

FOREWORD

In January 2004, the Stanley Foundation and the Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analyses (INEGMA)¹ cosponsored an international policy conference in Dubai on “Assessing Alternative Frameworks for Gulf Security.” The 50 participants were drawn from the Gulf, the Levant, Europe and the United States. They attended in an individual capacity, and the discussions were strictly informal and off the record. The substance of the conference is outlined and paraphrased in the Conference Report; in excerpts from three presentations by participants from Iraq, Kuwait and Europe; and in eight analytical policy articles (see table of contents for details).

The Dubai participants represented a wide array of nationalities and backgrounds: current officials from Gulf state defense and foreign ministries, counselors from local embassies, former U.S. officials, academics and policy experts, and parliamentarians from the region. American participation involved former State and Defense Department officials with significant experience in the Madrid process under presidents Bush and Clinton. These U.S. participants were knowledgeable about past multilateral approaches and alliance relations, as well as current U.S. strategic debates. Thus, the often-implicit assumptions of both Gulf and U.S. foreign policies were brought to the table for thorough critique, discussion and analysis.

Discussions covered, among other subjects, Iraq, Iran, Israel, divisions among the GCC states, the U.S. and European roles in the region, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and transnational terrorism. The participants were asked, in particular, to evaluate the possibilities for new Gulf security frameworks based on multilateral cooperation and broad diplomatic engagement of all actors. The final section of the conference report is focused on the subject of “comprehensive, cooperative and inclusive” approaches to Gulf security in the twenty-first century.

The conference report is followed by short excerpts from presentations given by individual Iraqi, Kuwaiti and European analysts. Sami al-Faraj, president of the Kuwait Centre for Strategic Studies, argues that issues of trade and finance are central to the future security of the region. Economics is ultimately as important as strategic weaponry in resolving thorny environmental and domestic-reform problems as well as traditional strategic-security issues between states. He advocates increased interaction between small Gulf Arab states and Iran and Iraq in the financial and technological spheres in order to draw all Gulf states together into a closer web of cooperative interactions.

Mustafa Alani, currently an associate fellow for the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in London, details the history of state-sponsored terrorism by the Saddam Hussein regime and contrasts it with the new type of non-state, transnational terrorism now dominating the Iraqi scene. He argues that the U.S. invasion, rather than thwarting terrorism, has instead created a more uncertain strategic situation in which state corruption and the influence of transnational networks plying drugs, small arms, terrorism and possibly even WMD may occur within and across Iraqi borders, to the detriment of regional security as a whole. He calls for concerted regional cooperation to stem these

negative trends.

Finally, Antonia Dimou summarizes the distinctive European norm-building approach to regional security, arguing that cooperation between pan-European institutions and regional powers could help stabilize the region over the long term. In the meantime, however, she notes the differences in philosophy and policy approaches between the United States and Europe, calling for increased trans-Atlantic cooperation but also describing the stronger affinity between the GCC and EU strategies for dealing with the Arab-Israeli dispute.

These presentation excerpts are followed by original research papers commissioned before and after the event in Dubai. The first paper, by Riad Kahwaji, president and founder of INEGMA, examines the wide gaps between the U.S. and GCC views of regional stability and security. Kahwaji argues that despite close military-industrial cooperation in the areas of high-tech weapons and special forces, the political approaches of the two parties continue to diverge in the post-Saddam environment.

Moving to a Levant view of Gulf security, Mohamed Kadry Said of the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo describes the history of Egyptian-Gulf relations, the commonality of Egyptian, Levant and Gulf interests, and the possibility for the growth of future combined military exercises and crisis-management capabilities.

This special issue then outlines representative views by two primary European powers with slightly diverging agendas, Britain and Germany. Daniel Neep, the primary Middle East researcher for RUSI in London, and Völker Perthes, a preeminent German Middle East expert for the influential Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) in Berlin, view in a similar light the current Bush administration strategies toward the Gulf: the “Forward Strategy for Freedom” and the “Greater Middle East Initiative.” Both largely agree on what they see as the logical pitfalls, contradictory policy goals and practical problems of implementation besetting the U.S. strategies. Perthes, however, is more adamant that an Israeli-Palestinian peace is the foundation of all security in the Greater Middle East, including the Gulf subregion, and in arguing for increased reform of interstate relations rather than internal politics. Neep, in contrast, is more critical of the Palestinian Authority and relatively more supportive of the U.S. concentration on domestic-reform and liberalization agendas. Both authors reaffirm the importance of the trans-Atlantic relationship, though their analyses make abundantly clear that substantial conceptual, cultural and political obstacles hinder the development of a new U.S.-European approach to the region.

Finally, the issue presents four contributions by American authors, all of whom argue for a strategic rethinking of U.S. policy and alternative conceptions of Gulf security in the twenty-first century. James Russell of the Naval Post-graduate School delivers a critical examination of U.S. nuclear strategy toward the Gulf and the Greater Middle East. Russell argues that the increased integration of nuclear weapons with U.S. conventional doctrine – and increased reliance on the language of coercive diplomacy and preemption – faces some serious logical and practical obstacles to full implementation. He questions whether a move away from traditional conceptions of retaliatory nuclear deterrence will stabilize the region, probing the cultural differences between U.S. strategic thinking and

security perceptions in the Middle East itself, including those of the Israeli government.

Michael Yaffe, dean of studies at the Near East-South Asia Center of the U.S. National Defense University, and a former official of the “Arms Control and Regional Security” talks of the Madrid process, lays out a concrete plan for an overhauled U.S. strategy toward the Gulf. Yaffe is careful to outline the commonalities and differences between Gulf and Levant security and is particularly critical of earlier security schemes under the old Madrid framework. He calls for an inclusive, layered, multilateral approach that recognizes subregional differences and incorporates both strategic-security issues (conventional arms, WMD) and “soft” security concerns. This new approach goes well beyond the Bush administration’s almost exclusive focus on internal reform and bilateral defense relationships with individual Gulf states.

Similarly, Craig Dunkerley, a former negotiator for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe between EU countries and the Eastern bloc, argues that although European institutions cannot be exported directly to the region, there are central experiences and principles of the CSCE experience that can be applied by Gulf states to their own distinct geopolitical environment. Dunkerley warns against the immediate formation of new, formal institutions and instead calls for looser multilateral networks to increase interactions. Dunkerley argues that a CSCE-like process in the Gulf must include all powers – even Iran, Iraq and Yemen – and visit both “hard” as well as “soft” security issues.

Finally, I outline three competing strategies for regional security, defining the goals, methods and principles involved in all three strategies. I compare and contrast the current Bush “counterproliferation” approach with the traditional “Realpolitik, balance-of-power school of thought” and a third approach based on cooperative security and principled multilateralism. Drawing on discussions among American experts, sponsored by the Stanley Foundation in June 2003, I argue that U.S. practices in the Gulf have consistently failed to provide lasting stability and prosperity for the region and that only inclusive multilateral frameworks will eventually bridge the gaps among contending ideologies, regimes and national interests in the region.

Michael Kraig, guest editor
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¹The Stanley Foundation is a non-profit, non-governmental institution that promotes public understanding, constructive dialogue, and cooperative action on critical international issues. The Foundation’s work recognizes the essential roles of both the policy community and the broader public in building sustainable peace. In particular, Foundation programming is focused on promoting and building support for principled multilateralism in addressing international issues. Current policy initiatives and organizational details can be found at www.stanleyfoundation.org.

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