



The recent discussion about the Iranian nuclear program and the international criticism of Iran's belligerent stand on its right to nuclear enrichment was the backdrop to visits by GCC state officials to Tehran in early 2006. The aim was to foster a direct dialogue with the Iranian leadership aiming to develop closer regional security cooperation and to prevent a looming international crisis. One step towards such a security framework was taken in December 2004 and May 2005 when the GRC introduced a blueprint for a Weapon of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Gulf to regional delegates as well as representatives from the EU, NATO, IAEA and Gulf states. In May 2006, the third workshop was successfully concluded in collaboration with the UK based institute VERTIC and attended by official delegates from all nine Gulf states.

Other important security concerns tackled in this third issue of the Security Bulletin are the current and recent geo-strategic trends in the Gulf region. Iran's increasing interventionist policies in Iraq is undermining the current Iraqi government and has potential to cause long-term instability in the region. At the same time, US policies towards the Middle East and the Gulf are increasingly destabilizing the situation, particularly as a result of the disastrous post invasion and US occupation period in Iraq. Both these developments are analyzed in depth in this issue.

It is evident that since the attacks of September 11 2001, US policies in the region have negatively affected US- relations with the Gulf States. As a result, the Gulf countries have started to look for new potential alliances in the East and have emphasized closer economic, political and security cooperation with Russia and China. Iran took a lead role in propelling this geo-strategic trend in April 2006, entering discussions about official membership status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to which it already has observer status. In the long term, alliances between the Gulf States and the East, currently defined as a predominantly trade relationship, may also shape the political and strategic landscape in the region and could gradually weaken US and EU influence.

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## Iran's Interventionist Policy in Iraq

*Dr. Mustafa Alani*

During the last two years, observers of the Middle East political scene have noticed a remarkable increase in the frequency and intensity of US, British and Arab official statements condemning what they describe as the extensive and serious Iranian intervention and meddling in Iraqi internal affairs. There is no doubt that such statements have some basis of truth, evident in the chaotic situation prevailing in Iraq since the US invasion and the downfall of the Iraqi Ba'athist regime. Many analysts believe that Iranian claims of not interfering in Iraqi internal affairs are blatantly false as there is evidence indicating the extent of their interventionist policy particularly visible in certain parts of the Shii areas of southern Iraq.

Iranian interventionist policy in Iraq has a long history. Establishing Iranian influence in Iraq was and for the foreseeable future will continue to be a prime component of Iranian regional strategy. This assumption seems to be true regardless of the nature of the Iranian political regime – demonstrated by the fact that it applied in both the time

“**The history of the two nations has been characterized by a near permanent state of rivalry and never ending competition and political-military conflict.**”

of the Shah as well as during the Ayatollah era. The Iranian objective to influence developments in Iraq is driven and motivated by a number of strategic factors as well as cultural and religious interests. The history of the two nations has been characterized by a near permanent state of rivalry and never ending competition and political-military conflict.

In terms of the cultural-religious and ethnic dimensions, Iraq represents the outer perimeter and the final frontiers of the Arab nation and Arab culture confronting the Persian nation and the Persian culture. Indeed from a cultural, religious and ethnic dimension, Iraq represents a perfect example and field of Arab-Persian confrontation. Iraq also represents the point where Sunni and Shi'i converge as well as confront each other. Therefore Iraq-Iran rivalry always had wider and extensive Arab national and historical dimensions, besides

the narrow local – Iraqi national ones.

In terms of strategic considerations, Iraq always represented the power that provided the counter balance to Iran and effectively fulfilled the task of Arab containment of Iran. A Sunni-led Iraq has acted as the main instrument for the containment of Shi'i influence beyond the sect's Iraq-Iran heartland.

In the Gulf region, as well as in the wider Middle East, the balance of power between Iraq and Iran was seen as a major factor in the maintenance of regional stability and an instrument of check and balance. Throughout history, each state has at one period or another, tried to alter this delicate balance that governed their bilateral relations and take advantage of weaknesses and difficulties faced by the other party. Indeed the two neighboring states' bilateral relations

“**...the two neighboring states' bilateral relations have been governed by deep distrust and antagonism which has resulted in a number of direct, indirect, or proxy confrontations or actual wars.**”

have been governed by deep distrust and antagonism which has resulted in a number of direct, indirect, or proxy confrontations or actual wars.

The present Iranian plan of intervention in Iraq has its roots in the Iranian government's decision to lend full support, overt and covert, to Iraqi Shii opposition groups shortly after the success of the Iranian revolution in 1979. The subsequent adoption of a plan to help the pro-Iranian Shii religious and political groups based inside Iraq, or operating from the Iranian territories as well as certain groups operating from Damascus - Iran's strategic ally in the region, or even from certain European capitals to work to topple the Iraq Ba'athist regime and seize power. But after more than 20 years of operation, and despite the unlimited Iranian and Syrian political, financial and military support and propaganda backing none of all these Iraqi Shi'i groups proved able to generate any serious threat to the Ba'athist regime in Iraq.

During the eight years of the Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988) the Iranian leadership mobilized the pro-Iran, mainly Iraqi Shii, opposition parties, namely the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and the Islamic Dawa Party, to support Iran's military efforts in the hope of achieving victory in the war. These two parties participated in providing Iran with vital intelligence information from inside Iraq, besides the participation of the cadres of the two parties in Iran's military operations along the border and actually carrying out a number of attacks against targets inside Iraq. The Baáthist regime in Iraq managed to prevent Iranian plans for interfering in Iraqi internal affairs. Indeed until the US invasion of Iraq in the autumn of 2003, Iranian strategy to intervene in Iraq proved a complete failure.

By mid 2002, the balance began to tip in Iran's favor with the escalation of the Iraq – US confrontation. The pragmatic Iranian leadership was able to judge accurately the seriousness of the post 9/11 Iraqi-US confrontation, and in particular the seriousness of President Bush's determination to remove the Baáthist regime in Iraq from power at any price and by any means. Thus, while the American administration was fully occupied with the task of planning to topple the Iraqi regime, the Iranian leadership was also occupied with the task of planning to take full advantage from any such development when it materialized and to secure major benefits from the American adventure and to turn this development into a strategic gain for Iran. This practical approach became evident in a number of high level decisions taken by the Iranian leadership during 2002-2003 and we can refer to two major steps in this context:

1) Against all the declared ideological and political principles of the Iranian revolution and its proclaimed enmity toward the US and its polices, the Iranian leadership, as practical interest dictated and required, encouraged its allies, the main Iraq Shii opposition parties, to move closer to US, in particular, during the crucial few months that preceded the US invasion when the US was busy preparing for post-invasion political arrangements. Indeed from mid-2002 to the time of the invasion Iraqi Ayatollahs and prominent Shiif political and religious figures frequently visited Washington or met with high-ranking US Administration officials publicly and openly. This unusual and ideologically contradictory alliance between the Iraqi Ayatollahs and the US Administration was formulated with full approval from Tehran's religious and political leadership, endorsing the fact that in Iranian political and strategic decision-making process, strategic interests outweigh ideological commitments or religious principles or taboos. In fact the roots of this "realpolitik " attitude were evident in the practices of the Iranian Ayatollah's policies

long before the Iraqi crisis, when the Islamic government of Iran decided to purchase American made arms from Israel during the Iraq- Iran war and agreed to a direct supply route for this arms deal from Israel, which what later became known as the Iran-Contra scandal.

2 ) As part of the state's preparation to take full advantage of the anticipated developments in the Iraqi-US confrontation and the growing possibility of the end of the Iraqi regime, on August 2002, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution ordered the formation of a Special Committee on Iraq composed of all concerned divisions within the Iranian power structure. The aim of the Committee was to monitor the development of the crisis as well as formulate Iran's strategy and to promote Iranian interests in post-Saddam Iraq. The committee was composed of representatives from defense, intelligence, political, diplomatic, and religious institutions of the state.

Of particular note among all of the institutions was the command of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Forces (RGF) and in particular the Guards intelligence arm under the name of Al –Quds organization which was created shortly after the success of the Iranian revolution to deal with the revolution's support and promotion of the principles of "External Jihad." The RGF's Al-Quds was in charge of all intelligence activities of the "Islamic Revolution" outside the borders of Iran, while the official "Ministry of Intelligence" was concerned with "state" intelligence activities. Thus this particular part of the RGF was responsible for most, if not all,

**“ ...at the time of US invasion of Iraq, Iranian intelligence, military, political, and religious institutions were well placed to serve the strategic objectives of the state. ”**

Iranian activities related to the "Iraqi theater of operation", including the sponsorship and control of the pro-Iran Iraqi Shii opposition groups and a direct and crucial control of these groups' intelligence and armed wings and militias forces.

Thus, at the time of US invasion of Iraq, Iranian intelligence, military, political, and religious institutions were well placed to serve the strategic objectives of the state which could be summarized as follows:

1) To prevent a US success in Iraq, that could undermine the stability and security of Iran at a later stage, and threaten the survival of the Islamic regime in Iran.

2) To establish a viable, sustainable Iranian influence within “new Iraq” that would serve Iran’s long term strategic interests in the region and beyond.

3) To prevent the emergence of a “strong Iraq” that could keep up its traditional challenge to Iran, or could revive the traditional balance of power between the two states and the practice of containment. Thus Iranian interests could be well served by the policy aim to promote a “new Iraq” under Shii control, a decentralized, deeply divided and fragmented state on sectarian and ethnic lines, a demilitarized state or one that is weak in military capability, a state and society that is less committed and detached from Arab nationalist causes.

The Iranian strategic formula in Iraq is very simple and well defined:

A failed US + A weak, fragmented Iraq: Equals a strong and influential Iran.

The present state and nature of Iranian influence in Iraq is remarkable. The structure of the Iranian network inside Iraq seems to have links to all main levels of the centers of power in the “new Iraq”. It is a macro map with multiple connections to most of the state’s institutions and to the influential non-state actors in the “new Iraq”.

First, the Iranian intelligence apparatus maintained strong links and influence over the militia forces and intelligence arm of the Iraqi Shii parties now in power. At the same time the Iranian intelligence community established a direct physical presence inside Iraq, and an overt and covert presence, in particular throughout the Shii heartland in southern Iraq and in the Shii’s holy cities, as well as in certain parts of the capital, Baghdad.

Secondly, the Iranian religious and political leadership had strong links and influence over the new Iraqi Shii political leadership. Such links and influence were rooted in the traditional Iranian sponsorship of Iraqi Shii political opposition groups since the 1980s, and the fact that many of these groups were initially established and operating inside Iran until the downfall of the Iraqi Baáthist regime in April 2003.

Thirdly, the Iranian religious leadership maintained strong links to the Iraqi Shii religious leaderships, as the two centers of Shii spiritual authority - Najif and Qum – are now closer than ever. Both leaderships perceive the situation with common interest - a state of affairs that required a high level of coordination between the two religious centers which both have huge moral and practical leverage over Iraq state’s political and security leaderships.

**“ ...despite the fact that US forces have occupied the country, in terms of control and influence, the Iranian leadership has far more influence and control over developments in post-Saddam Iraq than the current occupiers. ”**

In conclusion Iranian interventionist policy in Iraq has already attained a significant part of the state’s objectives in Iraq. Indeed despite the fact that US forces have occupied the country, in terms of control and influence, the Iranian leadership has far more influence and control over developments in post-Saddam Iraq than the current occupiers.

The situation in Iraq now offers a classic example of a Great Power’s failure and miscalculation. This example reflects on the ground the ironic relationship between the US’s “visible occupation” of Iraq and the Iranian “invisible occupation.” The Iranian success in Iraq has generated huge advantages to the Iranian decision makers and leadership. In fact, the Iranian leadership is now utilizing its advantageous position

**“ The Iranian success in Iraq has generated huge advantages to the Iranian decision makers and leadership. ”**

in Iraq or what can be describe as the “Iraqi card” as an effective instrument in Iran’s conflict with the US and the West over the issue of Iran’s controversial nuclear program. The Iranian leadership perceives and is acting on the assumption that the US predicament in Iraq provides a shield that restricts the US and the West’s ability to pressurize or impose hard punishment on Iran.

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## US Quitting Iraq is Not a Strategy

*Nicole Stracke*

The announcement of Italy, Japan and Britain to withdraw their troops from Iraq has reopened the debate in the United States about whether or not the withdrawal of its troops would change the course of the current crisis in Iraq.

American politicians and public are sharply divided on the issue of troop withdrawal. Senator John Kerry, Democrat presidential candidate in 2004, called on the US Senate to support a proposal to start withdrawing troops from Iraq in six months. This was rejected, however, and Senator Hillary Clinton ruled out a quick troop withdrawal, emphasizing the need for “smart US strategy”, though she did not specify what this meant.

Perhaps the real need of the hour is for the US administration to formulate a new ‘smart’ strategy toward the Middle East.

Three years ago, Washington unilaterally opted for military action against Iraq. Now, the Bush administration and the American people must face the consequences of that decision. This means, first of all, not falling for a “cut and run” strategy as suggested by Senator Kerry, just because the situation is becoming tougher for American soldiers and politically inconvenient now.

Remaining in Iraq is among the least damaging of American alternatives. A US withdrawal would signal to the world that Washington has failed in its mission to achieve stability and democracy in Iraq as promised by the administration as part of the Bush “liberty” doctrine formulated in September 2002. Withdrawal would be construed as a public defeat for the US and will contribute to weakening its influence in the

“**Withdrawal would be construed as a public defeat for the US and will contribute to weakening its influence in the region.**”

region. Given the current critical situation in the Gulf – the “war against terrorism” and the crisis over Iran’s nuclear program in particular – it is not advisable for the US to appear feeble.

The worldwide criticism of American conduct in Abu Ghraib and at Guantanamo has made it obvious that the US has lost its credibility as the “guardian” of human rights and

democratic values. But the US has not lost its credibility as a power broker, as well as military and security guarantor in

“**...the US has not lost its credibility as a power broker, as well as military and security guarantor in the region.**”

the region. This is reinforced in Iran repeatedly asking for direct talks with the US, as well as in the continuing bilateral military cooperation between the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and the US.

A US withdrawal at this point would also damage the US’ image of being capable to secure and defend its Middle Eastern allies. That could play into the hands of the American opponents worldwide, particularly Iran and strengthen Tehran’s stand on nuclear enrichment. At the same time, a US withdrawal would also contribute to an increasing Iranian role in Iraq. Iran is already supporting a number of groups in Iraq, notably the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution (SCIRI), the Islamic Dawa Party and Moqtada al-Sadr’s Mehdi Army, and using them to enhance its influence. If the Americans were to leave, the field would be open for Iranian hardliners to assist pro-Iranian parties and militias to shape political developments in Iraq through state institutions and military support.

A US withdrawal from Iraq would also leave the new Iraqi government under Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki without protection. Currently, the American forces form a buffer between the radical militia groups and the government. An American withdrawal would create a power vacuum that could be exploited by radical Sunni militias such as the Mohammad or Mujahedin armies which are aiming to

“**A US withdrawal at this point would increase the possibility of a sectarian strife between the radical Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish militias.**”

topple the current Iraqi government. Furthermore, the Iraqi security institutions are fragile. The Iraqi intelligence is weak

and lacks manpower; the military and police are politicized, fragmented, demoralized and partly corrupt. The military and police are also so deeply involved in the political struggle and are unable to enforce law and order on their own. A US withdrawal at this point would increase the possibility of a sectarian strife between the radical Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish militias.

Given these factors, the US government does not have any other option, but stay in Iraq, find a solution and revise its policy towards the Middle East. The Bush doctrine, which is the official guideline for the US policy in Iraq and aims to spread democracy and US hegemony in the region, needs revision. So far, the ambitious vision of the US administration to bring stability through democracy to Iraq has failed, and any other US initiative in the near future will meet with resistance in the region. What next then? The US needs to be flexible, change its current course and focus more on

***The US needs to be flexible, change its current course and focus more on security and stabilization rather than democratization.***

security and stabilization rather than democratization. The US assumption that democracy would lead to stability in the country does not hold well in the case of Iraq. In the long term, however, better security conditions may lead to stability and create an environment where the Iraqi people could practice self governance and also begin to develop a 'democratic' political culture. Thus, security is the key and

***Security is the key and the main prerequisite for any further development towards democratization.***

the main prerequisite for any further development towards democratization –albeit defined by Iraqis, not the Americans. But, in order to attain security and prevent a civil war, the country needs to have strong centralized government institutions, with a strong intelligence network, as well as credible army and police force.

A small but first step in the right direction has been achieved by electing an Iraqi government. The next and simultaneous step should be to stabilize the Iraqi security forces, depoliticize the Iraqi military and police, and restructure the Iraqi intelligence service under its director

general Muhammad Al-Shahwani. Daily killings, bombings and suicide attacks, and dysfunctional institutions prove that the US is incapable of stabilizing the situation on its own. Hence, the US should internationalize the drive to achieve stability by encouraging partnership with others, such as the EU or Russia in the process of rebuilding the Iraqi armed forces. Several EU states, among them Germany, have already heeded the Iraqi government's request last year to

***...the US has to change its current course if it does not want the Iraqi mission to end in an Iraqi 'trauma'.***

cooperate by providing training for high-ranking Iraqi police officials. In several cases, however, the US either interfered or blocked initiatives taken by its allies on hard security issues in order to preserve US domination and control.

In the final analysis, the US has to change its current course if it does not want the Iraqi mission to end in an Iraqi 'trauma'. At this point, the US is neither in a position to withdraw its troops nor solve the crisis alone. If it aims to be a leader on the world stage it should start acting as one - perhaps by starting to listen.

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# Russia's Iran Policy: Constructive Engagement or Strategic Challenge?

Iran's nuclear programs and its putative ambition to build the atom bomb have produced what is generally considered to be at present the most dangerous international crisis. Russia, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, neighbour of Iran on the Caspian Sea, and main supplier of civilian nuclear technology as well as conventional weapons to that country, is regarded as having more influence than any other international actor in Tehran. Its proposal to form a joint venture for uranium enrichment on Russian soil in conjunction with the continuation of the IAEA's inspection regime has been credited as conforming to American and European interests and, if adopted by Tehran, obviating the perceived need of economic sanctions or military intervention to stop a military nuclear program. Iran, however, thus far has rejected that proposal. That raises the question of what comes next in Russia's policy towards Iran. Considering



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developed by former Russian foreign minister and Arab expert Yevgeny Primakov has been the goal of establishing a "multipolar world." Its primary aim is to counterbalance the alleged American quest for global supremacy. In East Asia and South Asia, as part of this quest, China and India have been courted as "strategic partners." In the Near and Middle East, Russia has made efforts in the past to bestow this role on Iran. In May 2004, for instance, President Putin claimed, that "Iran has been our stable partner for a long time," and in October of the same year Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov reiterated this assertion, saying that "Russia can always count on Iran as a strategic partner in the region."

The Kremlin has rejected the American charges of Iran as a "rogue state" and part of an "axis of evil," and it does not share the view of the Islamic republic as the chief sponsor of "international terrorism." It also has played down the

“ **Russia is regarded as having more influence than any other international actor in Tehran.** ”

its adamant refusal in the Security Council to consent to sanctions against the Islamic republic, is it really safe to conclude that Moscow's interests and policies in that region are congruent with those of the West? Or are the Kremlin's perceptions of the Iranian problem quite different from those of the West? Finally, has it reconciled itself to the inevitability of a nuclear armed Iran and begun to adjust itself to that perceived future reality?

“ **The Kremlin has rejected the American charges of Iran as a "rogue state" and part of an "axis of evil," and it does not share the view of the Islamic republic as the chief sponsor of "international terrorism."** ”

significance of Tehran's close relationship with Damascus and support for organizations and movements like Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad.

One of the strands of Russian foreign policy conceptually

“ **One of the strands of Russian foreign policy has been the goal of establishing a "multipolar world." Its primary aim is to counterbalance the alleged American quest for global supremacy.** ”

As late as February 2005, Moscow even publicly dissociated itself from the American and Israeli view that Tehran wanted to become a military nuclear power. After talks with the then Iranian chief nuclear negotiator, Hassan Rohani, President Putin asserted: "The latest steps on the Iranian side have convinced us that Iran does not have the intention to build a nuclear bomb." Russia would, therefore, continue its cooperation with Tehran "in all areas including nuclear energy." That statement was undoubtedly not part of

genuine perception since already, six years earlier, the chief of the Russian Atomic Energy Ministry Yevgeny Adamov had told Reuters: "I am certain that Iran attempts to build nuclear weapons. It would be nonsensical to assume that they didn't want to do that."

This, indeed, is at present the predominant opinion of Russia's foreign and security establishment. For instance, a recent report of Moscow's prestigious Council on Foreign and Defence Policy (CFDP) states that "all of the contributors agreed that Iran strives to have nuclear weapons and that sooner or later it will get them." Their reasoning went as follows: The Iranian elite were convinced that, considering the possession of nuclear weapons by Israel and Pakistan, Iran could only be counted as a regional superpower if it had such weapons. But what would be the consequences of the Iranian bomb for Russia? They, according to CFDP, "would not be catastrophic so long as the Iranian regime remains stable."

Current Russian foreign policy initiatives are consistent with that opinion. They can be regarded as an adjustment to

***“ Current Russian foreign policy initiatives can be regarded as an attempt to regain some of the influence which Russia, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, lost in United States and the Greater Middle East. ”***

the inevitable but at the same time as an attempt to regain some of the influence which Russia, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, lost in what is nowadays, both in the United States and among Russian foreign policy experts, called the Greater Middle East.

Part of that attempt is an agreement concluded in March 2006 during Putin's visit to Algeria. It stipulates that Russia will equip the Algerian armed forces with modern weapons to the amount of \$7.5 billion. Sharpening Moscow's new instrument of foreign policy in addition to arms deliveries, i.e. the oil and gas lever, Gazprom chief Alexei Miller worked out with Algeria's Sonatrak, the dominant supplier of natural and liquefied gas to southern Europe, plans for swaps of gas deliveries between European and North American markets, a common pricing framework, joint exploration projects,

and pipeline and LNG plant construction on each other's territory.

Algeria is not the only country to receive Russian weapons. Syria is another recipient, and so is Iran. In the period from 2000 to 2005 the total value of contracts concluded with Tehran can be estimated at approximately \$300-400 million. However, in December 2005 the volume of arms contracts significantly increased: Russia will deliver patrol boats to the Iranian Navy and modernize the Iranian Su-24MK and MiG-29 fighters to the tune of approximately \$1.4 billion. It will also furnish Iran with 32 Tor-M1 (SA-15) low-to-medium altitude air defence missile systems at a cost of about \$700 million.

Russian arms deliveries to Iran, the Kremlin has argued, are designed so as not to destabilize the regional balance of power. While this argument is difficult to refute, the new

***“ Russia will not be part of any strategy that aims at isolating the Iranian government under President Ahmadinejad. ”***

contracts can hardly be said to fit into a strategy that aims at putting maximum pressure on Iran to discontinue uranium enrichment and other nuclear programs that can be used for military purposes. It is rather a strong signal that Russia will not be part of any strategy that aims at isolating the Iranian government under President Ahmadinejad. Furthermore, as the Tor-M1 missiles could be used to protect Iran's nuclear plants from air attacks, it is also a confirmation of the Russian position against the use of force.

The refusal to participate in a strategy of isolation and instead embarking on a policy course of what the Kremlin considers constructive engagement is evident on other issues. These include the surprise invitation in February 2006 to a Hamas delegation to visit Moscow for talks under the auspices of the foreign ministry without prior consultation with the other members of the Middle East Quartet (the US, the EU, and the UN) as well as the announcement in April 2006 that it would provide emergency aid to the Hamas-led Palestinian government.

Another part of the Russian strategy is the attempt, to the extent possible, to keep the U.S. and NATO out of

the Caspian region. Georgia's and Azerbaijan's efforts to become members of NATO have, therefore, encountered objections in both Moscow and Tehran. This applies also to ideas put forward in Washington to set up a Caspian Guard of up to 120,000 troops in order to fight international terrorist networks, protect the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline, and prevent

“**Another part of the Russian strategy is the attempt to keep the U.S. and NATO out of the Caspian region.**”

weapons and drug trafficking in the region as well as the transfer of components for the production of weapons of mass destruction. Moscow has countered such plans with its own initiatives. One of them is the proposal to create a joint naval force of the Caspian Sea countries, to be designated as CasFor. The proposal rules out participation of other countries, i.e., the United States, no matter whether this concerns provision of equipment, technical assistance, intelligence sharing, or personnel training. Those roles would be reserved for Russia.

A final ingredient of Russia's Iranian and Greater Middle East strategy is the attempt to draw Iran into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Thus, the Kremlin supported, perhaps was even instrumental in, the SCO's decision in July 2004 to grant observer status to Tehran. For a time it appeared as if it would also throw its weight behind the Islamic republic's quest for full membership and that a corresponding decision would be taken by the SCO at its 10th anniversary meeting in Shanghai in mid-June. This course of action, however, was rejected in Moscow, if only for the time being. This may also apply to equally contentious

“**A final ingredient of Russia's Iranian and Greater Middle East strategy is the attempt to draw Iran into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).**”

plans for Iran to join the Russian-sponsored Organization for Collective Security (OCS), which since 2003 is open to membership by states other than ex-Soviet republics.

Iranian membership in one or both of these organizations

would give more substance to the current talk about the creation of some “Eurasian NATO” and a “Gas-OPEC”. But Russian alignment with a nuclear armed Iran, possessing huge gas and oil reserves and situated at a crucial geostrategic juncture, would amount to the reversal of the decision of September 2001 to cooperate closely with the West and a clear challenge to the United States. Putin undoubtedly did not want to embark on a collision course with the United States, and particularly not prior to the G-8 summit in St. Petersburg in mid-July.

Yet suspicion about his true intentions remains. It is fuelled by Russian reports that Iran has until now been the only member with observer status to have been invited to the Shanghai summit, that President Ahmadinejad will attend, and that Putin has agreed to hold talks with the Iranian leader. It is too early to tell whether the Kremlin will hold the talks in the professed spirit of “constructive engagement” or in accordance with the elusive notion of a “strategic partnership”. Whatever the outcome of such a meeting, the very fact that it is taking place would distance Moscow even further from Washington's approach on the Iranian nuclear weapons issue and be another demonstration of a more assertive Russian policy in the Near and Middle East.

### *Other Research Bulletins by the GRC*



## The Peninsula Shield Force: End of a Symbol?

In the aftermath of the GCC leaders summit in Abu Dhabi on 18-19 December 2005 Saudi Crown Prince and Defense Minister Sultan bin Abdul Aziz announced in Riyadh that the joint GCC Peninsula Shield Force (PSF) would cease to exist as we know it today. What will happen to the force is still unclear. The Saudi proposal, to be ratified at the 27th GCC regular meeting of the six heads of states later this year, is still not spelt out. It seems to envisage the retention of an administrative structure, possibly under the aegis of the GCC Secretariat in Riyadh that will call upon single military units in case of emergency so that some element of centralized command and control is retained.

However, this period of transition seems to be an ideal time to carry out some reflections on the symbolic importance of this joint unit and the likely causes for its coming to an end in its present form. It is also an occasion to highlight the symbolic nature of GCC defense cooperation and the need to rely on an external power such as the United States to guarantee Gulf security for the foreseeable future.

Actually, the Peninsula Shield joint defense force best exemplified the symbolic nature of GCC defense cooperation. The force was established in 1986 after a meeting in Riyadh of the GCC chiefs of staff following a series of joint military exercises during the previous three years. It has been based at King Khaled Military City in Hafr Al-Batin in a strategic location in North East Saudi Arabia about 65 kilometers from the border with Kuwait since then. Its nominal strength is about 5000 men but the real war-fighting capabilities consist of a Saudi Army brigade that was deployed in



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the area long before the force existed. The second brigade with manpower and equipment from other GCC states is reputedly under strength and has no real war fighting capabilities.<sup>1</sup> The only time the Peninsula Shield force has been deployed so far has been during the successful Iranian Fao peninsula offensive on March 3 1986 when it was dispatched to Kuwait as a gesture of solidarity.

In the case of the Peninsula Shield force its symbolic nature has been recognized publicly even by Abdullah Bishara, the first Secretary General of the GCC.<sup>2</sup> Even its alleged function as a “trip-wire” contingent, though, is called into question by its immobility during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait at a time when Saudi television did not even give news of the event for the first two days. In light of the modest proportion it is noteworthy that its establishment was quite controversial. During the consultations that led

“  
***The most that could be said about the Peninsula Shield force is that it existed but to fulfill a symbolic role.***  
”

to establishment of the force in 1986 the Saudi proposal of splitting it into two nuclei, and deploying it into the southwestern as well as the north eastern border was rejected by Oman. This because it was deemed that that this would constitute a ‘provocation’ vis-à-vis Iran. This underlines how different GCC members perceive different threats as more or less important. There is no strategic consensus on who the GCC should guard against. Kuwait, Oman and the UAE insisted on a proviso that when the force enters one member’s territory the command structure reverts from Saudi Arabia to that of the host country.<sup>3</sup> This insistence underlines the preoccupation of smaller member states with Saudi meddling into their internal affairs and underlines the symbolic nature of joint military enterprises. The most that could be said about the Peninsula Shield force is that

“  
***The only time the Peninsula Shield force has been deployed so far has been during the successful Iranian Fao peninsula offensive on March 3 1986 when it was dispatched to Kuwait as a gesture of solidarity.***  
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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Cordesman, Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-First Century: The Military and International Security Dimensions, p.66.

<sup>2</sup> Erik R. Peterson, The Gulf Cooperation Council: Search for Unity in a Dynamic Region (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p.205.

<sup>3</sup> Laura Guazzone, “Gulf Cooperation Council: The Security Policies,” p.143.

it existed but that, I would argue, is the reason why it was constituted: to fulfill a symbolic role. First Secretary General Abdullah Bishara reinforced this point when he argued that Peninsula Shield was created to prove that “the Gulf was to all intents and purposes is one and that the people of the Gulf would consider any threat to one of them to be a threat to all.”<sup>4</sup> This statement is certainly questionable but it is not made naively. It is rather meant like countless other declaration and communiqués to convey the idea that the GCC stands united and it should not be associated with its neighbors.<sup>5</sup> The GCC does not constitute a “pluralistic security community” defined in Deutsch terms but it strives to project that image with a certain success.<sup>6</sup>

In sum collaboration in the realm of external defense has not moved beyond symbolism but the symbolic impact has been considerable and, given the structural constraints, it has been what the organization has rightly strived for. From this point of view the showpiece joint military maneuvers, the token Peninsula Shield force and the countless communiqués have achieved their purpose. In the mainstream media the GCC states are often lumped together when defense matters are being discussed.<sup>7</sup> This even if military analysts are unanimous in recognizing that what underpins Gulf security is a solid American military presence.

The situation is unlikely to change in the near future. In fact, recently tension seems to have resurfaced between Saudi Arabia and other GCC member states. The five smaller members display increasing independence in their foreign policy-making thanks to the cover given by an ever-expanding strategic relationship with the United States. The recent signing by Bahrain and Qatar of bilateral free trade agreements with the United States risk undermining a customs union that has been negotiated over almost twenty years and finally came into existence in 2003 even as implementation problems persist. In particular, Qatar has achieved increasing independence in its security policies thanks to its increasing importance to the United States as a logistical hub. In what can be considered a show of displeasure Saudi Arabia recently raised objections to the building of a

Bahrain-Qatar freeway over claims that it would cross over its sovereign waters. These disputes underline how central the concept of sovereignty remains in the Gulf in spite of the supranational yearnings of many in the region. From a

“ ***The recent signing by Bahrain and Qatar of bilateral free trade agreements with the United States risk undermining a customs union that has been negotiated over almost twenty years and finally came into existence in 2003.*** ”

broader point of view, I would argue that what many military analysts omit to highlight is that there is an essential problem of trust within the GCC that prevents a serious integrated defense policy to emerge. At any given point in the life of the organization one or more of the smaller states is fearful of the Saudi hegemony that would result from implementing an effectively integrated defense policy.<sup>8</sup> Throughout the 1980s the more diffident small state was arguably Kuwait, now this role seems to belong to Qatar. There are political considerations preventing further GCC defense integration. The policy of relying on a host of disparate arms suppliers and carefully cultivating diplomatic contacts is seen as a much better way to achieve external security than the idea of establishing a vertically integrated, centralized command similar to NATO or the US-Korean one. There is a recognition that self-sufficiency in external defense matters is simply beyond the grasp of the six member states for now and that Saudi hegemony would be too high a price to pay for a truly integrated defense policy. As it is often the case the technical aspects of military cooperation reflect broader political considerations and are at the same time symptomatic of the status of intra-GCC relations. It is in this symbolic light that the Saudi proposal regarding a reorganization of the Peninsula Shield force should be read.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in John Peterson, *The Gulf Cooperation Council: Search for Unity in a Dynamic Region*, p.205.

<sup>5</sup> An examination of the final communiqués and statements of the meetings of the Supreme Council give an idea of the insistence with which this notion is propounded by the organization.

<sup>6</sup> For the reasons why the GCC does not constitute a security community see Michael N. Barnett and F. Gregory Gause, III, “Caravans in Opposite Directions: Society, State, and the Development of Community in the Gulf Cooperation Council,” in *Security Communities*, ed. Emanuel Adler and Michael N. Barnett, Cambridge Studies in International Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Deutsch defines a pluralistic security community as one in which states become integrated to a point in which they have a sense of community which, in turn, creates assurances that they will settle their differences short of war. See Karl Deutsch, *Political Community in the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

<sup>7</sup> One of the more amusing □

who has written an account of Gulf security for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy calls for the dissolution of the organization on the grounds that it provides a dangerous counterbalance to the American presence in the Gulf. See Simon Henderson, *The New Pillar: Conservative Arab Gulf States and U.S. Strategy*, Policy Paper ; No. 58 (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> This issue was perceptively highlighted by Laura Guazzone in the 1980s. The following twenty years have fully validated her insight. See Guazzone, “Gulf Cooperation Council: The Security Policies,” pp.142-143.

## Laying the Foundations for a WMDFZ in the Gulf: “Approaches to National Legislation for WMD Agreements” Dubai, May 2-3, 2006.



The workshop entitled – ‘Laying the Foundations for a Gulf WMDFZ: Approaches to National Legislation for WMD Agreements’ – emphasized the principle of a Gulf WMDFZ as an important first step toward making a Middle East WMDFZ at a critical time for the region.

The effort to take the issue from a sub-regional level to regional level with the ultimate intention of pressuring Israel to denuclearize was organized by the Dubai-based independent think tank Gulf Research Center (GRC). The discussions involved high-level officials from the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Iran, Iraq and Yemen, as well as international arms control experts.

Iran, which is under international pressure to suspend nuclear enrichment and has been referred to the Security Council, said it supports the idea of Gulf WMD-free zone as long as the Middle East WMDFZ was not undermined. At the same time, it sought a new regional security architecture that defines a mechanism of tackling threat perceptions and pushed for the withdrawal of international troops from the region.

The GCC participants argued that while they are not in favor of any UN-imposed political, economic or diplomatic sanctions, and certainly opposed to military action against Iran, they have very little scope to avoid any adverse actions contemplated by the United States and Israel.

The workshop was co-hosted by VERTIC (The Verification Research, Training and Information Centre) – an independent non-governmental organization promoting national implementation of WMD agreements. VERTIC’s project is funded by the Global Opportunities Fund, administered by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

“ ***This project envisages better security and stability in the region and spares the risks of an arms race, thereby allowing the governments in the Gulf to focus on developmental issues for a better future.*** ”

In his opening remarks, the GRC Chairman, Abdulaziz Sager, said, “This project envisages better security and stability in the region and spares the risks of an arms race, thereby allowing the governments in the Gulf to focus on developmental issues for a better future.”

“We are happy that this idea is gaining interest at the official level. With several leaders in the region endorsing the plan, we hope it will soon become a Track I project,” he added.



During the Track II discussion, Iran said it was among the first in the region to call for a Middle East nuclear-free zone in 1974, but the current crisis is a result of the international community “depriving” the Islamic republic of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes for 27 years.

If the international community guarantees Iran the right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful use, Tehran is ready to lift the *carte blanche* on its program, an Iranian delegate said. However, any comprehensive treaty should include conventional arms as well, suggested Iran.

International experts argued that joining the Gulf WMD-Free Zone does not deny Iran the right to use nuclear technology for peaceful use.

Iran also called for developing a mechanism that encourages mutual trust and a collective system in the region with confidence building measures that address political, social, economic, and security dynamics.

While the GCC countries said that they do not ignore Israel’s nuclear program, they argued that Iran should not use Israel as an excuse to develop nuclear weapons

because it not only encourages an arms race in the region, but also leaves the GCC countries in the crossfire of a nuclear competition. The worrying threat posed by non-state actors and the possibility of them acquiring such weapons was also discussed.

While most delegates agreed that the current deadlock mandated direct talks between the United States and Iran, some suggested that geographical proximity necessitated the GCC countries to also be involved in the negotiations.

On the second day of the workshop, VERTIC experts made presentations on key aspects of laws pertaining to nuclear, biological and chemical weapons law. Further, an IAEA representative and a UN Security Council Resolution 1540 expert also presented papers. The ensuing discussions allowed regional delegates concerned with these issues in their own countries to pose questions and identify areas in which technical/legal assistance is needed from such organizations in order to implement national legislation.

“**Iran also called for developing a mechanism that encourages mutual trust and a collective system in the region with confidence building measures that address political, social, economic, and security dynamics.**”

## The Speech of the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Iraq

Labid Abawi



*GRC Chairman Abdulaziz Sager, HE Mr. Labid Abawi, HE Mr. Abdullah Murad*

First I would like to express my sincere thanks for the invitation of Iraq to participate in this important meeting. I wish the participants success in achieving their desired goals.

In the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, our national and collective security is exposed to great challenges, which preoccupy us and drive us to analyze seriously and in depth these threats and dangers and to find out new mechanisms and systems of protecting our countries, people and interests, in a way which is consistent with our legitimate hopes, wishes and aspirations.

The security threats confronting the countries and nations of the region comprise the threats of terrorism, the proliferation of WMD-nuclear, chemical, biological and radioactive weapons- the deterioration of the environment, poverty, diseases, internal violence and organized crime.

The priorities of confronting these challenges have for a prerequisite reaching a wide-scope understanding of the significance of collective security and identifying the effective, component and fair strategies, institutions and mechanisms, which are convincing to our countries and nations.

When we speak of WMD, especially the nuclear ones which still represent the greatest danger threatening the

entire world because of their devastating capabilities, we remember the destruction caused by the two bombs thrown on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and the environmental disasters caused by the accident of the reactor of Chernobyl, whose twentieth anniversary coincides with these days. We also remember what my country, Iraq, has witnessed of devastation owing to reckless attempts of the former regime, and its violations of the obligations of Iraq imposed by the relevant covenants.

Drawing from the bitter lessons and being aware of the implications and constituents of national security, the new Iraq has announced its commitment to, and respect of, international covenants relating to WMD and it will soon sign the treaty banning chemical weapons. In conformation of this, the constitution has stipulated the following in section (e) of article 9: "The Iraqi government respects and implements Iraq's international obligations relating to banning the proliferation, development and production of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and banning the equipment, technological materials and systems relating to the manufacture, production and use of these weapons."

Iraq believes in the necessity and importance of making the Middle East region free of WMD. On the basis of this, it

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moves on the level of the UN, the IAEA and the Arab League and strongly calls on states to sign the treaty banning the proliferation of WMD, especially Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, without distinction. Iraq also calls for implementing the system of comprehensive guarantees of the IAEA in the Middle East region. Here we must emphasize the need to call on Israel to sign the Non-Proliferation treaty and subject its nuclear installations to the system of international monitoring.

The position of Iraq is similar to the position of the Arab countries as regards commitments to making the Middle East region free of WMD. This position has for a basis article 7 of the non-proliferation treaty and section 14 of the Security Council's resolution no. 687 (1995), the resolution of 1995 on reviewing the treaty, and the resolutions of the General Assembly of the UN pertinent to this issue. Iraq's position enjoys regional and international support since it is imperative to find appropriate mechanisms to implement this.

In this context, we positively view freeing the Gulf region of WMD since this has utmost importance for the security and stability of the region in the present and the future. This could be an important first step if it is part of the wider quest, i.e. freeing the Middle East region of WMD like the rest of the regions of the world and in compliance with the resolutions of the General Assembly of the UN and the Arab Summits.

The non-proliferation treaty gives countries the right to conduct research and produce and invest nuclear energy, as well as cooperation in developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

However, we must always ponder the dual nature of nuclear energy since known states in the past claimed that their nuclear programs had peaceful orientations. But they soon turned secretly to possessing nuclear weapons. Here a bell of hazard tolls- that the regime of non-proliferation might not be durable or successful if other countries develop the most critical stages of the nuclear fuel and equip themselves with the technology of producing nuclear weapons in a short time. To prevent this, we must find constant ways of reconciling the right to use nuclear energy peacefully with the necessity of non-proliferation. Countries wishing to practice their right to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes must not insist on the fact that they can do so by developing capabilities that can be used in manufacturing nuclear weapons. Here we must emphasize the impor-

tance of transparency and cooperation with the IAEA and implementing the system of guarantees and other relevant arrangements and respecting international treaties.

Our countries need scientific capabilities; especially those that help them build developed, civilized societies, build their economies, and achieve sustainable development. They do not need creating huge burdens not only in the realm of finance and development, but also with respect to political and security implications.

Finally, I wish your conference all success, and thank you.

### *Other Research Bulletins by the GRC*



# Thirteen Key Factors about the Gulf as a Zone Free from Weapons of Mass Destruction: Perspective from Iran

A Gulf WMD-Free Zone is, in principle, an appealing idea for peace, stability, and security of the region and the world. However, to implement it some key factors should be taken into consideration:

1. A GW MDFZ should be defined within the framework of the “Gulf Regional Security Arrangements” initiative. In fact, GW MDFZ could only be envisioned as an integral part of the “Middle East as a Zone Free from Weapons of Mass Destruction.

2. A common understanding of the member states is necessary. This idea should naturally prepare Iran, Iraq, and Yemen as well as GCC member states for a “Middle East WMD-Free Zone” major plan.

3. To this end, a Gulf WMD-Free Zone needs to be developed from an abstract idea into well-defined mechanisms and frameworks, and common rules in these states. What should be taken into account in the first place is that different states in the region may have different threat perceptions. One of the most significant prerequisites of this trend is to make different threat perceptions uniform or, to put it more precisely, bring them closer, and to develop common interests among states in the region.

4. The most urgent issue is to achieve a Middle East WMD-Free Zone. Israel is the one and only nuclear weapon state in the Middle East. It has not joined any disarmament treat-



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ties and is a major source of threat to all Middle Eastern countries. Since the policy of all U.S. administrations have always been to ensure a strategic edge for Israel in the region, a Middle East WMD-Free Zone is quite conceivable and workable without being concerned about Israel’s security. Therefore, the idea of a Gulf WMD-Free Zone should be contemplated as a device to derogate from the strategic importance of ME WMD Free Zone.

5. As for Israel, its obscure policies as a regime holding advanced nuclear capabilities with offensive, rather than defensive, intentions lead to an uncertainty in a WMD-Free Zone plan. It should be noted that Israel considers WMDs not as a last resort in deterrence, but as a security protection to continue its illegal occupation of the occupied lands.

6. As long as Israel is not a member of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, and its massive WMD arsenals are not abolished, a balance of power in the Middle East is unavoidable to sustain peace, stability, and security in the region. Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq as powerful Islamic states could create a balance of power against Israel. Certainly, possession of WMDs by any country in the region does not help to establish a balance of power.

7. No actual planning for a GW MDFZ is possible with mili-



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tary presence of major powers in the region. These powers possess the bulk of WMD arsenals in the world. Removal of this military presence should be one of the important outcomes of a GW MDFZ.

8. A more appropriate basis for implementing a WMD-Free Zone plan may be a comprehensive view of disturbing and destabilizing elements in the region. There have always been some external

disturbing elements to the region which have been activated under certain conditions, imposing anarchy on the region for a while. In general, the threats to the region have been from beyond the Gulf, and the resources in the region have attracted foreign powers to the region. Meanwhile, even if the Gulf States could find a certain mechanism among themselves, their neighbours have some WMD capabilities which could actually hamper an effective system. India and Pakistan, on the one hand, and particularly Israel, on the other, none of which joined any disarmament or non-proliferation treaties, make the situation much more difficult.

9. Another important factor is mutual trust and confidence, which could help implementing a WMD-Free Zone plan. This depends on two requirements: to bring closer the divergent views of those making decisions in national and regional security issues, and transparency, which is a very difficult task due to the differences in threat and security perceptions. A political, legal, and technical mechanism and, in advanced stages, a joint monitoring system may help to promote both.

10. A "Regional Collective Cooperation System" should be considered as a master plan. The region most needs comprehensive confidence-building measures. This system of political, security, economic, cultural, social, and military cooperation is both vital and urgent to achieve:

- 10-1- a comprehensive confidence-building;
- 10-2- non-interference of foreign powers in the region;



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into account along with removal of threat and concern from the neighbours of the region.

12. Some plans, suggestions, and operational mechanisms should be developed and offered to the states. These should include analyzing the general view of the states and focusing on collective security arrangements, common interests of the regional nations in enhanced peace, stability, security, and economic prosperity, and ultimately promoting a united identity.

13. Iran supports any idea, contributing to more convergence among the Gulf states. Within this framework, Iran also supports a GW MDFZ as far as it does not undermine the strategic importance of the Middle East WMD-Free Zone, and is ready to cooperate to advance such ideas.

**“Iran supports any idea, contributing to more convergence among the Gulf states. Within this framework, Iran also supports a GW MDFZ as far as it does not undermine the strategic importance of the Middle East WMD-Free Zone, and is ready to cooperate to advance such ideas.”**

10-3- sustained peace, stability, and security;

10-4- consolidation of the relations between the nations;

10-5- sustained regional development.

11. The region should be immune to any use or threat of use of WMD by its neighbours or their allies. Removal of threat and concern among the states of the region should be taken

## Declaring the Gulf a WMD-Free Zone: Perspective from Kuwait

The initiative launched by the GCC States to declare the Gulf region a WMD-free Zone relates to developments on the Iranian nuclear issue. This issue could become the nucleus of a new conflict in the region, whose parties will be Iran, the USA and the EU countries.

The position of Kuwait as regards this issue is well known; it is the same as taken by the other states of the GCC, which primarily relies on the principles of safety and security. This is what we need here in the Gulf region. To achieve this goal, we must all work together to ward off any dangers or risks to which our region might be exposed.

If it is difficult at present to make the Middle East region free of WMD, why do we not pursue making the Gulf region free of these weapons, especially nuclear ones? This is an idea worthy of consideration without abandoning the effort to make the Middle East region free of these lethal weapons in the future.

In this regard, the statements of the GCC states, the most recent of which was the communiqué of the Abu Dhabi Summit held last year, confirm the keenness of these states to make the Gulf and Middle East regions WMD-free zones. The communiqué also betrays the fears of the GCC states as regards the Iranian nuclear program.

We have to remember the proposal of the GCC Secretary-General Abdul Rahman Al-Attiya with respect to concluding an agreement between the states of the region with the aim of making the region free of WMD. His proposal was meant to be a prelude to extending the proposal to countries of the entire Middle East, including Israel. It is worth mentioning here that Israel is the only country in the Middle East region to date that owns a huge nuclear arsenal even if it does not declare this. It is also the only country in the region that has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (in addition to India and Pakistan. Maintaining that Israel owns WMD, including nuclear weapons, does not mean ignoring the fact that other states, like Iran, for instance, also attempt to possess these dangerous weapons. This can only lead to a nuclear arms race whose extent and dangers are only known by God.

This will not only reflect on our region, but on the whole



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world. In the words of Abdul Rahman Al-Attiya, the Secretary-General of the GCC, “ We do not want to see our region sandwiched between two nuclear weapon states”.

In the GCC states we emphasize the right of Iran, as that of any other state, to use its nuclear program for peaceful purposes. This is a right guaranteed by the IAEA and it is incontrovertible. Yet the program must be subjected to the criteria and conditions set by the Security Council and the IAEA. When the Iranian nuclear file is referred to the Security Council and the final report of IAEA asserts that there was some obscurity and non-cooperation

on the part of Iran with respect to its nuclear program, we have to ask, “Why?” This is the apprehension that worries the states of the region. The statements made by officials in the GCC states center round questions about the objective of Iran and its nuclear program, which is enveloped in ambiguities.

In this context, I would like to point to the statement made by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Sheikh Muhammad Al-Subah Al -Salem Al Subah. The statement insists on the duty of Iran to comply with the regimes governing the use of nuclear energy, the right of nations to use it for peaceful purposes and that the IAEA should act as the governing body in this domain to ensure that this energy is safely used for peaceful purposes.

This accounts for the inflexibility of the positions of the US and the EU countries. Their positions derive from a disinclination to allow Iran to acquire any type of nuclear weapons, or develop its program for this purpose since they consider this as a threat to western interests and a distortion of the balance of power in the region.

Having all this as a point of departure, the GCC states, in dealing with the developments of the Iranian nuclear issue, rely on historical, security-related and political backgrounds, which have crystallized in a collective stance by the GCC states with regards to adopting this initiative and presenting it to the rest of the regional countries. The initiative is part of a new security system compatible with the realities of the region, and it supports the pillars of security and stability in the region. It also seeks to identify the most

important conditions and guarantees that can contribute to transforming the region into a WMD-free zone. This is especially the case in the current situation where the Iranian nuclear issue has become an urgent matter which demands a solution via regional and international initiatives.

### **The Historical Background**

On the whole, Gulf-Iranian relations are good; they are constantly developing after having gone through a very trying period. There are many social, cultural, economic and religious ties binding their people. However, there are some problems still hampering the realization of effective cooperation in different fields. The first of these obstacles is the problem of the Iranian occupation of the three UAE Islands. There is also the question of managing Gulf security, as well as the presence of foreign military forces besides what is being described as the Iranian intervention in Iraq as a new attempt to draw the socio-political map of the region.

Exacerbating these fears in the region fears of Iranian ambitions and the possibility that these ambitions would be supported with military capabilities that are not available to the rest of the Gulf states to date. There is also the impression that the Iranian nuclear program might enhance the country's ambitions and jeopardize efforts to restore stability in the region.

### **The Security Background**

The outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war in 1980 led to the realization of the importance of making the region free of WMD, especially with the realization that the next conflict in the region, if it takes place, will be open to all options and in particular WMD. This is inseparable from certain facts relating to that war. These are:

- The use of WMD during the Iraq-Iran war and the consequences of this on man and environment;
- Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the possibility of using WMD in its nuclear form in the liberation of Kuwait war after the US threatened to use tactical nuclear weapons if the Iraqi regime used its stock of chemical and biological weapons.

With all this in mind, the GCC States seek to find the most important conditions and guarantees that can contribute to sustaining stability in the region through formulating new security structures, which take into consideration the legitimate concerns and interests of all the parties concerned. It is worth mentioning in this context that the Security Council resolution no. 687/91 refers in section 14 to the necessity of verifying that Iraq is free of WMD as a prelude to freeing the rest of the region of these weapons.

### **The Political Background**

The Gulf region is of utmost importance to ensuring the activity and continuity of the global economy because it possesses most of the global oil reserves. This has led to an intersection of international interests in the region and to the interest of the great powers in ensuring continuing oil supplies and warding off any threats to this flow of supplies to the industrial world. The GCC States are aware of the fact that part of this responsibility falls on the states of the region, and that they are required, by virtue of this partial responsibility, to adopt initiatives that may positively impact the security and economy of the region. Thus the initiative of the GCC States to make the Gulf region a WMD-free zone is an expression of the regional attempt to lay the foundations of stability in the region, and of endeavoring to make all parties committed to the objectives of the initiative by offering the required guarantees to verify this commitment. The success of the initiative in achieving its goals will directly lead to impacting the attitude of international actors, which are connected to the security of the region. These actors can offer Iran political and security guarantees and propel it towards committing itself permanently to the initiative. These guarantees can translate into redeploying foreign forces in the region after eradicating the factors of tension and formulating security arrangements that guarantee the stability of the region in such a manner that realizes the interests of the different parties concerned.

### **The Environmental Aspect**

If we accept that the Iranian nuclear program is only for peaceful purposes, we must remember the Chernobyl disaster whose 20th anniversary passed a few days ago.

The reactor of Bushar is only 250 km from the city of Kuwait and other Gulf cities. If the technology used in constructing this reactor pollutes the waters of the Gulf, which is one of the most important sources of water for human use after refining, we can imagine the extent of the danger of any nuclear leakage from this reactor, or of breathing air saturated with nuclear dust. As a Gulf national the apprehension regarding this reactor worries and terrifies me.

Finally, I say that we, in the Gulf States, hope to be able through our efforts and those of the international community to arrive at a formula of understanding with our dear neighbor Iran, which will drive away from our region the apparition of instability, backwardness and the unknown consequences of failing to solve this issue.

## The Gulf Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone Project: Some Ideas for the Next Steps

*Peter Jones*<sup>1</sup>

The Gulf Research Center project on a Gulf Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (GWMDZFZ) is an extraordinary example of a Track Two project making great progress in a short space of time. Three highly regarded workshops have been held and have played a major role in placing the issue of a GWMDZFZ firmly on the regional agenda.

However, it is clear that this project will be viewed by many of those hearing about it for the first time through the prism of the growing crisis over Iran's nuclear program. This is inevitable, but presents some dangers if there are pressures to make the project conform to the needs of the crisis as regards its timetable and its intellectual content. That would be a pity; a real process to consider and create a GWMDZFZ will take longer than any one specific event or issue will allow.

That said, what are some of the possible future directions for the idea of a GWMDZFZ? This brief paper will explore the possible future options, primarily from the point of view of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Though the proposed Zone would also include Iran, Iraq and Yemen, my view is that the six GCC countries are the keys to this. If they make the decision to go forward, the others may join in – though some of them might not join right away.

*I would argue that there are at least four possible scenarios for the GCC countries at this time.*

First, do nothing. Doing nothing is an often undervalued option in diplomacy. Sometimes, it is the best course of action. But I do not think this is the case now. The growing sense in the region of the problem of proliferation is such that a new approach to dealing with the issue is required.

Second, the GCC states could opt to issue what might be called a “non-serious” GWMDZFZ proposal or document and invite the other three to associate themselves with it. By “non-serious” it is meant that the proposal would come in the form of a statement of some sort which would call for



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the establishment of such a Zone, or even create it in a purely declaratory sense. But such a statement would have few, if any, specifics as to such issues as verification or other obligations. Such an approach would have the benefit of being relatively easily achievable in a short time-frame. But it would not be taken seriously, nor would it ultimately contribute to regional security. Indeed, by providing a false sense that something had been accomplished, such a statement could have a detrimental impact in that it would allow some to avoid tackling the hard issues.

Third, the GCC states could pursue a “serious” GWMDZFZ proposal. By serious, I mean that the eventual Zone agreement would contain stringent verification provisions; firm commitments from extra-regional countries to respect the Zone; and well-thought out positions on other issues, such as the transit of WMD through the Zone. As the Gulf has the dubious distinction of being a region within which WMD have been used, and within which at least one country has sought to clandestinely develop nuclear and other mass destruction weapons while having committed by international treaty not to do so, this is the preferred option. It has a number of advantages, among which are:

- it would establish the GCC countries and the other countries of the Gulf which signed on as leaders in non-proliferation;
- it would remove any ambiguity which might exist over the WMD intentions of those states which did sign on and abide by the provisions of a stringent GWMDZFZ; and
- it would set a very good standard for an eventual Middle East WMDZFZ agreement.

But there are also some possible disadvantages:

- developing such an agreement would take time – even with the best will in the world, it will take at least 18 months for the states of the region to negotiate such an agreement;

<sup>1</sup> These comments were made in the authors' personal and private capacity.

- such an approach could raise the ire of those in the wider Middle East who wish to maintain “pressure” on Israel over its WMD policies;<sup>2</sup>

- it would tie the security from WMD attack of those regional states which did sign such an agreement to the security guarantees of the Great Powers, and especially the United States (this would be particularly true if some in the Gulf did not sign on, but maintained their WMD options – however, the security link between the GCC countries and the US probably makes reliance on US aid in the event of a WMD attack all but inevitable for the GCC countries anyway).

The fourth option would be to combine options two and three in some way. This could involve a declaration by the GCC states of their intent to develop a GWMDZF in the short term, followed by intensive and serious work to create it. In effect, the declaration would be a statement of intent on the part of the GCC states to develop such a Zone and an invitation to the three other countries of the Gulf to join them in the discussions to this end.

*What might be the characteristics of such a declaration? I would argue there are at least seven:*

- First, the declaration should clearly lay out the region to be covered by the proposed Zone (the GCC countries, Iran, Iraq and Yemen), and state that the GCC countries intend to go ahead even if some of those other countries do not wish to join right away;

- Second, the declaration should state that the objective is the complete and total elimination of all WMD from the Zone, with no tolerance for so-called “hedging” behavior;<sup>3</sup>

- Third, the declaration should clearly state that the GWMDZF is envisaged as a stepping stone on the way to a Middle East WMDZF, but that the Gulf, and, if necessary, the GCC countries only in the first instance, will go ahead on the way to this broader goal;

- Fourth, the declaration should clearly spell out the GCC states’ willingness to accept enhanced verification and other mechanisms for their Zone, building on the existing international standards, and lay out some examples of what these might be (for example, the Brazil-Argentina arrangement for accounting and control of nuclear material could be

referenced as a possible model of an enhanced verification mechanism);

- Fifth, the declaration should include a deadline by which the GCC countries intend to develop the Zone agreement and this deadline should be ambitious, but realistic (18 to 24 months might be considered in this respect);

- Sixth, the declaration should draw on the example of Protocols to existing Nuclear Weapons Free Zones in the world to note that extra-regional states, and particularly the nuclear weapons states, will be asked to assume obligations with respect to the Zone; and

- Seventh, the declaration should recognize that the creation of a GWMDZF (and a wider Middle East WMDZF) is integrally linked to the creation of a broader regional system for enhanced co-operation between the regional states and it should set that process in motion as well.<sup>4</sup>

This last point is a very important one. The ultimate success of any Zone will depend on the eventual creation of a new approach to security cooperation in the region. This will take time, but is a key point. Much debate has taken place over whether a WMDZF should precede or follow a new regional cooperation system, and over whether one should strive for a region-wide or sub-regional approach to either or both. As one who has been involved in this discussion for some time, this debate has an increasingly sterile quality to it. Ultimately, it is used by those who wish that nothing should get started because if one waits for the perfect moment to accomplish everything then nothing will happen. The key now is that progress be made where it can be, in the expectation that the rest of the region will move when it can.

As a final point, if the GCC countries do decide to go forward with the idea of a GWMDZF, a tremendous amount of intellectual and policy legwork will be required. Many complex issues need to be explored. In this respect, centers like the Gulf Research Center could play a key role in supporting the process with focused research and workshops at which the thorny questions can be thoroughly explored before official positions are considered by regional governments. The GWMDZF project has laid a very strong foundation on which to build.

<sup>2</sup> This has already happened. See the letter of 29 June, 2005 from the Secretary General of the Arab League, Amr Mousa to the Secretary General of the GCC in which Mousa criticizes the GCC countries for considering a GWMDZF as such a step could lessen collective Arab pressures on Israel. See [http://www.grc.ae/data/contents/uploads/Official\\_Documents\\_English\\_7512.pdf](http://www.grc.ae/data/contents/uploads/Official_Documents_English_7512.pdf) It should be noted that the North African countries, including Egypt, have already joined the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, so the idea that no Arab country should go forward with such a proposal is somewhat blunted.

<sup>3</sup> For more on “hedging” see Levite, A., “Never Say Never Again: Nuclear Reversal Revisited,” *International Security*, vol. 27, no. 3 (Winter 2002/03), pp. 59-88. For a discussion of “hedging” in the context of a GWMDZF see Jones, P., “A WMD Free Zone within a Broader Gulf and Middle East Security Architecture”, *Gulf Research Center, Policy Analysis Papers* (Dubai; Gulf Research Center, March, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> For more on the relationship between a WMDZF idea and that of a new approach to regional security see, Jones, P., *Towards a Regional Security Regime for the Middle East; Issues and Options* (Stockholm, SIPRI, 1998), available at: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/pubs/ph/details.cfm?id=10473>



## Defense and Regional Security in the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf States, 1973-2004 (An Annotated Bibliography)

By J. E. Peterson

### Abstract:

This is the most extensive annotated bibliography on the subject of Gulf security available. More than 2200 entries cover such subjects as oil security; the Iran-Iraq War; the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and subsequent Kuwait War; post-1991 policy towards Iraq and the Iraq War; and the involvement of the United States, Soviet Union/Russia, Europe, and China in the Gulf, including their bilateral relations with the Gulf states. Regional disputes and bilateral relations between littoral states are examined, as well as regional responses to security issues. The final section comprises coverage of internal aspects of Gulf security, including resurgent Islamists, Gulf military capabilities and arms transfers, and sections on each of the Gulf states. The text is accompanied by a comprehensive index of personal names and institutions.

*Language: English*



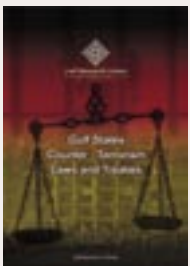
## Gulf States Counter-Terrorism Reports to the UN

By Gulf Research Center

### Abstract:

On 28 September 2001, the UN Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, adopted Resolution 1373 (2001), establishing the Counter-Terrorism Committee (the CTC). Under this resolution, all member States are requested to submit annual reports to the CTC on national steps taken to implement Counter Terrorism measures and laws. The UN Security Council has also established further reporting Systems in relation to Counter-Terrorism: Resolutions 1455 and 1540 establish the obligation of States to report on Terrorist Activities and on the prevention of use of WMD for Terrorist aims. The present publication collects all the reports in Arabic submitted by the nine Gulf states up to the date of publication and thus offers a good insight over the development of Counter-Terrorism measures in the region.

*Language: Arabic*



## Gulf States Counter-Terrorism Laws and Treaties

By Gulf Research Center

### Abstract:

Since 9/11 and the globalization of terrorist activity, the Gulf States have experienced an increase in Counter- Terrorism legislation, both on the regional and national level. This has led to the existence of a variety of definitions of Terrorism and of classifications of crimes and levels of involvement in terrorist activities – all valid simultaneously in the Gulf States. This legal publication aims to clarify the situation by offering a comprehensive collection of the main Counter- Terrorism laws and treaties.

*Language: Arabic and English*

### Gulf Yearbook 2005- 2006

By Gulf Research Center

#### Abstract:

The Gulf Yearbook 2005-2006 is the third volume in the annual series of the GRC Yearbook. Focusing on the events that have impacted on the Gulf region throughout the previous year, this year's publication picks up on where the last report ended and outlines the pivotal events of the year in terms of the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Iran, Iraq and Yemen and their relations with the broader regional and international environment. In a series of analytical chapters, the books looks at key issues such as political reform, economic development and the threat of terrorism Furthermore, an in-depth look is provided at the developments within the GCC states from a domestic, economic and foreign relations perspective. These items are complimented by a timeline of events for the year 2005.

*Language: Arabic and English*



### The Military Balance 2005-2006

Translated by the GRC

#### Abstract:

The Military Balance is an authoritative assessment of the military capabilities and defense economics of nearly 170 countries world-wide produced annually by the IISS. Detailed country-by-country entries list their military organization, personnel, weapons and equipment holdings, and relevant economic and demographic data. Region-by-region analyses cover the major military and economic developments affecting security policy and the trade in weapons and other military equipment. A comprehensive tabular section portrays key data on weapons and defense economics. The Military Balance is an indispensable handbook for anyone conducting serious studies of security policy and military affairs. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, founded in 1958, is an independent center for research, information and debate on the problems of conflict, however caused, that have, or potentially have, an important military content.

*Language: Arabic*



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The Spiegel

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Mustafa Alani

## ■ *Timeline: Iraq*

- **1 April**, Senior members of Iraq's ruling Shi'ite Alliance bloc call publicly for the first time for Ibrahim Al-Jaafari to step down as prime minister to break months of deadlock over a national unity government.
- **2 April**, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw arrive in Iraq on a surprise visit and declare impatience with the delays in the formation of the new government.
- **4 April**, The Iraqi tribunal announces that Saddam Hussein would be tried on genocide charges over the Anfal campaign against Kurds that left an estimated 180,000 people dead.
- **4 April**, Two Iraqi employees working for the United Arab Emirates embassy in Baghdad are killed in an attack
- **6 April**, Iraq's embattled prime minister vows to pursue his bid for a second term despite pressure from home and abroad to step down, signalling no early end to the standoff blocking a crucial national unity government.
- **9 April**, the Iraqi government criticizes Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak for saying civil war had started in Iraq, referring to his comments on the loyalty of Iraqi Shiites to Iran.
- **10 April**, Sunni Arab, Kurdish and secularist leaders emphatically reject Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari staying on in his post. The rejection of Al-Jaafari — blamed for failing to curb sectarian bloodshed since the bombing of a revered Shiite shrine in Samarra in February — came amid a renewed wave of violence that killed more than 100 Shiites in the previous week.
- **11 April**, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer denies at an official inquiry that he knew national wheat exporter AWB was paying huge sanctions-busting bribes to Saddam Hussein's Iraq.
- **11 April**, Iraq says it will boycott an Arab foreign ministers' meeting due to be held in Cairo on Wednesday to protest Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's comments on the loyalty of Iraqi Shiites to Iran.
- **19 April**, Prime Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari insists on another term, saying it is "out of the question" he will step down. Al-Jaafari's comments were made in a nationally televised news conference
- **21 April**, Iraq's largest parliamentary bloc, the Shia United Iraq Alliance (UIA), nominates Jawad Al-Maliki as its choice for the post of prime minister.
- **22 April**, Iraq's parliament elects Arab Sunni Islamist Mahmoud al-Mashhadani as its speaker as politicians began putting together a government after a four-month deadlock.
- **22 April**, Jalal Talabani, the first Kurdish president in Iraq's history is re-elected.
- **25 April**, The unification of the Kurdish cabinet has been unexpectedly postponed until the beginning of May. The cabinet was expected to be formed on April 26. Kurdistan Parliament speaker Adnan Mufti told Awene ( a local Iraqi newspaper) that the decision was made because the parliament will first be meeting with Iraqi and foreign delegations
- **27 April**, Shiite spiritual leader Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani calls for Iraq's next government to dismantle the deadly militias that have pushed the country to the brink of civil war. Sistani told prime minister designate Nuri al-Maliki in a meeting at his Najaf residence that militias must be disarmed and that weapons should be in the hands of the government alone.
- **27 April**, Iran's new ambassador to Iraq officially assumes his post in Baghdad, the first from the Islamic republic since 1980. Hassan Kazemi Qomi served as charge d'affaires to Baghdad for the past two years, although the two countries agreed to raise their representations to ambassadorial level in September 2004.
- **27 April**, Naji Rashid Al Nuaimi, 28, the first secretary at the United Arab Emirates Embassy was seized in Baghdad by gunmen who shot and killed his Sudanese driver.
- **20 May**, Iraq's parliament approves the line-up of a government of national unity proposed by Prime Minister-designate Nuri al-Maliki. Maliki, a Shi'ite Islamist, read out his programme to the 275-seat assembly after its approval of his cabinet.
- **22 May**, Iraq's new prime minister says his forces could be in charge in most of the country by December and aides of visiting British Prime Minister Tony Blair said all foreign troops may be gone within four years.
- **31 May**, Defence attorneys for Saddam Hussein accuses the prosecution of trying to buy a witness and putting

## ■ *Timeline: Iraq*

someone on the stand who perjured himself. Speaking from behind a curtain to hide his identity, a defence witness, who says he worked at a U.S. base, accused chief prosecutor Jaafar al-Moussawi of offering him money in 2004 to give false testimony.

- **2 June**, The BBC uncovers new video evidence that US forces may have been responsible for the deliberate killing of 11 innocent Iraqi civilians. The video appears to challenge the US military's account of events that took place in the town of Ishaqi in March.

- **3 June**, Iraq vows to press on with its own probe into the deaths of civilians in a U.S. raid on the town of Ishaqi, rejecting the U.S. military's exoneration of its forces.

- **4 June**, At least 43 people were killed across Iraq as Prime Minister Nuri Al Maliki fails to gain acceptance for his candidates to head key security ministries.

- **5 June**, His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, receives Hoshiyar Zebari, Iraqi Foreign Minister.

- **7 June**, U.S. warplanes killed Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the al Qaeda leader in Iraq blamed for bombings, beheadings and assassinations.

- **7 June**, About 594 prisoners are released in Iraq, state television reported, a day after new Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said a total of 2,500 would be freed to help foster national reconciliation. More than 100 of them were freed in the capital, a Reuter's reporter said.

- **8 June**, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al- Maliki presents his nominees for defence and interior ministers to parliament. He proposed Jawad al-Bolani, a Shi'ite, as interior minister and General Abdel Qader Jassim, a Sunni, as defence minister.

- **12 June**, President Mahmud Ahmadinejad holds talks with Iraqi Vice-President Adel Abdul Mehdi in Tehran.

- **13 June**, President George W. Bush makes a surprise visit to Baghdad where he pledged to stand by Iraq's new government until it could defend itself, while al Qaeda in Iraq threatened retaliation for the death of its leader.

- **14 June**, Followers of an Iraqi Shiite cleric attack the Iranian consulate in Basra and tears down its flag in protest

over criticism of their leader broadcast on Iranian television.

- **19 June**, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki announces that coalition troops will withdraw from the southern province of Al-Muthanna next month.

- **20 June**, Japan decides to withdraw its troops from Iraq, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi announced, ending the Japanese military's riskiest and most ambitious overseas mission since World War Two.

- **23 June**, Iraq releases 500 detainees from the infamous Abu Ghraib prison, the fifth batch of security suspects to be freed under reconciliation moves ordered by Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki.

- **25 June**, Iraq's prime minister unveiled a 24-point national reconciliation initiative Sunday, offering amnesty to insurgents who renounce violence and have not committed terror attacks.

- **26 June**, Seven Sunni Arab insurgent groups contact the government to declare their readiness to join in efforts at national reconciliation, a key Shiite legislator said.

- **26 June**, CNN reports that the U.S. military is planning to start reducing troop numbers

- **26 June**, spiritual leader, Shaikh Jamal Abdul Karim Al Dabban, was arrested by the US-led coalition plunging the war-ravaged country into yet another crisis.

- **27 June**, One of Iraq's largest Sunni Arab groups endorse the prime minister's national reconciliation plan, and the government announces new benefits aimed at paving the way for freed detainees to return to their normal lives.

- **27 June**, About 450 detainees have been released from Iraqi and US-run prisons under a national reconciliation plan aimed at bringing insurgents into the political process and ending the deadly tide of bloodshed in Iraq.

- **28 June**, Insurgents who have killed U.S. troops in Iraq would not be pardoned under the Iraqi government's amnesty plan, says Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki.

- **30 June**, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki goes to neighbouring Saudi Arabia to seek support for his national reconciliation initiative.



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