

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY IN THE ARAB GULF STATES

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This paper examines how the concept of “Gulf security” is evolving as internal political and socioeconomic changes in the Gulf states interact with the processes of globalization and the impact of international events in this volatile region.¹ Starting from the basic assumption of “regime security,” it first outlines the parameters that guide ruling elites in the six member-states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in constructing local and regional security agendas.² The paper then focuses on a range of current and evolving threats to security to draw the distinction between the “internal” and “external” dimensions of security and how these relate to each other.

Determining which individuals or groups hold the power and responsibility for formulating policy is important in delineating the linkages between internal and external security and deciding which issues do — and do not — dominate security agendas. This is a salient characteristic of ruling elites in the Arab oil monarchies, in which the conduct of foreign and security affairs is restricted to a tightly drawn circle

of senior members of the ruling family.³ Our understanding of regional security-policy formulation is consequently enhanced by taking into account the factors that inform regimes’ perceptions of their internal-security matrix. This, in turn, plays a crucial role in shaping their policies towards external issues such as the unfolding post-occupation dynamics in Iraq, the ongoing dispute between Iran and the international community, and the threat posed by radicalism and transnational terrorism.

In addition to the securitization⁴ of these particular issues, the second half of this paper examines a number of long-term, non-military challenges to security in the Gulf. It argues that the changing political economies of all six GCC states need to be underpinned by a new and broader approach to national and regional security. Ruling elites’ reliance on oil rents and external security guarantees have hitherto provided a powerful insulation from internal problems and demands, while also reflecting the unorthodox nature of “security” in these postcolonial states.⁵ Strength-

ening internal cohesion and creating more inclusive and sustainable polities is vital to overcoming the long-term challenges to security outlined in this paper.

The paper consequently builds on the cognitive shift in thinking about global security that has occurred in an era of accelerating complexity in global interconnections and transnational flows of people, capital and ideas.⁶ Transnational terrorism, cross-border criminal networks and flows, and global issues such as climate change have led to the emergence of new threats to national and international security. Increasingly, these bypass the state and erode the Cold War-era demarcations between internal and external spheres as states' monopoly over the legitimate use of force becomes contested by predatory rivals operating within societies and across state boundaries.⁷

EVOLUTION OF GULF SECURITY

The Gulf remains an extremely volatile subregion with multiple and interlinking threats to internal and external security. It did not share in the transformation of security that occurred in Eastern Europe or Latin America during the 1990s. In these regions, security became linked to issues of political and economic legitimacy, and the emergence of new concepts of cooperative security was associated with a shift away from realist approaches predicated on a zero-sum notion of national security.⁸ No such comparative shift occurred in the Gulf, which has experienced three major interstate wars based on balance-of-power considerations since 1980.⁹

The conflation of "regime security" with "national security" is a feature of local discourses on security in the Gulf, as it is in many other developing countries. Ruling elites in all six GCC states have

pursued hitherto-successful strategies of survival that enabled them to manage the transition into the oil era and retain control over the processes of state formation in the last century.¹⁰ External security alliances, both bilaterally with the United States and multilaterally through the creation of the GCC, met internal needs by reinforcing regimes' security, as much against their own societies as against neighboring states.¹¹

The parameters of "Gulf security" in the coming decades will be intertwined with the political and economic opening-up of the region. Four factors will shape the contextual framework within which it will evolve. The first is the impact of the processes of globalization and the revolution in information, communications and technology (ICT). This is creating new forms of private, public and virtual space in which to mobilize, organize and channel participatory demands.¹² Globalization has also enmeshed the Gulf within a wider interconnected region with multiple sources of actual or potential insecurity. These include the intellectual and radicalization linkages emanating within and flowing from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the impact of progressive state contraction and ungoverned spaces in Somalia and Yemen and their implications for maritime security, and the threat of nuclear proliferation in Iran and Pakistan.

This links to the second factor, the growing internationalization of the Gulf and its emergence as the center of gravity in the Middle East by virtue of its economic and financial resources. The rapid expansion of economic and political links with China, India and Russia is creating new strategic linkages that are shifting the international relations of the region in subtle ways.¹³ Indian President Manmohan Singh visited the Gulf in November 2008

and announced that India viewed the Gulf as an intrinsic part of its broader neighborhood. Significantly, India also signed defense cooperation agreements with both Qatar and Oman on maritime security, the sharing of data and common threat perceptions.¹⁴ Meanwhile China, in its tenth Five Year Plan (2001-05), referred to energy security for the first time and has constructed a naval base at the Pakistani port of Gwadar, close to the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz.

Issues of energy dependence and security of access to regional resources give external powers a stake in regional security structures. International reactions to the outbreak of piracy in the Gulf of Aden during 2008 may prove a harbinger of future policy trends. The European Union launched its first-ever naval mission (Operation Atlantis), while both China and India reacted with a more muscular deployment of naval forces to protect their own maritime security interests. As the Gulf's share of global oil and natural-gas production is projected to increase from 28 percent in 2000 to 33 percent in 2020, with most of that increase going to Asia, its strategic significance will only increase, together with the number of external powers holding a stake in regional affairs.¹⁵

Oil (and, more recently, natural gas) is therefore the third factor that both explains international interest in the Gulf and frames the challenges facing its political and economic evolution. These reserves are not distributed evenly throughout the Gulf, and pockets of energy poverty and reliance on imported natural gas (primarily from Qatar) have already emerged.¹⁶ This distinction will play a crucial role in shaping regional development and potential sources of tension and insecurity in the future. At 2006 production rates,

and barring unexpected new discoveries, Bahrain, Oman and Yemen are projected to deplete their existing oil reserves by 2025 and consequently face imminent transitions to post-oil states. This contrasts sharply with the other Gulf states, which do not face the same challenges of resource depletion as their reserves-production ratio is a projected 62.8 years (Qatar), 69.5 years (Saudi Arabia) and 91.9 years (United Arab Emirates).¹⁷

Given the centrality of oil revenues in constructing and maintaining the social contract and redistributive mechanisms that bind state-society relations in rentier systems, any changes in the domestic political economies of resource distribution will pose great challenges to security and stability in states of transition. Comparative political science suggests that redistributive states are especially vulnerable to erosion of the ruling bargain and consequent loss of regime legitimacy, if mechanisms for co-opting support and depoliticizing society begin to break down.¹⁸ One prominent academic critic in Bahrain stated bluntly, "The future is very bleak. The system must change or transform itself." Otherwise, "without oil, there is no future."¹⁹

The fourth contextual factor is the continuing lack of internal consensus within the GCC itself. The GCC was established in 1981 as a political and security bulwark against revolutionary Iran. Lingering intraregional disputes and fears of Saudi hegemony on the part of the smaller member-states have hampered progress towards security cooperation, which has lagged behind economic integration. The six member-states have been unable to agree on the nature and extent of the threats posed by Iran and Yemen, thereby making it virtually impossible to adopt a regional approach to these issues.²⁰ Most significantly, each member-state has been

integrated under the U.S. security umbrella on a bilateral basis. This strategic reality is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future and complicates any moves towards regional security cooperation.

SECURITIZATION OF CURRENT THREATS

GCC responses to the territorially bounded issues of Iraq and Iran and the intellectual challenge of transnational terrorism illustrate their awareness of the linkages between internal and external security. These interconnections have been magnified by the explosion of Arab satellite television channels and internet websites, which have accelerated the spread of transnational linkages while contributing to the creation of an Arab “imagined community.”²¹ Accordingly, regimes have construed these issues more as threats to their political and popular legitimacy than to their material security, and this has guided their formulation of policy to meet the challenges.

With the steady drawdown of American, British and Australian troops from Iraq ahead of the December 2011 deadline for full withdrawal, attention is turning to how the post-occupation dynamics of Iraq and its future political trajectory will affect regional security structures and threat perceptions. Thus far, the GCC states have managed to minimize their exposure to the many sources of insecurity within Iraq, such as sectarian conflict, terrorism and large-scale refugee flows.²² This does not mean that regional policy makers believe the security threat from Iraq has disappeared; the problem of integrating Iraq into the regional fold remains unresolved.²³

Since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003, regional and international discourse on Iraq has been dominated by

analysis of its geopolitical and strategic implications for the regional balance of power.²⁴ As early as February 2003, Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal warned President Bush that he would be “solving one problem and creating five more” if Saddam Hussein were removed by force.²⁵ Officials and analysts in the Gulf viewed the empowerment of Iraq’s Shiite majority and the rise in Iranian influence over Iraqi affairs as the major, if unintended, consequence of the overthrow of the Baathist regime. The result has been deep suspicion of Iran’s cultivation of extensive ties with both state and non-state actors inside Iraq, which has provided Tehran with strategic depth and stoked deep unease within the GCC.²⁶

It is in this context that the theory of a “Shiite crescent” running from Iran through Iraq and the oil-rich Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia to Lebanon gained considerable traction in popular and political discourse in the region. This occurred as the orgy of political violence and subnational communalistic challenges to state authority between 2005 and 2007 sharpened sectarian tensions in the Gulf, as in the broader Middle East. It negatively affected the pace of political reform by reinforcing the innate conservatism of the ruling families in the GCC, who interpreted the unfolding chaos in Iraq as proof that U.S.-backed democratization efforts would shift the locus of power away from the regime.²⁷

Theories of a “Shiite crescent” and suspicion that Shiite parties represent a threat to Gulf Arab polities rest on a flawed assumption of pan-Shiite transnational loyalties and monolithic unity within Shiism itself, alongside a simplistic narrative of sectarian conflict and minority identity.²⁸ Iraqi Shiites are divided, and most hold a

more complex and positive attachment to Iraqi nationalism than is admitted by proponents of a “Shiite crescent.”²⁹ Kuwaiti Shiites demonstrated their loyalty to the state during the 1990-91 occupation, when their associational infrastructure provided the backbone of an organized resistance movement against the Iraqi invaders.³⁰ Significant Shiite unrest in Saudi Arabia in 1979 and Bahrain between 1994 and 1999 was motivated by resentment at uneven patterns of development and internal socio-economic marginalization rather than residual loyalties or direct or indirect Iranian influence.³¹

Nevertheless, the sectarian lens remains a powerful filter through which ruling elites in the GCC view developments in Iraq. Led by Saudi Arabia, GCC rulers deeply distrusted the Maliki government, which they suspected was an Iranian proxy and source of multiple physical and ideological threats to their own polities.³² This contributed to a self-fulfilling cycle. Their reluctance to increase their political and economic engagement with Iraq enabled Iran to take the lead in reconstruction and development projects. These include the new international airport in Najaf, which opened in August 2008, the creation of a free-trade zone around Basra, and the signing of multiple cooperation agreements between Iraq and Iran.³³

A slew of unresolved issues such as the slow incorporation of the Awakening Councils into state structures and the controversial creation of tribal Support Councils continue to complicate the confidence of GCC state elites in the Maliki government.³⁴ The centralization of political and military power in the prime minister’s office and the creation of a shadow network of advisers bypassing official government structures carry ominous overtones of

Iraq’s dictatorial past.³⁵ Another important source of regional concern is the decentralization debate and competing initiatives to create a federal entity in southern Iraq.³⁶ From the point of view of GCC rulers, the most worrying aspect of the federalism issue lies in its normative and practical implications for the highly centralized concentration of power in their own states. Particularly in Saudi Arabia, the legitimacy of the ruling-family elite rests on a narrow Nejd-Wahhabi alliance. This might become vulnerable to contestation from groups and communities excluded and marginalized during the process of state formation, including Shiites in the Eastern Province, Ismailis in Asir and Hijazis in western Arabia.³⁷

Iraq therefore remains a perceived source of insecurities and tension to the GCC. New threats to regional instability come from the continuing lack of human development and indices of human insecurity in Iraq, such as the 2.3 million internally displaced persons and high rates of poverty and unemployment.³⁸ These factors will continue to foster instability so long as they remain unresolved. Transnational criminal networks and the growth of an illicit economy have already emerged in the global drug trade as Iraq has become an increasingly lucrative conduit. Since 2003, smugglers have taken advantage of porous border controls to channel illegal opiates, cannabis and synthetic pharmaceuticals from Afghanistan via Iran to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for transit to Europe.³⁹

The potency of the “Shiite crescent” discourse underscores the complex web of political, economic and historical interconnections that crisscross the Gulf and influence the different ways individual GCC states view their relationship with Iran. Whereas the United States depicts

Iran as a strategic rival and military threat to its interests in the GCC, ruling elites in the Gulf states focus more on the ideological and political threats emanating from Tehran.⁴⁰ Iran has presented such threats to its neighbors in the past. It maintained a longstanding claim on Bahrain until 1970 and periodically revives the issue, most recently in February.⁴¹ It has occupied three islands belonging to Sharjah and Ras al-Khaymah since 1971. After 1979, Tehran also attempted to foment unrest in neighboring states with large Shiite populations in a short-lived effort to export its Islamic revolution.⁴²

This legacy of Iranian ambitions to attain regional hegemony, alongside the presence of substantial Shiite communities in Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, has tied the external threat posed by Iran to issues of internal security within the GCC. As the threat of sectarian overspill from Iraq became securitized by ruling elites between 2005 and 2007, local discourse on the nature of the Shiite threat often conflated questions of Shiite loyalties and Iranian meddling into one amorphous threat.⁴³ Particularly in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, officials feared the politicization of Shiite communities and sought to delegitimize and deflect their demands for participation and inclusion by restricting political spaces available to them and depicting activists as potential fifth columnists with allegiance to Iran.⁴⁴

The perceived ideological threat from Iran is compounded by the GCC states' bilateral integration under the U.S. security umbrella. This reliance on external protection is a continuation of a much older strategy of survival against regional predators.⁴⁵ However, it enmeshes the GCC states within the broader conflict between the United States and Iran. Successive U.S. presidential administrations since the 1979

Iranian revolution have refused to accept that Iran can play a constructive role in any regional security system. Meanwhile, Iran has consistently called for the departure of all foreign forces from the Gulf as the *sine qua non* of any such agreement.⁴⁶

This sort of binary opposition of competing visions of regional security exposes the GCC to great risks, should tensions between Iran and the international community over its nuclear program escalate significantly. The scale and extent of GCC military ties with the United States render their legitimacy acutely vulnerable to blowback from Iranian retaliatory strikes and enraged public opinion, which would likely hold their regimes complicit in any such strike.⁴⁷ This forms part of a broader "regimes-peoples" division within Middle Eastern states that became identifiable during Israel's conflicts with Hezbollah in 2006 and Hamas in 2008-09.⁴⁸ Within the Gulf, the staunch public opposition to U.S. policies in Iraq and Afghanistan and ties to Israel presents a range of fault-lines that Iran has already started to exploit in an effort to detach GCC states from the bellicose rhetoric emanating from Washington.

During 2008, Iran escalated a war of words designed to leave the GCC states in no doubt of its intention to destabilize their polities in the event of conflict. Deputy Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mohammadi pointedly questioned the legitimacy of the monarchies and traditional systems in the Arabian Peninsula and speculated that they would not be able to quell rising domestic unrest at the U.S. military presence.⁴⁹ In September, the ideological threat posed by Iran to the internal security of the GCC states became more acute when Tehran handed responsibility for defending the Gulf in the event of any attack to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps.⁵⁰

This decision was announced one day after a former Iranian consul-general to Dubai gave an interview to Dubai-based *Gulf News* claiming that Iran had maintained a network of sleeper cells in the GCC since 1979 that could be activated on Tehran's orders. Iranian officials publicly repudiated the allegations and accused the Western media of spreading lies about Iranian intentions. Nevertheless, the effect of these rumors and the recurrent revival of claims to Bahrain as "Iran's fourteenth governorate" fuel regime suspicions about Iranian intentions and capabilities.⁵¹ More important, they tap into a widely held feeling in the GCC at both the political and public levels that Iran maintains a network of undercover agents in the Gulf that would engage in underhanded tactics if ordered to do so from Tehran.⁵²

All six GCC states worry to varying degrees over Iranian influence, even as they maintain extensive trading links with Iran that, in the case of re-export trade from Dubai, constitutes a major loophole in the international regime of economic and financial sanctions.⁵³ Ties of trade and shared commercial interests provide a powerful rationale for improving relations between the GCC and Iran. However, the different internal calculations within each individual state mean that the GCC is unable to reach consensus on, or deal collectively with, the Iranian issue at a regional multilateral level.⁵⁴ This became evident in the fallout from Qatar's decision to invite Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad to the GCC Summit in Doha in December 2007.⁵⁵

Radical extremism and transnational terrorism pose a different, but no less profound, ideological threat to regime legitimacy and internal security. Security officials throughout the GCC notably failed to anticipate the rise of al-Qaeda in

the Arabian Peninsula after 2002. They quickly realized, however, that the organization's publicized aim of forcing the withdrawal of Western forces and influence from the Arabian Peninsula constituted an existential challenge to regime legitimacy.⁵⁶ The construction of a radical alternative to governing elites attempted to tap and mobilize popular discontent at their pro-Western orientation.

The ICT revolution and the creation of new forms of virtual space have eroded regimes' control over the flow of information and made it harder for them to isolate their societies from external influences.⁵⁷ Simultaneously, the rise of satellite television, internet and email has enabled transnational organizations to spread their messages across state boundaries and appeal to a broad "imagined community" of followers.⁵⁸ The introduction of the internet into Saudi Arabia early in 1999 played a pivotal role in facilitating the spread of jihadist propaganda in the kingdom.⁵⁹ Saudi security officials responded to this unprecedented challenge by prioritizing "intellectual security" and actively adopting cyber countermeasures in an effort to battle "deviant thoughts" and turn the ICT weapon against their foes.⁶⁰

Although the current capability of terrorist organizations in the Arabian Peninsula is much diminished, their intent remains a real threat to the internal security and external stability of the GCC. Terrorist finances have not been completely disrupted and remain a threat, particularly in Dubai, which is emerging as one of the new conduits for organized transnational criminal and terrorist networks.⁶¹ Moreover, the April 2008 suicide bombing carried out in Mosul by Abdullah al-Aini, a recent Kuwaiti returnee from Guantanamo Bay, indicated that many extremists remain

beyond rehabilitation.⁶² Regional-security officials acknowledge that the return of foreign insurgents from Iraq will inject a new dynamic into the regional security environment and will remain a latent risk for many years to come.⁶³

In January 2009, the emergence of two Saudi returnees from Guantanamo in positions of leadership in al-Qaeda in Yemen highlighted the weaknesses in regional and international security responses to the challenge of transnational terrorism. Following their release from Guantanamo, Saud al-Shihri and Muhammad al-Awfi spent five months in Saudi Arabia's much-vaunted rehabilitation and counterradicalization programs and were deemed ready for reintegration into society in May 2008.⁶⁴ Their reappearance in Yemen struck a humiliating and damaging blow to Saudi Arabia's counterterrorism strategy, which had presented this soft approach and emphasis on a "war of ideas" as an innovative new strategy in the struggle against violent extremism.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, the link with Yemen adds weight to growing evidence that extremists and groups linked to al-Qaeda have reconstituted themselves there after their tactical and operational defeat in Saudi Arabia.

The contraction of government control and the existence of "ungoverned" spaces in Yemen further illustrate the complex interconnections between internal and external security in the GCC. Saudi Arabia and other GCC states face a renewed challenge from terrorist infiltration and weapons smuggling from Yemen as terror cells take advantage of state contraction and security gaps to regroup and reorganize.⁶⁶ In May 2008, Yemen's vice-president, Abdu-Rabu Mansour Hadji, claimed that 16,000 suspected members of the al-Qaeda network had been expelled from Yemen

since 2003. These arrests notwithstanding, in August, Yemeni security forces uncovered an al-Qaeda-linked cell that was planning to attack targets in Saudi Arabia, and later foiled a separate Yemeni-led cell that aimed to target oil-installation facilities in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.⁶⁷ This plot was reminiscent of al-Qaeda's failed attack on the Abqaiq oil-processing facility in February 2006.⁶⁸

The September 17, 2008, coordinated assault on the U.S. embassy compound in Sanaa revealed a disturbing new development as three of the six suicide attackers had recently returned from Iraq.⁶⁹ After their return, the men reportedly attended al-Qaeda camps in the southern provinces of Hadramawt and Marib that Yemeni security officials suspect of training an aggressive new generation of extremist leaders.⁷⁰ The deteriorating internal security situation in Yemen, at once a cause and a consequence of the contraction of state control, is a significant threat to the stability of the Arabian Peninsula. Moreover, it links regional security in the Arabian Peninsula to another security subregion in the Horn of Africa. This brings into the regional security equation the problems of state collapse in Somalia and progressive state contraction in Yemen, large-scale refugee flows from Somalia to Yemen, and the burgeoning issue of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Aden.⁷¹

The involvement of militants from the Iraqi insurgency raises the prospect of a second destabilizing wave of combat-hardened militants returning to the Arabian Peninsula. In 2002, the first wave of several hundred Saudi "Afghan veterans" returned to Saudi Arabia following the fall of Kandahar and provided the nuclei for the terrorist campaign waged by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in

2003-04.⁷² Although the security forces in Saudi Arabia and the other GCC states are better prepared to handle the return of Iraq “veterans” and are unlikely to be taken by surprise, as they were in 2002, their counterterrorism measures may simply be shifting the problem to the periphery of the Arabian Peninsula.⁷³

The rising incidence of terrorism in Yemen is a symptom of the much broader crisis of governance and contraction of state control facing the country and its long-serving president, Ali Abdullah Saleh. Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the Middle East, with a population of 23 million (the second highest on the peninsula after Saudi Arabia) and a GDP per capita of just \$2,500 in 2007.⁷⁴ The government faces a combination of armed rebellion, deep-seated socioeconomic problems and mass opposition to government policies.⁷⁵ The cumulative impact of poor governance, endemic corruption, inadequate economic development, dwindling oil reserves, a water table dropping by ten feet per year, poverty, unemployment rates of over 40 percent and a rapid population growth rate of 3.7 percent per annum is a systemic social and economic crisis that has left Yemen perilously close to collapsing into a failed state.⁷⁶

This failing political economy on the southwestern flank of the Arabian Peninsula is a direct threat to the security and stability of the GCC.⁷⁷ Concerted regional and international action is necessary to assist the Yemeni state infrastructure to cope with the growing gap between rising demand for, and diminishing supplies of, basic services and resources. However, by early 2009, neither the international community nor the GCC had formulated a collective long-term strategy to prevent Yemen’s collapse.⁷⁸ What is lacking is a

program of political and economic engagement that goes beyond countering terrorism and tackles the root causes of state failure and societal strains.

A major part of the problem is that the GCC is unable to reach a consensus on how to tackle the instability in Yemen and what measures to take to alleviate it.⁷⁹ Lingering Yemeni resentments toward Kuwait and Saudi Arabia hamper efforts to incorporate Yemen into regional structures.⁸⁰ At a collective level, the GCC fears for its labor security if its labor markets are opened up to a large-scale influx of low-skilled and politicized labor migrants.⁸¹ Instead, Saudi Arabia and Oman have adopted measures such as tighter border controls and security fences to contain the tensions within Yemen and prevent overspill to their own polities.⁸² The thwarting of terror plots directed by Yemenis against targets in Saudi Arabia may indicate the immediate success of this policy of containment. However, it fails to offer a long-term solution to Yemen’s systemic problems of governance and resource depletion, which will become more acute with time.⁸³

The dynamic interaction between internal and external events is the thread running through ruling elites’ formulation of security policy within the GCC. The postcolonial state system has survived three major interstate wars since 1980, while a genuine attachment to national symbols and a sense of belonging have grafted the substance of group identity onto the impersonal framework of the state.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the emergence of “new” transnational security issues and shifting patterns of conflict from interstate to intrasocietal violence introduces new challenges to regional security.⁸⁵ The impact of the processes of globalization on state-society relations and societal insecur-

rity needs to be examined in the specific context of evolving political economies and domestic structural problems in the GCC, to which this paper now turns.

LONG-TERM AND NON-MILITARY THREATS

The evolving and long-term challenges to security in the Gulf states include demographic trends and structural imbalances in Gulf polities, the political economy of resource distribution, and the impact of climate change and environmental degradation. Changing political economies and a range of socioeconomic problems are straining traditional channels of state-society interaction and complicating traditional strategies for co-opting potential opponents through the spread of wealth.⁸⁶ If left unchecked or inadequately tackled, these issues have the potential to strike at the heart of the social contract and redistributive mechanisms that bind state and society, and to leave a legacy of fractured polities with greater susceptibility to future external and global security threats from factors such as climate change.

Demographic Trends and Structural Imbalances

Socioeconomic strains may have a disproportionately destabilizing effect on the large numbers of young people who lack any point of comparison with the hardships experienced by their elders. This opens a potential challenge to regime legitimacy if succeeding generations react to the scaling back or loss of the redistribution of wealth and the provision of public goods that they have come to expect as a right of citizenship.⁸⁷ Current levels of welfare expenditure and redistributive mechanisms are unsustainable in the long-term and will require a reformulation of the social contract

through the introduction of charges for basic services such as water and electricity.⁸⁸ Such an outcome is not palatable to ruling elites. In the words of one retired Kuwaiti official, they are “scared like hell” at the possible social tensions and instability they fear might result from the scaling back of subsidies and the introduction of charges.⁸⁹

Rapid population growth and inadequate employment opportunities are major threats to long-term stability and security in the GCC. The Gulf states contain some of the youngest and fastest growing populations in the world. The Population Reference Bureau estimates that GCC populations will increase by 42-80 percent in each country until 2050, and by 151 percent in Yemen.⁹⁰ Its statistics for 2008 also show a large youth bulge as the proportion of the population under 24 varies from 19 percent in the United Arab Emirates and 24 percent in Kuwait to 38 percent in Saudi Arabia and 45 percent in Yemen, the two most populous states in the region.⁹¹ These figures place significant pressure on Gulf regimes to generate jobs to accommodate them as they work their way through the labor market in coming decades.⁹²

This challenge is compounded by stratified labor markets and rentier mentalities that have created unbalanced labor forces riven by numerous fault lines. These include divisions between men and women, public and private sectors, citizen and expatriate labor, and English speakers and the rest.⁹³ The existence of large numbers of migrant laborers with no civil or political rights and very few economic rights is a further source of human insecurity and a potential threat to Gulf polities, should they make any claims to civil or political rights in the future.⁹⁴ Continuing reliance on expatriate labor at a time of growing indigenous unemployment also contains the

seeds of considerable future discontent.⁹⁵ Within the region, unemployment is regularly cited as the major long-term challenge facing regimes that are widely perceived to lack the political courage and capital to formulate effective strategies for tackling the structural roots of the labor imbalance.⁹⁶

A November 2007 study by McKinsey & Company laid bare the scale of the challenge posed by mounting unemployment in the GCC. The report estimated that real unemployment rates in Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia exceeded 15 percent and that the figure rose to 35 percent in the 16-24 age bracket. It also found that the saturated public sector was no longer able to guarantee employment to citizens entering the job market. Furthermore, it identified severe deficiencies in local education systems: most entrants into labor markets lacked the qualifications to enter the private sector.⁹⁷

These factors point to a future crisis in the social contract in its current guise of cradle-to-grave welfare for citizens. Existing state capacity to meet rising demand for utilities, health care and education, in addition to jobs, is overstretched; the region has been hard hit by the double blow of plunging oil prices and the global economic downturn that started in 2008.⁹⁸ Many development plans are in jeopardy. In addition, diversification schemes have largely failed to resolve the deeper structural imbalances between public- and private-sector employment and the “crisis of education.”⁹⁹ A generation of young people lacks the requisite skill sets and language abilities to compete with alternative, cheaper sources of expatriate labor.¹⁰⁰

Resource Security and Patterns of Distribution

Issues of infrastructure security and access to basic services are crucial com-

ponents of long-term sustainability in the GCC states. Ensuring the security of access to sufficient food, water and energy supplies has a long-term strategic dimension. It is integral to meeting the challenges of rising population levels and large-scale economic-diversification plans.¹⁰¹ Water tables are dropping throughout the Middle East as demand from rapidly urbanizing and industrializing populations outstrips supply from fossil water and local aquifers. A report issued by the Islamic Development Bank in November 2008 found that average annual water availability per capita in the Middle East has declined by two-thirds since 1960 and is projected to halve again by 2050 to 550 cubic meters per capita per year.

The obvious implications for food security became clear in February 2008, when Saudi Arabia announced that it would cease producing grain by 2016 in order to alleviate growing water shortages attributed to climate change, drought and the depletion of fossil water.¹⁰² Saudi officials have developed alternative plans to “outsource” food production by creating an investment fund specifically to purchase agricultural land in Pakistan that will be used to meet domestic demand for rice and wheat.¹⁰³ Other Gulf states have negotiated similar partnerships with food-producing nations in Asia and Africa.¹⁰⁴ Such strategies are vital to ensuring food security and freeing scarce water resources for domestic and industrial consumption.¹⁰⁵

The steps being taken by GCC governments to procure sufficient food and free up water supplies are important in themselves. However, a more intractable problem in several GCC states comes from the interaction of dwindling natural resources with inequitable patterns of resource distribution. The concentration

of resources in one particular group while scarcities persist elsewhere has been a demonstrated source of civil strife in numerous instances.¹⁰⁶ Three examples from Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Bahrain illustrate how localized scarcities and uneven access to resources can lead to domestic tensions and instability among ethnic, tribal and sectarian groups.

In November 1979, resentment among Shiite communities in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province over shrinking water resources and failing water systems in the oasis regions of Qatif and al-Hasa was a major cause of three days of clashes with Saudi security services. Tensions were exacerbated by protesters' anger at the apparent inability of local municipalities to alleviate the worsening situation. This tapped into grievances over the broader marginalization of Shiite communities in Saudi Arabia and the politics of uneven development, which denied basic services to the towns and villages in the Eastern Province.¹⁰⁷

Following the discovery of oil reserves in the Yemeni province of Hadramawt shortly after the 1990 reunification, oil rents fell disproportionately under the control of northern patronage groups linked to President Saleh's powerful Hashid tribe. Their exploitation of oil rents has caused widespread discontent in Hadramawt and other areas in southern Yemen with the political pattern laid down after the brief civil war in 1994. This has played on and deepened lingering north-south tensions and was a contributory cause (though not the proximate one) of the large-scale urban protests against the government in southern cities in 2007 and 2008.¹⁰⁸

The case of Bahrain illustrates the tensions that arise from differential levels of access to resources and employment. Economic deprivation and systemic gov-

ernment discrimination against the majority Shiite population formed the basis for recurrent internal unrest, most severely in the uprising from 1994 to 1999. In May 2008, the 17 MPs belonging to Al-Wefaq walked out of a parliamentary debate to protest the sudden announcement of a 41 percent increase in the population in 2007. This, they alleged, was due to government attempts to redress the sectarian balance on the islands by diluting the Shiite majority.¹⁰⁹ The new arrivals also elicited cross-sectarian concern at the strain they place on services such as housing, education and the energy grid, which are already overstretched.¹¹⁰ Energy consumption doubled between 2006 and 2008 and is nearing peak capacity, yet demand for energy is forecast to grow a further 65 percent by 2014.¹¹¹

All three case studies demonstrate how states and societies containing numerous fault lines are more susceptible to internal tensions and conflict. Here the emphasis on "regime security" becomes problematic as the issues of which group defines security, and for whom, become politicized and contested.¹¹² This is indicated by the controversy over the importing of Sunni families into Bahrain to staff the security and military services.¹¹³ As described above, it may well contribute to the regime's sense of security but at the price of exacerbating sectarian fissures on the islands and corroding relations between the majority communities and the ruling elites

Environment and Climate Change

Unequal resource distribution and socioeconomic challenges such as poverty and population stresses may also increase a society's vulnerability to external shocks such as environmental degradation and climate change.¹¹⁴ Empirical research has indicated that the impact of "environmen-

tal scarcity” is most pernicious in instances where it interacts with systems of unequal resource distribution.¹¹⁵ Societal cohesion may become fragmented if actual or latent fault lines and tensions within society become sharpened and dwindling access to limited resources becomes more contested. This is a potential issue of concern in the Gulf states, where potential cleavages abound — whether Arab versus Persian, Sunni versus Shiite or citizen versus non-citizen.

Climate security and the threat from ecological disruption and human-induced climate change have emerged as key components of the new security paradigm. In April 2007, the UN Security Council discussed for the first time the international security implications of climate change. It identified a range of security threats from climate change, including flows of environmental refugees, potential conflict over access to resources and energy supplies, and societal stresses and humanitarian crises.¹¹⁶ Other research has suggested that Middle Eastern countries will be among the hardest hit by climate change and that it could become the primary driver of conflict within and between states if comprehensive measures are not taken to alleviate its impact.¹¹⁷

Coastal patterns of settlement and development in Gulf states render them especially vulnerable to the impact of climate change or environmental degradation. Land-reclamation projects and low-lying islands such as Bahrain would be affected by rising sea levels.¹¹⁸ In Kuwait, officials express deep anxiety about the potential environmental and ecological consequences of any accident at the Iranian nuclear reactor in Bushehr. They point out that Bushehr is closer to Kuwait than to Tehran and that counterclockwise currents

in the Gulf would result in Kuwait’s bearing the brunt of any irradiation of water supplies.¹¹⁹ Desalination plants supply up to 80 percent of the drinking water in the GCC, and any contamination of regional water supplies would be catastrophic.¹²⁰

Yet, this aside, environmental degradation and climate change barely feature in regional security discourse. The Gulf states have some of the highest levels of per capita energy consumption and per capita carbon emissions in the world. In this context of heavy industrialization and mega-projects, the long-term threat from climate change is simply not an issue; the security agenda remains focused on short-term “hard” issues. As one Dubai analyst said, “Thinking is very ad hoc and short-term, and this is the problem in the Gulf.”¹²¹ It remains to be seen whether UK Secretary of Defense John Hutton’s listing of climate change as one of the new threats to Gulf security (alongside the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorist havens in failed states) will have any discernible impact in the region.¹²²

Once again, Yemen provides a stark example of how climate change and resource depletion are already sharpening tensions and exacerbating conflict over access to scarce resources. Water tables are dropping by as much as six to ten feet each year; the annual rains that replenish local aquifers cannot keep up with demand for water.¹²³ Growing scarcities have not resulted in better regulation of water management. Instead, individuals and groups have rushed to extract as much water as they can in order to translate it into short-term profits through the growth of *qat*. This mildly narcotic plant consumes more than two-thirds of annual water consumption in Yemen, and its cultivation is causing rapid soil depletion in addition

to exacerbating water scarcity.¹²⁴ It is here that the linkages drawn by Hutton among climate change, failing states and terrorism may combine in a cycle of instability and predatory contestation for resources in a contracting political economy.

A NEW APPROACH TO SECURITY?

The future of Gulf security will be framed by the need to find sustainable balances: between competing visions of national and regional security architecture; between incremental reforms to political and economic structures and the deeper systemic problems that undermine long-term solutions; and between rising demands for, and falling supplies of, natural resources. At its core lies the balance between state and society and reformulation of the social contract during the transition to post-oil political economies. In this regard, the management of dwindling oil rents in Bahrain, Oman and Yemen will provide a barometer of the long-term prospects for internal security and external stability in the Arabian Peninsula.

States in transition are more vulnerable than most to political violence and ideological and other substate challenges to legitimacy. Visionary leadership and long-term development strategies are necessary, but not sufficient in themselves, to minimizing these threats and reconstituting state-society relations. Socioeconomic challenges and growing disparities of income and wealth within the GCC add further impetus to the need for regimes to broaden their base of support and construct more inclusive polities that can weather the transitions ahead. Redistributive states with depoliticized societies are especially vulnerable to economic insecurity and the potential breakdown of mechanisms for spreading wealth and co-opting support.

For this reason, the global financial crisis and economic slowdown that began in 2007 have been very closely monitored by governments in the GCC.¹²⁵

What is vital to securing the sustainable long-term development of these polities is expansion of their support base and reconciliation of regime security with human security for all. This is crucial to strengthening the internal cohesion of Gulf polities and ensuring that current and future security strategies are targeted at all communities and levels of society. Tackling existing insecurities and inequalities will better enable states and societies to manage the transition to post-rentier forms of governance and lessen the sources of potential tension and violent contestation for political power. Empowering women and working towards human security for all communities will increase the likelihood that changes will be consensual and nonviolent.

References to gender and human security are entering regional debates on security with increasing frequency. Oman and Qatar, alongside the UAE, have led the region in publicizing women's rights and placing women in visible positions of political and economic leadership. Prominent royals such as Sheikha Mozah of Qatar have taken a leading role in educational and cultural development and are becoming more assertive in the public-policy arena.¹²⁶

Simultaneously, groups and organizations have started to acknowledge the importance of human security as a foundation stone for constructing a new security paradigm. In 2008, the Arab Women's Organization focused its most recent biennial conference on women and human security, devoting the occasion to constructing a human-security strategy that embraces women as equal participants and contribu-

tors.¹²⁷ The Arab Human Development Report 2008, to be published in 2009, will be entitled *Human Security in the Arab World* and will focus on the symbiosis of human development and human security. This is both significant and encouraging, as successive Arab Human Development Reports have identified the lag in key indices of human development and governance and the political, economic and social realization of full empowerment in the Arab world.¹²⁸

It is possible that ruling elites in the GCC merely view their advocacy of the concept of human security as part of a broader strategy to update regime security and legitimacy. If this proves the case, it would fit into a record of pragmatic adoption of strategies of survival that have eased nondemocratic regimes through periods of intense transition. Finely honed over many decades, these instincts guided the regimes through the intense social and economic upheavals that have accompanied the entry into the oil era.¹²⁹ The primary differing variable in the shift to the post-oil future is that their capacity to co-opt opposition is likely to be limited both by socioeconomic constraints and by globalizing flows of people, ideas and norms.

Much depends on the attitude of the ruling elites as agents of change. Their actions will determine whether the reforms subsequently develop into a genuine commitment to the values of human security as applied to communities and individuals with interests that are distinct from those of the ruling elite. If this is allowed to occur, it may strengthen internal cohesiveness and contribute to national security by addressing the latent fault lines that may otherwise be vulnerable to manipulation by external variables. The adoption of an inclusive and empowering vision of security would also lessen the likelihood

of political violence and social conflict accompanying the transition to post-rentier structures in the GCC. However, it should be said that the evidence from the projects of political reform unveiled in the late 1990s suggests that this is unlikely to occur and that the probable outcome is a stalled “halfway house” that suits neither the interests of the state nor those of the individuals and groups within society.

At a regional level, the GCC needs to find a workable balance between reliance on the United States as an external-security guarantor and the creation of a regional security architecture that can provide greater stability than the balance-of-power dynamic has done. This may best be served by engaging with Iran and a possibly resurgent post-occupation Iraq, while regulating their power within an inclusive security arrangement. Such an arrangement need not entail the infeasible expansion of the GCC to include Iraq and Iran. Instead, it could take the form of a network of forums and mechanisms for comprehensive and cooperative security based loosely on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Difficult challenges lie ahead in the Arab oil monarchies. The regimes must reformulate the welfare states constructed during the 1960s and 1970s, when populations were low and per capita wealth was high. The transition to post-redistributive models of governance will require addressing the systemic structural problems in their sociopolitical composition. Simultaneously, globalization and the opening up of political and economic processes present new material and intellectual linkages between the internal and external dimensions of security. Defining what security means and for whom it is intended will consequently be integral to the evolving

political economies of the GCC. This is one of the most important factors determining whether the changes will sharpen

or help overcome the latent and existing threats to security outlined in this paper.

¹ “Gulf security” is defined here as focusing on the six member-states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates), also termed the “Gulf states,” but also including Yemen as well as Iraq and Iran.

² F. Gregory Gause III, “The Political Economy of National Security in the GCC States,” *The Persian Gulf at the Millennium: Essays in Politics, Economy, Security and Religion*, eds. Gary G. Sick and Lawrence G. Potter (Macmillan, 1997), pp. 61-84.

³ Anoushshirvan Ehteshami, “Reform from Above: The Politics of Participation in the Oil Monarchies,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 79, 2003, p. 55.

⁴ Securitization as a concept in international relations is associated with the Copenhagen School of thought. It follows a constructivist approach to describe how and why certain issues come to be considered threats to security and hence become securitized rather than ordinarily politicized. Securitizing an issue in this manner frequently legitimizes extraordinary means or actions to solve the perceived problem.

⁵ Keith Krause, “Insecurity and State Formation in the Global Military Order: The Middle Eastern Case,” *European Journal of International Relations*, No. 2, 1996, pp. 319-354.

⁶ Michael Dillon, “Global Security in the 21st Century: Circulation, Complexity and Contingency,” *The Globalization of Security*, eds. C. Browning and P. Cornish (Chatham House, 2005), p. 3.

⁷ Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 32.

⁸ Andrew Rathmell, Theodore Karasik and David Gompert, *A New Persian Gulf Security System*, RAND Issue Paper (2003), p. 2.

⁹ Henner Furtig, “Conflict and Cooperation in the Persian Gulf: The Interregional Order and U.S. Policy,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 61, 2007, p. 639.

¹⁰ J.A. Kechichian, *Power and Succession in Arab Monarchies: A Reference Guide* (Lynne Rienner, 2008), p. 420.

¹¹ Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 175.

¹² Political bloggers were active discussants during recent parliamentary elections in Bahrain (November 2006) and Kuwait (May 2008), while online social networking websites such as Facebook have been embraced by a younger generation of activists who use it for debate and coordination of activities; personal interview, Kuwait, December 22, 2008.

¹³ Steve A. Yetiv and Chunlong Yu, “China, Global Energy and the Middle East,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 61, 2007, p. 199.

¹⁴ “Qatar and India Agree to Expand Security Ties,” *Gulf Times*, November 10, 2008.

¹⁵ Anthony H. Cordesman, *Security Cooperation in the Middle East* (The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007), p. 3.

¹⁶ Personal interview, Qatar, December 16, 2008.

¹⁷ Figures taken from the BP Statistical Review of World Energy published in June 2008 (p. 6); a comparable reserves-production ratio is not available for Kuwait. In 2006, a similar projection made by Christian Koch estimated the longevity of Kuwait’s oil reserves at 110 years, in addition to slightly differing figures for the three countries cited in the BP study — Qatar (51 years), Saudi Arabia (75 years) and the United Arab Emirates (110 years); Christian Koch, “Gulf States Plan for Day That Oil Runs Dry,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, 2006, pp. 23-4.

¹⁸ Mary Kaldor, Terry Lynn Karl and Yahia Said, *Oil Wars*, Pluto Press, 2007, p. 28.

¹⁹ Personal interview, Bahrain, December 18, 2008.

²⁰ Dalia D. Kaye and Frederic M. Wehrey, “A Nuclear Iran: The Reactions of Neighbors,” *Survival*, Vol. 49, 2007, p. 111.

²¹ Morten Valbjorn and Andre Bank, “Signs of a New Arab Cold War: The 2006 Lebanon War and the Sunni-Shi’i Divide,” *Middle East Report*, No. 242, 2007, p. 9.

²² David Pollock, "Kuwait: Keystone of U.S. Gulf Policy," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, No. 76, 2007, p. 41.

²³ For example, see the negative reaction in the Gulf to U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' proposal in December 2008 that the GCC consider expanding to include Iraq; "GCC Rules Out Expansion to Include Iraq," *Gulf Daily News*, December 14, 2008; personal interview, Kuwait, December 21, 2008.

²⁴ Robert Lowe and Clare Spencer, "Iran, Its Neighbors and the Regional Crises," Chatham House Report, 2006; Mai Yamani, "Arcs and Crescents," *The World Today*, No. 62, 2006; Ted G. Carpenter and Malou Innocent, "The Iraq War and Iranian Power," *Survival*, No. 49, 2007; Henner Furtig, "Conflict and Cooperation in the Persian Gulf"; J.A. Kechichian, "Can Conservative Arab Monarchies Endure a Fourth War in the Persian Gulf?" *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 61, 2007.

²⁵ Quoted in Nawaf Obaidi, "Stepping into Iraq: Saudi Arabia Will Protect Sunnis If the U.S. Leaves," *The Washington Post*, November 29, 2006; Obaidi was removed from his position as a private security advisor to the Saudi Arabian ambassador in Washington, Prince Turki al-Faisal, following the publication of this op-ed in which he called for "massive Saudi intervention to stop Iranian-backed Shiite militias from butchering Iraqi Sunnis" if U.S. forces withdrew prematurely from Iraq. The Democrats had just gained Congressional seats in the 2006 mid-term elections.

²⁶ Carpenter and Innocent, "The Iraq War and Iranian Power."

²⁷ Chris Toensing, "From the Editor," *Middle East Report*, No. 242, 2007, p. 47.

²⁸ Laurence Louer, *Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (Hurst, 2008), p. 223.

²⁹ Reidar Visser, "Basra: The Reluctant Seat of Shiastan," *Middle East Report*, No. 242, 2007, p. 23.

³⁰ Katherine Meyer, Helen Rizzo and Yousef Ali, "Changed Political Attitudes in the Middle East: The Case of Kuwait," *International Sociology*, Vol. 22, 2007, p. 300.

³¹ Munira A. Fakhro, "The Uprising in Bahrain: An Assessment," in *The Persian Gulf at the Millennium: Essays in Politics, Economy, Security and Religion*, eds. Gary G. Sick and Lawrence G. Potter (Macmillan, 1997), p. 183; Toby C. Jones, "Rebellion on the Saudi Periphery: Modernity, Marginalization, and the Shi'a Uprising of 1979," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 38, 2006, p. 213.

³² Abdulaziz O. Sager, *The GCC States and the Situation in Iraq* (Gulf Research Centre, 2008).

³³ Kenneth Katzman, *Iran's Activities and Influence in Iraq* (CRS Report for Congress, 2008), p. 6.

³⁴ Personal interview, Kuwait, December 22, 2008; Tariq Alhomayed, "Betraying the Awakening Council," *Asharq Alawsat*, August 24, 2008; Alissa J. Rubin, "Clash over Tribal Councils Intensifies in Iraq," *International Herald Tribune*, December 4, 2008.

³⁵ Toby Dodge, "Iraq and the Next American President," *Survival*, No. 50, 2008, p. 41.

³⁶ For information on the progress of the initiatives to create federal entities in southern Iraq, see the website maintained by Dr. Reidar Visser at www.historia.org (last accessed January 2, 2009).

³⁷ Gwenn Okruhlik, "Rentier Wealth, Unruly Law, and the Rise of Opposition: The Political Economy of Oil States," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 31, 1999, p. 300.

³⁸ UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, *Humanitarian Crisis in Iraq: Facts and Figures* (United Nations, 2007).

³⁹ "Iraq Emerging as Key Route in Global Drugs Trade," Agence France Presse, July 5, 2008.

⁴⁰ S. Chubin, "Iran's Power in Context," *Survival*, No. 51, 2009, p. 165.

⁴¹ Zaki Taleb, "The Iranian Policy in the Gulf Is Indeed Puzzling, Because This Policy Is Rife with Contraventions," *Arab Times*, July 21, 2007; Habib Toumi, "Iran 'Ignorant of International laws,'" *Gulf News*, February 16, 2009.

⁴² F. Gregory Gause III, *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Gulf States*, (Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1994), p. 90

⁴³ Toby Jones, "The Iraq Effect in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Report*, No. 237, 2005, p. 25.

⁴⁴ Personal interview, Bahrain, December 19, 2008.

⁴⁵ Between 1835 and 1971, this role was performed by the government of India and (after 1947) the United Kingdom.

⁴⁶ Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations*, p. 152.

⁴⁷ Military links with the United States take the form of separate Defense Cooperation Agreements with Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, an Access to Facilities Agreement with Oman and a large range of military agreements that have underpinned Saudi Arabian security since the 1940s. In addition,

Bahrain and Kuwait have been granted Major Non-NATO Ally status, and Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are partners in NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

⁴⁸ Velbjorn and Bank, *The New Arab Cold War*, p. 3.

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⁵² "Iran Dismisses Gulf Sleeper Cell 'Lies,'" *Gulf Times*, September 17, 2008.

⁵³ "Sanctions Slow Iran's Trade, But Don't Stop It," Associated Press, August 18, 2008.

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⁵⁷ Emma Murphy, "ICT and the Gulf Arab States: A Force for Democracy?" in *Reform in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*, eds. Anoushivan Ehteshami and Steven Wright (Ithaca Press, 2008), p. 184.

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⁶⁷ "Saleh Informs Sultan of al-Qaeda Plots Uncovered in Yemen," *Arab News*, August 14, 2008.

⁶⁸ "Saudi Arabia to Try 1,200 More Terror Suspects," *Saudi Gazette*, October 26, 2008.

⁶⁹ "Yemen Identifies U.S. Embassy Attackers," *Gulf Today*, November 2, 2008.

⁷⁰ Jeremy Sharp, "Yemen: Where Is the Stability Tipping Point?" *Arab Reform Bulletin*, No. 6, 2008.

⁷¹ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that 32,000 refugees fled Somalia for Yemen between January and October 2008 and that Yemen housed more than 75,000 Somali refugees, while the International Maritime Bureau reported that at least 83 ships had been attacked in the Gulf of Aden in the same period, and 33 hijacked.

⁷² Bruce Riedel and Bilal Y. Saab, "Al Qaeda's Third Front: Saudi Arabia," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 3, 2008, p. 34.

⁷³ Personal interview, London, July 10, 2008.

⁷⁴ Figures taken from the CIA World Factbook 2008, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html> (accessed January 3, 2009).

⁷⁵ Intissar Fakir, "The Ignored Causes of Yemeni Instability," *Daily Star*, August 25, 2008.

⁷⁶ Stephen Day, "Updating Yemeni National Unity: Could Lingering Regional Divisions Bring Down the Regime?" *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 62, 2008, p. 431.

⁷⁷ Telephone interview, Dubai, December 14, 2008.

⁷⁸ Sharp, *Stability Tipping Point*.

⁷⁹ Personal interview, Qatar, December 16, 2008.

⁸⁰ In 1990, Saudi Arabia expelled 800,000 Yemenis from the Kingdom, while Kuwait has yet to fully forgive Yemen's support for Iraq during the 1990-91 occupation in spite of the large sums of aid distributed to Yemen by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.

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- ⁸⁴ Paul Dresch, "Societies, Identities and Global Issues," in *Globalization and Identity in the Arab States of the Gulf*, eds. Paul Dresch and James Piscatori (I.B. Tauris, 2005), p. 11.
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- ⁸⁶ Gerd Nonneman, "Security and Inclusion: Regimes Responses to Domestic Challenges in the Gulf," *Gulf Security: Opportunities and Challenges for the New Generations*, ed. S. McKnight, N. Partrick and F. Toase (RUSI Whitehall Paper Series, 2000), p. 108.
- ⁸⁷ Anh Nga Longva, "Neither Autocracy nor Democracy but Ethnocracy: Citizens, Expatriates and the Socio-Political in Kuwait," *Globalization and Identity in the Arab States of the Gulf*, p. 34.
- ⁸⁸ Personal interview, Qatar, December 16, 2008.
- ⁸⁹ Personal interview, Kuwait, December 22, 2008.
- ⁹⁰ The projected population growth rates in each individual country between 2008-2050 are: Kuwait, 80 percent; Oman, 42 percent; Qatar, 48 percent; Saudi Arabia, 77 percent; UAE, 75 percent; and Yemen, 151 percent, <http://www.prb.org/Datafinder/Geography/MultiCompare.aspx?variables=30®ions=122,128,130,131,132,135,137> (accessed January 12, 2008).
- ⁹¹ <http://www.prb.org/Datafinder/Geography/MultiCompare.aspx?variables=35®ions=122,128,130,131,132,135,137> (accessed January 12, 2008).
- ⁹² Anthony H. Cordesman, "Security Challenges and Threats in the Gulf: A Net Assessment" (CSIS, 2008), p. 100.
- ⁹³ Gawdat Bahgat, "Education in the Gulf Monarchies: Retrospect and Prospect," *International Review of Education*, Vol. 45, 1999, p. 129.
- ⁹⁴ This may already be happening as significant labor unrest occurred in Dubai, Bahrain and Kuwait during 2007-8; Roger Hardy, "Migrants Demand Labour Rights in Gulf," BBC News, February 27, 2008.
- ⁹⁵ In 2007, 13,974,000 expatriates constituted 37.16 percent of the total GCC population of 37,600,000 and a majority of the population in Kuwait (66 percent), Qatar (75 percent) and the UAE (83 percent); see the introductory paper published by the LSE Kuwait Research Programme for Development, Governance and Globalisation by Sharon Shochat, "The Gulf Cooperation Council Economies: Diversification and Reform," February 2008, table 4.3, p. 34.
- ⁹⁶ Telephone interview, Dubai, December 14, 2008; personal interview, Bahrain, December 18, 2008; personal interviews, Kuwait, December 21, 2008.
- ⁹⁷ "GCC unemployment rates skyrocketing," *Bahrain Tribune*, November 24, 2007.
- ⁹⁸ Telephone interview, Qatar, November 24, 2008; "Kuwait's Biggest Investment Bank Defaults on Debt," *Kuwait Times*, January 9, 2009.
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- ¹⁰⁰ Mamoun Fandy, "Enriched Islam: The Muslim Crisis of Education," *Survival*, Vol. 49, 2007, p. 97.
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- ¹⁰⁶ Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases," *New Global Dangers: Changing Dimensions of International Security*, eds. M.E. Brown, O.R. Cote, S.M. Lynn-Jones and S.E. Miller (MIT Press, 2004), p. 269.

¹⁰⁷ Toby Jones, "Rebellion on the Saudi Periphery: Modernity, Marginalization, and the Shia Uprising of 1979," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 38, 2006, p. 219.

¹⁰⁸ Day, *Updating Yemeni National Unity*, p. 422.

¹⁰⁹ "Bahrain Shia MPs Walk Out Over Population Row," Reuters, May 14, 2008; this sudden announcement by the Central Bank in February 2008 followed years of concern at the Bahraini government's controversial program of naturalizing more than 10,000 Sunni families from Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan to staff the security services, from which Bahraini Shiites are excluded from leadership positions.

¹¹⁰ Personal interviews, Bahrain, December 18, 2008.

¹¹¹ "Bahrain's Energy Consumption Doubles in Two Years," *Bahrain Tribune*, June 4, 2008.

¹¹² Krause, *Insecurity and State Formation*, p. 324.

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¹¹⁵ Homer-Dixon, *Evidence from Cases*, p. 269.

¹¹⁶ R. Eckersley, "Environmental Security, Climate Change, and Globalizing Terrorism," *Rethinking Insecurity, War and Violence*, eds. D. Grenfell and P. James (Routledge, 2008), p. 88.

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¹¹⁸ In 2001, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Third Assessment Report estimated that sea levels would rise between 9 centimeters and 88 centimeters by 2100.

¹¹⁹ Personal interviews, Kuwait, December 21 and December 22, 2008.

¹²⁰ Pollock, *Kuwait*, p. 31.

¹²¹ Telephone interview, Dubai, December 14, 2008.

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¹²⁸ Arab Human Development Report 2002: *Creating Opportunities for Future Generations*; Arab Human Development Report 2003: *Building a Knowledge Society*; Arab Human Development Report 2004: *Towards Freedom in the Arab World*; and Arab Human Development Report 2005: *Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*, available at www.arab-hdr.org/ (accessed January 20, 2009).

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