

The United States and the Security of the Arab Gulf States

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Abstract

The Arab Gulf States are allied together in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) having strong and friendly relationships with the United States. They are critical to the American strategic interests and collectively represent the single most important theater in Washington-Tehran strategic competition. The proximity of the Arab Gulf states to Iran, the region's geostrategic value to the stability of the global economy, the shifting military balance, and the social, demographic, political upheavals in several key states make it a potential flash-point for tensions between Washington and Tehran. The United States issued new strategic guidance in early 2011 that called for the United States to avoid any repetition of the kind of involved in open-ended wars that occurred in Afghanistan and Iraq. This guidance gave the Middle East and the Arab Gulf States that same strategic priority as Asia, and stressed the threat posed by Iran and its search for nuclear weapons, but called for the American to build up strategic partnerships rather than take a unilateral lead or dominate the commitment of military force. Since that time, Washington has face growing pressure on government and national security spending, had to cut its forces and modernization plans, and faced growing domestic political pressures as a result of war fatigue and focus on domestic issues. The United States administration also differed with many of its Gulf allies over its lack of support for Mubarak of Egypt and then the military takeover in Egypt and its uncertain role in dealing with the crisis in both Iraq and Syria. Finally, the United States also faces a serious crisis of confidence in dealing with each of its Gulf allies as well as its other allies in the Middle East.

Keywords: Arab Gulf States, Gulf Security, Middle East, Regional Security, Foreign Relations.

Introduction

The role of Great Britain in the Middle East and the Gulf region has been greatly weakened by the diminution of her relative strength, and by her withdrawal from India and from various Middle East territories which served as bases. The front line in the defense of the Middle East against pressure from the north which had been a British concern for over a century was taken over by the United States in March 1947, when the Truman Doctrine was formulated. It is the balance between the former Soviet Union and her satellites on one side and the American and her allies on the other, which the common desire to, avoid nuclear warfare that preserves the general peace of the world. Meanwhile, concerns over the security and military defense of the Arab Gulf states have steadily intensified over the course of the twentieth century.

At the same time, the actors assuming their responsibility for the Gulf States security have also changed, so have the means and thus, necessarily, the strategies to defend the Gulf. Consequently, any contemporary strategy concerned with Arab Gulf security including that of the United States to be viable, must not only be concerned with external threats to Gulf security, but also be intimate with the immediate environment and nature of social, economic, and political conditions in the Arab Gulf States, both past and present. Although, the three actors concerned with Gulf security have been Great Britain, the United States, and the six Arab states. England exercised primary responsibility for the Gulf security because of its predominant position in the region from the turn of the century through the Second World War, and it continued to be directly concerned with the area until final withdrawal in 1971.¹

An important factor which compelled an early British withdrawal from the Gulf region was the American intrusion in the Middle East after World War II, attracted greatly by the oil interests. In addition to that it's economic, political and strategic interests.

The American exploited to the maximum the existing raging local nationalism against British colonialism. Furthermore, every successive British withdrawal from the Middle East has been hastened by the United States.² The American led military action to eliminate the so-called Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and to create postwar conditions that could support democratic political development appears increasingly unlikely. However, that operation will mark an end to the decade –long policy of containment of Iraq and set the stage for a new American approach to security cooperation and political engagement throughout the Arab Gulf region. The article offers a sustainable roadmap for a new American strategy and military posture in the Gulf region. Meanwhile, the presence of the American forces in the Arab Gulf States, particularly in Bahrain and Qatar, has been a highly contentious issue in the Arab World since the Gulf war of 1991. While this presence gave the United States and its coalition partners new flexibility in containing Saddam Husain, and ensuring access to Arab oil, it also exacerbated anti-American sentiment, mainly among the more devout and disaffected youth in the Gulf region.³

The United States had no foreign policy at all for the Middle East in general and the Gulf region in particular before the Second World War because it thought it had no vital interests in the far away and backward region. Towards the end of the of World War II, however, it was clear to the American administration that oil was an important ingredient in any war efforts and could be easily exploited in huge quantities from the Arab Gulf region, particularly Saudi Arabia. The United States pursued successfully with Saudi Arabia in 1943 to further its oil control and preempt Britain's influence in Saudi Arabia.⁴ Significant changes lay ahead for American Security strategy in the GCC states after so many years of stasis.

In between the Gulf war and the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the strategy of dual containment of Iraq and Iran was a key driver of American military planning and force posture for the region. During these years, the overriding American concern was preserving access to Gulf oil at a reasonable price. The Arab Gulf States acquiesced to a significant American military presence on their soil despite the domestic costs, and the United States was reasonably successful, at least until the second Palestinian uprising in September 2000, in insulating its relationships with key Gulf States from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The American administration assume that the regional security environment would continue to evolve more or less on its present trajectory and that the challenge confronting the United States was how to manage American forward presence for the long haul under increasingly stressful conditions.⁵

While the United States military and security interests originated around the time of the Second World War, it was not until after 1971 that the American became increasingly and directly concerned with the defense of the Arab Gulf States, and Western interests there. The year 1971 marked a watershed in the way many of the littoral states viewed the Gulf States security. The centuries old British shield had been removed and new responsibilities for self-defense and regional policing fell by default to the American, in order to preserve the global and Western access to Gulf oil, and denial of penetration or intrusion by hostile or rival forces. While the strategic interests have been similar, the means or methods of protecting those interests differ considerably. This not only due to differing national interests and perceptions, and situation over the last three quarters of a century, both in the Arabian Gulf itself and on a much broader level. Consequently, comparison of the perceptions and experience of each of three actors provides insights into the constrains, limitations and necessary direction of contemporary American and Arabian Gulf States policy in that region. ⁶ The purpose of this study is to evaluate the implications of these political, strategic, security, and military factors for American military presence and force posture, defense and security relationships, and force planning for the Gulf region.

The paper is divided into the following headings

1. Introduction.
2. Changing of the Guard.
3. American interests and objectives in the Arab Gulf states.
4. American alliance with the Arab Gulf states.
5. A new American approach to the Gulf States security.
6. The Arab Gulf states security under President Obama.
7. Conclusion.

The Changing of the Guard:

The year 1971 is used as a convenient date for determining when responsibility for Arabian Gulf states security shifted from Britain to the United States. But in many ways, this is an artificial threshold, since the process of changing the guard occurred gradually over the course of several decades. Britain's withdrawal from the Gulf region was completed, not initiated in 1971. The Second World War marks the beginning of the decline interests in India, East Africa and the Middle East. In the Arabian Peninsula, this process had involved the granting of independence to Kuwait in 1961 and the departure from Aden of South Yemen in late 1967. Even as the post war years witnessed a gradual decline in Britain's position, the roots of the United States involvement in the region were being established. Among the early reasons for American concern was the acquisition of oil concession in the Gulf military use of the Peninsula and surrounding areas for the war efforts, and the steady proliferation and deepening of the American position in Iran.⁷

Consequently, the late 1940s, 1950s and the 1960s represent a long period of transition and overlapping of interests, goals and responsibilities in the region on the part of Britain and the United States. Rather than cooperation, this overlapping resulted in serious competition and even opens hostility. It was obviously clear that the end of the Second World War that British imperial role was greatly diminished. Indeed, the entry of the American into the war had saved not only Britain from invasion, but also its colonial possessions. From the British viewpoint, American participation in the war, had gained a toehold in areas from which it had been previously excluded. The Arabian Gulf states were among of these areas. The first of the American intrusions revolved around oil and penetration of the Gulf fields. By the beginning of the Second World War, American oil interests were represented in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Bahrain. On top of this challenge came American insistence on access to British facilities in the Gulf to prosecute the war efforts. Meanwhile, the British suspicions of the United States intentions to build an air force base at Dhahran in eastern Saudi Arabia in 1944. This proposal met with British objections, who regarded it as a bare-faced attempt to create a political and strategic presence in Saudi Arabia. The base was constructed in 1946 and occupied by the United States Air Force until turned over to the Saudi government in 1962. Additionally, the United States provided loans and credits to the Saudi Kingdom, constructed roads, and eventually supplanted the British military mission. Thus, these actions, worked to transfer predominant outside influence in Saudi Arabia from the British to the American, which has held it ever since.⁸

Another American penetration was the establishment of the American Navy's Middle East Force in the Gulf, because of growing economic interests and also of the cold war. The Navy decided to deploy two destroyers and a seaplane tender to the Gulf in 1949. The Middle East Force has remained in the Gulf ever since, although after Britain's withdrawal the United States use of facilities was downgraded officially at the request of the Bahraini government.⁹ Additionally, the real permanent presence in the Peninsula appeared only after the Second World War. Emerging American-Saudi relations, initiated by ARAMCO's presence, promoted the establishment of an embassy in Jidda in 1942 and, later a consulate in Dhahran, the center of ARAMCO operations. Since then, the most significant aspects of the United States involvement in the Peninsula have revolved around Saudi Arabia.

The complete absence of any connection less than fifty years ago has been completely transformed, building on a combination of the special role played by ARAMCO in Saudi development, the erstwhile United States military presence in Dhahran and the burgeoning American arms sales and training teams. ¹⁰ However, Britain's relations with the Arabian Gulf States remain far stronger even today. Although, the record of the past has seen a steady shift in the balance of British and American influence and power in the Arabian Gulf States. Thus, Britain still remains an important commercial and cultural force in the region, but the torch of military and political power of which the Arabian Gulf States uncertainly depend for certain aspects of their defense has passed to the United States.¹¹

American Interests and Objectives in the Arab Gulf States:

The United States has two strategic interests in the Arabian Gulf States, firstly, preserving access to oil supplies and secondly, preventing the former Soviet Union expansion there.¹² Underlying these two interests are a number of tactical objectives, such as the means by which the American seeks to preserve or achieve its strategic interests. It is hardly necessary to emphasize the role of Gulf oil in the United States interests. Nearly 60 percent of all world oil reserves are contained in the Middle East, with approximately 25 percent of the global total in Saudi Arabia alone. Hence, the world's reliance upon Gulf oil is likely to continue for decades to come.

Additionally, the Gulf region can serve as a key land-bridge between the Soviet Union and the Middle East, South Asia and East Africa, as well as a window on the Indian Ocean. Although, it should be stressed that securing the two central strategic American interests requires employment of a complex, multi-layered strategy, involving all the tactical objectives such as develop the capability for military intervention in the Arabian Gulf, deter Soviet military attack and contain Soviet political influence in the Gulf, support the status-quo in friendly states of the region and finally, promote stability in the Gulf states.¹³ Meanwhile, the United States has developed, over the years, definite interests in the Arabian Gulf region. It's centered on oil. As the British withdrew in 1971, Washington seemed to have defined her objectives in the Gulf region which were and still are as follows:

1. The United States will support indigenous efforts to ensure regional security, stability and to foster orderly development without outside interference.
 2. The United States will assist peaceful resolution of territorial and other disputes among the regional powers and the opening up of better channels of communication among the Gulf states.
 3. The United States will ensure continued access to and protection of the Arab Gulf oil supplies, in order to maintain reasonable rates and supply of sufficient quantities of oil in order to meet the American needs.
 4. The United States will protect its commercial and financial interests and investment in the Arab Gulf states.¹⁴
- In order to achieve these objectives, Washington applied the Nixon Doctrine of the late 1960, which resolved round the principle of allowing surrogates to guard the United States interests in peripheral regions instead of direct involvement as was the case in Vietnam.¹⁵ But what gave a big jolt to the American and its allies was the use of Arab oil as a political weapon to achieve definite political goals and the decision of the Arab Gulf States to hike the oil price at the wake of the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1973. Since then, oil politics injected anew dynamism and orientation in international relations.¹⁶ Furthermore, with regard to the American objective of having access to the Gulf oil supplies at reasonable prices and in sufficient quantities to meet its needs and those of her allies. Ever since the Gulf States ventured to use the oil weapon in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the United States seriously considered retaliation by using food as a counter-weapon through an embargo on the Arabs and also considered the use of force.¹⁷

Oil was the only reason that brought the United States into the Gulf States and its present and future interests lay solely in the exploitation of oil from this region. The Middle East contains 60 percent of all the plants petroleum resources. Saudi Arabia alone possesses 26 percent of the plants proven petroleum resources. About 80 percent of world's oil produced by the organization of petroleum exporting countries and of this the Islamic member states control 72 percent with Saudi Arabia having the largest share of 20 percent. Therefore, more than half of oil needs of the Western World and Japan are met by supplies from the Arab Gulf States.¹⁸

At present the United States is increasingly becoming dependent on the Arab Gulf oil and it imports more than one million barrels a day from Saudi Arabia, the largest single contributor to the United States oil imports. The United States views the Gulf region as vitally important for itself, particularly; it's interested in uninterrupted flow of oil from this region to the United States as well as to its allies in the west. The policy of the United States is backed up with an operational military presence in the Gulf region to manipulate and influence situations. Such a presence is a coercive presence that would have serious impact on the shaping and controlling of important geopolitical features of the area in which a crisis may come ahead. One of the implications of the American oil policy seems to be a warning to the Arab Gulf states that national sovereignty over national resources and national competence to dispose them of are to be exercised with restraint.¹⁹

The United States policy in the Gulf region since 1971 falls into two distinctive periods:

1- 1971-1979.

2- 1979- to the present.

While the first period was characterized by being inaction, the second period has tended towards overreaction. The United States policy towards the Gulf region during the first period was predicated on the Nixon Doctrine, which provided the foundations of the so-called twin pillar policy, by which the American relied upon Iran and Saudi Arabia, as its surrogates in the Gulf region. But a series of troubling events in the region around 1979, the new Iran's Islamic regime in Tehran, forced the re-evaluation of this policy. The indirect American approach of the past decade was reversed in a spasm of concern and rhetorical reaction.

The broader Gulf states was characterized as an arc of crisis, the Carter administration threatened the former Soviet Union with retaliation, simmering plans for a more direct and stronger American role in the Gulf region were put on the front burner, and the American military would intervene in the Gulf if deemed necessary. Although, this policy shift has been made permanent by the actions of the United States Presidents to the present. Henceforth, the Arabian Gulf region remains a key area of American strategic interests. 20

American Alliance with the Arabian Gulf States:

The United States position as an ally of the Arabian Gulf states was been judged with ambivalence and ambiguity both in America and the Gulf region. In some ways, American administration wanted to be the defender more than some Gulf States wanted to be defended. Thus, the Gulf States evidently depended on American defense, and at the same time they openly disagreed with Washington on the aims and efficacy of its defenses. 21The complicated nature of the American alliance with the Arab Gulf States attests to the complex, special military responsibility that Washington has undertaken to bear there and to the unplanned way this role has developed. Before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, America was already regarded as a main defender of the Gulf region but had little physical or institutional involvement in defense schemes. This role reflected the Gulf States' weaknesses and inability to defend them. Their populations were small and their armies ineffective and experienced. They were not eager to institutionalize an American military role. Being smaller in terms of population and military power, they feared the wrath of Iran, Iraq and several Arab states.

Thus, these tiny states preferred to pacify radical Arab states and movements by mediating their inter-Arab disputes, supporting these regimes verbally, and providing financial aid to other Arab states in order to appease neighbors and render themselves immune from subversion or attack.²² The Gulf States established the Gulf Cooperation Council(GCC) in May 1981, at the height of the Iraq-Iran war, showed the Gulf states need to defend themselves, albeit through independent action, apart from the United States. The Gulf States highly valued the American assistance but only as a very last almost unusable resort. They preferred to deal with threats by diplomatic means and pay-offs to potential aggressors.²³ Therefore, none of the Arab Gulf States entered into a written official defense agreement with the United States. Regional diplomatic maneuvering was their first line of defense. American intervention will be requested only given the worst possible scenario. The United States given its own interests and perceptions accepted this role. Thus, the United States acted as defense coordinator, adviser, arms supplier and strategic deterrent against any threats to the Gulf region.²⁴ However, Saudi Arabia could not agree with the United States during 1991-92 over the kind of weapons it wanted, or on payment for its military purchases. For these reasons and given Syria's and Iran's objections to American forces in the Gulf region, Saudi Arabia decided not to make an official agreement with the United States.

Additionally, Kuwait did sign an official defense pact with the United States on September 18, 1991. Bahrain also concluded a defense agreement with the American government in the same month.²⁵ these agreements were based on the understanding that the United States would defend its allies and sell those arms. Both sides had a parallel view on the importance of stability and economic development. The Arab Gulf states also expected American efforts to resolve the Palestinian issue.²⁶ The American forces did station in Kuwait as part of the planning of an immediate, initial defense effort. While Washington did not define its strategy during the Bush administration, the tone for President Bill Clinton administration was set on May 18, 1992, and called American strategy in the Gulf region 'Dual Containment'.

Through economic and military boycott, Washington sought to replace President Saddam Husain and establish a new government in Iraq and at the same time to induce Iran to embark on a non-hostile, non-aggressive foreign policy toward the Gulf States. Many of the tiny Gulf States security problems were internal, linked to potential foreign threats or reactions against an effort to tighten cooperation with the United States. American policy could not deal with these issues, nor did the regional governments desire such interference. Therefore, the United States was unable to undertake or develop ways of strengthening unification in the Gulf region, or attempt to induce political change, even in a small way.²⁷ meanwhile, the Gulf States have been beset by internal opposition, mainly from Islamic Fundamentalist Groups. The Cooperation between the Gulf States and Egypt could be an alternative to their alliance with the United States. However, the Arab Gulf States suffer from inter-state disputes and differences, notably between Qatar and Bahrain, and Qatar and Saudi Arabia over UN demarcated border lines. Egypt emerged as a mediator in these disputes. On the other hand, Kuwait and Oman, have regarded Iran for decades as a welcome addition to regional security as a way to counter Iraq.

The key implication of these factors for American-Gulf states threat perception differs from that of the United States and even among them. Gulf security from the Gulf States viewpoint, focuses on a variety of tactics, in which America has only a limited role while Egypt and Iran each have their own contribution to make.²⁸

Meanwhile, the explosions in the American army bases at Dhahran in June 1995 and Al-Khubar in November 1996 generated even more tension. From the American viewpoint, the Saudi security forces were too lenient in their investigations. But on the other hand, the Kingdom viewed the United States presence in the Gulf region had become counterproductive, a target for terrorist attacks.²⁹ Henceforth, the Arab Gulf states would like to see American military intervention only in time of need, believing that cooperation with some Arab states and Iran could diffuse tensions. The United States would be called to intervene in any future tension. The American-Gulf States relationship had changed and strengthened in two important ways:

1. There was the precedent of large scale United States intervention, at the Gulf States invitation and with their cooperation.
2. American forces are now present and ready to fight in the Gulf region (in Qatar and Bahrain). Consequently, a relationship between the United States and the Arab Gulf states had and still been largely a potential alliance is now implemented as a very real and strategically important one for both sides.³⁰

The New American Approach to the Security of the Gulf States:

The Arab Gulf States needs to find a workable balance between reliance of 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 be served by engaging with Baghdad and Tehran, while regulating their power within an inclusive security arrangement.

Such an arrangement need not entail the infeasible expansion of the Gulf States to include Iraq and Iran.³¹ However; the American relations with the Arab Gulf states are strained by divergent policies toward a changing Middle East, they fears of being an abandoned by the American, and unprecedented intra-Gulf tensions.

The United States administration has attempted to reassure Gulf rulers of the strength of the security alliance while calling for liberalizing reforms. The Gulf regimes have put them at odds with these calls. Washington must focus on promoting political and security sector reforms in the Gulf that are critical to long-term regional stability by better integrating its use of military and diplomatic tools. Dramatic shifts in the Arab World environment have exposed sharp differences between America and the Arab Gulf States. There is a growing sense that the United States is a power in retreat that is ignoring the interests of its allies and betraying them. They have criticized the United States as a naïve capitulation to Iran's nuclear ambitions in ongoing negotiation, and its hesitation to intervene in the Syrian crisis. They fears of the American abandonment are not new and they are deeply etched into the structure of the relationship. As smaller entity dependent on a more powerful patron, they have always worried that the United States will abandon them to more predatory neighbors or entrap them in a regional war of the United States making. ³²

Meanwhile, the Arab Gulf States have undertaken activist and assertive foreign policy across the Middle East. These policies have opposed American Interests. For instance, the Gulf States have bankrolling the Egyptian military's ejection of the elected government of President Mohammed Morsi and funding the opposition groups in Syria. The Saudi government called for a Gulf defense policy, to include a united military command of the GCC forces, and it has issued veiled threats to the American about seeking military partners elsewhere. In response for the Arab spring of 2011, the Arab Gulf States increased internal repression. Their domestic policies are at odds with Washington's call for real reform and human rights within the Gulf region. At the end, the small steps toward liberalization that Gulf governments have taken in the past have all halted. The American policy in the Kingdom of Bahrain faces the starkest challenge. The Kingdom faced a worsening cycle of protests and repression since 2011. Sides, the monarchy and the opposition party have pursued escalatory tactics and a winner-take strategy, resulting in missed opportunities for compromise.³³

Since the Arab uprising in 2011 the United States strategy has been to reaffirm to the Arabian Gulf States the Durability of the United States support to them against regional threats, mainly Iran, and will provide security to the Gulf region. The United States has continued its scheduled arms deliveries to the Arab Gulf States including a recent 11 Billion Dollars package, and increased the arms sales to the Gulf region under the United States Foreign Military Sales Program over the past six years. The American administration has professed continued political support for political reform in the GCC states.

On the contrary, the Gulf States opposed the American initiatives since the start of the Arab uprising. President Barak Obama visited Saudi Arabia on March 2014, who declared that the United States should take a strong stance in support of her interests in the Gulf States and the expectation that Gulf rulers will enact meaningful reforms. Washington needs to revise its reassurance strategy in the Gulf region and ensure that it includes an American efforts to convince the Arab Gulf States that reform which include political institutions, the security sector, and the rights and liberties afforded citizens, would ultimately contribute to the American as well as the Gulf States vital interests in long term stability. 34 As the Gulf security is concerned, President Obama outlines a positive strategic vision for the Gulf States reaffirming American commitment to Arab Gulf states regional alliances and describing the necessary reforms.

In his speech to the United Nations in 2013, President Obama stated the vital American national security interests in the Gulf region. The United States should effectively exert its leverage to bring about needed reforms in the Arabian Gulf States. Doing so in the present climate of American-Gulf discord over regional policy toward Syria, Iran and Egypt will admittedly be challenging. But a holistic approach to Gulf security that includes addressing the root causes of political and social unrest not only reflects American values than the present approach but is increasingly necessary to prevent serious challenges to Gulf rulers and to American assets and people. Successive American Presidents, officials and decision-makers have reaffirmed this imperative in speeches, but American policy efforts must accelerate, mainly in light of the shifting regional dynamics.³⁵

To deal with the critical situation in the Arab Gulf States, the United States responded with a series of major security cooperation initiatives. These include deploying American Special Forces to the Gulf, making the Arab Gulf States partners in the United States Combined Air Operations Center in the States of Qatar, and helping the Gulf States make major improvements in their deterrence and defense capabilities. By and large, the United States increased it is arms agreements with the Arab Gulf States by over eight times between 2004-2007 and 2008-2011. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made the most drastic increase, with a nine-fold increase in 2008-2011. Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates have also experienced considerable growth in weapons imports from the United States. 36

The Arab Gulf States Security Under President Barak Obama Administration:

The United States of America has become the dominant military, diplomatic, and economic presence in the Arabian Gulf States. Therefore, it's the leading Gulf power in that region. The number and size of military forces and operating facilities in the Arab Gulf States expanded dramatically as the American forces fought two regional wars and confronted Iran over the following decade. This was a companied by a vigorous assertion of Washington predominance and preemptive determination to shape the politics and historic contours of the Gulf region, a strategy that became known as the Bush Doctrine. Meanwhile, President Obama spent his first term managing the end of the war in Iraq as well as the conflict in Afghanistan.

However, the President second term defined American foreign policy. He announced in his address to the United Nations General Assembly on September 24, 2013, and stated that: "The United States of America is prepared to use all elements of our power, including military force, to secure our core interests in the region. We will confront external aggression against our allies and partners, as we did in the Gulf war. We will ensure the free flow of energy from the region to the world and we will dismantle terrorist networks that threaten our people, and finally, we will not tolerate the development or use of weapons of mass destruction". 37.

The drivers of this foreign policy are the American core interests, and it does not define the kind of these states in the Gulf region that the United States would like to see, no mention of democracy, human rights, liberty, it does not commit of the American to the security of the Gulf states, only to help defend them against direct external aggression. Last but not least, Obama defines two specific objectives in the Arab Gulf States to occupy the last three years of his presidency which are the Iranian nuclear issue and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Another issue became a secondary position in his opinion. 38 Regarding the Iran Deal on nuclear issue, President Obama pledges more military aid to reassure the Arab Gulf States. He reassures the Gulf leaders that the United States was serious about bolstering their security and willing to help the Gulf States counter Iran.

The President said: " I'm reaffirming our ironclad commitment to the security of our Gulf partners, to work with our G.C.C. partners to urgently determine what actions may be appropriate including the potential use of force."³⁹ However, the United States nuclear deal with Iran was uneasy with the Saudi Arabia as well as with other Arab Gulf states, which they fear would free Iran to further exert its influence in the region.

Saudi Arabia foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir said that his kingdom would welcome a deal that deprived Iran of nuclear weapons capability, The Saudi foreign Minister stated that: "We will follow the talks and see before we can judge in terms of whether or not the Iranians will do what it takes to reach a deal".40

Conclusion

With the decline and fall of the British Empire, the United States succeeded in acquiring a number of strategic bases all over the world. The Eisenhower Doctrine was formulated underscoring the need to use the United States forces in the region to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations requesting such aid against overt aggression from any nation controlled by international communism. From 1970s on word, the Arabian Gulf region began to play a greater role in International Affairs. The new correlation of forces on the world scene allowed the Gulf States to be very successful in the struggle for the right to control their own natural resources. The United States as well as the Western powers was forced to share oil profits with the oil-producing Arab States of the Gulf. The period after the Iranian revolution saw the advancement of the Carter Doctrine, which demagogically proclaimed the need for an American military presence in the Gulf to prevent former Soviet Union expansionism there. When the Soviet military threat proved non-existent and as the Arab States continued to supply the West with oil, another propaganda ploy began to be used the so-called Shia danger.

All these propaganda tricks are intended to justify the constant United States military presence in the Gulf region and to garner public support for the positions of the United States administration. The Arab Gulf States have stronger ties with the United States as well as with the Western capitalist economy. It appears that these states are becoming increasingly dependent on United States and Western technology. The protracted and bloody war between Iraq and Iran has enabled the United States and the Western Bloc to influence both of the belligerents and to apply more pressure on the Arab Gulf States with the threat of expanding the zone of hostilities. Washington is doing its utmost to perused the leaders of the Arab Gulf states that their enormous stockpiles of arms will not be enough to protect their thrones and states and that they can't do without United States assistance.

Thus, the United States press carries numerous reports about Shia threat to the Gulf, acts by subversive elements and so on. The United States grossly interferes with the affairs of the Gulf leaders, telling them what kind of policies they should pursue on the world scene. For instance, on the eve of the 39th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the United States Department sent the Gulf States a note containing recommendations to the Gulf States as regards their attitude to the Iraq-Iran war and the Arab-Israel conflict. However, these instructions can hardly be interpreted as an attempt to question their independence, since the State Department demands that they subordinate their national interests to the United States strategic interests. Meanwhile, it's the United States that is currently maintaining the largest military force in the region and has also been involved directly in the armed conflict there. America's line of policy is quite dangerous and has no future. Indeed this policy is at variance with the people's basic interests and aspirations. No matter how much the American tries to flex its military muscle it won't be able to change the world and make it live by the American standard.

The United States interests in the Gulf region were unaltered by the events of September 11. If anything, the terrorist attacks demonstrated that conditions and events in the Gulf, and in the wider Middle East, are of even more immediate importance to the security and safety of the American citizens. It's that lesson that should lead the American government to begin taking the difficult actions necessary for the long term, orderly evolution of the Gulf and its security environment. Most importance is the withdrawal of the standing United States military presence. These forces do need to be invisible, and impermanent than it is today. Therefore, the Gulf States are not happy with the thought of unresolved and irresolvable Palestinian crisis, or with submitting to the United States demands for unlimited cooperation in a domestic hunt for supporters of al-Qaeda.

However, the dilemma for the Gulf States is to balance a still necessary American military presence against Iran and other enemy forces in the region. In the face of a nuclear Iran, the Gulf States are likely to seek expanded the United States guarantees of enhanced protection and promises to defend them if a confrontation are imminent. The American military presence in the Gulf region will be required for some time, hence, the desire of the GCC states to reduce the American military footprint and the vulnerability of forward deployed forces needs to be balanced against the political and deterrent value of a visible American military presence in the Gulf region. The interests and security policies of the GCC member states have long been intertwined with those of the United States.

Wars, border disputes, success and collapse of the Arab-Israeli peace process, and recurring instability in the international oil market have posed grave concerns for the wellbeing of the Gulf region as well as the United States strategy and defense policy. The key security issues that shape the American policy in the Arabian Gulf region today include maintaining support for the war on terrorism, securing access to reasonable priced oil, and preventing Iran from acquiring weapons of mass destruction or taking actions that are hostile to United States interests. The United States became increasingly more directly present and involved in maintaining the security of the Arab Gulf States. These states are basically illiberal and authoritarian. The United States and the Gulf monarchies have profoundly different views about political order, personal freedom, and gender relations.

What links the United States and the Arab Gulf States is not values, but interests. Those interests are substantial, and they have sustained a productive and mutually beneficial relationship for decades. While the Gulf regimes have their differences among themselves, they are bound together by profoundly important common characteristics and by their security ties with the United States. That relationship with the American has it is ups and downs, but it is enduring, and it gives the United States leaders considerable leverage. The American military presence in the Gulf region is likely to be for some time. The United States desire to reduce its footprint and the vulnerability of forward deployed forces needs to be balanced against the diplomatic and deterrent value of a visible presence in the Gulf region. Finally, the United States has the diplomatic, economic, and military capital to seek and create the balance of national interests and balance of value systems in the Gulf region.

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