

# The Future of Gulf Security

## Project Summary Report

In association with  
INEGMA and LNCV



The  
Stanley  
Foundation

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## Introduction

For more than five years, the Stanley Foundation's Middle East programming has employed private Track II diplomatic dialogues and independent analyses by both Stanley Foundation staff and external policy experts to stimulate ideas on how the region might develop and implement multilateral, sustainable, just security solutions to pressing regional issues.

The rising influence of states and actors within the Gulf subregion, particularly in the last decade, is significantly impacting the political, security, and economic forces within the entire region. The subregion's importance will continue to grow in the coming years due to its control of the Middle East's largest energy reserves, its pivotal role in deterring transnational terrorism, and the spillover threats it faces from issues such as nuclear proliferation and the instability in Iraq. Understanding the complex network of relationships and the perceptions regarding shifting power centers in the Gulf is critical if more sustainable security frameworks are to be developed for the region.

The Stanley Foundation's latest project, The Future of Gulf Security, continued the foundation's multiyear focus on this critical subregion. The project ran from February 2006 through August 2007. The objectives of the project were to:

- Identify perceived security threats and trends.
- Encourage creative thinking on confidence-building measures (CBMs) to alleviate rising tensions.
- Determine how the states in the Gulf with assistance from external actors can move toward the goal of sustainable, subregional security frameworks.

This project summary report provides the final outcomes from the project. The first two sections detail the primary findings and recommendations from the project's two international conferences as interpreted by Stanley Foundation program officer Kathy Gockel in consultation with the two conference rapporteurs, Paula Broadwell and Raj Chitikila. The content of these sections was taken from the roundtable discussions. Additional analysis is kept to a minimum.

**Please note that conference participants neither reviewed nor approved the content of these sections. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all of the recommendations, observations, and conclusions.**

The third and brief final section, Moving Forward, is a summary of the Stanley Foundation's analysis of the current state of affairs in the Gulf and the implications for a future subregional security framework.

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## Challenges of Gulf Security: Conflicts and Routes to Stability

In late June 2006 the Stanley Foundation, in association with the Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis (INEGMA), hosted a regional conference in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, to discuss “Challenges of Gulf Security: Conflicts and Routes to Stability.”

Conference participants included officials, security analysts, and academics from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, the European Commission, Italy, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, Japan, and the United States.

The objectives of the conference were twofold: to determine the crucial perceptions of key regional actors regarding the forces and factors that were increasing the strain on Gulf relations and to identify what actions might be taken to mitigate future discord. The specific topics discussed were: Iran-Arab-US relations in the Gulf, Iran’s nuclear program, and the situation in Iraq.

### Macro-Level Issues

The conference revealed several interrelated macro-level obstacles to the development of a more sustainable regional security strategy. First were the “negative” connotations that many Westerners, particularly audiences in the United States, associate with Islam and the Middle East. Second was the level of mistrust most regional and some international participants have about current US democratization efforts in the region. Third were the inconsistent interpretations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) across countries and even between regions. The overall effect was a widening perception gap between Middle Eastern and Western audiences that is creating adverse conditions for future cooperative security strategies.

Several factors were cited as contributing to negative Western perceptions of Islam and the Middle East. One was what a US participant called “the eruption of tensions within Islam.” Terrorist activities by actors associating their actions with their Islamic beliefs are giving the religion a negative connotation in the West. Further exacerbating these negative connotations is the Western association of Islam with the global war on terror (GWOT). These negative perceptions were viewed as an impediment to the development and implementation of both security and economic policies that could actually help ease tensions. One example cited to demonstrate the seriousness of these negative perceptions was how US politicians played upon citizens’ fears to stop the Dubai Ports deal in the United States.

Further contributing to this growing “perception gap” between Western and Middle Eastern audiences are the US government’s regional democra-

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tization policies. Regional participants associated democratization with regime change, especially in light of US policy toward Iraq. They also felt that the United States was inconsistent in applying its democratization policies and this intensified regional mistrust of the United States' "real objectives" in the region. The most common examples cited were US policies toward Egypt and Palestine. Egypt continues to receive large amounts of US aid even as its regime limits human rights and opposition parties. At the same time, funding to Palestine was stopped even though Hamas came to power through a democratic election that was held at the urging of the United States.

The overwhelming view held by most participants was that democratic transition needs to be assisted in a way that enables the Middle East to democratize in its own manner. Participants believed that a viable and sustainable democracy could not be imposed from the outside. In lieu of current US democratization policies that could be interpreted as a quest for regime change, both European and American participants encouraged the consideration of human security policies as a viable alternative. The reasoning was that a focus on the needs of citizens would promote more inclusive and integrated domestic policies that in turn could support democratic transition and reform at all levels of society.

The final macro-level issue that was viewed as driving a wedge between regional and Western stakeholders was the contradictory interpretation and enforcement of the NPT. The views of many US and European Union (EU) participants regarding the "actual" meaning of Article IV (the peaceful pursuit of nuclear energy) did not match those of many regional participants. One US participant summarized the American (and larger Western) view on the priority of commitments and articles within the text of the NPT. This position was that any doubts about a state's compliance with Article II of the treaty automatically held other articles in suspension, including Article IV rights to the peaceful pursuit of nuclear energy and technological research—whether these doubts were harbored by the international community, by individual states/parties, or by the IAEA (or all of the above).

As stressed in the US participant's comments, Article II states, "Each non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to...manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices." Meanwhile, Article IV states that, "Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production, and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty."

The US argument was that Article IV was thus dependent upon the full confidence of the world that a given member state was adhering to Article II. If any doubt existed about a member state's violation of Article II, then moving forward on rights given under Article IV would not be possible. Positive

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nuclear cooperation and trade would essentially be frozen until all reasonable doubts about weapons-seeking activities were removed. Article II, along with requirements for International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards expressed in Article III, would act as a doorway through which states must go if they wanted to implement other relevant parts of the treaty.

The US interpretation was that there is a chronological order to implementation rather than simultaneous fulfillment of all articles. Thus, given that the IAEA is still expressing doubts that it has received a final comprehensive and accurate declaration of all nuclear activities by Iran (as required under Article III of the treaty), the United States, Europe, and indeed the United Nations are fully within their rights to impose a nuclear technology embargo on Iran.

Yet other participants argued that there should be a more even balance between rights and obligations given by the articles in question, saying that current US and Western behavior was in fact discriminatory in the pressure put on some countries (such as Iran) compared to others (such as US friends and allies). The alternative viewpoint argued for simultaneous fulfillment of all articles, by all members—whether the P-5, or nuclear supplier states, or nuclear technology receiving states. Some regional participants also cited the United States' own lack of commitment to the NPT as a rallying point for those opposed to its policies.

Overall, participants admitted that actions needed to be taken to address these three areas in an effort to close the growing perception gap if the deterioration of regional relations and security was to be halted and reversed. Interestingly, few participants proposed CBMs or mechanisms to address these issues.

### Conclusion: Measures for Moving Forward

As expected, the discussions revealed a high level of distrust among Iran, the United States, Iraq, and the GCC states. Finding some common areas of interest will take considerable efforts—both bilateral and multilateral—before a more comprehensive security arrangement can even be considered.

In regard to the development of a future multilateral security arrangement, the key finding was a consensus that a truly sustainable security solution would have to include all of the major players in the Gulf region—Iran, Iraq, the GCC states, and the United States. As demonstrated by the strategic measures listed in the next section, such an arrangement would also require assistance from other states and organizations within the region and larger international community.

### General Measures

- All countries, particularly Iran and the United States, need to cease using negative rhetoric and look for common ground to begin a more productive dialogue.

- Further Track II diplomatic measures should be implemented to address: (1) Iraq and regional stabilization, (2) bilateral relations between Iran and the United States, and (3) global nuclear developments.
- The United States, EU, and GCC should enact policies that help to bridge the growing divide in perceptions among the United States, Europe, and the Middle East, with particular efforts focused on disassociating Islam from the GWOT.
- The international community should create an improved (NPT-regime) policy to address nuclear energy development.
- Gulf, regional, and international players need to define what role(s) can/should be played by each of the regional states, regional organizations, and international actors including the United States, EU, China, Japan, and the United Nations in order to enable the development and implementation of a sustainable Gulf security framework.
- A discussion with Iran could start with a more “local” issue, such as the dispute over the three islands between Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as an initial confidence-building activity that can increase security cooperation among regional players.
- Palestine remains a point of contention for both Israelis and other states in the region. The United States and regional players should work together to resolve the issues peacefully as the ongoing conflict undermines security throughout the Middle East and diminishes US legitimacy in the region.
- The invasion of Iraq has galvanized the new Sunni-Shia confrontation. Conflict resolution efforts, via American public diplomacy and Muslim leadership across the globe, must break cultural barriers between Muslims (Shia vs. Sunni) in the region and across the Ummah.
- Neighboring countries should do more to stop the flow of insurgents into Iraq and to quell clerics’ support for such activities.

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#### Iranian Measures

- Pursue more transparent foreign/regional policy positions.
- Clarify security guarantee requirements.
- Express awareness of Gulf anxieties and concerns and work with the GCC to identify strategies and policies to alleviate those anxieties and concerns.
- Contribute—transparently—to stabilizing the security situation in Iraq (border controls, reigning in insurgent leaders, etc.)
- Clarify what the expectations and/or desires are for future Iraqi leadership.

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**GCC Measures**  
Recognize the importance of a stable Iraq to the region and offer more assistance instead of dwelling on US failures in the endeavor.

### **GCC Measures**

- Adopt a policy of “no enemies” in the region.
- Lead efforts to create a comprehensive multilateral security arrangement that includes determining the roles that critical players can and need to fulfill.
- Push to create a meaningful, comprehensive security organization in the Gulf that includes all members of the region (GCC, Iraq, Yemen, and Iran).
- Assume a greater role in alleviating the current Iran-US impasse by serving as an intermediary and hosting a series of conferences to promote rapprochement.
- Offer a clearer vision for US-Iranian rapprochement. There appears to be some ambivalence regarding the GCC states’ interests in resolving these issues.
- Recognize the importance of a stable Iraq to the region and offer more assistance instead of dwelling on US failures in the endeavor.
- Form and lead a committee for dialogue among Iran, Iraq, and the GCC to clearly identify the threats to the Gulf and develop approaches for conflict mitigation.
- Formulate domestic and foreign policy initiatives (exchange programs, training, teaching posts, Web sites, etc.) that educate GCC citizens and citizens of the United States and Europe about their respective cultures to alleviate the growing tensions between the region and the West.

### **Iraqi Measures**

- Work with the United States to clarify its needs and then formally invite assistance from the GCC states, Europe, and Asia. In the interim, the Gulf states, Europe, and Asia should look for opportunities to stabilize Iraq, since a failed Iraqi state will have negative international repercussions.
- Identify concrete, measurable issues that can be used to build confidence with the GCC states given historical grievances.
- Be transparent in all relations with Iran as this relationship is viewed as a security threat to other players including the GCC and the United States.

### **US Measures**

- Separate democratization policies from security policies.
- Identify less threatening approaches that promote and assist reform in the region such as human security initiatives and measures.



- Use democratization in a selective manner, not as a consistent policy principle.
- Recognize the inconsistent application of policies across the region and take corrective measures.
- Enter direct negotiations with Iran.
- Offer concrete security guarantees for Iran and the region.
- Avoid military confrontation with Iran as it will have negative political and economic consequences for the region and the world.
- Move away from bilateral and toward regional partnerships.
- Pursue positive interpretations of the West-Islam relationship so that it is framed by issues other than terrorism.

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**US Measures**  
Recognize the inconsistent application of policies across the region and take corrective measures.

## Gulf Security: Steps Toward a More Sustainable Order

In April 2007 the Stanley Foundation, in association with Landau Network-Centro Volta (LNCV), convened a second international dialogue, “Gulf Security: Steps Toward a More Sustainable Order,” in Lake Como, Italy.

The participant list, agenda, and presentations for this second conference were designed to offer broader perspectives on the issues and actors influencing the security of the subregion. Participants included officials; academics; and policy experts from Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Oman, the UAE, Yemen, China, Japan, Pakistan, Russia, Turkey, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, and the United States.

The conference sessions were similar to those from the 2006 dialogue. However, the session titles and topics were modified to reflect the decreasing levels of trust, stability, and security in the Middle East since the previous conference. The three conference sessions were: Tensions in Iran-Arab-US Relations, the Instability in Iraq, and Nuclear Proliferation in the Gulf. Specific emphasis was placed on CBMs, initiatives, and mechanisms that could help decrease regional tensions.

### Significant Perceptions Vis-à-Vis the 2006 Conference

The major perceptual difference between the 2006 and 2007 conferences is best described as a greater sense of urgency that diplomacy should hold sway over military action. The majority view was that diplomacy was the only viable option for resolving current crises. This urgency could reflect the changes in the composition of the participants from the previous year, both in the states represented and the participants from each state.

Further militarization of the Gulf was a critical concern, particularly increased militarization by the United States due to its unease with Iranian policies. There was considerable apprehension that the United States and/or Israel might strike Iranian nuclear sites given Iran’s refusal to halt enrichment and the perceived threats made toward Israel by Iranian President Ahmadinejad.

The wisdom of taking military action against Iran was questioned as most participants believed it would not resolve the issues and could inflame the entire region. As outlined by one Gulf participant, the probable outcomes would be severe harm to civilians, the environment, and regional and international economies. It was also noted that previous surgical strikes against Iraq’s nuclear program crippled but did not stop the program. One European participant remarked that such a strike could seriously damage if not destroy the NPT.

Yet there was also acknowledgment that Iran’s growing influence in the region and its nuclear program were creating further tension and

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...diplomacy should hold sway over military action.

contributing to instability. While Iranian participants and others called for decreased US presence and influence in the region, other participants claimed that Iran's actions were backfiring. The fear of rising Iranian influence throughout the region was driving the GCC states back to the United States for security guarantees due to the threat of Iranian hegemony and threats of retaliatory action by Iran against the GCC if the United States and/or Israel strike Iran's nuclear sites. The expansion of Iranian influence and power throughout the Middle East was also cited as potentially driving a new arms race, particularly with Saudi Arabia.

"Rivalries" among states and factions throughout the Middle East and in neighboring countries were also cited as increasing tensions and threat perceptions within the Gulf. Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories were all mentioned as states in which these rivalries were clearly visible.

Related to this notion of rivalries was the issue of inflammatory rhetoric and actions, particularly those used by US and Iranian leaders, which were seen as contributing to the escalation in tensions and rivalries throughout the region. An American participant acknowledged that "the axis of evil statement will probably go down as one of the US' greatest mistakes." A non-Western participant stated that he saw, "the Holocaust conference in Tehran as a mistake." Still another participant claimed that "Israel also feels deeply threatened, particularly given Ahmadinejad's recent statements."

Negative terminology and coverage by the media were also mentioned as souring relations, particularly between Western and Muslim populations. The oft-cited reference to Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability as the "Islamic bomb" led one participant to ask in jest if India's capability should be referred to as the "vegetarian bomb." The constant association of Islam with terrorism was also described as unfair and unjust. The overall perception was that rhetoric and media coverage, along with inconsistent and aggressive behavior, were negatively impacting popular opinion thereby decreasing the opportunities for engagement.

The perception of double standards and injustice did not just come up in relation to the media. Throughout the conference a key theme of discussions was that for any solution to be sustainable, it must be perceived as fair and just. The difficulties of finding such a solution were evident in the examples shared by participants. Some states complained that the United States has too much influence over decisions in the UN Security Council and other international bodies. Iran was cited as using asymmetries in power and influence to its advantage in blocking efforts by the UAE to use the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and GCC mediation to resolve the three islands dispute. The viability and justification of sanctions were also mentioned as an area of contention, as were the international responses to Iran's nuclear program compared to North Korea's program and suspicions that Israel may already have a nuclear weapons program.

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Related to the calls for greater diplomacy, less militarization, less inflammatory communications, and more just solutions was the frequent reference to multilateral initiatives and institutions as credible mechanisms for resolving disputes. Among these were the GCC, Arab League, UN, ICJ, Iraq Neighbors Forum, NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), and the Persian Gulf Regional Security Network. Cooperative regional approaches (current and proposed) initiated by Turkey, Russia, China, Japan, and the states of Europe were also cited.

The institution whose involvement was consistently mentioned and requested was the United Nations, particularly in association with the ongoing instability in Iraq. Overall, movement toward national reconciliation was viewed as the most critical factor essential to Iraq's and the region's future security, stability, and progress. A critical element of this success would require placing as much importance on political solutions as on security solutions. Movement on both would require greater constructive involvement on the part of local, regional, and international actors.

Toward this end, the consensus was that a UN or multinational force would be required to replace the US forces if the goal was to stabilize the country. The preference was for forces to come from states with predominantly Muslim populations. However, that solution raised further questions. Should the force include peacekeepers from neighboring states? Would this merely cause more sectarian rifts? Would peacekeepers from states such as Indonesia or Malaysia be accepted? Would the force be peacekeeping or peace-enforcing?

Lending further credence to the necessity of multilateral solutions was the majority opinion that a growing number of external states have legitimate interests in the region. Given these interests, most participants thought that these states should have a say in future solutions. Even though a few participants asserted that external actors' influence should be limited, the discussions made it clear that this was unlikely due to factors including geopolitics, energy security, global economics, potential military confrontations, and nuclear proliferation.

Finally, it became clear that the ongoing issues in the Gulf were being viewed too narrowly. As summed up by one European participant, the region's issues were increasingly being viewed through a "security lens." The danger of this limited perspective was a correspondingly narrow view of the available policy alternatives. A more beneficial approach would be to consider all of the political, economic, and security issues and the types of policy responses and mechanisms that can best address each.

Related to this was the proposal that CBMs start with practical and operational challenges in areas of common interest, such as drug trafficking and border control. It was agreed that these types of approaches would move the dialogue forward in a constructive manner, focusing on solving common problems rather than rehashing myriad historical grievances and disputes.

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## Recommendations and Confidence-Building Measures

The inherent message from the conference was that unilateral and military responses will not result in sustainable, fair resolutions either to the current crises or to longstanding regional issues. Rather, aggressive responses (rhetoric and actions) were exacerbating the situation and creating further divisions. If these responses and actions were not checked, the result will be an intensification of rivalries, violence, and militarization that could further inflame the Gulf subregion and larger Middle East. This could simultaneously pose further security and political problems for neighboring states including Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkey and undermine international security and economic interests.

The inverse was also cited as a possibility—an increase in trust from successful, incremental diplomatic resolutions to common areas of concern could result in new opportunities to engage productively and peacefully on other political, economic, and security issues. A caveat to this positive perception was that a number of successful, tangible, incremental steps would be required to reach the point where the larger issues could be successfully addressed.

There does appear to be both the need and desire for a regional security system that includes Iran, Iraq, the GCC states, and the United States. Yet serious consideration also needs to be paid to the interests of and roles for states and organizations that may be impacted by such a system, especially given international concerns regarding energy security and nonproliferation. The desire for a future nuclear-free zone was also mentioned by several participants but appears to be farther down the path of possibilities.

Based upon the urgency regarding the buildup in tensions, the conflicting threat perceptions, and the number of players with critical interests in the Gulf, it appears that immediate CBMs need to be developed and taken before larger regional issues and a security arrangement(s) can be pursued. Many participants also claimed that resolution of larger issues would necessitate reconciling the states' respective security threats and grievances.

In the interim, multilateral political and diplomatic solutions need to be stressed and further militarization/military strikes taken off the table due to both regional and international threat perceptions and the likely negative externalities for the Gulf, Middle East, and international community.

### General Measures

- Curtail aggressive rhetoric and actions that could provoke further military confrontation in the Gulf, *particularly between Iran and the United States*.
- Engage the media to discuss more balanced and less provocative coverage of issues involving the Middle East and Muslim populations.
- Develop a coordinated action plan for international, regional, and state-level initiatives to close the gap in perceptions between the West and the Muslim world.

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**Iranian Measures**  
Identify common operational and incremental problems that could be appropriate starting points for CBMs with the United States and the Arab states.

- Determine methods for engagement at all levels (government, private sector, citizen) to build greater understanding and trust between the West and the Middle East.
- Use Track I and Track II diplomatic initiatives to engage Iran, the United States, and the Arab states in CBMs that address common concerns such as drug trafficking, incidences at sea (maritime security), border security, and Iraqi migration/refugee issues.
- Define roles and activities for local (Gulf), regional, and international players that enable the development and implementation of CBMs in the region.
- Build political will for a larger UN role in Iraq and the replacement of US and Coalition forces with an international force.
- Actively assist Iraq with national reconciliation and the resolution of other key issues such as the displacement of Iraqis, oil-sharing agreements, Kirkuk, and counterterrorism.
- Push for forward movement on the Middle East Peace Process in recognition that this larger issue impacts the resolution of subregional issues in the Gulf and the viability of future regional security frameworks.
- Initiate forums to address inconsistencies in the understanding, application, and enforcement of the NPT.
- Recognize and address “nontraditional” security issues in the Gulf, such as economics, health, etc., particularly those involving Iraq.

**Iranian Measures**

- Recognize that rhetoric that plays well to certain domestic, regional, and international audiences tends to heighten tensions and responses of Arab neighbors and the West.
- Stop hostile rhetoric and actions that threaten to provoke Israel and the larger international community, such as holding a conference on the Holocaust.
- Identify common operational and incremental problems that could be appropriate starting points for CBMs with the United States and the Arab states.
- Initiate Track II forums to better understand, reconcile, and address the grievances and threat perceptions of the US and Arab states including Iraq.
- Agree to a multilateral mechanism to resolve the three islands dispute as a CBM with the GCC states.

- Stop using Iraq as a proxy “battleground” for ongoing issues and a perceived rivalry with the United States.
- Propose direct talks with the United States on common interests and operational problems (i.e., drug trafficking, border control, terrorism) regarding Iraq and/or Afghanistan.
- Develop a concrete list of concessions that Iran would be willing to offer if the United States and international community accept Iran’s pursuit of a peaceful nuclear energy program.
- Increase transparency to decrease threat perceptions regarding the nuclear program by meeting IAEA requirements.

#### GCC Measures

- Identify common operational and incremental problems that could be appropriate starting points for CBMs with Iran and the United States.
- Initiate forums and mechanisms to better understand, reconcile, and address the grievances and threat perceptions of Iran and the United States.
- Engage with Iraq on means for the GCC states and Arab League to better assist Iraq with its security, political, and economic issues. A starting point could be assistance in addressing the growing number of displaced Iraqis that threaten to further destabilize the region.
- Stop support of Sunni resistance groups in Iraq.
- Reengage states in the Gulf, the United States, and key international actors in discussions regarding desired regional security frameworks.

#### Iraqi Measures

- Request greater assistance from the United Nations, the EU, and neighboring states to mediate and resolve Iraq’s political and security issues, particularly those affecting national reconciliation.
- Develop a concrete list of areas in which specific Arab states and institutions can assist Iraq on political, security, and economic issues.
- Establish specific forums with Arab states and institutions to share and discuss these requests for resources and assistance.
- Specifically ask for Arab, US, and international assistance to address the needs of Iraqis who have been displaced from their homes.
- Document and formally request that Iran stop activities by its Revolutionary Guard Corps in Iraq.

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**Iraqi Measures**  
Specifically ask for Arab, US, and international assistance to address the needs of Iraqis who have been displaced from their homes.

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**US Measures**  
Refocus US policy so that the "security perspective" does not outweigh the "political perspective," especially on Iraq policy.

### US Measures

- Formally declare that the United States will not further "militarize" the Gulf and take the option of a military strike against Iran off the table to decrease threat perceptions in exchange for security guarantees from Iran regarding key US allies in the Gulf and in the larger Middle East.
- Increase diplomatic activity to resolve current crises, particularly the political issues facing Iraq, questions surrounding the Iranian nuclear program, and Iranian threats against Israel.
- Refocus US policy so that the "security perspective" does not outweigh the "political perspective," especially on Iraq policy.
- Accept the need for greater international involvement to resolve the ongoing security, political, and economic issues in Iraq.
- Address regional inconsistencies in policies such as the differing responses for resolving proliferation issues with North Korea versus with Iran.
- Build political will for the United Nations and/or a multilateral grouping of states to take the lead in resolving the ongoing issues in Iraq.
- Encourage continued multilateral efforts by regional and external actors to negotiate and address ongoing issues in the Gulf, particularly efforts made by states and organizations that have positive relations with Iran, the Arab states, and the United States such as Turkey and various European states.
- Develop a plan with Iraq, the region, and the international community to address the displacement of Iraqis from their homes, both those still residing in Iraq and those who are now residing in neighboring states.
- Review and analyze successful CBMs from the Cold War to determine applicability to the current situation in the Gulf.
- Determine what concessions and controls the United States and international community will need in exchange for allowing Iran to develop a peaceful nuclear energy program.



## Moving Forward

The continued escalation in tensions and threat perceptions over the past year and a half has curtailed forward movement on several proposed Track II initiatives and subregional Gulf security frameworks. Research and conversations with policymakers and experts from within and outside the Gulf region have confirmed that CBMs are required to establish the base level of trust necessary to engage those actors viewed as critical to a subregional security framework: Iran, Iraq, the GCC states, and the United States.

The failure to defuse current tensions will most likely generate further mistrust and cause threat perceptions to become more acute. Yet one of the greatest challenges and concerns on the part of Western policy experts is that open and honest communications with their counterparts from Iran could have negative consequences for those Iranian counterparts. This situation has to change if any movement is to be made.

Three other “trends” are also making discussion and development of a subregional framework more difficult. One is the perception that the region is breaking into rival “camps”—between a US “camp” and an Iranian “camp” in the Levant, the Gulf, and potentially Afghanistan and between Arab Sunni allies, led by Saudi Arabia, and an Iranian camp including Syria and specific Shiite factions throughout the region.

Second is a trend emerging in response to the first trend—negative reactions on the part of citizens in the Middle East to these rival “camps.” Rejection of both camps is causing people to consider the agendas of political Islamist parties. While the attraction of nonviolent Islamic parties may be understandable, especially since these parties are often the only real alternative to the existing regimes and promote reform as part of their agendas, the attraction to radical groups such as Al Qaeda is a serious threat to regional and international security. From a policy perspective, regional actors and members of the international community need to better understand these nonviolent Islamist groups, determine how they can more effectively engage with them, and offer new governing alternatives to combat the attraction of violent groups like Al Qaeda.

The final trend is the growing number of states with interests and influence in the Gulf. The sheer number and varying interests of the players may make it impossible to agree upon a viable Gulf security arrangement in the future.

### What Can Be Done in the Near Term?

In the near term, the prioritization and sequencing of issues and steps need to be determined. Key questions to be considered are whether there are specific CBMs that need to happen in certain areas (political, security, economic) and on certain issues before others. Are there particular CBMs that if successfully undertaken are more likely to make the key players more open to subregional security discussions? Should subregional security frameworks be agreed upon before a regionwide nuclear-free zone is discussed?

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The continued escalation in tensions and threat perceptions over the past year and a half has curtailed forward movement on several proposed Track II initiatives and subregional Gulf security frameworks.

Can either a subregional security framework and/or a nuclear-free zone be discussed when the issue of a peace accord between Israel and the Palestinian Authority is often mentioned as a necessary condition in the context of these discussions?

There is also the larger issue of whether the trends and events of the past year and a half have so transformed the regional environment that a viable subregional agreement can no longer be negotiated prior to a larger regional agreement. For example, given Iranian rhetoric toward Israel, will the United States even consider a subregional security agreement that includes Iran until it provides long-term guarantees of Israeli security?

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Also, rather than starting anew, past and current CBMs and regional security efforts need to be inventoried and analyzed to determine what worked, what commitments have been made, where those commitments stand, what caused past efforts to stall or go “off track,” and what gaps need to be filled by future efforts and mechanisms. A key element of this analysis needs to include input from parties and states with critical interests in the region that may or may not have been part of past efforts. This is not to say that every activity must include all parties. Rather, mechanisms need to be developed that give further consideration to the concerns and interests of these additional players if the final objective is the development of a sustainable subregional security framework.

#### **“Preconditions” to Develop Sustainable Gulf Security Frameworks**

If the requisite base level of trust and political will can be established, there needs to be a determination by the key parties as to whether agreement can be reached on the type(s) of security that should be addressed by a subregional system or systems. If not, the likelihood of developing and implementing a successful framework is unlikely.

As discussed in a forthcoming paper on regional security and cooperation systems, security “exists on different levels, often simultaneously.” Thus the specific type(s) of security being sought—collective, cooperative, human, etc.—and the objectives of each need to be defined before the creation of the requisite system to ensure that the objectives do not conflict with one another and that the requisite system actually meets those objectives. Related to this is the question of whether there is a need for a common threat perception among the players as a precondition to the creation of a regional cooperation and security system. The answer depends upon the type of security the members of the proposed security system want the system to address.<sup>1</sup>

Thus future dialogues should be designed to address these issues prior to proposing a specific type of security framework or system.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Jones, “Is a Common Threat Perception a Necessary Precondition for the Creation of a Regional Security and Co-operation System?” *Conflict Infocus*, Volume 19, Amman, Center on Conflict Preventions, forthcoming.

## Next Steps

Immediate next steps need to concentrate on measures to lower the sense of urgency and threat perceptions surrounding a military strike in the Gulf. This will require discussion of security guarantees among a number of actors including Iran, the United States, Iraq, the GCC states, and Israel. As long as these heightened threat perceptions persist, real movement on CBMs and a future security framework are unlikely.

Iran is being given some breathing room by the IAEA thanks to the work plan released at the end of August. If Iran fails to meet the work plan requirements, it is likely that additional sanctions will be imposed by the UN Security Council or groups of states such as the United States and the EU. If Iran's threats against Israel continue and its activities in Iraq continue to jeopardize American lives, then there are no guarantees that the United States, Israel, or some combination of states will not take military action.

Finally, US overtures to the United Nations to expand the UN's role in Iraq may present an opportunity to recover some of the international goodwill that was lost in the buildup to the US intervention in Iraq. However, given what has transpired between the United States and the UN over the past five years, there are legitimate concerns that the UN may be used as a pawn by the US as a way to save face in Iraq. Therefore, the US, the UN, and members of the larger international community need to ensure that these new calls for UN assistance result in a renewal of trust, collaboration, and commitment between the UN and the United States. The last thing needed right now is further division between the US and the larger international community as an aligned approach between the various parties is necessary for forward movement on the issues critical to the future of Gulf security.

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Immediate next steps need to concentrate on measures to lower the sense of urgency and threat perceptions surrounding a military strike in the Gulf.

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## Challenges of Gulf Security: Conflicts and Routes to Stability

Sponsored by The Stanley Foundation in association with INEGMA  
June 26-28, 2006  
Shangri-La's Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa  
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

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Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only. Participants attended as individuals rather than as representatives of their governments or organizations.

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## Gulf Security: Steps Toward a More Sustainable Order

Sponsored by The Stanley Foundation in association with the Landau Network-Centro Volta  
April 23-25, 2007  
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## The Institute for Near East & Gulf Military Analysis (INEGMA)

INEGMA is a self-financed establishment that offers media, research, and consultation services in the fields of defense, security, and geopolitics. INEGMA receives no financial backing from any government or political party worldwide. It was set up to provide media organizations, think tanks, nongovernmental organizations, militaries and governments of the Middle East, and international private companies with various services related to military and strategic affairs. Information on INEGMA can be found at *www.inegma.com*.

## Landau Network-Centro Volta

The Landau Network-Centro Volta (LNCV)—founded in 1995 at the “Centro di Cultura Scientifica A. Volta” in Como, Italy—is a nonprofit and nongovernmental organization operating as an international network. The main focus of its research programs are security and international policy issues such as nonproliferation; regional stability in the Middle East, South Asia, and the Korean Peninsula; NBCR disarmament and arms control matters; and water/energy security.

Main support for the LNCV comes from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the European Commission; the Lombardy Region; the Municipality of Como; and Italian, European, and US Foundations (on a project basis.)

The Scientific Board of the LNCV consists of world-renowned international experts who possess significant experience in geopolitical affairs and in scientific-technological fields related to disarmament, nonproliferation and global problems. LNCV printed and electronic publications include proceedings of its international workshops, assessment reports, case studies, and working papers.

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