

CONFERENCE REPORT

QUESTIONS IN NEED OF ANSWERS

Throughout the discussions, participants offered thought-provoking questions as well as their own recommendations for future policy directions in the Gulf and the Greater Middle East. It is therefore appropriate to start the conference report with a comprehensive listing of these questions, many of which were eventually answered (in part or full) during the course of discussions.

Regional Security: the Role of the GCC and the Role of the United States

- Are we talking about the security of regimes *within* Gulf states or the security of the region as a whole? Can these two goals be reconciled in a way that allows for effective multilateral cooperation?
- The GCC overall defense bill has created a huge amount of national and collective debt; how can this debt be reduced for the benefit of human development?
- Does the Gulf region possess the requirements for a viable security regime that is not dependent on external powers? Is the region, as a security system, so highly influenced by the global environment that it cannot stand on its own?
- How do Americans perceive their role and mission in the region? Does the U.S. presence in the region enhance or hinder overall regional security?
- Is the difficulty in defining a regional security framework attributable to the complex disputes among the Gulf players themselves, or is it attributable to external factors such as U.S. policy or the Arab-Israeli dispute?

Iran and the Region

- How does Iran perceive the alliance between the Gulf Arab states and the United States? Does this perception inhibit Iran's relations with GCC states?
- If a positive change occurs in U.S.-Iran relations, how will this affect regional security frameworks? Would it be wise to rethink regional security arrangements on the assumption that there will be a change in bilateral U.S.-Iran relations?
- Can Iran really play a stabilizing role in rebuilding Iraq politically and socially? Or does Iran overestimate its influence with the Shiite groups?
- Will new fears arise among GCC states if Iran comes to play a substantive role in stabilizing Iraq?
- Why should the Iranians help the Americans in stabilizing Iraq? Is it in the Iranian national interest to do so, given the current state of U.S.-Iranian relations?
- Is there a new competition taking place in Iraq between Persians and Arabs, Sunnis and Shiites?
- Can the expansionist tendencies of Iraq toward Kuwait be inhibited by the U.S. military presence? Will these concerns vanish as a new Iraqi political identity takes shape?

Future Modalities for Discussions

- Would it be wiser for all parties to forgo new modes of dialogue and instead revive the institutions founded in past decades such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) dialogue, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and many others?
- How does the Bush administration's Forward Strategy for Freedom merge with new suggestions for Track 1½ or Track 2 discussions, or with European outreach through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU) or the OSCE?

Israeli Security and Gulf Security

- The Arab countries, Iran and even Iraq believe that U.S. financial support to Israel is substantially more than Israel needs to safeguard its security. The general perception is that the United States gives Israel offensive capabilities that it uses to make its neighbors weaker. Therefore, what is the minimum level of support the United States could give to Israel to make it feel secure, but which would allow Arabs to perceive of the United States as an honest broker in regional disputes?
- What is the likelihood of the United States reviewing its recent policies regarding the dismantling of Palestinian human-rights organizations and the labeling of the Palestinian resistance (and its international supporters) as terrorists?
- What is so special about Iran and Iraq that they are viewed in the West as the most destabilizing states for the region? Does it have to do with the foreign policy of super-powers – i.e., the wish not to have major regional competitors – or does it have to do with these nations' historic criticism of Israel?

Saudi Arabia and Gulf Security

- What is the likelihood of redefining the criteria and parameters for the U.S.-Saudi special relationship, given the uncertain direction of Saudi political development over the next several years?
- After 9/11, the U.S.-Saudi relationship was severely strained. The war against Iraq raised speculation that Saudi Arabia might be the next U.S. target for regime change. There was even talk in some parts of the U.S. policy community about the potential territorial division of Saudi Arabia. What is the impact of such rhetoric on Saudi Arabia and on Gulf security?

Egypt and the Gulf

- Should Egypt play a role in stabilizing Iraq under a U.N. mandate, or jointly with NATO troops or other international forces?
- If Egypt decides not to send troops to Iraq, will it consider undertaking training programs to enhance the capabilities of the Iraqi police and military, as Jordan has? How will this action be perceived?
- How will recent bilateral developments between Iran and Egypt affect Gulf security?

The Gulf and Weapons of Mass Destruction

- Is the presence of WMD projects in the region evidence of failure by regional states

to construct a viable security framework?

- How might WMD in the Gulf be eradicated? Can WMD issues be addressed, and WMD eradicated, without referring to Israeli capabilities? Why is international pressure always exerted upon Saudi Arabia or Iran, and not on Israel or other existing nuclear states?
- Will the GCC act as a cohesive body if Iran is proved to own nuclear weapons?
- Why does the GCC perceive Iranian nuclear programs to be more of a threat than Israeli policies?
- How does the United States evaluate the accuracy of its intelligence information in general, especially after the Iraq fiasco?
- Based on the recent history of U.S. intelligence failures, how will the United States convince the Iranians that the U.S. judgment of Iran's implementation of the Additional Protocol is fair and accurate?
- Does Iran anticipate any domestic or international obstacles in ratifying the Additional Protocol? Will it ultimately open up its facilities to full inspection by the international community?

REGIONAL REALPOLITIK AND OUTSIDE POWERS

A great deal of conference discussion was centered on the real and ideal U.S. roles in the region, largely because the U.S. presence was still believed by GCC or Arab states to be necessary for undergirding a stable balance of power in the region. However, this argument for the necessity of a U.S. presence was joined by both Arab and Iranian participants evincing fear of a new U.S. strategic direction that might represent a radical turn away from traditional balance-of-power considerations, and toward political transformation of the region.

Meanwhile, there was ample evidence of continued schisms among Arab monarchies (GCC states) and between the GCC states and Iran. While many regional participants were worried about the direction of U.S. policy, many were also skeptical of the Gulf states' ability to chart a stable security path on their own, arguing that a combination of power imbalances, ideological disagreements, and domestic political developments mitigated against greater regional unity.

Accordingly, this first section of the conference report will describe the discussions of the U.S. role in the region; the necessity of military inputs by external powers; evolving realities of intra-GCC (intra-Arab) and GCC-Iran (Arab-Persian) security politics; and regional critiques of current and future U.S. policies in the region.

The Diversification of U.S. Bases and Its Impact on Gulf Geopolitics.

The conference discussions began with a detailed presentation by a former official of U.S. CENTCOM who currently is an analyst and academic at the Pentagon's National Defense University. According to this presentation – based on the latest in military thinking within the Joint Planning offices of the U.S. Secretary of Defense – the United States is intent on a large reduction and rescaling of U.S. deployments in the region. There will be much less emphasis on active ship tours and ports of call, U.S. Air Force deployments, and Army personnel stationed locally, and much more emphasis on pre-

stationed support equipment, latent command-and-control capabilities, long-range aircraft missions (from bases further out in the Indian Ocean or from the continental United States), and increased U.S. capacity for quick deployment and heavy-lift. This U.S. return to a traditional “over-the-horizon presence” is based firmly on a political evaluation that the large surge in active U.S. deployments since 1991 has helped bring about the radical anti-U.S. sentiments that contributed to the attacks of 9/11.

In contrast with the past over-the-horizon presence, however, this new redeployment will rest upon assured capacity for very quick insertions, precision strikes with highly lethal long-range weapons and even better surveillance. In all, U.S. military and civilian officials believe that U.S. deterrence of interstate aggression will not only stay intact, but even improve – that is, U.S. security assurances will remain credible as long as potential aggressors in and around the Gulf understand the realities of these new U.S. high-tech military capabilities based on the ongoing “revolution in military affairs.” The traditional U.S. missions of deterrence, defense, and (if necessary) retaliation and warfighting are not being diminished within the region. Rather, the “political footprint” of these missions will be much reduced, thanks to new U.S. military technologies and procurements over the next several years.

Another theme of both this initial U.S. presentation and the resulting Arab commentary was the impact, real or predicted, of the current diversification of U.S. bases in the region – namely, the large exodus of forces from Saudi Arabia and the redistribution of ports, air strips, troops and command-and-control facilities to smaller Arab states such as Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Many Arab participants felt that this redistribution was greatly impacting the geopolitics of the region. In particular, intra-GCC relations have been affected. According to some participants, this U.S. military “diversification” has jeopardized the preeminent regional position of Saudi Arabia, and its overall regional influence is gradually deteriorating. The smaller Gulf states are no longer looking at Saudi Arabia as the de facto leader of the GCC. Meanwhile, some political forces in Saudi Arabia have started to observe the constitutional changes taking place in these smaller states, which are now proceeding without the traditional tacit approval of Saudi Arabia. Bahrain, for instance, would have never held its recent general elections without previous consultation with Saudi Arabia. Now, it and other smaller Gulf Arab states are allowing greater parliamentary debate, civil discourse and local elections without taking into account Saudi Arabia’s opinion of their possible impacts on GCC harmony and security.

The U.S. analysis, meanwhile, seems to be that U.S.-directed changes in military deployments are not undermining stability or creating new favorites, but are simply reflecting the interests and preferences of regional actors. During a lively question-and-answer session, the former U.S. CENTCOM official expressed a strong conviction that all states act upon their own national interest, and thus, the smaller Gulf states have apparently found it in their self-interest to take the risk of having an increased U.S. military presence in their country for the benefit of an increased influence with their regional peers. Thus, the United States is not empowering small states against their will.

Another theme was the question of U.S. command structures (and their diplomatic as

well as military elements) in the region or in neighboring areas. Several Arab participants asked about a current rumor that the United States was considering moving CENTCOM headquarters from Florida to the region, something that might have local political impact. In particular, there seemed to be a feeling that the state hosting the headquarters would be given a status above its neighbors and peers. The former CENTCOM official admitted that there were “elements” in the United States that would like to move all facilities to local territory. However, this has ultimately been rejected for several reasons. How would the United States put this presence in the Gulf without adversely affecting the existing balance of power? Which country would be picked? Would this country remain friendly to the United States five or ten years from now? How much extra infrastructure would have to be constructed? Qatar has been proposed by some planners, but there are many skeptics within the U.S. government, and it does not appear that the present arrangement (headquarters in Florida) will change.

There was some skepticism among participants about the “mechanistic U.S. view of the region.” One Iranian participant questioned the heavy U.S. reliance on rigid planning assumptions about force levels as well as the U.S. reliance on a static view of domestic political trends in Gulf states, including assumptions that Afghanistan will remain relatively stable in the coming years. This participant also noted that the very presence of U.S. forces has a strong impact on the politics of the region, some of it negative, and that the negative consequences of U.S. deployments are underappreciated.

The former U.S. official answered that planning assumptions “are necessary to come up with a base line.” If the predicted trends come true, then the number of troops could even be decreased below the current goal of 7,500-10,000 in the region. But if regional trends turn out to be negative, in terms of the threat level within and between states, troop levels will not be decreased. The U.S. presenter argued that “the post-reconstruction assumptions are merely military assumptions, and [we use the idea of] ‘wildcards’ to refer to natural disasters and failures of adopted policies.”

On the subject of new military technologies, the former U.S. military official pointed out that the U.S. navy had 5,000 warships in World War II, 1,000 during the time of Vietnam, and now only 300 in its entire arsenal. According to this presenter, “The 300 warships of today can easily defeat the 5,000 warships of World War II. In five to ten years, the United States will have a military that doesn’t have to be directly in the Gulf in the same numbers as it is today. Therefore, optimism and pessimism don’t have anything to do with this issue. [In an objective sense], the United States needs far fewer troops to do what it feels it needs to do to protect its national interest.”

The Inevitability of a U.S. Role

It was clear that many Arab countries in the region still advocated a strong U.S. military and diplomatic presence due to the persistent inability of Gulf states to find their own balance of power, which in turn is based on the radically different makeup of regional states and their respective national resource bases. According to several Arab participants, the U.S. physical presence in the region, global political dominance, and growing role as enactor of regional-security frameworks makes it a *de facto* major regional

partner in the Gulf. Several believed that there is no alternative to the continuous presence of large-scale U.S. forces in order to address the inherent regional imbalance of power. One participant said, "The imbalance of power creates a vacuum, and [this] invites aggressors to make adventures to destabilize the region. [Therefore], the United States should be part of any security arrangement."

Many noted that the GCC has reached a point where member states cannot convene a meeting to discuss security structures without the presence of U.S. officials. One participant argued, "The question of Arab unity and a collective Arab system of security is a myth. The U.S. will always act upon its own national interest. The United States supported the shah of Iran to control the islands [Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs] and now it supports [the] UAE to take them back. The islands did not change, but U.S. interests changed over the course of time. The United States is a major player, and its approval of any security structure is a basic [reality] in the region."

For instance, one Arab analyst said he was "realistic and not idealistic in his analysis of why GCC states did not succeed in proposing a genuine regional-security formula, either among themselves or with Iran or Iraq." His analysis was described as "macro-level" and based on the "extreme sensitivity of size," that is, the differences in national population and financial and military resources available to individual states. According to this participant, "The balance of power is a major problem in the region and a main reason behind Iraq's intention to invade Kuwait in 1985, the Iraq invasion of Iran in 1980, and the Iraq invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The regional balance of power is still heavily relying on external powers."

Therefore, to avoid the influence of regional neighbors, the GCC states invited superpowers to physically reside inside their borders. Saudi Arabia had no foreign troops on its soil before 1991. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the Saudis invited the United States to reside in the region to strike a balance of power with Iraq and halt the potential expansion of the Iranian Islamic revolution. In addition, according to this analyst, "The region suffers cultural and ideological problems that will continue into the future."

Several participants made clear their belief that the region suffers from a severe crisis of trust. GCC states do not trust each other, but they do trust foreigners and foreign powers (at least before the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the U.S. post-9/11 policy of counter-terrorism). In the Gulf region, argued one participant, "Foreigners have the best jobs, the best salaries and, supposedly, the best formula for security arrangements. Unless we solve this problem of identity, the GCC will never solve any of its regional crises. Unless GCC states have the will to forget the past and search for a genuine security formula, the region will continue relying on foreign powers."

Another participant seconded this opinion, noting that "the United States is strongly needed to protect smaller countries, but the overall dominance of its military forces in the region raises overwhelming negative sentiments and even hate against the U.S. presence. The imminent threat from large states to smaller Gulf states will always be there – the potential threat of Saddam Hussein's regime to the northern Gulf states of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and the potential threat of Iran to the southern states of the region."

In this regard, one Arab analyst was skeptical about the former U.S. military official's

assessment that the United States would soon radically reduce the number of its forces, noting President Bush's recent statement that Kuwait is a major "non-NATO ally" in the region. If small states such as Kuwait are "non-NATO allies," how can the United States possibly reduce its deployments in the region?

One Arab participant pointed to the internal political realities of Gulf states as a major factor requiring dependence on outside powers for national security. In particular, the decision of all the GCC states to rely on monarchical succession rather than political liberalization to transfer power has undermined the ability of these states to exploit domestic resources for security purposes. Rather than browbeating the United States, regional states "should admit the fact [that] there is a limit on what they can or can't do. GCC states should realize [their] capacities; they can't, for instance, build [weapons systems such as the] SAM-7; however, they can build universities and develop human resources."

In short, the solution to the problem of dependence on external powers is for GCC states to develop their own human capital over time. This participant also charged that the "bigger states [of the Gulf] did nothing to benefit smaller states. . . . They didn't transfer advanced technology to smaller states, nor excellent education, and did not succeed even in maintaining security. Three major wars erupted in the region instead." It should therefore be no surprise that the United States has carved out a central role for itself in regional-security calculations.

Arab Critiques of Reliance on Outside Powers

In a harsh critique of the balance-of-power thesis, one Arab participant stated that if Iran were to help the United States in stabilizing Iraq, this would be tantamount to helping the United States "set their wheels to another war" against either Iran or Saudi Arabia, or perhaps both. It is therefore in neither the regional nor national interest to "make the U.S. job in Iraq easier." Expanding on this point, many participants asked throughout the conference whether the United States would play its historic role as a balancing power, or whether it was in fact intent on a major "transformation" of the region through forceful regime change or coercive pressure on regional regimes to undertake domestic political reforms toward greater liberalization.

For instance, one Arab participant argued that the history of the past several decades shows objectively that the presence of the United States in the region does not guarantee regional security or enhance its stability. According to this viewpoint, part of the reason for the destabilizing nature of the U.S. role is the failure of the United States to offer any new, holistic initiative involving much-needed confidence-and-security-building measures (CSBMs) between regional states. Instead, the U.S. role has been largely based on coercion or pure military defense of allies, not on building bridges between competing parties.

For this reason, another Arab analyst stressed the role of advanced technology and the chances it gives to GCC states to choose "who their neighbors are." For instance, the GCC might create major strategic economic and technological partnerships with Far East states such as China or Japan. In this analyst's view, the GCC should exploit the fact that

it has become fairly advanced in the area of communication technologies. For instance, the GCC could create data-storage capacities and centralized server facilities for global commerce. Through advanced technology, including the export of badly needed technological infrastructure to large neighbors such as Iraq and Iran, the GCC could settle its strategic disputes by redefining relationships to focus more on trade and finance, and less on territory. The smaller GCC states “can only triumph if [they] depend on their qualitative edge” and use their substantial financial capital to “restructure” the region’s political and economic life (see summary of presentation by Sami Faraj in this issue). For instance, this analyst believed that the GCC and Iran could “achieve a lot on bilateral and multilateral levels, and smaller states can be a driver for change” (as has been the case of Al-Jazeera media in Qatar).

Another critique of the U.S. role was based on the persistent gap in security perceptions between the United States and small GCC states. According to one Arab expert, the United States “does not perceive potential threats against Kuwait as Kuwaitis do.” For example, Kuwait has argued since September 2002 that the “umbrellas” offered by U.S. antimissile systems would not be sufficient to guarantee their security in the event of a missile attack from Iraq. Kuwait has been “very cynical about buying the most efficient system available” from U.S. companies, doubting the overall efficacy of U.S. missile-defense systems. This Arab analyst believed that the Kuwaiti critique was probably shared by officials from other small GCC states.

One Arab participant noted an irony that undermines Gulf stability. The Iranian regime has real problems with U.S. policies, while their citizens are pro-Western. In stark contrast, for those GCC states friendly with the United States, their officials are pro-Western, but the populations are extremely anti-American. This dichotomy creates natural instabilities in the region and undermines the U.S. role as security guarantor.

In another critique of the U.S. role, one Arab analyst argued that he understood the Iranian threat perceptions of the United States, noting that the U.S.-GCC alliance is perceived as endangering Iran’s well-being and stability. This analyst criticized the policies of Arab governments in the Gulf, arguing that the “GCC will not have a framework for Gulf security by excluding major players like Iran and Iraq,” especially since both states have recently demonstrated good intentions toward smaller states. In this participant’s view, neither Iran nor Iraq constitutes real or even potential threats to the security of the region. For instance, Kuwait and Iran have signed a recent \$1-billion deal to construct a water-transport pipeline, which is the largest economic deal ever signed between a Gulf state and Iran. Confidence-building measures such as these have allayed the fears of smaller GCC states, which used to see Iran as a potential threat. Given the realities of Iran-GCC rapprochement or *détente*, this analyst argued that Gulf Arab states are spending too much on defense systems, noting that in the year 2002, Arab states spent more than \$50 billion on armaments and procurements. According to this participant, Arab states have to “balance hard security with soft security,” which in practice means better relations with their larger neighbors (Iraq and Iran) and less reliance on U.S. military might.

This analyst further outlined “impediments that hinder GCC states from genuinely

contributing to Gulf security”: intra-GCC rivalry; lack of a unified threat perception; U.S. special partnerships and preferential policies to reward GCC states for their military facilities; and persistent fears of regional hegemony in regard to larger states such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran. However, overall this analyst argued that new bilateral military deals between individual GCC states and the United States constitute the largest hindrance to constructing indigenous security frameworks. In large part, this is because the United States does not perceive “the deep roots of the social and political problems that play a role in destabilizing regional security.” According to another Arab expert, “unless the U.S. vision of the region is changed or readjusted with these realities, and with the deeper causes of the social and political dilemmas [internal to Gulf regimes], its endeavor to search for regional security will never work. The United States succeeded in destroying the regime in Iraq but never succeeded in filling the political vacuum there.”

Finally, one European analyst noted that the Israeli perception of Gulf security – possibly shared by the current U.S. administration – is based on a form of regional hegemony. In the 1960s and ’70s, Israel supported the reigning regional-security structure that was composed of “three pillars: Israel, Turkey and Iran.” In the Israeli view, “If these security structures were revived again, then the United States would be less dependent on the Gulf [Arab] states,” and the benefit of stability would return. So, Israel implicitly favors a regime change in Iran that would allow it to be a “regional pillar” again, thereby negating the need for the United States to rely on politically unstable Gulf Arab monarchies.

Iranian Critiques of Reliance on Outside Powers

One Iranian charged that Kuwait and other small Gulf Arab states had committed major strategic mistakes by relying so heavily on an outside power (the United States) for national security. As argued by this participant, “The best policy for smaller states to adopt is to remain neutral rather than to rely on U.S. forces. In brief, smaller states should follow the model of Switzerland.” This analyst admitted that Iran has committed strategic mistakes as well, for instance, when it threatened its neighbor states to expand the Islamic revolution over their land in the 1980s. However, “The bigger mistake committed by Kuwait and other regional small states, which is worse than the mistake of radical Iranians, is that rather than trying to resolve their disputes regionally, they have opted to resort to U.S. military power.” According to this participant, “The realistic approach to resolving the regional imbalance of power is to admit the difference in size between the Gulf states and Iran. Geography will never change, regardless of the regime in power.”

Another Iranian participant raised the notion of “fear of Iran” as an institutionalized concept. He wondered if this “institutionalized concept” should be discussed whenever and wherever an alternative security framework for the region is discussed. The participant argued that to resolve this dilemma, Iran and GCC states should work on gradually converting “fear of Iran” into a more constructive concept.

As detailed by several Iranian participants, the region is witnessing a gradual strategic and conceptual change in regard to Iran’s relationship with the other states of the region, and Iran is looking forward to building up constructive relations with regional states, including stronger bilateral ties. One Iranian participant believed that changes in “the

entrenched conceptions of states” can gradually be institutionalized through further cooperative agreements. For instance, this participant referred to the current exchange of commercial flights between Iran and Dubai as a sign of mutual cooperation, adding that Iranian-GCC relations could become even more normalized and positive despite the “islands issue.”

In general, the Iranian participants critiqued the traditional “balance of power” or “realism” school that their Arab neighbors tended to rely upon in their foreign policies. One argued that balance-of-power reasoning creates a “vicious circle” that has led to “security escalation.” In sum: the small GCC states fear Iran’s size and military policy, so they ally themselves with the United States, which brings in heavy military forces that inherently threaten the Islamic regime in Tehran – perhaps even constituting an existential threat, given the rhetoric of “axis of evil.” In turn, Iran undertakes security policies and diplomacy that threaten its neighbors, even though Iran intends its security policies to be purely defensive in nature. Thus, reliance on the United States as an outside power creates a vicious circle between Iran and its neighbors. The problem is therefore not the imbalance of power or Iranian desires for hegemony, but rather, the negative perceptions that Arab regimes harbor toward Iran, which cause them to mistakenly rely on the United States for regional security. One Iranian analyst stressed that Iran has shown its sincerity in wanting to cooperate with its neighbors through diplomacy with the EU and the International Atomic Energy Agency on the nuclear issue.

Further, one Iranian analyst admitted that he understood why Israel and the United States are concerned about the Iranian nuclear program but wondered why the GCC is similarly worried. This analyst reasoned, “If their worries are related to the islands dispute, then they shouldn’t worry too much; Iran does not view the islands issue as strategically important – it is only a source of national pride.” In general, none of the Iranian participants believed that the dispute between the UAE and Iran over the three islands should constitute a significant source of tension.

The Arab Response to Iranian Critiques

Several Arab participants argued that the islands question constitutes the most strategically important issue in the Gulf region, even though it is not economically vital. As pointed out by one analyst, the Kuwaiti island blocks the Iraqi sea outlet and the UAE islands overlook the Strait of Hormuz. GCC states fall under the shortest-range missiles Iran possesses, and for this reason, the GCC military planners naturally focus on Iranian offensive capabilities rather than intentions. The GCC is under threat of Iranian missile strikes, even if those missiles are aimed at Israel. In this analyst’s view, the GCC encounters a similar situation to that of King Hussein of Jordan in 1991, in facing Iraqi SCUD missiles.

Another Arab expert minimized the symbolic significance of Iranian disclosures to the IAEA and the Europeans. In the final analysis, the GCC states do not need such disclosures by Iran, nor do they depend as absolutely on U.S. capabilities as the Iranians believe, because non-governmental, commercial entities sell high-quality surveillance photographs on the internet (or one can even see them for free on the Web site of

Globalsecurity.com, a U.S. non-governmental organization specializing in policy analysis based on commercial satellite photography). Therefore, the GCC does not need intelligence information to monitor the nuclear activities of Iran, such as the building of their Isfahan nuclear base.

Meanwhile, the very presence of missiles or the introduction of missile technologies to the Gulf by Iran is inherently threatening to Kuwait, even if Iran were to fully cooperate with the IAEA and forgo development of nuclear weapons or other WMD. In the Kuwaiti analysis, if another war were to erupt, it would happen “on conventional rather than nuclear terms.” For this reason, the UAE is the best-equipped state in the GCC in terms of WMD defense systems. It owns even greater defense capabilities than the Saudi and Kuwaiti forces. The very fact that the UAE owns such systems is strong evidence of how the UAE perceives the Iranian threat.

All this said, one analyst quipped, “Kuwait views Iran in more positive terms than the Iranian participants in this conference think. At least Iran has checks and balances, and the decision to go to war [in Iranian politics] is more difficult than the decision to go to war during Saddam’s regime. The Arab press in GCC states even translates debates of Iranian strategic issues.” According to this expert, it is not the Iranian regime that GCC states fear (as is the case with the United States), but rather the hard geopolitical fact of its size.

On the issue of whether the GCC would stand as a unified cohesive body against the Iranians during times of hostility, co-chair Riad Kahwaji of INEGMA asserted that, if confidence-building measures are sustained with GCC states, and the political and economic relations between both entities are enhanced, then there will be little chance for GCC states to harbor hostilities against Iran. However, if the hardliners in Tehran were to gain more ground – for instance, in its upcoming presidential elections – and if the Islamic revolution were revived again, then GCC states will strengthen their alliance with the United States. In any case, even if there are constant improvements in the political and military relations between the GCC states and Iran, the “GCC military mind will not keep silent toward the Iranian missiles, which pose serious threats to the security of regional states.”

On the issue of why the GCC fears Iran’s nuclear program more than Israel’s, Kahwaji commented that the United States owns the best missile defense systems in the world, the Patriot, and GCC is looking for such systems to deploy on its soil. If Washington approves selling the GCC these systems, then a U.S. condition is that the systems should be deployed on the eastern fronts and not on the western fronts. If the GCC did not accept U.S. conditions, then they might pursue non-U.S. missile-defense systems (from Russia perhaps), despite the fact they are not reliable or proven systems in any program. However, even in this case, the United States might exert pressure on Russia not to conclude such a deal, if GCC states planned to employ them on the western front. Therefore, the GCC is sacrificing deploying such systems on the western front to seek superior U.S. armaments and technology.

Finally, on the issue of the three islands, Kahwaji asked, if the islands are not strategically important to Iran, why does Iran not take the initiative to pull out its troops, in order to remove the one thorn left in the GCC-Iranian relationship?

Iranian Optimism: Positive Developments in GCC-Iran Relations

One Iranian participant expressed relief that some GCC states have a more positive perception of Iran than he had thought. Due to the existence of a good level of freedom of press in the region, the Iranian political debates and perspectives are heard and reflected in GCC media. In this person's view, the dissemination of Iranian debates in the Gulf region is proof that both societies are interacting with each other. Iran has controversies with individual GCC states over various issues, but these controversies should not deter interaction and the maintenance of good bilateral relations. With states outside the region, relations are not as deep as they are supposed to be. However, through mutual cooperation, Iran and its neighbors should be able to enhance their relations, as has already happened with Kuwait.

On the multilateral level, there is an evolving debate in Iran that encourages the enhancement of relations with the entire GCC, and there is a clear tendency to go beyond bilateral relations. This internal Iranian debate represents a significant change in the security of the region, as it allows for engagement beyond the low levels seen in the 1980s and '90s.

Concerning the U.S.-GCC alliance and the perception that it hinders Iran's relations with regional states, an Iranian participant argued that this is not a prevalent perception in Tehran. GCC states are neighbors; hence, Iran does not view them as foes. Moreover, Iran cannot do anything about its size. Therefore, establishing bilateral cooperation is the answer to the security dilemma in the Gulf.

The Iranian participant asked Arab Gulf participants not to fall into the U.S. trap of viewing Iran as part of an "axis of evil". Iran is engaged in reforms and amendments of its constitution and is not interested in starting new conflicts with neighboring states. Moreover, Iran and the United States have common interests in the security and stability of the region – secure oil, a stable Iraq, a stable Central Asia and Afghanistan, and the settlement of other regional disputes. In this environment, the U.S.-GCC alliance is understandable as long as it does not pose a threat to Iran.

The Iranian participant also stated that Iranian missiles were not erected to hit GCC states. Rather, "Iran is a state under siege and under attack," both in the sense of official U.S. pronouncements and at an unofficial level. Israel is pressuring Washington to militarily target Iran before any other regional state. Under these serious threats, Iran should be concerned with its own defensive security systems. Despite these negative trends, introduced largely by an outside power, Iran has started nascent defense and security cooperation with GCC states. Apart from signing mutual cooperation projects with Kuwait, Iran has initiated military cooperation with Oman and other states.

In this context, the dispute with the UAE over the three Gulf islands of Abu Musa and the Tunbs is a delicate and nuanced issue which the UAE and Iran are discussing. Iran hopes to solve this political challenge with the UAE. Having disputes with GCC or Arab states does not entail the cutting of political ties. Iran can keep good relations with these states and at the same time negotiate all issues of concern.

China and Taiwan, for instance, have their differences, but they have been able to maintain excellent economic relations and investment initiatives. This is a relevant example for the future of Iran-GCC relations. Iran-GCC controversies should not be taken

advantage of by other states to further widen the gap between regional actors in order to achieve the hidden goals of outside powers.

Iran is also not a destabilizing force in terms of WMD proliferation. In fact, Iran supports the Middle East WMD-Free-Zone initiative and maintains excellent multilateral relations with Egypt within the context of international organizations such as the United Nations.

Finally, rhetoric in politics is very important, and Iran understands that democratic development internally is a requirement for peace and security in the region. This constitutes another issue of commonality between Iran and its Arab neighbors, who also have recognized the importance of domestic reform leading toward economic and political liberalization.

Another Iranian participant referred to the negotiations taking place in New York between the foreign ministers of the GCC and Iran. The Iranian foreign minister offered the idea of Iran's being officially recognized as a diplomatic and military observer to the GCC. Although this suggestion was not perceived positively, it is evidence that Iran is interested in regional cooperation on a pragmatic level. For instance, Iran supports the stability of Iraq; the first official who headed a delegation to Iraq after the American invasion was an Iranian ambassador.

UNEASY TRIANGLE: IRAN, THE UNITED STATES AND IRAQ

According to the Iranian participants, the national interests of the United States and Iran in the region converge, but this should only be analyzed on the basis that Iran has a "natural" influence on Iraq. Iran does not have a perverse interest in undermining Iraq through creating a particular domestic system in Baghdad that benefits Iran at the expense of the Iraqi people or other neighboring states. The real problem is not Iranian interests in Iraq, but rather the U.S. insistence on defining Iran within an "axis of evil." As U.S. rhetoric sets the general tone for diplomacy in the Gulf, when the United States speaks to the Iranians, it might wish to avoid creating unnecessarily negative dynamics.

The Iranians argued that the world has a tendency to oversimplify the Iranian debate into conservatives versus reformists.² In this simplistic perception, the reformists attempt real internal reforms, while the conservatives block their efforts. The Iranian polity is more nuanced. The conservative bloc is not a single political faction, but a wide spectrum of groups. Conservatives are sometimes even radical in making genuine changes, advocating policies to improve relations with the United States and preventing the further expansion of the Islamic revolution to other countries in the Gulf region. In short, preserving the fruits of the Islamic Revolution does not equate automatically with repressive internal policies or radical external ones.

Meanwhile, the Iranian polity has reformist groups who are still stuck in the 1950s and '60s, championing the progressive social slogans that dominated Europe during that period. One Iranian participant expressed a belief that the negative U.S. perception of Iran (and accompanying diplomatic statements) has created a global perception that is inaccurate but has been successfully "marketed" to Iran's neighbors. This marketing campaign has resulted in the definition of Iran as an enemy state, an irresponsible power intent on destabilization of the Gulf for ideological goals.

In response, one skeptical U.S. participant pointed out that the United States had offered a generous commitment to aid Iran after the earthquake disaster in Bam. This offer was flatly refused by the Iranian elites. What does this example say about the argument that Iran wishes to improve its relations with outside powers?

In response, one Iranian analyst charged that the offer itself might have been sincere but must be understood in the overall negative context of U.S. policies toward Iran. In this participant's view, the United States does not really want to improve relations with Iran, although the earthquake event could have been an opportunity for both states to fruitfully invest in their relations. However, given the context of U.S. labeling of the Islamic Republic as a member of the "axis of evil," the Iranian authorities and people did not trust overall U.S. intentions. "Even a seven-year-old Iranian child would have said 'no' to the U.S. rescue team and humanitarian assistance. Everyone in Iran was surprised and amazed. Neither the reformists nor the conservatives anticipated such a move – so it was bound to fail." The problem, according to this participant, is that Iranians feel they are dictated to by Washington.

The decision to reject the U.S. humanitarian initiative was taken at higher levels, and some "courageous writers" criticized the regime's rejection in the newspapers, asserting that this might have been a good opportunity to improve relations with the United States. So in a sense, the dissenting press coverage constitutes evidence that Iran is becoming an open society, at least in terms of public debate and media reporting.

This participant also argued that to have a stable Iraq, the Shiites must be brought into a framework that both regional powers and the Shiites themselves trust and respect. "The United States does not understand the Shiite populace in Iraq as the Iranians do. To have an understanding with the Shiites in Najaf, you must first reach the Shiites in Qom." In other words, U.S.-Iranian relations must be improved for a stable order to evolve in Iraq.

However, some participants expressed doubt that Iran had influence, benign or otherwise, over the Shiite leaders and populace in Najaf and Karbala. There was a fair amount of skepticism that the particular Iranian theocratic version of Shiite thought, blended as it is with the Persian nationalism of Iran, could offer lessons to Shiite leaders and people in Iraq.

On the two schools of thought within Shiism, (in Najaf, Iraq, and Qom, Iran), one Iranian participant argued that Western analysts are right to point out that there are differences of opinion between the *ulama* (religious authorities) in Najaf and Iran. But there is also an equally important difference of opinion among the Iranian *ulama* in Iran, a difference that does not imply dysfunction.

Currently, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani is against U.S.-led or U.S.-created institutions in Iraq, and thousands rally to his call. The fact is that the United States does not know how to communicate with the *ulama*. Therefore, there should be a dialogue between the United States and the *ulama* in both Iran and Iraq. To avoid domestic catastrophe in Iraq, it is essential that the United States and Iran develop a healthy bilateral dialogue.

Somewhat against this argument of the centrality of Iranian influence in Iraq, one Iranian participant asserted, although Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani is of Iranian origin, this does not mean that he assumes he carries weight in Iran. Nor does Sistani's local influ-

ence automatically mean that Iran has influence over Iraq. The perception of Iranian influence is overdrawn by both U.S. analysts and by the Iranians themselves. This said, the Iranian interest in the stability of Iraq coincides with the American interest. According to this Iranian expert, the Iranian influence in Iraq is “natural” and not “artificial.”

One skeptical U.S. participant replied that, given Iranian activities within post-Saddam Iraq, it is not so easy to dismiss the claim that the religious leadership of Iran advocates a “clash between civilizations” with the West: “I have a hard time understanding how the U.S. can expect [support for stabilizing Iraq] from a leadership that advocates such a concept.” If the Iranian religious and political elites believe in a clash of civilizations that requires the persistent weakening of U.S. influence in the Gulf, how can the United States expect Iran to intervene in Iraq and exert pressure on the Shiites to curb political catastrophes? This U.S. analyst further admitted that Iran has some influence on Najaf and Karbala, but he wondered if Najaf and Karbala might end up influencing Iran instead.

In defense of Iranian perceptions and actions toward the United States, one European participant argued that Iran’s worries about being identified as “evil” by the United States constitute a legitimate concern. In particular, this analyst believed that Iran should worry about the United States using Iran’s aid in stabilizing Iraq as a base from which to undermine Iran in the future. This European expert referred to the logistic assistance Iran provided to the United States during its invasion of Afghanistan as an example.

THE FUTURE OF IRAQ: DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN-POLICY ISSUES

One Iraqi analyst seconded the presentation given by Dr. Alani, who detailed several concerns about the spectacular growth of transnational terror groups, criminal networks, drug smugglers and overall political corruption and radicalization within Iraq (see summary of presentation by Dr. Alani in this issue). However, this Iraqi analyst believed that optimism might eventually override pessimism in Iraq *if* the economy were promoted and the private sector significantly enhanced.

This same analyst took note of “U.S. missteps” in dismantling Iraqi forces and the Iraqi intelligence apparatus, and the U.S. inability to establish an effective governing body in Iraq. To combat the consequences of these U.S. missteps, mutual cooperation and collaboration among regional states at all levels is a basic element for crystallizing frameworks for regional security. In this expert’s view, unless there is a growth in cooperative ties among regional states, Iraq will continue endangering its neighbors with three main threats that no army can solve: 1) the Kurds, 2) oil, and 3) religious radicalism. Dialogue among regional states is key. If the United States opts to lead this dialogue and chooses to reduce its military forces, this would generate a positive change in regional perceptions of the U.S. role.

Another Iraqi analyst referred to the long history of conflict between Iraq and Kuwait. According to the official document submitted to the British government in 1938, Iraq considers Kuwait part of its territory. Iraqi leader Nouri Al-Said considered an invasion of Kuwait in 1958, as did General Abdul Karim Kassem in 1961. Saddam Hussein did the deed in 1990. The problem between Iraq and Kuwait is not a problem of leadership; the Iraqi elites have always gained popular support whenever they have shown ambitions

toward Kuwait. The problem is rather a persistent strategic issue: the Iraqi desire to access the Gulf, which the population of Iraq generally supports. What is needed, therefore, is a re-education of the Iraqi nation to eradicate the entrenched idea that Kuwait is part of Iraq.

OTHER ARAB VIEWPOINTS ON GULF SECURITY

Egyptian View²

On the Egyptian role in Iraq, one participant commented that there are many differences between the United States and Egypt. The United States is not creating an environment in the Gulf region that would encourage Egypt or even other Arab states to play a role there. The United States does not consult with Arab states, with negative consequences for Iraqi and Gulf security. One prime example of this dynamic was the total dismantling of the Iraqi army, undertaken without seeking advice from Arab friends such as Egypt. This has had major consequences (mostly negative) for Iraqi stability and security. In this context, if Egypt were to send troops to Iraq, it would only satisfy the United States; it would not do the Iraqi people any good.

There are two conflicting views in Cairo on sending Egyptian troops to Iraq. Some believe it is an Egyptian duty; others give more weight to the negative implications for the Egyptian people. Egyptian relations with Arab states are not based on security issues but rather on historic and blood ties. Many Egyptians are married to Iraqis, and a lot of Egyptian artists, teachers and scientists live in Iraq. Sending Egyptian troops to fight and kill Iraqis will create tension between the two states. Furthermore, in the current environment, Egyptian soldiers will not be able to tell the difference between friend and enemy.

One participant commented that, although the Arab layman will not support a role for Egypt in the region, Kuwait and other Gulf states will never cut their ties with Egypt. The historic relationship among Arab states will survive any differences over the handling of Iraqi security. Kuwait will never cut ties over Egypt's peace treaty with Israel or disagreements with Egyptian analysts and media.

On sending troops to Iraq, this participant asserted that Egypt needs to invest a great deal of money in a revitalized military apparatus. Thus, it might not be able to use its military capabilities in extraregional operations for a long time. It has the capacity to send troops across borders, and it has transport aircraft, but currently its time frame for such operations is too long. Egypt needs to make improvements for quicker, more efficient deployments in response to specific contingencies.

Lebanese View

One Levant analyst argued that Lebanon is interested in Gulf security for three main reasons. First, in absolute terms, small countries have everything to gain from regional stability in those areas of the world where strategic resources are involved that affect the global economy. Second, Lebanon has maintained excellent historical ties with Gulf states for the past few decades. Third, there is tremendous economic interest for Lebanon in the region. A high-level expatriate contingent from Lebanon lives and works in the Gulf area. Large numbers of Lebanese companies also operate there. Further, Gulf investment in

Lebanon is significant and has maintained a steady rate over a long period of time. Finally, Gulf states have generously contributed to the reconstruction of Lebanon on more than one occasion.

This analyst also argued strongly that it is not possible to work toward Gulf security arrangements without addressing the security of the Levant. And the security of the Levant cannot yet be discussed without addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict. This conflict is a priority for the Levant and for Arab states in general. The absence or degradation of a peace process with Israel will certainly hinder Lebanon and Syria from joining a larger security regime, including one that incorporates the Gulf subregion. The exclusion of Syria and Lebanon from a nascent security structure will constitute a serious risk of marginalization of these countries, which will never lead to a more secure Greater Middle East. Syria is a major player and should be included in any security system. Further, Lebanon is a positive example of how a conflict-ridden state can become a working democracy and a pluralistic society.

Gulf Arab Critique

One Gulf Arab participant blamed Egypt for the stagnation of GCC-Egyptian ties, charging that Egypt did not comply with the principles of the Damascus declaration (agreed in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War). Under this declaration, Kuwait waited for Egypt and Syria to move their troops to assist Kuwait during and after the war, but it did not happen. This participant said that GCC states have contributed to the economic welfare and security of Egypt, and Kuwait is expecting Egypt to contribute to its political and military security in return.

Others argued that the Damascus declaration is “history,” and that Egypt has been downgraded by GCC states for not contributing militarily to Gulf security in a concrete way in the 1990s. Egypt does not have the political commitment nor the ability to bring decisive military power to bear within the Gulf. All the military hardware bought by Egypt and Syria is for local defense. However, some Arab analysts still think that both states should activate the Damascus declaration by creating a military infrastructure prepared for quick deployments in times of crisis. Without these investments, small Arab states do not envision any real security commitment on the part of Syria or Egypt.

WMD ISSUES

In regard to Iranian nuclear activities, one Iranian participant argued that it is dangerous to assume that the United States will “gain positive outcomes” by exerting pressure on Iran. Iran has in fact cooperated with the international community in regard to its nuclear program, despite the fact that there are many critics inside Iran who are against the signing of the Additional Protocol of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). Critics have viewed Iran’s signature as a surrender to the pressure exerted by the United States and the EU.

Because of this domestic criticism, Iran signed the Additional Protocol purely as a confidence building measure (CBM) and temporarily accepted its conditions to evaluate whether England, France and Germany are serious about their promises of “economic

incentives.” If the EU fails to undertake its part of the deal, Iran may scuttle full implementation of the Additional Protocol. The debate over its merits is not yet over in Iran.

In response, one U.S. participant argued that it was not only U.S. and European pressure or the promise of incentives by European powers that led Iran to accept the Additional Protocol. In addition, there was unified international pressure in support of the global goal of nuclear nonproliferation, which included Russia’s threat not to provide Iran with fuel and Japan’s threat not to go forward with a \$2-billion petroleum deal. In this context, it may not be wise for Iran to treat the IAEA’s activities purely as a CBM to assess European intentions. The real issue on the table is not Western relations with Iran, but rather the global consensus in favor of nuclear nonproliferation.

Another participant brought up the issue of Israeli viewpoints, which are important given Israel’s fears of Iranian WMD development and Israeli threats to preempt an Iranian weapons capability. There are two schools of thought on how Iran is perceived in Israel. The first is led by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who advocates U.S. military action against Iran to prevent the emergence of Iranian nuclear weapons capabilities (latent or real). The second school, led by David Levy, believes in the potential utility of engagement of Iran and dialogue with current leaders in Tehran. In late 1990, this latter group started a secret dialogue with Iran to reduce tensions and explore how the pro-Israeli lobby in Washington can intervene to lighten U.S. sanctions on Iran as a CBM and incentive to cooperate.

One Arab analyst suggested the formulation of new procedural measures that would be stronger than the current provisions of the NPT and its Additional Protocol, which are imperfect multilateral instruments. States can in fact cheat on their obligations without getting caught. However, this analyst also accused greater powers of pushing the world’s states to sign these and other WMD agreements while knowing that these states might not keep their promises to abide by the stipulated articles.

For instance, in 1995, Arab states agreed to sign the NPT – both as a CBM and a move towards putting Israel in a corner as the only remaining nuclear state in the region. Sponsored by Iran, these Arab states took a further step forward when they submitted text on a “Middle East WMD-Free Zone” (WMDFZ) to the U.N. Security Council for approval. At that time, the United States argued that the idea of a WMDFZ was not valid. But Arab states view their initiative as an ideal proposal for creating a fair, norm-based security environment in the Greater Middle East. Arab states genuinely believe that such a multilateral mechanism would prevent member states from cheating on the articles of multilateral treaties. As one instance, this analyst referred to how the United States firmly treated Israel on the issue of transferring the technology of its Arrow missile to other countries, saying that Israel already has submitted to macrolevel norms without such a zone being constructed. Why, then, should the United States refuse to work for a more explicit multilateral framework based on nonproliferation norms?

However, one Arab participant said that he was skeptical about how firmly Washington would continue to deny Israeli requests to export the Arrow ABM system to other countries. He pointed out that the United States has allowed Israel to produce all the components of Arrow missiles in the United States and approved the export of these

components to Israel for assembly. This manufacture and export policy is a clear violation of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), of which the United States is an original author and member.

This analyst further argued that *all* Israeli missiles are derivatives from original U.S. technology, and as such are the most accurate missiles in the region. Meanwhile, whenever the United States has attempted to provide Egypt with advanced technology, Israel has pressured it not to provide weapons such as the U.S. Navy's antiship missiles. The United States even attempted to modify the software programs of these missiles to downgrade their capabilities. This is clearly an unequal treatment of states under a nonproliferation regime that is supposed to be based on the sovereign equality of all members. Such unequal treatment erodes the will of Arab states to contribute to the larger war on terrorism.

Another Arab analyst said that he doubted there could be the establishment of a WMDFZ in the Middle East under current political conditions. In particular, the Israeli nuclear issue has thus far aroused highly negative feelings in Arab leaders. According to this analyst, "The Arab states have really given up a lot of their cards and received no positive response from the Israeli side....Why should Arabs sign the NPT while Israel is free not to sign? Why should Arabs be the ones who give up their cards while Israel is completely forgotten?" Many suggested that all Arab member states should pull out of the NPT and not re-sign unless Israel also signs. There is hope that such a drastic measure would exert pressure on Israel to enter into a debate with neighboring countries and possibly even exert pressure on the United States to push Israel to give up its nuclear weapons. Furthermore, there is only a minority inside Israel that debates the actual use of its nuclear arsenal; it is not an issue that focuses the entire Israeli electorate and therefore should be seen as subject for debate.

According to this Arab analyst, there is no official U.S. statement on Israeli WMD. There is a debate in the United States on how it will act if a state publicly announces that it has nuclear programs (as has already happened in the case of Pakistan and India). Will the United States eventually talk about how to approach Israel on this subject? Or will it instead decide to help these de facto nuclear states with safety procedures for their weapons arsenals? If the United States were to help with nuclear safety technology, then the United States would be accused of condoning the nuclear efforts of these states.

On the ratification issue, one Iranian participant said that Tehran had entered into negotiation with the EU both as a sincere CBM and to assure the international community that Iran is not developing a nuclear-weapons program. As a first step, Iran froze its *peaceful* nuclear activities, accepted intrusive inspections of its nuclear facilities, and started implementing the Additional Protocol even before ratifying it. Ratification of the Additional Protocol is now in the hands of the Iranian Parliament, which is seriously debating the fairness of its requirements.

In this regard, the inspection of Iraq (prior to the U.S. invasion in March 2003) is a central focus of debate in Tehran. Iran refuses to accept the Iraqi inspection model, which would turn the Iranian nuclear issue into an international security issue. The United States knows Iran is not Iraq; hence, Iran should not be subjected to the same treatment as Iraq

by either the United States or the international community. In any case, Iran does not work for the satisfaction of the U.S. authorities because “the satisfaction of the United States has no limits and [the United States] aims at the destruction of the Iranian regime.”

Finally, this Iranian participant noted that Mohamed ElBaradei’s IAEA report did *not* refer to “violations” committed by Iran, but rather to “failures” concerning its declaration of nuclear activities. True violations stipulate legal enforcement processes, and these specific allegations “were not raised or even referred to at all in the report.”

Another Iranian participant admitted that Libya’s and Iran’s disclosures of their nuclear activities have revealed the involvement of many private companies in a non-transparent fashion. This disclosure has put extreme pressure on many of the Iranian nuclear organizations. However, the Iranian disclosure of their nuclear program has another important dimension that must be recognized by the West and the world: It is a source of pride for Iran to have domestic capacities and to have the competence to produce not only nuclear reactors but also fully indigenous nuclear facilities. Within this context, accepting inclusive inspections and signing the Additional Protocol as CBMs will constitute a test that will guide Iran on how to interact multilaterally with the international community in the coming two years.

An Alternative (Liberal) U.S. View

Strong views on Iran’s activities and on nuclear nonproliferation in general were voiced by U.S. analysts. However, not all of these views were complementary in their policy recommendations or description of the proliferation problem. In particular, there was one U.S. view that expressed strong support of the NPT regime and multilateral treaty instruments and processes, and one view that was highly skeptical of multilateral regimes based on legal norms and institutional inspections processes. At issue, therefore, was not only the scope of Iran’s activities and whether or not Iran was complying with its international obligations, but also the U.S. conception of the global proliferation problem and how best to approach the spread of nuclear weapons to countries beyond the original P-5. One U.S. viewpoint favored principled forms of multilateral cooperation based on the sovereign equality of all members and non-members of the NPT, as well as the U.S. ratification of additional instruments such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to bolster the global cause of nonproliferation. Another American view favored more selective forms of multilateral action, based on a coalition of U.S. friends and allies, in which nonproliferation norms are defined and enforced by the United States in cooperation with like-minded states.

For one U.S. analyst who favored comprehensive, principled forms of multilateral action to stem proliferation, the Additional Protocol constitutes a “brand new item” and “the implementation of its articles will probably take two years to complete, from developing base-line data all the way to the inspection phase.” While this analyst saw such lags in implementation as inevitable, and accepted the time commitment necessary for true enforcement (unlike more skeptical commentaries on the NPT within Washington circles), this analyst was worried about Iran’s approach to the Additional Protocol as a CBM, and in particular about Iran’s conditioning of its implementation of the protocol on EU eco-

conomic incentives. This analyst asked, “Can Iran wait two years to evaluate the European Union’s commitment to its part of the deal? Will Iran consider ElBaradei’s comments articulated on October 18...to undertake extra confidence-building measures?” Because of the realities of enforcement of complex provisions, Iran should not wait to start implementation of the protocol while it creates its own extratreaty conditions and requirements. The NPT requirements are clearly stated and implementation needs to exist separately from other political and economic interests.

This pro-NPT analyst also noted that within the Gulf, only Kuwait has signed the NPT. Are the GCC states actually committed to it? Will Saudi Arabia consider signing the NPT and its safeguard agreements? Will there be a Gulf WMDFZ similar to the Middle East WMDFZ stipulated in the article of U.N. resolution 687?

In regard to the question of U.S. technical assistance to India on safety and security measures, this pro-NPT analyst said that the United States probably would assist India in its nuclear safety procedures. However, he was not sure that this assistance was helpful for global NPT goals, and he worried that such assistance would raise real concerns worldwide. Bearing in mind that Israel has not yet signed the NPT (and does not yet receive support on nuclear technologies from the United States), what is the implication of U.S. nuclear assistance to India? Will this set a precedent that leads to U.S. bilateral technological assistance to Tel Aviv, further undermining the NPT? As argued by this analyst, “Noting that Libya is giving up on its nuclear program, Syria is under enormous pressure to give up on its chemical weapons, and Iran is under immense pressure to stop pursuing a nuclear weapon program, will Israel also be pressured to give up its own nuclear program? Or will the United States signal acceptance of the Israeli arsenal through assistance on safety and security technologies?”

This analyst further argued that the United States could do a lot in terms of its rhetoric, actions, and WMD politics to strengthen principled multilateral instruments. Currently, the United States is allocating funds to research and develop improvements for its own nuclear arsenal. The United States even is debating the development of new nuclear weapons for use in counterproliferation contingencies. Is this move a distraction to U.S. non-proliferation efforts worldwide? If the United States allocates funds to develop new nuclear weapons, the worldwide reaction to U.S. developments would be highly negative and could easily drown out concerns about Iran.

Finally, this American analyst noted that the United States has pulled out of negotiations on proliferation of biological weapons and has not kept its promise to rejoin negotiations at a later date. It has not even ratified the CTBT. These actions do not create an environment where the international community can pressure Iran to abide by its own commitments under the NPT.

A Status Quo (Conservative) U.S. View

According to a different U.S. analyst with a more pro-administration viewpoint on nonproliferation methods and goals, the Israel nuclear program constitutes “a fairly stable, secure situation.” If the United States were to raise questions with Israel about its nuclear activities, what would this then do for the Israelis or the security of the region?

Should we exert more pressure on Israel? If the United States seriously raises this issue, it is doubtful that the results would be positive for either Israeli or regional security.

This American expert admitted that most states are not undertaking experiments on new nuclear weapons (as the United States might yet do), but a lot of them *are* conducting experiments on accurate missiles and on chemical and biological weapons. These small WMD programs could be an “equalizer.” This is why these states find chem-bio WMD attractive, and why the United States legitimately fears them. Meanwhile 90 percent of all states opt *not* to pursue nuclear, biological or chemical weapons and have no problem with U.S. leadership on this issue. Only about 10 percent of the states in the world pursue WMD and accurate missiles, and these are the states toward which the United States is gearing its nuclear policies.

This analyst admitted that the United States did not ratify the CTBT and has indeed provided \$20 million for research programs on the improvement or preservation of its nuclear arsenal. Some people have felt that the United States might need new nuclear-weapon designs in the future. The United States *is* a nuclear state, and the security and stability of the world depends on the existence of the U.S. nuclear arsenal and the credibility of U.S. nuclear threats. The United States and the former Soviet Union have tried to adhere to the articles of international nuclear treaties. Hence, U.S. nuclear practices do *not* have anything to do with the horizontal proliferation of these weapons to other countries such as Iran. Recent nuclearizing states are not pursuing these weapons because of U.S. nuclear policies.

In regard to Arab and Iranian claims that states in the developing world are unfairly pressured to join regimes that the United States does not even believe have credible inspection instruments, this conservative U.S. analyst argued that the treaties have strong international norms that all states should adhere to, whether or not the West pressures others to join. States’ signatures imply an acceptance of the principle of inspections, even if those inspections processes may be severely flawed.

As to U.S. actions in enforcing regimes, sometimes when the United States reaches a point where inspection is necessary, it often finds the inspection provisions of the treaties wanting, both domestically and internationally. For instance, the United States disregarded its own proposed amendments on the CWC Article 9 because it later discovered, when writing up domestic U.S. legislation to support its own enforcement of inspections, that these amendments did very little to fulfill the purposes of the treaty.

In regard to Iranian actions, this analyst agreed that Iran’s signing of the Additional Protocol was a positive step forward. It was, in fact, a central recommendation by the United States. However, Great Powers should not expect that the Additional Protocol will satisfy everyone’s concerns about Iran’s ultimate intentions. If a country wants to cheat on the NPT, it will find a way to do that. This is the basic problem of inspection systems entrenched in multilateral treaties. If Iran is sincere about signing the Additional Protocol, this step may (over time) constitute a CBM. However, it is far from constituting a comprehensive solution to the nuclear crisis with Iran.

In sum, this U.S. analyst believed that the real issue is *not* whether Iran enforces the basic provisions of the Additional Protocol, but rather whether Iran is sincere about

wanting to give up its quest for a nuclear arsenal. Enforcement of basic NPT provisions is not enough to prevent the development of Iranian WMD. If Iran is not sincere, and it treats the Additional Protocol as a straightforward compliance measure – thereby limiting its actions to the minimum steps necessary to satisfy the Additional Protocol – then the NPT will fail to stop proliferation.

In response to some rather severe criticism of U.S. intelligence and its overall level of credibility by both Arab and Iranian participants, this analyst replied, “If there is a genuine or contrived doubt about U.S. intelligence findings, then it will be very hard to urge the IAEA to start with what is going to be a diplomatically delicate inspection. Without this intelligence information [from U.S. sources], powerful states will be reluctant to approve rigorous inspections and will hesitate to show up in Tehran asking decisively to inspect specific facilities.” This analyst asserted that the experience with Iraqi WMD and U.S. intelligence should not be used by either Europeans or Gulf countries (or others on the Security Council) to undermine a credible inspections process in Iran, in which U.S. intelligence will necessarily play a central role.

ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORKS

Comprehensive, Cooperative and Inclusive Multilateral Approaches³

In their presentations to the assembled participants in Dubai, Michael Yaffe, dean of the Near East-South Asia Center of the U.S. National Defense University, and Craig Dunkerley, a retired U.S. ambassador, presented ideas for constructing new processes of interaction in the Gulf region. Their separate edited papers are included in full in this journal. For the purposes of this conference report, their recommendations for new Gulf processes can be summarized as follows:

- **Comprehensive.** All issues that impact national and international security within the Gulf subregion should be incorporated, including “hard security” issues involving conventional and small arms as well as “soft security” issues such as drug smuggling, terrorism, trade, environmental concerns and domestic reform issues.
- **Cooperative.** Their recommended strategies would comprise *mutual* security agreements on a flexible and “layered” basis, allowing a multitude of bilateral, trilateral and multilateral agreements that complement each other and involve the parties necessary for the cooperation to work in practice (for instance, not every agreement would include every actor). Taken as a whole, these cooperative agreements would help all actors attain their interests using CBMs, CSBMs and even potential, negotiated constraints and obligations that could limit any one state’s ability to dominate the region. Finally, there would be “follow-up mechanisms” to ensure that all states are seriously considering all baskets of issues (see “comprehensive” description above) and that they are taking their joint obligations seriously.
- **Inclusive.** *All* governments and nations within the Gulf, including Iran, Iraq and Yemen, would be involved, while existing bilateral agreements and alliance structures, such as U.S. partnerships with Gulf Arab monarchies and the GCC, would be respected.
- **Compartmentalized.** New diplomatic, economic and security processes would be created that *are specific to the Gulf itself* and not automatically tied to the success or

failure of processes such as the Israeli-Palestinian or Israeli-Syrian negotiations. While the Arab-Israeli dispute and Israeli nuclear weapons would remain important issues that need to be resolved for the full realization of Gulf security and stability, Levant issues would not be the sole determining factor for cooperation among Gulf states. Rather, Gulf states would move forward on issues unique to their own subregion while staying fully engaged on issues involving Israel. While final solutions to Gulf insecurities cannot be reached without an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict or the improvement of Israel-Iran relations, substantial progress could still be made on security problems that pose dire, immediate threats to all Gulf states (including transnational terrorism, domestic instabilities, financial malaise, conventional arms races, and continuing strategic distrust between small and large Gulf states).

Arab and Gulf Critiques of New Multilateral Approaches for the Gulf Region

After the presentations by Yaffe and Dunkerley, one Iraqi analyst charged that the United States harbors an agenda for the “anti-construction of regional identity.” Security, even international security, is a concept linked with identity. Regional security cannot evolve unless there is first the establishment of a viable regional identity. This in turn requires that the interests of all regional players be fully and fairly considered.

This analyst said that, as an Arab, it was hard for him to speak about regional security in advance of peace between Israel and the Palestinians and an end to the Arab-Israeli dispute. When security arrangements are discussed in international symposia, there are usually taboo topics that Arabs should not raise – and moving forward on regional security without addressing the plight of the Palestinians is one of them. If we are to discuss regional security, then regional priorities should be the central focus. If the United States is searching for a Gulf or Greater Middle East security framework through a changing of regional political priorities, it will likely fail. This analyst said that he, as an Arab, is not ready to talk about Israel’s security before it accepts peace and ends its occupation of the Palestinian territories. Nor is he ready to discuss the WMD programs of Iran when nobody is allowed to discuss Israeli WMD in international forums. “My priority as an Arab is not to give Saudis their human rights, but to give the Palestinians their human rights. When Palestinians are given their rights, only then I will be ready to discuss the human rights of the Saudis.”

This said, no security initiative will work in the region unless the United States approves it. There is a major problem in the U.S. approach to creating viable security frameworks, however: selectiveness. Iran is always part of the “axis of evil” or a “rogue” state; Israel is not regarded as a legitimate point of discussion, and regional security should be discussed before peace.

Meanwhile, the GCC is viewed in the region as “a house where everybody goes to talk and talk again and then goes back home and nothing happens.” The GCC cannot be developed and expanded into the central organization for regional security. One Iraqi analyst said that he would not feel that anything had been achieved if Iraq were to join the GCC in its present, ineffectual form. Furthermore, this analyst argued, “I will not accept joining the GCC without the Iranians.” Any regional-security solution propagated by the United States or other powers that leaves out Iran is illegitimate, given Iran’s status as a

major regional player.

One Arab Gulf analyst described U.S. policies as being idealistic in rhetoric but cynical in practice. The Saudi perception is that U.S. adherence to the principles of human rights and its focus on this topic in regional-security discussions constitute an effort to justify its pure national interest in the region. There are many contradictions between actual U.S. policies and the U.S. endeavor to find a comprehensive security arrangement for the region. The Gulf Arab view, including that of Saudi Arabia, is that new dialogue initiatives will be undermined for several reasons. First, the United States supports Israel despite the latter's crimes of genocide against Palestinians. Second, the United States has dismantled human-rights organizations that help Palestinians, labeling them and other Palestinian resistance groups as international terrorists. Third, after 9/11, there is a heavy strain of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim policies inside the United States. Because of its domestic treatment of Arab-Americans and new Arab immigrants, "the United States is unqualified in the eyes of the Arab nations and particularly Saudi Arabia to [use] human-rights and democracy slogans." Fourth, the United States has essentially "given up" on its special relations with Saudi Arabia, a major policy move that necessitates a redefinition of criteria for special relationships in the region. Fifth, acquiring special access to bases in Gulf states, and repositioning its military forces in the region, seem to constitute the standard American formula for preferential policies and special treatment: hard-nosed Realpolitik that belies idealistic U.S. rhetoric.

In reference to the proposed OSCE model, one Gulf Arab analyst further pointed out that there is a difference between the policies of individual Gulf states and the policies of GCC states as members of a formal security-alliance structure. The GCC has its own unique requirements and obligations for all members, and it is not clear how individual states that are already members of the GCC can also be members of a grander alliance structure or security condominium within the region.

Further, the external-security controversies are usually solved by the Gulf states themselves on a bilateral basis. The new initiatives proposed for subregions in the presentation of Michael Yaffe, according to this Gulf participant, suggested inclusion of Iran, Iraq and Yemen. In this Gulf analyst's view, inclusion of Iraq in the GCC is beyond the imagination of all member states for reasons related to the sectarian and demographic nature of the GCC population. The admission of Iran and perhaps Yemen is less problematic, though still hard to imagine. Admission of Yemen would complicate the security problem at a time when GCC states are struggling to strike a balance of power within the region and among themselves.

For instance, Iraq and Kuwait are still fighting over the sea front. This implies that GCC states are faced with external-security issues that should be solved first, as a regional priority, before there is any wider discussion of new multilateral frameworks. If Iraq succeeds in formulating a stable domestic constitution, Kuwait may find a foundation on which it can start bilateral negotiations with Iraq, with support from its GCC allies. Kuwait is interested above all in reaching new security arrangements with Iraq.

In regard to the contentious issue of domestic sociopolitical and socioeconomic reforms in Gulf states, the participants from the Gulf region argued that it would be a

mistake to take the OSCE as any kind of model whatsoever. The general sentiment was that the OSCE (formerly the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, or CSCE) was based on a broad and deep European agreement about the ideal political values for society, and this agreement is completely lacking within the Gulf. The Arab states do not yet have similar general agreements, tacit or explicit, on how political rights should be organized domestically. Even the basic concept of democracy is not generally agreed upon in the region. Finally, the OSCE model implies an ongoing discussion among officials and leaders about domestic-reform efforts, one of the “baskets” of the CSCE during the Cold War. Currently in the Gulf, one cannot talk about domestic politics; it represents an international challenge to current regimes by their neighbors and by outside powers. Leaders in the Gulf are already concerned about the opinions and frustrations of their own citizens and do not desire outside critiques of their domestic evolutionary path.

For instance, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE have different standards from other powers in the Gulf and are viewed in the mind of the layman as being more liberal than Saudi Arabia. In the current context of an imbalance of power that distinguishes GCC relations, smaller states cannot expect to put serious pressure on the Saudis to accept new legislation on human-rights issues or the freedom of women. This is considered interference in the internal affairs of another state. Changes in legislation and regulations are up to the Saudi society; in any case, smaller states do not have enough power to force such proposals on bigger states.

In sum, the GCC does not enjoy unified legal regulations and standards. Each member state enacts its own constitution and believes that its own system has advantages over those of its neighbors. From a Kuwaiti perspective, for instance, the legal system of Kuwait is superior to other GCC legal systems. As one Gulf Arab participant said, once GCC states “enjoy unified standards, then we can think about the OSCE model that Europe struggled over for a long period of time.”

In regard to the “follow-up mechanisms” recommended by Craig Dunkerley relating to an OSCE-like process, one Gulf analyst said that the GCC might consider new relations with Iran, Iraq and Yemen, but that any new cooperative relations should seriously consider inclusion of incentives and penalties so that these new parties do not undermine the multilateral progress already made within the GCC.

Finally, there were critiques of the way the United States defines domestic-reform agendas for the region. In particular, regional participants asserted that the United States has failed to engage the issue of religion as a key element of social life and human development and, as a result, tries to impose Western values on Gulf societies.

In the end, argued some Gulf Arab analysts, political reform in the region can be realized only if the elites of regional states give their sincere commitment to the overall process, utilize national resources fairly, and accept the principle of accountability. There were doubts that the United States, as an outside power, could help bring this about. In part, this doubt was based on the strong belief of regional analysts – even those highly critical of their own domestic elites – that the United States has difficulty respecting the sovereignty of Gulf states. One Arab Gulf expert criticized the unilateral U.S. use of force to kill transnational terrorists in Yemen without first requesting permission from the government of that state.

European Critiques⁴

On the official EU position, one European analyst commented that the Iraqi crisis has led to fragmentation within the EU, and the internal politics of member states have been put to a severe test. While it is true that the EU has played a minimal political role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, it has been playing a major economic role. At the international donors' meeting held in Washington in 1998, the EU was responsible for financing 60 percent of the initiatives outlined in the Arab-Israeli resolution.

Another European analyst said that he had become politically confused when he heard about the new dialogue initiatives launched in Washington recently, including the Bush administration's Forward Strategy for Freedom and the Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI). For over a decade, Europe has focused on the Mediterranean as part of a much larger geopolitical region. The United States is only now talking about the Greater Middle East as a coherent region with its own dynamics. Europe has created many institutions that are still alive today that could be useful in a Gulf or Greater Middle East context, including the Western European Union, the NATO Dialogue with Middle East states, the ongoing OSCE dialogue with individual Middle East states, the NATO-Mediterranean dialogue, and the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. These institutions are still functioning, and sometimes they delegate missions to diplomats on their behalf. The European fear is that the United States will construct similar models that simply repeat what Europe is already doing.

Further, this European analyst asked participants why the Euro-Mediterranean partnership failed and ended up with modest achievements, even though it was strong in conceptualization, in political support and attention by Europe, and in funding. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership had much more money than the United States is now putting into its Forward Strategy for Freedom and the GMEI. The analyst said that he personally believed it failed because Greater Powers wanted to "get around" the Arab-Israeli conflict, but they did not manage to do this because of political realities throughout the Greater Middle East (including the Gulf). Hence, outside powers ended up creating new concepts like CBMs and CSBMs, which did not go forward in any concrete way because the Palestinian and Iraqi questions remained unresolved. Therefore, solving the Arab-Israeli dispute, including all bilateral disputes between Israel and its neighbors, is a necessary precondition to moving forward on either a subregional or regional basis with new security structures.

Further, the Europeans tended to offer a very different concept of democratization, in particular, different visions for how outside powers could support domestic liberalization in the Gulf and the Greater Middle East. According to one European expert, the United States and the EU do not dispute the importance of the spread of democracy all over the world as a way of creating a foundation for international peace and stability. However, the EU is extremely skeptical about whether U.S. policy makers truly grasp the complexity of the democratization process and how full of contradictions it is (no matter what the regional context).

For instance, Europe tends to look at Iran *not* as an ideal partner, but as the most democratic and most pluralistic experiment in the region thus far. In contrast, U.S. policy makers tend to look at Iran as the major "rogue" left after the fall of Saddam's regime.

Iran is at a place domestically where the EU sees there is at least a plurality of social forces, unlike in other countries of the region. In general, the EU views the process of democratization as a more nuanced issue than the United States, which tends instead to focus on whether a state agrees with U.S. policy and bases its decisions on immediate regime change accordingly.

As another example, the EU is concerned about the United States imposing the idea of democracy and its preferred code of conduct *prior* to its intervention to solve a territorial struggle such as the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the European conception, all outside powers must work together to solve these difficult conflicts *first*, which then would allow regional states to make substantive internal reforms. On the Arab-Israeli conflict, for instance, the United States requested that the Palestinian Authority convert into a democratic entity before the United States would intervene to solve the Israeli-Palestinian question. In the European view, this approach is unrealistic and counterproductive because it is not likely that a state or group will democratize if they feel they are under constant attack as part of an ongoing conflict.

In the European view, the United States is too focused on “regional reordering” rather than the building up of solid regional structures to regulate relations between states as they are currently constituted. The strategy of regional reordering is an approach that projects power in the region and changes it from the outside by military means, while the EU approach of “building regional structures” focuses on improving relations between existing governments so that a peaceful environment is created for domestic change. In the EU conception, regional structures for peace between nations can be built even if the regimes in question are undemocratic. In fact, the presence of peaceful international relations among sovereign states will allow for more concerted domestic reforms. Europe realizes that all regional states have legitimate interests, even though they might be “problematic partners” until liberalization proceeds.

However, one European analyst admitted that peace negotiations involving the existing Palestinian organizational structure and leadership (the Fatah movement) are extremely problematic. In practice, according to this analyst, it is hard to separate internal reform from questions of international or regional peace and stability. Therefore, there must be an agreement on a new trans-Atlantic approach that takes the best concepts from both Europe and the United States. Further, this analyst noted that due to a very real “Islamic dilemma,” the United States is cautious. The Iranian Islamic revolution and the 9/11 terror attacks have made Washington very cautious about relying on autocratic regimes, fearing that relations with undemocratic states could hurt it again in the future.

However, the latter analyst admitted that the United States has an overly simplistic conception of domestic politics and society throughout the Middle East. The U.S. debate tends to picture Middle East states as having a monolithic leadership cadre overseeing the society, referring often to the autocratic Iranian regime suppressing the people’s desire for freedom. In reality, even in autocratic states such as Syria, different groups and factions exist in both leadership circles and society, relating to one another in complex ways.

Europeans generally believe that political Islam can play a constructive role in politics and “set a striking positive example towards more pluralism and stability,” such as the role

of Hizbollah in Lebanon. While the United States continues to see Hizbollah as a radicalized terrorist group (based on its earlier experiences in the 1980s), Europeans believe that extremist movements can be moderated over time by playing a role in the evolving political processes. For instance, the leadership circles of groups such as Hizbollah are not necessarily composed of political elites alone; they can also integrate personalities from the civil society or private sector.

In the end, Europeans tend to argue that there are limits to what outside powers can accomplish in regard to domestic liberalization, a process that springs from within the society. European analysts and officials do not see the Middle East as a passive region where people have no influence on their own destinies.

Finally, one European analyst asserted that the efforts to formulate official, institutionalized frameworks would freeze in place many of the current realities in the region that are contrary to the interests of some players. Therefore, the United States and regional powers might reject such a strategy. The cooperation witnessed in the Gulf thus far (such as that between Iran and its Arab neighbors) did not occur under the guidelines of official frameworks. Rather, they were informal private-sector investments or bilateral cooperation on oil and other economic issues. Formal frameworks by their nature enforce cooperation on real issues, but this type of enforced cooperation may create artificial shared interests where none currently exist. Whatever structure or process is created for multilateral interaction in the Gulf, it must reflect current and evolving political realities.

There was also some Gulf Arab skepticism about the current EU programs and processes, as well as criticism of the European stance toward the U.S. invasion of Iraq. One Arab analyst critiqued the positions of France and Germany, arguing that their status as members of the Security Council should have led to forceful action in favor of securing small states from the Iraqi threat. This analyst pointed out that France had earlier signed a security guarantee as a permanent member of the Security Council, and therefore, France should have kept its security commitment to Kuwait rather than opposing the United States and other regional powers in their stand against Iraq. The Arab expert criticized the position of the French defense minister, who prior to the war visited all Gulf states *except* Kuwait on the grounds that Kuwait supported the U.S. position in the war against Iraq. Given this context, why should Kuwait buy from France billions of dollars of military hardware and civilian software if France will not stand up for the security of Kuwait in times of regional crisis? This Arab analyst also criticized the European role in post-war Iraq, saying that many European humanitarian organizations and NGOs that were active and successful in post-war phases around the world (such as in Angola and Lebanon) did not commit the same resources to Iraq.

Response to Criticism

Some American analysts evinced skepticism about the logic of current EU initiatives, arguing that they tend to be purposely disconnected from U.S. efforts and focused on Northern Africa and the Levant subregions within the Greater Middle East. In general, there seems to be negative competition between Europeans and Americans on comprehensive socioeconomic programs that address regional problems. This undermines their

overall effect and efficiency. As argued by one U.S. analyst,

When I look at the [Bush administration's] Greater Middle East Initiative, I ask, where were the European programs that formed part of an integrated, overall strategy? I am not sure where the European role is in the evolving GMEI. The Bush administration is handling the politics of the Middle East in a multilateralist form, and it involves institutions that played, and are still playing, a successful leading role. For instance, the U.S. under the Clinton administration had asked the EU to be part of the Barcelona process and the EU rejected its proposal. Now I will be amazed if the U.S. said this is a process we want still to be part of. I think the Barcelona process and all other processes that made real progress [in the 1990s] encountered difficulties, and the Europeans should take a very hard look at them [to reassess their political logic]. The Middle East is a very diverse region, and there is no one-sided solution [that applies to all subregions]. The [tendency toward] one-sided solutions was one of the problems of the Barcelona process and the ACRS [Arms Control and Regional Security talks] as well. And that is why if the Europeans want to keep these processes alive, they have to revise and readjust them [to take into account subregional realities] because the EU has politically invested a lot in them.

One U.S. analyst said that the ACRS process failed in the past, and therefore no U.S. administration will resort to a failed program without tinkering with it to some degree. Many administrations do revive the central characteristics of old programs, but the programs' names are changed and they are packaged a bit differently. While new institutions may indeed be a step too far, and it may be hard to separate Gulf concerns from Levant security issues, the old frameworks and processes failed *because* they made no separation between Gulf and Levant issues. Therefore, new approaches are genuinely needed, and repeating old formulas will fail just as badly as they did in the past.

In regard to the criticism concerning GCC mandates, one U.S. participant asserted that the notion behind a new multilateral, layered approach is to encourage the GCC as a collective-security alliance to continue improving its structure because it has achieved a lot. Rather than stagnating, the GCC should think of new ways to enforce its mandate for providing security to its member states.

In the view of U.S. participants, the severe regional critiques of the proposals by Dunkerley and Yaffe were actually "talking past" rather than "talking to" the presentations given. According to U.S. participants, these critiques were in fact criticisms of the policies of the Bush administration. For instance, the complaints about lack of focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were not complaints about an OSCE-like approach. In fact, a free-floating diplomatic process on a multilateral basis need not ignore or contradict serious efforts to bring peace to Israel and its neighbors. Both efforts could exist simultaneously. All U.S. participants agreed that there should be real progress on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, because if this process fails, then Gulf efforts will also fail. However, U.S. participants also tended to argue that real progress could still be made on subregional concerns within the Gulf using cooperative, comprehensive and inclusive multilateral approaches, even as new efforts are also made to bring peace to the Levant. Furthermore, the more progressive U.S. analysts (which did not include all U.S. viewpoints – see WMD discussions above) argued firmly that if the United States has the right

to talk about preventing a nuclear Iran, as well as setting up new cooperative processes in the Gulf, then the United States should also accept the Arab demand to address Israel's WMD programs.

U.S. analysts admitted that some components of a "layered approach" to Gulf security would be "exclusionary," in that some economic or security agreements might not include every single nation in every instance of policy (although the general preference would be for Iraq, Iran and Yemen to be incorporated into as many agreements and processes as possible, as a general norm and goal). In the end, the U.S. experts believed that the United States would not enter into programs that did not allow some special relationships with "partnership countries," and that Iran would continue to be viewed more as a "foe" than a "partner" in some quarters of the U.S. policy establishment. However, the hope is that a layered approach could create a fairly neutral, non-threatening mechanism where Iran would be encompassed in an emerging regional structure. Indirectly if not directly, Iranian concerns and national interests would get heard as dialogue among regional parties moves forward.

Moreover, U.S. participants argued that their suggestions for new Gulf initiatives were based on their own personal experiences in the Madrid process as U.S. officials, and in conferences attended in Asia, specifically conferences dealing with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). These Asian frameworks do not violate basic tenets of sovereignty, nor do they undermine the special partnerships that the United States has with individual Asian nations. Rather, the Track 1½ and Track 2 forums allow for repeated and reliable interaction among all nations in the region on all security issues of concern. This is the vision that the U.S. participants wanted to put forward as a partial solution to continued instabilities within the Gulf subregion.

The U.S. participants asserted that they never viewed the OSCE as a proper model for the region, but rather as a "significant model full of rich experiences." In this view, "a number of organizations set up around the world can learn lessons from its principles." In the end, however, U.S. experts admitted that it is up to the Middle East to define the right model to deal with the unique and specific problems of the region.

One retired U.S. official asserted that he was recommending "a situation which does not likely have a single, neat, clear organizational solution, but rather a reflecting reality, a series of relationships, a series of arrangements, or a series of processes." He said that some states will naturally have a deeper "commonality of interest" because they have closer relations with each other than with other states in the region. New multilateral processes will often be partial in their quality of interaction (for instance, GCC states will continue to have stronger relations than Iran, Iraq and individual GCC members). However, one can hope that an increasing number of actors will be able to expand their relations and have the same "commonality of interest," although this is a process that will take a considerable period of time. In the interim, there are opportunities that can be exploited to make forward progress on individual baskets of issues, wherever a common interest does exist.

Inclusive dialogues involving all players need not be based on the presumption "that

everyone from the very start has the same breadth and depth of common interest.” Whether one calls new multilateral dialogues a layered approach or a network approach, the aim is to capture the complexity and dynamism of change in the Gulf and redirect it toward positive common goals. New proposals for comprehensive, cooperative and inclusive multilateralism are forwarded not to “freeze a status quo in amber,” but rather to manage difficult changes already happening in the Gulf.

Finally, on the compatibility between the U.S. Forward Strategy for Freedom and the new GMEI, U.S. analysts said that the Bush administration has adopted a multiple-track approach and believes that progress on one track will push progress on another. However, some U.S. officials and analysts view the GMEI and related policies as constituting a revolutionary approach that will transform the region. There is an inherent contradiction between the “gradualists” in U.S. policy-making circles and those who want to push things quickly, especially when it comes to the people-to-people level. Whatever the response to the GMEI and its ultimate effects on the region, however, the American participants argued that after 9/11, the United States is very eager to design new programs for the region that extend beyond political speeches. The Bush administration wants to have real achievements, and in this context, the GMEI and its follow-on programs should be taken seriously.

SUMMARY

Overall, the main theme of the conference was change and uncertainty. There is massive and unprecedented change going on in the Gulf region today. Participants evinced real uncertainty about future regional developments and the best strategic courses of action to meet those developments; uncertainty was a theme of almost every presentation given at the event. But at the same time, while new policies are desperately needed, the discussions clearly showed that there are many factors obstructing the invention of new ways of going about national security and foreign policy in the Gulf.

Despite these obstacles, however, Western participants (especially U.S. participants) argued strongly that the Gulf countries should work to conceptualize an indigenous security framework that involves more trust, mutual interaction and interdependence among the Gulf states themselves – especially in regard to those environmental, economic and military/security issues that are unique to the Gulf subregion. Many of these U.S. participants had knowledge of current military and diplomatic plans evolving in the State Department and the Pentagon, and they argued that if the Gulf states did not act quickly and decisively to address persistent instabilities, then the United States would itself make policy changes without waiting for alternative suggestions – something these U.S. participants did not view as a healthy international dynamic.

Obstacles to an Alternative Security Framework

Conference discussions revealed large differences in threat perceptions between big powers and small powers in the Gulf. There were also differences between Arab and Iranian perceptions, between those of the GCC and United States and, of course, between those of the United States and Iran. Participants around the table emphasized different threats (or different interpretations of the same event), especially in regard to the Iranian

nuclear program and other related issues. The development of a low-enriched-uranium (LEU) capability by Iran for the stated purpose of producing domestic energy was seen as a security threat to the United States and the European Union. Participants believed that this perceived threat is perhaps the central factor motivating new policies by both the United States and the EU today. As Riad Kahwaji described in his paper, however, the GCC is less concerned with the Iranian nuclear energy program and its potential nuclear-weapons applications than the United States or Europe. In fact, the GCC states fear the Israeli nuclear program as much, if not more, than potential future Iranian developments (see article by Riad Kahwaji in this volume). For Arab states in both the Gulf and Levant, Iran's program is at most a nascent weapons capability, while Israel's arsenal is a fact. In this context, a serious question was raised: Why is so much international and global pressure exerted on Iran to sign and ratify the NPT, ratify the Additional Protocol, and enact the required nuclear safeguards, while Israel, with its own alleged WMD arsenal, is forgotten?

Further, there was fear and uncertainty about the political future of Iraq and its defense program. There were many concerns about the Iraqi political identity as well, both domestically and internationally. There were many sentiments which said that the present uncertainty about Iraq's political, social and military identity must be settled before there could be any concrete action toward a larger cooperative effort in the Gulf, including the construction of new regional-security frameworks. For example, many regional participants asked, Will the United States provide Iraqi national security in the future? Or will Iraq provide its own security, both domestically and vis-à-vis its neighbors? And in either case, what does this mean for military deployments, procurements and so forth?

There was uncertainty about the future of the GCC. Will it expand? Can it expand to include an evolving Iraqi identity? What might be the future relations between Iran and the GCC? In this regard, there were fairly forceful intimations by the Iranian participants that Iran is keen to increase the quantity and quality of its relations with the GCC beyond just purely bilateral measures with individual countries, and perhaps to start dealing with them in depth and on a more multilateral level.

There was disagreement about the IAEA and the Additional Protocol. What do they mean? Are they strictly confidence-building measures (CBMs), or do they constitute an end in themselves? Will they ensure predictability and reassurance in regard to the Iranian nuclear program? Or is the Additional Protocol merely an initial step that exists in a much larger CBM process that shows each side the intentions of everyone else?

In this regard, the three islands dispute has been viewed as a status issue and an "intentions" issue: What are the intentions of Iran, one of the largest Gulf countries, towards smaller countries in the region?

There was a great deal of support expressed for CBMs and for Craig Dunkerley's idea of having a very flexible approach to confidence building in order to create a different security environment (see article by Dunkerley in this issue). In other words, countries should not make new institutions that would freeze the status quo because the existing realities of the region are too dynamic. Participants advised against the automatic extension of the OSCE or the NATO models to the region, and against the feeding of regional countries into these larger European or trans-Atlantic institutions. Rather, the conclusion

was that the Gulf should take lessons from these regional organizations, including Asian and Arab examples, and apply lessons from all of these multilateral experiments to create a much more fluid security process for the Gulf. In sum: Do not seek an institutional framework, but instead seek a process.

There seemed to be agreement that no Gulf actor will be secure if a major actor is completely excluded from the new process in the future. There was a lot of debate over what the word “exclusion” means in practical terms. For instance, is it possible to include Iran and/or Iraq in an economic or financial transaction, but exclude them from a decision on military security?

Domestic issues and internal reform of Gulf societies were also brought to the fore during discussions, by regional as well as Western participants. In this regard, one European analyst argued that there is a danger that the United States will attempt to define what it believes a “civil society” should be for Arab states (see article by Neep in this issue). This European participant recommended instead that regional states reach a common agreement on increasing the domestic political space in their societies to let people decide on their own what a civil society is, rather than relying on the advice of external powers. Regional participants seemed to agree with this sentiment, arguing that internal reform is a necessary component of any new security framework in the Gulf, but that reform must come from within and not be dictated by outside powers.

Many participants from both Europe and the Gulf argued that confidence-building exercises or frameworks are not just about regional CBMs between the Gulf states themselves, but must also include confidence building and the mutual building up of trust between regional states and external powers. In particular, Europe and the United States should not forget that their own relations with regional states require more explanation and justification as part of a wider confidence-building process. What are European and U.S. goals in the region, and are these goals transparent to regional actors?

Finally, there was a general sentiment that the United States and Europe do not adequately understand and address Gulf states’ perceptions of each other. The United States, in particular, does not understand how small or large GCC states view Iran and vice versa, or how individual GCC states view other GCC states. U.S. experts and officials also do not understand the perceptions and threat assessments of GCC states and Iran vis-à-vis Iraq. This lack of understanding undermines the feasibility of new Western recommendations for alternative security frameworks in the region.

The Security Dilemma: Ideas from Regional Participants

One Arab scholar argued that the logic of GCC security is inherently fluid and that this context is the one in which the United States must be brought into the region. This scholar admitted that although power politics has failed in the past, there is no choice but to rely on the U.S. presence for maintaining a balance of power in the region, both militarily and diplomatically. The U.S. presence is important precisely because of the fluid identities of the Gulf States and their domestic disputes.

On the GCC-Iran relationship, Arab participants acknowledged Iran’s high level of frustration concerning outsiders’ misperceptions of internal Iranian politics. At least one

Arab participant admitted that the United States and perhaps the rest of the world do not understand the true nature of Iran's political evolution. Some Arab participants said that they do understand the quality, dynamism and openness of the Iranian domestic political situation better than the Americans. However, they also expressed fear of Iran's geographic and demographic size and its military potential. Based on this analysis, various Arab participants argued that CBMs are very important in the region to squarely address perceptions of threats based on geopolitical realities. In short, while U.S. and European participants tended to emphasize the threats to the region emanating from Iran's particular regime, Arab participants tended to emphasize more longstanding threats based on the hard realities of geopolitics, particularly balance-of-power factors.

In response, some of the Iranian participants argued that Iran is indeed very worried when the GCC invites the United States to stay in the region. Iran feels pressured to take steps in reaction to the U.S. military presence. In this regard, the term "vicious circle" was repeatedly used by Iranian participants to describe the security dilemma created by the persistent Arab fear of Iran, the resulting invitations to the United States to deploy forces in the region, and the negative Iranian response to these U.S. deployments. Again, CBMs were emphasized as an important step to deal with this so-called "vicious circle."

Some participants asked about the role of the Levant. What exactly can the Levant contribute to a Gulf security framework or process, in terms of material resources or diplomacy? One participant argued that the Middle East as a whole desperately needs a few crucial things: disaster-response capabilities to react to earthquakes or other natural catastrophes; peacekeeping forces; and post-conflict peace-enforcement and reconstruction capabilities. Also, the region needs the ability to move military forces more flexibly to respond to regional contingencies, so that regional states are not solely relying upon U.S. forces. Although there is at present no agreement on how best to create these capabilities, one participant suggested that Egypt might expand its current military exercises to incorporate forces from other states.

A participant from the Levant asked Arab and Iranian participants not to forget the states outside the Gulf subregion, and to keep in mind constantly that the Levant and the world depend on the resources the Gulf provides. (This same point was first raised by keynote speaker Gerald Thompson of the Near East-South Asia Center of the U.S. National Defense University, who reminded regional participants on the first night of the event that the rest of the world depends economically on the central resource of the Gulf region and is greatly concerned about how Gulf security affects other regions' stability).

In sum: Gulf security is tied to global security and to the security of other regions as well. Therefore, it cannot be reduced to the particular national-security concerns of the regional states themselves.

Recommendations for Future Dialogues

One U.S. participant argued that the greatest contribution of the United States in these types of informal discussions is to listen and not to talk all the time. He suggested that the U.S. policy community continue to pursue similar discussions on regional security with the goal of agreeing on a common "Statement of Intent" about the role of new

CBMs in Gulf security. As argued by this participant, future dialogues need to “address specific problems in a tangible way,” including concerns about the major transitions now underway in Iraq. To encourage concrete recommendations, specificity and policy action, this participant also suggested there be “a follow-up mechanism for these discussions . . . to make sure the participating states are making use of their results.”

One Arab participant suggested a parallel symposium strictly for citizens, experts and officials from Gulf States. This Gulf-only dialogue would then propose indigenous regional-security frameworks. This discussant said that it would be good to hear Gulf states’ own perspectives without considering U.S. or other foreign intentions. This proposal was backed by one U.S. analyst, who said that an internal GCC discussion about new regional frameworks should occur before bringing extra-regional players into the mix.

Several participants from the region, including both Arabs and Iranians, argued for an annual or biannual “Track 1½” series with experts, academics and officials as a basic foundation for addressing strategic change. As voiced by one such regional participant,

It is vital to keep this kind of discussion going on with a group like this, to try to come to terms with what is happening in the region. Around the table here are soldiers, academics, professionals and diplomats. One of the things we are trying to do in this conference is to predict the future, in many respects, based on our understanding of the past. Prediction is a very difficult thing to do, especially when you are in the middle of changes; therefore, it is vital to keep a dialogue like this going in order to more deeply understand controversies and to further appreciate what people around the region think.

Another participant from the region said that confidence- *and security*-building measures [CSBMs] should be the defining focus rather than CBMs, because this allows for larger issues of security to be discussed. This participant also argued that a priority issue should be the precise definition of a future regional-security structure. Many participants had advocated a future process or framework that was “not too rigid and not too loose” in its requirements and parameters, but there was a lack of detail. Therefore, future dialogues should not lay out specifically the ideal multilateral process and its various components for the Gulf region.

One American participant critiqued the regional response to Michael Yaffe’s and Craig Dunkerley’s suggestions for a layered approach that took lessons from the OSCE and from Asia (see articles by Yaffe and Dunkerely in this volume). He argued, “I felt that people were hearing what they wanted to hear. . . . I would suggest having another hard look at how the OSCE started during the Cold War.”

Further, this American participant said,

About Iraq, participants are still thinking in terms of the old Iraqi army: 400,000 men, scud missiles and great military power. This military power is not there any more, and it will not be for some time. Whether this military power will rise again or not is a decision that should be made by an Iraqi government that doesn’t even exist today. The military power of Iraq is so distant that it doesn’t merit consideration [in future dialogues].

Another regional participant commented on the absence of “public” (non-governmental) personalities at the conference:

Why doesn't the conference take the initiative of creating a forum across the Gulf for non-government actors? Creating such a forum, as a first stage, will help formulate substantial proposals on Gulf security. The actors will derive from a wide spectrum of scholars, civil activists, academics and so forth, and will be therefore free from their governmental commitments [so they can] speak their minds without fear. These actors will be able to [affect the opinions of] decision makers across the Gulf and can exert pressure on them to enforce and implement favorable policies and strategies. . . . The people are the parties who have a real interest in sustainable development.

In this regard, one regional participant brought attention to some major changes in Iranian civil society and domestic politics:

We have to begin thinking about security at both the macro and micro levels. There are changes going on in Iran at the micro level. New political personalities and local religious leaders are emerging and becoming more powerful and influential with more potential followers. They are very important actors in terms of any security arrangements in the region . . . We simply cannot ignore their presence; they can [undermine] any security arrangement [that] officials may have reached in their meetings. They are the connectors between NGOs and government institutions. We have to approach Islamic thinkers, as well. Iran is now witnessing what one political scientist called an “emergence of civil society,” and [there are] dozens of them in Iran. It is very important to involve them in our dialogue.

Another Arab Gulf participant focused on the issue of misperceptions in the Gulf security environment, including speculation about the U.S. role in the region and the connections between Gulf security and the security of the larger Middle East:

There is a need for intra-GCC debate to [reach a common] Gulf perception on security arrangements. The next conference should look into the separate perceptions of the GCC side, the Iranian side and the Iraqi side, both towards each other and towards the United States and its regional role. Is it a facilitating role, or is it a protectorate role? Also, the next conference should look into the linkage between Gulf security and the larger Middle East region. How will the peace process [between Israel and its neighbors] impact the [Gulf] security arrangement and vice versa?

In response to the above statements, one European participant raised three points on the linked issues of CSBMs/CBMs, the inclusion of extra-regional neighbors such as Pakistan and India, the competing interests of Gulf states, and the central importance of Levant security for the Gulf:

We should include Pakistan and India in the security regime. We should tackle this issue more elaborately next time to actually start looking at what [components] make up the security regime. What can be separated and what cannot? There is a relation between

[different subregions and different issue areas] of a security regime, and we should talk about how these relations actually work. We should talk about what factors of the Arab-Israeli conflict impact the Gulf region and vice versa.

We should go also beyond the CBMs to speak about what instruments fit this region. CBMs are a two-level game. When we, the Westerners, ask for CBMs on the part of regional actors, we seem to forget ourselves. CBMs are not only about confidence between Kuwait and Iran, but about confidence between the United States and the people of the region. It is about the European Union and the people of the Gulf.

Even allies have different agendas towards what they want to achieve. For instance, the United States talks about change, a forward strategy of freedom and transformations, while the European Union talks about stability of the region and not having conflicts exported to Europe, [while] . . . the local participants talk about quite different things. For instance, Kuwait is not really concerned about democracy and stability in Iraq. It is concerned only with the perceived danger of the Shiites taking power in Iraq. [One Arab presenter] talked about this issue very clearly and directly when he said that there is no way Iraq would join the GCC because of sectarian reasons.

Finally, one American analyst argued in detail that the Gulf Arab states and Iran must be extremely proactive and forward-looking on those security issues specific to the Gulf geopolitical environment:

Things are changing rapidly and if the regional states do not like U.S. policies, . . . [they should] reshape this change. Otherwise the United States will keep going forward with its plans. Security structures are definitely coming, and regional states have to help shape them. . . . The same thing applies to Iran. . . . [I]f Iran wants to shape its own security structure, it should figure out how it will interact with the Gulf states. . . . All regional states have something to gain and lose, and . . . we should try to sort out what losses and gains [are paramount] . . . I suggest that each regional state should come to terms with how it can contribute to the security structure. . . . I agree on, and further confirm, the region's concerns about the Arab-Israeli conflict and that there should be more progress in the peace process; I even believe that the United States should be more assertive. But what are [the Gulf states] going to do about joint cooperation for environmental disasters? What are they going to do on disease control? There are a lot of issues out there that need to be addressed [specific to the Gulf subregion itself]. Iraq could become chaotic. It may become stable or very moderate. . . . [I]t is important to help shape the future of Iraq. If you don't help shape it, it may shape you in ways that you may not like. There is a need for a multilateral approach on the part of the United States and regional states; this need was stressed by all speakers directly or implicitly. . . . [T]he unilateral approach, especially the U.S. unilateralist approach, will only keep major actors further apart and will produce very limited short-term results. We need to discuss and modify reassurance measures in an elaborated manner. We need to address threat perceptions of the GCC states, Iran and all other involved actors. The Gulf states should engage themselves in solving their disputes and perceptions on a GCC level, GCC-Iran level and also on a GCC-U.S. level. There should be more engagement with Turkey, the Levant, Pakistan and India, and so on. In the final phase, all actors should be brought together at the same table to address regional impediments: the United States, the EU, the GCC and other regional states.

One Arab participant from the Gulf region agreed with this assessment, arguing that there was “a suggestion in the air that nothing can be done because we found problems in every idea we analyzed here.” For critical thinkers to find difficulties and obstructions is not unusual; it is the inherent nature of conferences such as this to criticize new ideas and find potential faults. But, this participant argued, with the current situation in the Gulf, “Waiting to find out what the United States is going to do or what its intentions are is not an option. . . . [The Gulf region] would be in a much better situation if regional actors could be proactive in some way.”

— Edited and compiled by
Michael Kraig, program officer, The Stanley Foundation, and
Riad Kahwaji, president of INEGMA.

¹ Throughout this section, one Iranian participant referred to the grouping of myriad conservative factions as “preservists,” desiring to preserve the results of the Islamic Revolution as a whole. The editor has changed this term to “conservatives.”

² See full article by Qadry Said in this issue.

³ See articles by Yaffe, Dunkerley, and Kraig for a full exposition of comprehensive, cooperative, and inclusive multilateral approaches to security in regional environments.

⁴ See the description of official EU policy by Antonia Dimou in this issue, “Kuwaiti, Iraqi, and European Views of the Gulf Security Situation: Excerpts from Presentations and Papers.” See also the original analyses of European-U.S. policy differences and trans-Atlantic issues in the articles by Daniel Neep and Völker Perthes in this issue.