

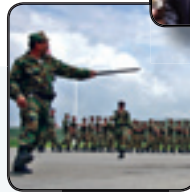
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Implications for the GCC Region



Exploring GCC Relations
with the Levant States



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The Virtual Cold War: Implications for the GCC Region

Dr. Andrei Zagorski

Since President Vladimir Putin delivered his statement at the Annual Security Conference in Munich on February 10, rhetoric is dominating the relations of Russia with the US and NATO, accompanied by a further decline in the Russian-EU dialogue. Despite repeated appeals to turn down the unhelpful rhetoric, it continues to fuel the worst expectations of an eventual return to a Cold War situation between Moscow and Washington.

In Munich, Putin not only accused the United States of seeking to impose its will on other nations; he also presented a short list of what in the American policy is seen as hurting the Russian national security interest. This list reached from NATO enlargement, forthcoming US deployments in the new member states of the Alliance such as Bulgaria and Romania, to preparing for the deployment of American ballistic missile defense components in the Czech Republic and Poland. The placement of US bases in Bulgaria and Romania is presented by Moscow as a breach of the Russia-NATO accord of 1997 which promised that no substantial allied forces and infrastructure would be deployed in the former Soviet bloc countries.

Neither of those issues is entirely new, nor are the arguments in Moscow. Relatively new are the steps Russian authorities allege they would take in response. Ever since February 2007, President Putin and senior officials in Moscow have not hesitated to warn the US and NATO that the implementation of the

above plans would result in the collapse of the existing arms control arrangements and would trigger a new arms race, both nuclear and conventional.

More particularly, senior Russian military commanders have indicated that Russia would retarget its nuclear missiles against European countries where American missile defense components were to be deployed. They also admitted the possibility of a Russian withdrawal from the 1987 Treaty banning intermediate nuclear missiles. In the spring of 2007, Moscow asserted that the tests of a new multiple warhead mobile intercontinental missile, and of a new cruise missile were a response

to the envisaged American deployments. In April 2007, President Putin further announced that Moscow would consider withdrawing from the 1990 Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty should NATO nations fail to ratify its adapted version by July 2008. All those steps were supposed to impress upon Washington and, more particularly, its European allies, that there exists a real danger of a new arms race.

What Are the Eventual Implications for the GCC Region?

Should the arms race scenario materialize, i.e. should Moscow be

Russian President Vladimir Putin with US President George Bush in Maine, July 2007. Differences between Russia and the United States have been growing over missile defense and other issues.



willing and capable of again challenging the US and NATO militarily thus triggering a response by the US and its allies, what consequences could this have for the Gulf region and for the GCC countries? Shall those consequences be seriously considered?

The notion of a new arms race and of an eventual return of the Cold War revives the images of a return to a sort of bipolar world in which the interaction between the US and Russia is again an essential and central element. Indeed, the message of the assertion of the possibility of a new arms race between Russia and the US, and between Russia and NATO is based on the assumption that Russia is coming back to the world stage and that it has become increasingly capable of challenging the pursuit of American policy goals if Washington does not pay enough attention to what Russia likes or dislikes.

This scenario would hardly result, in the current circumstances, in a new global race to divide the entire, or almost the entire world into friends of either the US or Russia thus forcing other nations, including the GCC countries, to choose between either of them, or to seek a nonaligned status. It would, however, increase the strategic importance of a few regions in the world and particularly that of the Gulf region which remains crucial for the stability of the global energy supply.

The current controversy between Russia and the US is largely focused on developments in Europe, and the bilateral agenda with the United States. Should the rudimental confrontation go a step further, however, it would not remain restricted purely to European affairs and/or the bilateral Russo-American relationship. It would also begin to affect the level of cooperation between Moscow and Washington on

a number of regional issues and, most particularly, on the developments in the immediate proximity of the GCC region in the Middle and Near East.

Although any direct obstruction of the US policy objectives in the Middle and Near East does not seem to be the immediate purpose of the contemporary Russian rhetoric, the logic of Russia returning to the world stage and identifying itself as an opponent, if not a rival to the US, is most likely to lead to the resumption and intensification of Moscow's relations with its old clients in the region, first and foremost with Syria, but probably also with Iran.

In sum, a continued US-Russian controversy, without re-imposing a new bilateral order on the Middle and Near East, would have significant consequences for the GCC countries. While, on the one hand, it would raise the strategic importance of the region as a source of global energy supply, it would in addition largely shift regional politics towards developing client relations with either the US or Russia. It would thus increase the complexity and even anarchy in the immediate proximity of the Gulf region making a common search for cooperative solutions of the outstanding problems more difficult. Admittedly, their solution is even now anything but simple.

Is a New Cold War Inevitable?

While the consideration of the scenario mentioned above seems to make sense given the current rhetoric in Russo-American relations, there is little evidence to suggest that this is exactly the scenario that is likely to materialize. Instead, there are enough arguments that can be made that would lead one to conclude that a new arms race option is rather unlikely and also that this would damage regional develop-



ments in the Gulf. On the contrary, it can be suggested that the prevalence of antagonistic rhetoric between Moscow and Washington might even boost cooperation between them on the Middle and Near East.

It is remarkable that, in the current round of the strategic debate, Moscow has come back exactly to the agenda of the late 1990s when the former President Boris Yeltsin was the first to announce the advent of a “Cold Peace”. The dispute included such issues as the status of Kosovo, NATO enlargement, adaptation of the CFE Treaty, as well as missile defense and strategic (nuclear) arms control. Many in the West believed that the controversies of those years had been sorted out by the end of the 1990s or early in this decade. The current dispute reveals that this assessment was wrong.

Having benefited from high energy prices and having ensured financial stability and economic growth, Moscow has developed a new degree of self-consciousness – that of a returning great power that can afford preventing further changes in the status quo and, probably, even reverse some of those developments that had taken place in the previous decade. It is obvious that Moscow seeks to renegotiate at least some of the deals that were signed by a weak Kremlin that had to cope with a profound decline in its power in the 1990s.

The theory of a “rising Russia” finds many proponents worldwide, although it is contested by those pointing to its remaining structural weaknesses.¹ Anyway, a thorough analysis does not substantiate the theory of a new arms

race between Russia and the US. Moscow is neither really capable of challenging America militarily – either in Europe, or elsewhere – nor does the US appear to be willing to take on the challenge.

The modernization of the Russian nuclear forces was launched in 2002. Although it has been publicly presented as a response to the US plans of erecting a global missile defense system, in fact it served the single purpose of replacing the aging Soviet nuclear arsenal which has to be almost entirely decommissioned after 2013. Taking into account the current developments, the Russian nuclear arsenal by 2020 will be significantly below the target set by the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty with the US. Thus, this development does not look like a challenging arms race. Rather, it appears to be a vehement effort by Moscow to maintain its status as the second largest nuclear power in the world.

Considering the continued decline and low morale of the Russian armed forces (not speaking of the ageing military industries), withdrawing from the CFE Treaty could hardly be used by Moscow to deploy more troops and heavy armaments along the frontiers with NATO. Quitting the Treaty would have only one single consequence – that of lifting any restrictions on the American deployments in Europe while also removing any restrictions for the Russian military to deploy more arms in the Caucasus. Given that the Russian military is apparently fine with the current balance, they must as such have no fears of either the US or of NATO forces in Europe significantly increasing their deployments.

The threatening statements by Putin heralding a new arms race era did not create a big impression either in the US or in Europe. Not expecting any military challenge to emanate from the Russian military posture in the years to come, they also do not consider developing any military response to the rhetorical challenge. Thus, the two essential preconditions for a new arms race are missing. Even if some groups in Russia would be willing to consider such a path, the fact remains that Moscow in general is not capable of challenging the US and NATO militarily. As a result, the US and its allies do not see any real need to respond by adjusting their military posture. The likelihood of the materialization of an arms race scenario will remain, therefore, negligibly low in the years to come.

It is obvious, however, that the current objective is for a somewhat stronger Moscow to renegotiate at least some of the deals it struck with the West a decade ago when it was considerably weaker. The US does not seem to be interested to give up the options just for the sake of a good relationship with Moscow which is no longer central to US foreign policy. However, it continuously engages Russia in a cooperative manner in order to provide the Kremlin with the best possible reassurance that its legitimate security interests are not ignored. This new bargain, not the arms race, may have some effect on the GCC neighborhood, as it is likely to increase, not diminish, US–Russian cooperation on Middle East and Iran.

Dr. Andrei Zagorski is Leading Researcher and Professor at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations.

¹ See, i.e. Rajan Menon, Alexander J. Motyl, “The Myth of Russian Resurgence”, *The American Interest Online*, March–April 2007, <http://the-american-interest.com/ai2/article.cfm?id=258&Mid=8>

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Exploring GCC Relations with the Levant States

Dr. Christian Koch and Seada Kassie

While much of the regional security attention in the Gulf is focused on the war in Iraq and the dispute over the Iranian nuclear program, there is of course another constant political crisis that is playing itself out in the Levant. Developments surrounding both Lebanon and Syria over the past years and particularly since the summer of 2006, when the once-Paris-of-the-Middle East once again became the scene of a larger regional conflict thereby bringing destruction and agony on the Lebanese people, have proven highly

worrisome to the Arab Gulf States. Within the context of the events that have taken place, there is deep concern that violence could yet again spiral out of control and bring about a wider, more devastating, regional conflict. In order to prevent such a scenario, the GCC states have attempted to play a diplomatic and economic role both to calm existing tensions and to pave the way ahead for a more stable future.

Following the withdrawal of Syrian troops in April 2005, it was generally

thought that Lebanon would open a new chapter in its troubled recent history. But it was soon to become apparent that the withdrawal did not solve the Lebanese problem. Given its fractured political scene and continued interference from the outside, Lebanon found itself confronting the prospects of a renewed civil conflict when Israel launched a 34-day war in response to the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by the Hizbollah militia, a war that left thousands of civilians dead. The July 2006 war with Israel, which was internationally

UAE President Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan with Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. The GCC states have maintained their diplomatic contact with Syria.



condemned as uncalled for, left traces of fear and insecurity in Lebanon. One direct result was that in November 2006, six opposition ministers quit the unity government in place in Lebanon causing a stand-off between the Western-backed government of Prime Minister Siniora and the opposition supported by Syria and Iran, a crisis that remains unresolved as of July 2007. And in the midst of all existing turmoil, government troops have been locked in a battle with a rejectionist group called Fatah al-Islam, a radical splinter group with an ideological link to al-Qaeda, in the Nahr al-Bard refugee camp that since May 2007 has resulted in over 200 casualties. The violence has been Lebanon's worst internal conflict since the end of the civil war in 1990.

For much of what has happened in Lebanon over the years, Syria's involvement and its resistance to calls for an independent Lebanon have been seen as the main cause for the instability. The parliamentary election that brought Hariri's son, Saad Al-Hariri into power in May 2005, has worked unceasingly to see Syria out of the way for much of its operations. Still, Syria is blamed for its indirect involvement in Lebanon's politics including close ties with President Emile Lahoud, whose term was unconstitutionally extended for three more years when he was supposed to have left office in 2004. The murder of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005 caused a wide rift between Lebanon and Syria and brought Lebanese frustration about the continued Syrian military presence in their country to the forefront. Following a United Nations Security Council resolution and pressure from the international community, Syria withdrew its forces in April 2005. With all fingers pointing towards Syria for the assassination of

Rafik Hariri, Syria has yet to meet the challenge of proving itself innocent.

The circumstances surrounding Syria have culminated in an attempt by the GCC states to get more involved in trying to resolve some of the outstanding issues. The implication of Syrian involvement in the Hariri assassination

There ... exists agreement and a common policy as far as the GCC states are concerned vis-à-vis Lebanon. This consensus includes support for the legitimate government of Lebanon; the rejection of any external intervention in Lebanese affairs or anything that threatens the sovereignty of Lebanon whether by Israel or Syria or anyone else, and unanimous support for the UNSCR 1559 calling on Syria to leave Lebanon

left Syria even more politically isolated than before and it increased scrutiny of the Assad regime. In addition to US allegations that Syria was and is fostering terrorism in the region, Syrian ties with Iran were in particular focus with the suggestion that Iran was using Syria to launch its key battles in the wider Arab world. France and Saudi Arabia led some of the criticism. France strongly objected to Syria's military presence in Lebanon while Saudi Arabia was particularly upset about the murder of multi-billionaire and close ally Rafik Hariri, who himself held Saudi citizenship. As a result, Syria has found it considerably difficult to remain adamant about its case with two Security Council resolutions calling for the complete withdrawal

of its military forces from Lebanon, (UNSCR 1559) and cooperation in the investigation of Hariri's assassination (UNSCR 1636).

In light of these circumstances, the GCC states have undertaken a variety of efforts to calm the situation and contribute to Lebanese stability, and to try to pave the way for Syria to return to the Arab fold. Within the broader effort by the international community to contribute to the rebuilding of Lebanon and bringing stability to the region, the GCC states have become factors playing a central role in this process. This has included primarily a political role with the 2005 GCC annual summit strongly urging Syria to cooperate with the United Nations in the Hariri investigation. Equally, the GCC states highlighted the importance of unity in Lebanon and called for efforts at interference to cease.

As is well known by now, Saudi Arabia also took the lead in criticizing the role of Hizbollah in the kidnapping of the two Israeli soldiers, a move that Saudi officials characterized as serving as a precursor to the Israeli bombardment. The Saudi statement issued at the time called for there to "be a differentiation between legitimate resistance (to Israel) and uncalculated adventures" and "the Kingdom sees that it is time for those elements to alone shoulder the full responsibility for this irresponsible behavior and that the burden of ending the crisis falls on them alone," a clear reference to the actions of Hizbollah.¹ The Gulf States subsequently unanimously agreed on the need to disarm Hizbollah and entrust its military power and control to the Lebanese army for the legitimate use of power. In the most recent conflict between Fatah al-Islam and the Lebanese army, Saudi foreign

¹ Saudi Press Agency, "Official Source Makes Statement," July 13, 2007.

minister Prince Saud al-Faisal pledged the Kingdom's support to the Lebanese government and condemned the violent actions conducted by the militants. The Gulf States also announced plans to send arms shipments to the Lebanese army.

There thus exists agreement and a common policy as far as the GCC states are concerned vis-à-vis Lebanon. This consensus includes support for the legitimate government of Lebanon; the rejection of any external intervention in Lebanese affairs or anything that threatens the sovereignty of Lebanon whether by Israel or Syria or anyone else, and unanimous support for the UNSCR 1559 calling on Syria to leave Lebanon. The bottom line is that the GCC policy is clear-cut and there can be no doubt about the objective.

On the Syrian front, Saudi Arabia's endeavor to improve the situation went a step forward with the meeting held between King Abdullah and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad just prior to the Arab League annual summit in March of this year. A particular concern has been Syria's alliance with Iran. Given the existing concern over Iranian intentions across a whole range of issues as far as the Middle East is concerned, the GCC have found it necessary to remind Syria that its actions inevitably will have detrimental effects for the Arab world. During the 2007 Arab Summit, the Arab states clearly demonstrated that Syria should return to the Arab fold as opposed to siding with Iran. Among other things, the Saudi Middle East initiative initiated by King Abdullah in 2002 has called for the full return of the Golan Heights to Syria. The intention here is to get Syria behind the initiative, in turn implicitly accepting the two-state solution with regard to Palestine/Israel, while at the same

time divorcing itself from the policies of both Hizbollah and Iran. Saudi Arabia is keen to denounce the status of Hizbollah in the region, as it did at the onset of the July war, and it has criticized Iran and Syria for their constant support to the Shi'a militant

What is particularly noticeable is that the GCC states have not restricted their involvement to merely feeding Lebanon or Syria empty promises, but that their words have been followed by commendable actions

group. Syria is also expected to assist in stabilization efforts in Iraq.

Saudi Arabian diplomacy has been at the forefront of efforts for the rehabilitation of Syria. Yet King Abdullah has made it clear that such rehabilitation comes at a price. Saudi efforts with regard to Syria are similar to those extended to Libya when the Kingdom arranged for a compromise for the Qadhafi government over the Lockerbie investigation. In return, Libya had to make severe concessions, and there is a similar effort now on the table to save the Assad regime. As far as the Gulf is concerned, however, there is no alternative to the present regime in Damascus except possibly the establishment of a radical Islamist state along the lines of Hamas. This is something the GCC wants to avoid.

What is particularly noticeable is that the GCC states have not restricted their involvement to merely feeding Lebanon or Syria empty promises, but that their words have been followed by commendable actions. Immediate assistance was provided to Lebanon during and after the July war which included millions of dollars of recon-

struction and assistance funds from all of the GCC states. In order to support the Lebanese currency, Kuwait deposited \$500 million in Lebanon's central bank while Saudi Arabia did the same with a \$1 billion deposit. Saudi Arabia has also given \$10 million to the Palestinian refugees in the Nahr al-Bared and Beddawi refugee camps after the recent conflict between the Fatah al-Islam and the Lebanese army. The United Arab Emirates, apart from its aid of \$20 million to the UN Program for the relief of Lebanon and \$300 million soft loan to help revive the Lebanese economy, successfully cleared 28 villages of landmines and cluster bombs a result of the war in Southern Lebanon. Meanwhile, Qatar sent over 200 soldiers on a mission to the UN Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in order to monitor the cessation of hostilities as mandated by UNSCR 1701.

Regarding Syria, there have been extensive discussions in terms of developing a more positive trade and economic relationship with the GCC. With Syria indicating its interest in terms of opening up its economy and engaging in liberalization efforts, the past several years have seen considerable change occurring in the Syrian economy including a commitment to attracting investments, promoting growth and creating job opportunities. The GCC countries, with Saudi Arabia in the lead, have responded by suggesting that they would be willing to consider a free trade zone agreement (FTA) as a means to facilitate trade movements between the two sides. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, during his meeting with GCC's Secretary-General Abdul Rahman al-Attiyah on May 2, 2007, underscored the importance of establishing such a zone and argued that such an agreement would "facilitate the movement of consumer goods

between Syria and the GCC member states through the reduction or elimination of tariffs and would permit the bilateral practice of insurance, communication and transportation services.² With liberalization fully in the picture and FTAs on the move, Syria's economy is expected to gain some concrete benefits from such a move.

Underlying the GCC approach is the firm belief that only regional cooperation will foster wider peace and stability. In that context, the objective of the GCC states is to help rebuild and stabilize Lebanon while at the same time form a positive and cooperative relationship with Syria. There is, however, the underlying assumption that Leba-

non's sovereignty must be protected. The GCC states on many occasions, including the annual GCC summit in late 2006, highlighted the importance of Lebanon guarding its sovereignty for a smooth transition towards stability. In the final communiqué of the 27th annual summit, GCC Secretary-General al-Attiyah expressed his concern about Lebanon's intensifying situation and called for unity of the Lebanese people in strengthening the security, stability and prevalence of the law. The GCC states have strongly encouraged the Lebanese presidential election scheduled to take place in November 2007, given the common belief that a democratically elected government is essential to Lebanon's sovereignty.

With the upcoming election in Lebanon aimed at improving the status quo and Syria's cooperation with Arab states and the international community required for easing tensions, the role of the six Gulf States might be crucial in determining success and failure. Instead of their usual complacent role, the GCC have tried to get ahead of developments in the Levant and provide a framework for the future direction of events. This is a positive development and should be encouraged further.

Dr. Christian Koch is Director of International Studies at the Gulf Research Center. Seada Kassie completed an internship at the GRC and is studying International Relations at the American University of Sharjah.

Smoke billows from the besieged Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr al-Bared in July 2007 following fighting between Lebanese government troops and Fatah al-Islam militants



2 Zawya Middle East Business News and Company Directory, "Syria: Bridging the Gulf," July 2, 2007.

Gulf Policy under Gordon Brown

Florian Weisweiler

Great Britain's Labour Prime Minister, wrote Dean Acheson in 1950 in a reference to Clement Attlee, evinced "all the passion of a woodchuck chewing a carrot." When Gordon Brown became the 52nd British Prime Minister in succession to Tony Blair, more things were unknown about him than known. The perception by the general British public is that Mr. Brown is very good with money and that during his time as Chancellor, the British economy has performed better than ever before. At the same time, he is also perceived as being a dour, boring, inscrutable and uncharismatic Scot – exactly the opposite of his predecessor who was a "sunny boy kind of guy" who came across well in the media and who charmed voters to elect him three times. With his takeover of the office of the Prime Minister, Mr. Brown is now charged with healing the wounds over Iraq and restoring public faith in the Labour Government in order to win a fourth consecutive term. The question therefore is who is this son of a Church of Scotland minister and Edinburgh University graduate, what does he stand for in terms of a foreign policy agenda and what in particular does this mean for the Gulf region?

An Uncertain Foreign Policy Direction

Brown has been careful not to suggest that there will be any U-turns in the key areas of Blair's social policy, or any radical breakaway from New Labour. Domestically, his big challenges, as outlined during his Labour leadership campaign, include constitutional reform (a US-style written constitution vs. a looser bill of rights), housing (house

planning restrictions are likely to be relaxed) and health services (he intends to make the NHS his "immediate priority").

Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown (seen here on a visit to Iraq) has pledged to learn the lessons of the past with regard to British Iraq policy



Yet, one of the most speculated about topics is the foreign policy Britain will pursue under the new leadership. Despite recent speeches on Britishness, national security and climate change, Gordon Brown's views about the wider global policy agenda and whether they will differ greatly from those of Tony Blair, are not yet clear. As a senior member of Blair's government throughout its 10-year tenure, Brown shared responsibility for everything that Tony Blair did - the good as well as the not-so-good. Central to Blair's foreign policy was his close friendship with the American President and his unconditional support of American actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Given the situation Brown inherits in Iraq and the Middle East, it is there that he will face the most urgent policy changes and the steepest learning curve. His main foreign policy challenges are Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and the Anglo-American relations. Israel and Palestine have been left in Blair's

care in his new role as envoy for the Middle East Quartet, and Europe (the European constitution) is a

topic. Brown will take his time with. But for the former Chancellor to gain legitimacy, he must offer something, domestically and abroad, but he can only do that by distinguishing himself from the Blair legacy in radical and clearly perceptible ways.

While in general terms, Gordon Brown is something of an unknown quantity as far as foreign policy is concerned, he can probably be described as an Atlanticist and his pro-American sympathies should not be underestimated. At the same time, he will not be as close to President Bush as Tony Blair was. His European instincts incline towards the practical but stop short of being integrationist. And while he has quietly supported all the interventions carried out by the Blair-led government - Iraq, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, and Afghanistan - the question remains as to how far he would undertake such interventions himself.

Iraq as the Immediate Dilemma

Gordon Brown fully backed Tony Blair's decision to go to war in Iraq and, as finance minister, provided the necessary funding, signing the checks when required. The general consensus is that Brown remains committed to the war but in a speech in May he indicated



that he “would learn the lessons” from the mistakes made so far. It is believed that the Prime Minister will remain supportive of American policies but he has also said that he wants a more “solid” rather than “slavish” relationship with Washington. Basically, Britain and the US are desperate to stabilize Iraq before they contemplate troop withdrawal, so Brown's options seem limited for the time being. However, although he may have to follow the American lead for a little while longer, with disenchantment over Iraq at home and a possible general election as early as 2009, Brown will certainly be keen to distance himself as much as possible from the image of “Bush's poodle” that his predecessor suffered from. In fact, a leading English newspaper revealed that the US President is expecting a U-turn from Gordon Brown regarding Iraq within the first 100 days of his Premiership. A close ally of Brown, former deputy leader of the Commons Nick Griffiths, has for example been

quoted as saying that “we should get out of Iraq as soon as is practicable. We should consult the Iraqi government - but they cannot have a veto. This cannot be delayed.”

While it could be argued that Brown has not really had the time yet to sit down and think about all the policies he wants to pursue, he certainly did have time to think about who should be in his cabinet: the appointment of Foreign Office minister Lord Malloch Brown, a war critic, was deliberate. And the minister wasted no time in steering up controversy when, during an interview with the Daily Telegraph, Lord Brown said that “the UK and the United States would no longer be ‘joined at the hip’ on foreign policy”. Although this may indicate a cooling of US-UK relations, it is not yet clear whether or not this is the official policy of the government especially after new Foreign Secretary David Miliband insisted only a day later that the US will continue to be the UK's “single most important bilateral partner in the world.”

“Our commitment to work with the American government in general, and the Bush administration in particular, is resolute,” Mr. Miliband told the BBC. Yet, fact remains that even David Miliband was a critic of the decision to invade Iraq. And while there are no serious policy shifts expected as a result, the choices of people more critical of the British approach to Iraq suggests at least a degree of alternative thinking that might expand British policy options. This is particularly the case as the debate about the withdrawal of troops, especially in Washington, intensifies.

Iran

The negative experience of Iraq and Afghanistan is likely to shape Brown's attitude toward Iran, and there it is possible to imagine him taking a new approach. While Blair has refused to rule out military action, it is almost

inconceivable that a Brown government would support such action, not least because of his greater sensitivity to the economic implications of such a conflict. It is thought that Brown may move closer to the Europeans in pushing for more dialogue with Iran, and especially over Iraq. This also would involve engaging Syria diplomatically to a greater extent. Generally speaking, Brown can be expected to continue supporting UN sanctions against Iran over its nuclear activities. Asked recently if he would rule out a military attack on Iran he replied: “We want a peaceful settlement to the Iran issue.” This is in line with current British government policy, which emphasizes a multilateral approach but does not rule out military action. However, one of Brown's closest political allies, the former foreign secretary Jack Straw, has stated: “I don't happen to believe that military action has a role to play in any event. We could not justify it.” As such, support by Brown for military action is hard to envisage.

In a news conference in Washington on 12 July, President Bush drew together, in one prepared sentence, the developing, and much contested, US accusations against Iran: “The same regime in Iran that is pursuing nuclear weapons and threatening to wipe Israel off the map is also providing sophisticated IEDs [improvised explosive devices] to extremists in Iraq who are using them to kill American soldiers.” Would Britain under Gordon Brown support military action against Iran? According to British analysts, it is unlikely that Britain would join such action. It is not inconceivable that it would support it, but only as a very, very last resort, with incontestable evidence that Iran's nuclear weapon ambitions were real.

Afghanistan

As British policy in Iraq moves towards an endgame, British military commit-

ments in the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan are increasing and troop numbers are expected to reach nearly 8,000 later this year. On Afghanistan, Brown's options appear very limited in the face of an escalating conflict and a resurgent Taliban. In fact, Brown might want to couple any further withdrawal from Iraq with another gesture of support in Afghanistan. He might, for example, boost the British presence on the ground there to allay any fears in Washington that Britain is going soft in the "war on terror." Overall, Brown is not expected to change this commitment and he has taken a tough stand in the fight against al-Qaeda, arguing that it must not be allowed to regroup in Afghanistan. With the mounting attacks, however, Afghanistan could become a growing problem for him, in particular in debates within NATO about contribution from other allies.

The Broader Middle East

Gordon Brown has not shown as much interest in Israel/Palestine issues as Tony Blair has. Britain therefore is not expected to play a major role under a Brown premiership, which will probably recognize the limited influence that any single European country can exert. The appointment of Simon McDonald, a former British ambassador to Israel, as his foreign policy adviser has delighted the Israelis, who see McDonald as a "friend of Israel". One of Brown's main areas of interest could be in economic development for the Palestinians. On a visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories in 2005, he got Israeli and Palestinian economic ministers together for the first time in many years.

One question is whether the appointment of Brown's predecessor as Middle East peace envoy could result in tensions. Blair replaces former World Bank president James Wolfensohn, who resigned in April of last year in

frustration at the difficulty of making progress on a problem that has defied diplomacy for nearly 60 years. Diplomats say that the Quartet envoy's role is largely focused on improving Palestinian governance and does not involve diplomatic negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Brown is said to be deeply unhappy with the appointment. He wants to put a particular focus on boosting reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinians by, unsurprisingly, economic means. Blair's appointment is certain to distract attention from this. More realistically, Brown will model his approach to Israeli-Palestinian problems on that adopted by the Middle East Quartet. This is likely to mean shoring up support for Fatah, consolidating the situation in the West Bank and a reluctance to negotiate with Hamas in Gaza.

Anglo-American Relations

The "special relationship" is still likely to be Brown's most important political alliance. The Scot regularly enjoys holidays at Cape Cod and has close links with US Democrats. Brown is certainly not personally anti-American and his will not be an anti-American government. But Iraq is not the only foreign policy issue Brown may wish to distance himself from. Guantanamo, the practice of extraordinary rendition and US hostility towards the UN are others. Early on in his Premiership, there may be small but symbolic statements on these issues. One could be International Development Secretary Douglas Alexander's speech against unilateralism where he called for an "internationalist approach" to global problems. Some analysts considered those remarks as evidence of Labour distancing itself from the US. At the same time, the US-UK relationship would become closer if a Democrat becomes President in 2008.

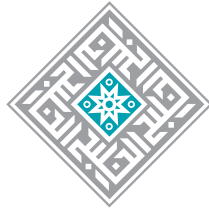
Since Blair's announcement of his resignation and Brown's bid for leadership,

the Labour Party has gained a bounce in the polls, gaining three points after months of polls showing them trailing behind the opposition Conservative Party. Gordon Brown is still in the early stages of his Premiership and he has already had major issues to deal with such as the three attempted terror attacks in London and Glasgow. It is therefore understandable that he himself probably does not know quite yet what he is going to do about all the issues and problems his predecessor left him with. It is widely accepted that Brown's passion in foreign policy is for development.

His statements about the wider world indicate a heavily economic view of foreign policy. In January, he called universal education and addressing global warming the twin tracks of his foreign policy. The Treasury says that he increased foreign aid by 140% in his decade as Chancellor. He has spoken of unemployment and deprivation as among the main sources of violence in Iraq. In some respects, again, Brown is not so different from his predecessor, who spoke passionately about global warming, and who helped to push for big aid increases, especially for Africa, from the G8 group of industrialized countries.

But however much he believes in such economic determinism, day-to-day events are likely to become a greater preoccupation. Brown is most unlikely to have the luxury of picking and choosing the events that will define his Premiership. For a man who has variously been described as a "control freak" and a "Stalinist" because of his desire to keep tight control over the development of policy, the transition from long-term planner of the economy to manager of crises may be the toughest part of the new job.

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A Stable Iraq Needs a Strong National Army

Abdulaziz Sager

In cases of military intervention in politics, the military establishment in third world countries has played two kinds of roles. The first was the negative role of delaying the natural process of gradual democratization by resorting to the actual use of, or threat of using force, to control political power. It was this practice that opened the door for coup d'etats and counter coups by aspiring army officers.

The second role was more positive. In cases where the failure of politicians and the corruption of the ruling elite had led to widespread chaos and political instability, putting the state on the brink of civil war, the military acted as a protector of the integrity of the state by serving as an institution not consumed by internal power struggles and fragmentation. The military would, as a result, step in to prevent further instability and instead ensure the continued well-being of its people. Cases in point include Turkey and Pakistan, and more recently Mauritania. In these and in other instances, the military took the role of protecting democracy, safeguarding the constitution and the basic civil rights against violations by the ruling elites.

In most cases, the military establishment in the developing world is a microcosm of the national identity of the nation in question. It is the melting pot for all forms of sub-national affiliations. It is also characterized by discipline and better organization in comparison with other state

institutions, a trait which makes the military more capable of decisive intervention at the right moment. In times of crisis, its role has been quite effective in consolidating the sense of national belonging and reducing the side-effects of emergencies.

At the same time, a positive role during a crisis can only be played by a strong national military establishment, one which is capable of taking proactive measures to save the nation from the horrible consequences of civil war and fragmentation. It is this positive role that is necessary in the case of the current quagmire facing the Iraqi people. Iraq is a country on the verge

of a complete breakdown. After four years of internal power struggles and illegal occupation, the question continues to linger whether the Iraqi state will remain intact or possibly wither away. During this period, Iraq has experienced the horrendous effects of sectarian violence, daily humiliation of average Iraqi citizens by occupation forces, mass killing of innocent Iraqi civilians by terrorist groups, warring militias and criminal gangs. All of these developments have led to the virtual collapse of the Iraqi state.

One fundamental cause for the current situation inside Iraq is the failure of the politicians to deliver on both

Iraqi police recruits train at a military camp in the northern Kurdish city of Sulaymaniyah, April 2007



their mandate and their promises. Instead of opening the way for a political solution to the country's troubles, their inaction has allowed sectarian divisions to deepen, institutionalized widespread corruption and left the state's institutions in a shambles. The result is that partisan and sectarian allegiances are deepening and the patriotic sense of belonging is waning. Flowery promises of democracy and economic well-being are being mocked as fantasies in the midst of this bloodshed, human rights violations and forced displacement of population groups. Iraqi politicians had the chance to prove their ability to rule the country in an effective manner but they have failed.

Iraq today needs a strong military establishment to rid the average citizen of the humiliation by the occupation forces. But more importantly, Iraq requires a strong national military to provide a viable alternative for the fail-

ures and malpractices of the political leadership. Here, it should be noted that the Iraqi army was established by Great Britain in January 1921, seven months before the accession of the royal family in Iraq, and that the first command and staff college in the Arab world was established by the Iraqi army in the 1940s. The current problem is that while the occupation authorities disbanded the reputable Iraqi army which paved the way for the current malaise, various groups now have a vested interest in maintaining the present situation. They include the ruling elite who lack the necessary legitimacy, and the armed militias of various groups, which could exist only in the absence of a strong national army, and terrorist groups, which came into existence in the vacuum of a national army. Even foreign powers have an agenda to prevent a strong national army from existing as this would restrict their influence in the domestic affairs of the country. In

all these instances, the biggest losers are the people of Iraq.

One of the major challenges for Iraq today is that the process of rebuilding the military establishment of the nation is being prevented by the continuous political rivalries between opposing factions, the ever-growing influence of armed militias, raging sectarian violence and regional powers that do not want to see a strong national Iraqi army protecting the destiny of the country. This is in addition to the lack of enthusiasm in the US administration to support the development of such a strong national military in Iraq. Meanwhile, the Iraqi government, which is the one responsible for rebuilding the national army, is crippled by its own weaknesses. As a result, its efforts at building a strong national military can only be characterized as weak and ineffective. In fact, the "new" Iraqi army is being criticized on the grounds of bearing sectarian allegiances and thus, far from being the truly patriotic national structure that is necessary. Further, its role in keeping law and order has been futile.

In the absence of a strong national army in Iraq, the situation in the country will remain open to all possible scenarios, chief among them the fragmentation and ultimate breakdown of the Iraqi state. If this were to occur, the consensus is that it would have catastrophic results not only for Iraq but for the region as a whole. So, the question that begs for an answer is: Who but a strong national army could enforce law and order, bring stability, assist in nation building, re-establish a powerful Iraqi state and save the country from the current tragedy?

Abdulaziz Sager is Chairman of the Gulf Research Center.



Abu Dhabi 'Green City' Initiative: A Step in the Right Direction

Dr. Mohamed A. Raouf

"The world remains captive to the old idea that we face a choice between economic growth and conservation. In fact, growth cannot be sustained without conservation."

Kofi Annan (Dubai, Feb 6, 2006)

As part of a new vision, the Masdar Company owned by Abu Dhabi Government announced in May 2007 its intention to build a new carbon free community as a unique integrated "Green community." This "Green" energy and technology campus will offer a sustainable living environment and state-of-the-art office and research facilities depending on green construction, desalination, bio fuels, sustainable transport, water recycling, waste water management, solar cooling, sustainable irrigation, and other renewable aspects.

Masdar also intends to launch and operate a Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project development company in the Middle East and North Africa in order to operate and maintain carbon generating assets, manage a sizable carbon portfolio as well as develop a new class of carbon assets in the post-Kyoto era (beyond 2012). The unit will be particularly focused on advancing CO₂ capture and storage (CCS) for enhanced oil recovery.

There is no doubt that Abu Dhabi took a bold and historic decision to embrace renewable and sustainable energy technologies. As the first major hydrocarbon producer to take such a step, it has established

its leadership position by launching the above-mentioned Masdar Initiative which will serve as a global cooperative platform for open engagement in the search for solutions to some of mankind's most pressing issues: energy security, climate change and truly sustainable human development.

The Masdar Initiative is a multi-billion dollar comprehensive economic development program designed to leverage Abu Dhabi's considerable financial resources and energy expertise into innovative solutions for cleaner, more sustainable energy production and resource conservation. One key objective of Masdar is to position Abu Dhabi as a world-class research and development hub for clean energy technologies. A related objective is to drive the commercialization and adoption of these and other technologies in sustainable energy, carbon management and water utilization.

Although difficult to precisely measure, the following direct results are expected from the project by 2015:

- ▶ 10,000 new high-quality jobs in the clean energy and sustainable technologies sector in Abu Dhabi
- ▶ 800 full-time Masters and Ph.D. students at the Masdar Institute specializing in clean energy and sustainable technologies
- ▶ A multibillion-dollar expansion of the Abu Dhabi non-oil economy

- ▶ The creation of a world-class scientific and research hub which is currently non-existent in the Gulf region; such a hub can become the core of other knowledge-based activities and industries in addition to clean energy.

As part of the overall project, there also is the Masdar Clean Tech Fund, a \$250 million diversified venture capital investment vehicle that seeks to build a portfolio of clean technology funds and joint venture investments. Furthermore, there are plans to hold the first World Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi in 2008.

The Masdar Green City initiative will help cut carbon emissions



The approach suggested by Masdar certainly has important benefits. Beginning with a vision of a city whereby the air is not clogged with carbon and where public transport as well as thousands of homes depend on electricity derived from the sun's rays, the idea is to support green buildings that are known to increase employee productivity by 6 to 26%, increase their health and morale, and reduce absenteeism of employees by 15%. Studies reveal that buildings with a good overall environmental quality can reduce costs in the long-term, and reduce the rate of respiratory disease, allergy and asthma. Many current building materials emit toxic gases, which can have a detrimental impact on the occupant's health and productivity.

Practitioners of green buildings often seek to achieve not only ecological



but aesthetic harmony between a structure and its surrounding natural and built environment. The appearance and style of sustainable homes and buildings can as a result be nearly indistinguishable from their less sustainable counterparts.

Some have characterized climate change as a remote global problem that is beyond the capacity – and responsibility – of local governments to solve. But when one considers what makes the Gulf region so unique, one begins to realize and understand that global climate change is in fact a profoundly local issue – both in terms of cause and effect. It is within the communities and cities themselves that cars are driven and the power that generates global warming pollution is generated. It is therefore an individual choice about energy supply and use, transportation, solid waste, and land use that determines the future trajectory of greenhouse gas emissions.

There is no doubt that the announcement of Masdar and the accompanying initiative is a step in the right direction. The most important direct benefit is the ability to help to cut emissions and therefore set an example for others to follow. This will raise awareness and hopefully cause people to follow up with similar initiatives.

At the same time, one has to be realistic about expectations. Despite the lofty goals that have been announced, one has to understand that it is very difficult, scientifically and practically, to reach a carbon-free (zero carbon emissions) community. Thus, it is still very early to judge to what level carbon emissions can and will be reduced. In this context, it will be necessary for Masdar to clarify for the public the methods and ways through which they will attempt to

offset carbon emissions. In addition, the new community will be a fenced community. Such fencing has of course deficiencies from the ecological point of view as it is an artificial barrier obstructing the natural movements of biodiversity species within the area. There could also be social consequences as some might consider this a private area with a lavish lifestyle that in turn results in envy between people living inside and outside the community fence. Finally, the new community will undoubtedly have some negative environmental impacts which will need to be identified, clarified and mitigated. As has always been the case in the past, there is no development without negative or positive impacts and ultimately success is determined by the ability to minimize or eliminate the negative consequences and maximize the positive ones. At the outset, it might be helpful to conduct a willingness to pay study in order to identify how much additional costs people would be willing to absorb in order to live in such a community.

Mahatma Gandhi once said: “Be the change you want to see in the world.” The above-mentioned pilot project can begin to translate in a practical way the Abu Dhabi government's policies toward building a diversified economy on sustainability principles. In addition, it also shows to the rest of the world what can be done locally in the UAE in order to combat climate change alongside raising the profile of the country as a responsible member of the international community, and that may urge other big polluters and carbon emitters to take similar steps.

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