Dr. Al-Faraj’s belief, the issue of territorial sovereignty “would be irrelevant with the passage of time.”

d) Implementation of all current economic agreements between the GCC, Iran and Iraq as the foundation for a Northern Gulf Common Economic Zone. Existing agreements include the bilateral agreements between Iraq and Qatar; the extension of fiber-optic lines between Kuwait and Iran; the transfer of fresh water between Kuwait and Iran; the linking of railway and ferry lines between Saudi Arabia and Iran; increased transfers of gas among Qatar, the UAE and Kuwait; and the evolving partnerships in petrochemical industries (principally Saudi Arabia and Iran). Furthermore, new partnerships could be sought in the transference of Caspian oil southward through Iran and the Gulf.

3. A Long-term Phase.

The GCC nations, Iran and Iraq would ultimately enter into full and comprehensive peace treaties – especially in regard to Iraq-GCC relations and Iran-Iraq relations. This would be followed, ideally, by enacting domestic legislation for the free movement of persons, trade and finances among all Gulf nations, including Yemen. Religious and cultural tourism could play a great part in opening up Iran and Iraq. The GCC would then embark upon an expansion of investments in the fields of communications and information technologies. Although the

mere geographic size of Iraq and Iran would make the extension of fiber optics and other networks difficult, one could still imagine linkages such as the Iranian city of Abadan and the Iraqi city of Basrah with Kuwait City or Dhahran.

Dr. Al-Faraj concludes, "It is with this vision in mind that one can imagine a peace grid stretching from northern Iraq to southern Oman" that would potentially evolve into a Gulf Common Technological Zone. In turn, these shared economic, infrastructural and technological networks would be backed up by advanced military monitoring and verification agreements to guarantee that no state would attempt to upset the mutually beneficial status quo. Finally, the internet could play a large role in educating new generations about the "culture of peace."

AN IRAQI VIEW

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Dr. Alani began his presentation with the recognition that transnational threats are largely "a by-product of regional political and territorial disputes." In particular, transnational threats arise when regional disputes create governments with "diminished authority and capacity," under which "radical political Islamic movements . . . feed on society's resentment and fear of chaos." In turn, these conditions lend themselves to a "spillover" of conflict conditions into neighboring countries.

Due to years of draconian sanctions under Saddam's rule, combined with the dramatic effects of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003, Dr. Alani argues that

Iraq has become an area where transnational threats now proliferate and endanger Gulf security as a whole. First, "Islam has emerged as the dominant political force in the country, and religious activism is on the rise. Thus, Islam is bound to play a more prominent role in the social and political life of the country." According to Dr. Alani,

Radical Islam has appeal as a reformist force, seeking to advance the cause of democratization, human rights and social justice within the framework of Islamic sharia law. Thus, many of the oppressed and persecuted people of Iraq, suffering under the repressive rule of an authoritarian regime, see Islamist movements as progressive in character.

Based on this analysis, Dr. Alani outlines "three worst-case scenarios" for Iraqi political and social development, all of which would be accompanied by an increase in transnational threats such as "terrorism, arms smuggling, potential theft and sale of WMD materials, and organized crime – drug trafficking, oil smuggling, and the theft and smuggling of antiquities." These three scenarios are 1) the total collapse of the state; 2) the fragmentation of the state and the formation of a number of small entities; and 3) the development of a weak, unstable central government. Whether or not these worst-case scenarios materialize, Dr. Alani notes that the U.S. decision to "disband a number of state ministries and institutions, in particular the state's defense and security apparatus," has created "a huge security gap" domestically that has allowed terrorist and criminal groups to establish a base in the country.

Dr. Alani then outlined three distinct

threats that could emerge in the presence of the above worst-case scenarios:

1) Terrorism

Dr. Alani argues that “international terrorism has a short history and shallow roots in Iraq,” in part because Saddam Hussein’s Baathist regime itself “represents a group of professional terrorists.” The authoritarian government monopolized terrorism within Iraq, leaving little room for transnational or international elements. For instance,

criminal acts such as the killing of political opponents, kidnapping, threats and intimidation were the main tactics employed by Saddam Hussein and his colleagues in the Baath Party leadership between 1963 and 1968 during the party’s struggle to control power, which finally succeeded . . . in July 1998. Thus from 1968 to the last day, the regime recognized terrorism as one of the main instruments [of state power]. . . . The inner circle of the old regime consisted mainly of a group of terrorists and common criminals.

This inner circle “employed three tactics. First, it directly organized terrorist activities . . . planned and executed by the regime’s different security services.” Secondly, explains Dr. Alani, indirect terrorist activities involved the purposeful creation of small groups dependent on the resources of the Iraqi state that were used in foreign lands to carry out the grander geopolitical objectives of the regime. Lastly, the regime sponsored pre-existing terrorist groups:

For many decades [Saddam’s regime] . . . provided safe havens and support for several non-Islamic secular groups

– mostly Palestinian groups that engaged in international terrorism such as Abu al-Abbas (PLF), Abu Nidal (ANO), Abu Ibrahim (the May 15 Organization) and other groups.

However, Dr. Alani argues, this reality should not be conflated with radical, transnational, Islamic-based terrorism outside the control of governments. In contrast with the vision of the Bush administration, which clearly tried to tie Hussein’s Baathist regime together with transnational, Islamic-based terrorism such as Al-Qaeda,

in reality, [terrorist activities of the Iraqi government] came under the full control and management of the regime’s leadership. Involvement in terrorist acts required the approval and supervision of the regime’s leadership, probably at its highest level. . . . Non-state actors such as foreign terrorist organizations could not operate in Iraq independently. . . . A state of deep mistrust and conflict of ideology and objectives [led] Saddam’s regime to be identified by Islamic extremist groups as an enemy regime.

2) WMD Proliferation

Dr. Alani also indirectly criticized the Bush administration’s strategy by arguing that the U.S. invasion of Iraq has resulted in new transnational networks with a potential for trafficking in stolen conventional weapons and WMD materials and technology. As stated by Dr. Alani,

Indeed, since the downfall of the regime, evidence has emerged from the states neighboring Iraq (mainly Saudi Arabia and Jordan) that transnational

crime groups have established an active and profitable trade focused on [conventional] arms-smuggling activities utilizing the huge arsenal of the Iraq armed forces [which was] mostly left behind after the sudden collapse of the regime.

Further, “there could be a slight danger that a country like Iraq could be a source or become a transshipment point for the illicit transfer of WMD material.”

3) Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime

According to Dr. Alani, prior to the U.S. invasion in March 2003, “Iraq was one of the very few regional states that could claim that drug abuse was not a problem in society. The enforcement of strict laws and severe punishment . . . [has kept] the country clean from drug abuse and made the state off-limits for drug traffickers for the past 70 years.” Now, after the U.S. invasion, the situation has changed, with infiltration of Iraq by terrorist and criminal groups. However, argues Dr. Alani,

The criminal organizations in general and drug traffickers in particular are not monolithic but act as networks, pursuing the same types of joint ventures and strategic alliances as legitimate global businesses. Since the collapse of the Baathist regime, evidence has emerged to indicate that the Iranian and Turkish narcotics cartels have established operations, and that hard and soft drugs as well as synthetic drugs are sold and bought almost openly in Baghdad, Karbala, Basra and other Iraqi cities. Local and Arab press reports have asserted that Iranian drug gangs – linked to newly

established organized crime groups in Iraq – now operate freely in the country.

Furthermore, continues Dr. Alani,

The lack of a strong central government and the absence of effective military and security institutions in the new Iraq could allow the state to develop as a convenient “transit zone” for the transferal of drugs from producing countries like Afghanistan to the European markets via Iran. Potentially, terrorism and drug trafficking could be the greatest threats to the stability of the new state of Iraq and to Gulf regional stability.

The Danger of Regional Destabilization and Corruption

Dr. Alani concluded by arguing that

Terrorist groups, organized crime and drug trafficking are new phenomena in Iraq. The rise of organized crime groups (some with suspected transnational connections) is an unfortunate by-product of the collapse of security in many Iraqi cities that followed the removal of the Baathist regime. . . . Terrorist and crime groups have exploited many opportunities opened up by the demise of the regime. Criminal gangs have accumulated sufficient financial resources [through] a widespread looting of the country’s banks and other state institutions [that has allowed them to become] . . . financially richer, better armed and better organized than the newly formed state police force. These sorts of criminal groups have the capability to undermine the economies of the state and subvert its political integrity through corruption. Many of these groups have entered into new

and mutually cooperative arrangements with other terrorist and criminal organizations in neighboring countries, which makes an assessment of their activities extremely difficult.

[Thus], the illegal actions of transnational crime organizations threaten law and order in Iraq, directly affecting people's sense of security, trust and order, the very underpinnings of any society. In a state like Iraq, they attempt to corrupt public officials, jeopardizing the integrity of the emerging government and institutions. A transnational threat also poses a serious threat to the economic security of the nation, in that its basic activities could undermine the workings of [a new] free-market economy.

To combat these highly negative trends, Dr. Alani recommends that

Law enforcement agencies (police forces, intelligence agencies, customs authorities) in the region lead the fight against transnational threats. For this purpose, they need to collect both strategic and tactical field intelligence. The collection of strategic intelligence is important and requires interstate cooperation at all levels. This type of intelligence is long term in nature, provides a comprehensive view of any threat within the environment, assesses the extent of the threat, and points out which areas are at risk – all of which allows law enforcement to advise governments and to be proactive in its efforts against transnational threats. Tactical intelligence is operational in nature and is geared towards action in the field.

Dr. Alani concluded his presentation with the sobering judgement that “instability in Iraq will cast its shadow on all states in the region. Terrorists and drug traffickers, organized crime groups, arms smuggling, and the potential theft and sale of nuclear material” are all immediate, serious threats to Gulf stability and security.

Thus, an increase in cross-border illegal activities represents an interrelated network of transnational challenges to the states and societies within the Gulf and Middle East region. They serve as potential catalysts for conflict among these states. In addition, these transnational threats have the potential to challenge the security of the West.

In sum: if transnational factors are not taken as seriously as traditional interstate threats – such as WMD or conventional weapons proliferation in “rogue states” such as Iran – then the confluence of transnational threats could eventually create dangers to Gulf states' internal stability, leading to new interstate conflicts and military interventions.

A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE
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Shared Values

According to Dimou, the most important constant in regional and global security is the common set of values shared by Europe and the United States. Dimou's basic assumption was that the trans-Atlantic relationship would stay central to

Middle East security. In her view, “The fight against terrorism, . . . the growth of international trade, and the promotion of sustainable development are all aspects of globalization in which both sides share common values and interests. . . . Both sides wish to establish security based on the common values voiced by Europe and the United States: freedom, democracy and peace.”

Europe’s Contribution

As argued by Dimou, Europe’s central role is an integrative one: creating a larger sphere of politics and societies based upon universal ideals of freedom and prosperity. Europe has created international and regional security over the past five decades not through military hardware, but rather through strategic cooperation to bring about the goal of creating a prosperous, free community: “Europe has experience in incorporating countries that have been under dictatorship or autocratic regimes. . . . Europe has something to say on this because it is a *community of values*, and these common values are a departure point for the approach to the problems of our age.”

In this regard, Dimou asserted the importance of the new European Security Strategy (ESS),¹ which she believed was “intellectually coherent and sufficiently flexible to enable the EU to adapt effectively to the changing security environment.” It directly addresses the U.S. priorities of international terrorism and WMD, proposing concrete steps within a broad framework.²

EU-GCC Dialogues

Despite her stress on the central importance of the U.S.-European relation-

ship for Gulf security and the existence of substantial transatlantic commonalities in the realm of social, economic and political values, Dimou was careful to lay out the specific policy assumptions and political goals that both Gulf Arab states and the EU share, as well as the actions that the EU has taken on its own vis-à-vis the Gulf Arab monarchies. In particular, the EU has focused on developing a strategic partnership with the GCC states. This strategic dialogue has placed special emphasis upon the Iraqi issue, the Middle East peace process and Iran, as well as on global matters such as the war on terrorism and the proliferation of WMD.

In the EU perception, according to Dimou, “Despite the diversity of the countries in the Gulf and the challenges they face, there is a clear connection between them arising mainly from their growing interdependence. In this context, a co-operative approach favoring dialogue is...a must in security matters.” In short, there is an assumption that a multilateral framework is both possible and necessary in the Gulf, including the growth of opportunities for mutual dialogue – and indeed, there is an EU assumption that further multilateral connections are *natural* because of “growing interdependence.” Accordingly, at a pre-war Iraq session of the Joint Council and Ministerial meeting between the EU and the GCC,³ “the GCC and the EU reiterated their determination to further develop a multilateral political dialogue in order to seek common solutions to mutual problems.”

However, while many of the policy assumptions and political goals of this EU process are shared by the Gulf monarchies, they are *not* necessarily shared by current U.S. policy makers. For instance, in the

pre-war period, the EU and the GCC “reaffirmed their commitment to the United Nations remaining at the center of the international order. They recognized that the primary responsibility for dealing with Iraqi disarmament at that time lay with the Security Council and pledged their full support to the Council in discharging its responsibilities.”

Most important, both the EU and the GCC have repeatedly emphasized the view that a just and fair solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a necessary condition for a stable and secure Middle East, and that Gulf security cannot be separated from this issue. For instance, according to Dimou,

[T]he GCC and the EU have stressed that peace in the Middle East is an imperative for the establishment of a broader security regime. The GCC and the EU recognize Israel’s legitimate security concerns and Palestinian legitimate rights to a viable Palestinian state, living peacefully side by side with Israel and its neighbors, all within secure borders, and stress their support to the Palestinian efforts to take forward the reform process....The GCC and the EU support [the proposition] that the aim of all efforts remains the establishment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, including Syria and Lebanon.

While this may square with current U.S. assumptions to some extent, a clear point of departure is the belief that any solution must be based on the 1967 borders, and that the basic assumptions and goals of failed past processes such as Oslo and Madrid must still be taken into account by decision makers. In the EU conception of

the problem, according to Dimou,

The international community shares a common vision of two states, Israel and an independent, viable, sovereign and democratic Palestinian state, living side by side in peace and security on the basis of the 1967 borders....Any peace agreement is expected to be based on the relevant UNSC resolutions, the principles of the Madrid Conference, the principle of ‘land for peace,’ the Oslo Process, and the initiative of Saudi Arabia endorsed by the Arab League Summit in Beirut in 2002.

Moreover, both sides agree (in contradiction with Washington) that a primary problem has been the Israeli policy of Jewish settlements beyond the “Green Line” and illegal annexation of territory. As described by Dimou,

The GCC and the EU are alarmed at the continuing illegal settlement activities, which threaten to render the two-state solution physically impossible to implement. They thus call for dismantling illegal outposts and freezing all settlement activity, including natural growth of existent settlement blocks...[F]reezing settlements that could disrupt Palestinian territorial contiguity is a top priority, since their illegal construction violates international law, inflames an already volatile situation, and reinforces the fear of the Palestinian side that Israel is not genuinely committed to ending the conflict.

Based on these assumptions, the GCC and the EU have urged Israel to reverse its settlement policy and as a first step to immediately apply a full and effective

freeze on all settlement activities.⁴ The GCC and the EU have further made special references to the “illegal construction of the wall that the Israeli government decided during the war on Iraq to relocate on West Bank land.” In a stark disagreement with current parameters of the debate in Washington, which largely sees the Israeli wall as a straightforward security measure, the EU and the GCC view the wall “as a means of annexing West Bank land upon which Israeli settlements exist.”

In the case of Iran, the GCC and the EU have both encouraged the reform process within Tehran. The EU continues to move forward on a “Trade and Cooperation Agreement” and an agreement on “Political Dialogue and Counterterrorism.” Additionally, both the GCC and the EU have expressed concern at the lack of progress towards resolution of the territorial conflict between the UAE and Iran over Abu Musa and the Tunbs Islands. As described by Dimou, “They specifically reiterate their support for a peaceful solution to the conflict in accordance with international law, either through direct negotiations or by referring the issue to the International Court of Justice.” Again, this policy of a broad engagement of Iran, based on universal legal norms and rules, is largely at odds with the U.S. focus on counterproliferation, isolation and pressure, which is sometimes viewed as necessary

to bring about a “regime change” within Tehran.

On global issues, notably terrorism and WMD proliferation, the EU and the GCC also have underlined the importance of implementing U.N. Security Council Resolution 1373 and of working with the U.N. Counterterrorism Committee (CTC) at national and regional levels. Based on this description of the combined EU-GCC approach, it is again not clear that the various sides are working from the same script for regional and global security, since the U.S. government has made hardly any reference to the importance of U.N.-level or U.N.-led activities in the U.S. War on Terror.

Finally, in regard to WMD nonproliferation policies, “The GCC and the EU are determined to support all efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and the Gulf Region....They call upon all countries not yet party to relevant treaties, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the conventions on biological and chemical weapons, to sign and ratify them.” While the United States is a full party to the NPT and Chemical Weapons Convention, it has walked away from or shelved indefinitely the ratification of the CTBT and the enforcement protocol for the Biological Weapons Convention.

¹ The EU Security Strategy was adopted at the Thessaloniki European Council on June 2004.

² Editor’s note: see the full text of the European Security Strategy at: http://ue.eu.int/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=391&lang=EN.

³ The thirteenth session of the Joint Council and Ministerial meeting was held on March 3, 2003.

⁴ This call for restraint by Israel was issued in the context of the thirteenth session of the Joint Council meeting