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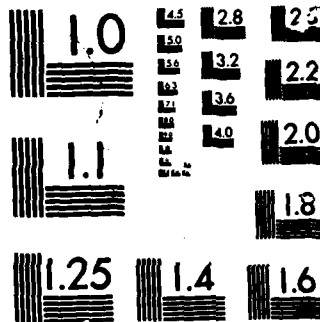
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A SOUTHWEST ASIAN BASING STRATEGY FOR USCENCOM

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL LEO M. LASKA, CE

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distance from a formal policy of accepting such a presence. With the exception of building and upgrading some facilities in Oman for contingency purposes, no significant success in solving the forward basing problem has been made. Six years have passed since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the taking of the American hostages in Iran. During that time, no further deterioration of U.S. strategic interests has occurred in the Persian Gulf. Since forward military basing cannot be given as a reason for a lack of deterioration, strong argument can be given to retain the status quo arrangement. Valid U.S. contingency interests can be served by planning to occupy "overbuilt" and existing facilities in the States of this region during an emergency.

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

A SOUTHWEST ASIAN BASING STRATEGY FOR USCENCOM
AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

By

Lieutenant Colonel Leo M. Laska, CE

Colonel Robert J. Lilley, MI
Project Adviser

US Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013
4 April 1986

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Leo M. Laska, LTC, CE

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Since President Carter's declaration of U.S. vital interests in the Persian Gulf in his State of the Union Message of 1981, the RDJTF, and more recently USCENTCOM, have pursued forward basing in the Southwest Asian Region. A detailing of these efforts points out the extreme difficulty in meeting each Southwest Asian country's requirements while trying to satisfy a U.S. military strategic goal. Persian Gulf states friendly to the U.S. privately recognize the security value of U.S. military presence, but publicly must maintain distance from a formal policy of accepting such a presence. With the exception of building and upgrading some facilities in Oman for contingency purposes, no significant success in solving the forward basing problem has been made. Six years have passed since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the taking of the American hostages in Iran. During that time, no further deterioration of U.S. strategic interests has occurred in the Persian Gulf. Since forward military basing cannot be given as a reason for a lack of deterioration, strong argument can be given to retain the status quo arrangement. Valid U.S. contingency interests can be served by planning to occupy "overbuilt" and existing facilities in the States of this region during an emergency.

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"We need combat forces in being, ready for immediate deployment...widely disposed on strategic airbases, and capable of rapid concentration anywhere, over suitable airways and connecting bases."

"Touey" Spaatz

General, USAF, 1948 (1)

"An overseas basing structure, supported by essential operating rights - such as staging and overflight - continues to be important to our ability to carry out foreign obligations and support the foreign and security policies of the United States..."

William P. Rogers

Secretary of State, 1971 (2)

These two quotations, 23 years apart, suggest a continuity of policy throughout the period of development of our overseas base structure. The evolution of the network of bases and rights did not, however, follow a master plan. Rather, the basing structure, as well as the overflight and staging rights associated with it, developed haphazardly over the years as a result of ad hoc decisions, in response to specific events, requirements and technological developments. This holds true equally for barracks in Germany, airfields in Morocco and Thailand, or naval facilities in Japan. Events

and requirements today suggest a necessity for similar forward basing of elements of the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM).

Generally, it can be said that all bases, facilities and military installations overseas serve an important political function. In varying degrees, they combine presence with reassurance, and in general they show the flag to friend and foe alike. (3) While this partially explains the US desire for forward basing of USCENTCOM forces, the primary reason is much more pragmatic.

President Jimmy Carter proclaimed, on 23 January 1980 in his State of the Union Address, that "...an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." (4)

This statement of American foreign Policy caused military planners to be faced with a serious dilemma. In order for this policy to have credibility, it had to be clearly demonstrated that the United States had not only the will, but the means to carry it out. At the time of President Carter's address, the United States lacked the requisite military capability to enforce his doctrine. What did happen is that he set in motion several political, military and diplomatic initiatives which promoted the development of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF), the organizational forerunner to the United States Central

Command.

March of 1979 might be viewed as the turning point for the development of American foreign policy in Southwest Asia. Reacting to the loss of the "strategic prize" of Iran, on 28 February 1979 the National Security Council met and proposed a new strategic policy in this "arc of instability."

The cornerstone of early planning was the realization that, to respond to a crisis in the region, the United States had to possess not only ready military forces, prepared and equipped for desert warfare, but, more importantly, access to regional military facilities. An inescapable fact in logistics planning for combat operations in Southwest Asia is that there is virtually

...no area of the world more distant from the United States than the Persian Gulf. Airline distances from the east coast of the United States to the Gulf exceed 7,000 miles. By sea...distances range from 8,500 nautical miles via the Suez Canal to 12,000 nautical miles via the Cape of Good Hope. (5)

An integral factor in the evolving strategy for Southwest Asia was the planning to overcome this critical logistic-support obstacle. Recognizing the apparent shift in regional attitudes towards closer cooperation with the United States, the President, in a National Security Council meeting on 4 December 1979, directed the Pentagon to conduct a study to locate potential sites for military bases or facilities in

the region. While one task force continued to study military force response options, another was making recommendations on the question of regional military facilities.

We should note that the timing of this NSC meeting was not accidental. The sense of urgency about this project seems to have been caused by the failure of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to provide the President with a viable military response to the takeover of the embassy in Teheran. This suggests that nearly two months before his State of the Union Speech, Carter had decided on a military force option. Thus, the first step in implementing this option was the Presidential decision to secure bases in Southwest Asia.

On 14 December 1979 the Secretary of State directed Mr. Reginald Bartholomew, then Assistant Secretary of State for Political/Military Affairs and Director of the Southwest Asia Special Task Force, and Robert J. Munnay, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near East and South Asia, to go to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Somalia, and Kenya to open negotiations to secure access to military facilities for American air, ground, and naval forces. Bartholomew was able to reach tentative agreements with the Foreign Ministers of Kenya, Somalia and Oman on the general terms of the arrangements for military facilities usage by the RDJTF.

Kenya's agreement came first, followed closely by Somalia. Oman proved to be surprisingly more difficult; negotiations were unexpectedly broken off because of Omani misunderstandings about the actual size of the American

facilities to be constructed and the number of American personnel required to build and maintain these facilities. As an Arab Muslim country bordering on the Gulf, Oman was in a very tenuous position with respect to subtle pressures from Saudi Arabia. It was an extremely difficult choice between the requirement for security and fears that an influx of Western military and civilian workers would cause internal instability in the Sultanate.

While the search and the negotiations were taking place, there were some critical discussions of the strategic rationale and the relative merits of these widely separated countries. In retrospect, one can delineate three reasons for the selection of those countries. First, the Southwest Asia Task Force, operating under the National Security Council, coordinated the work of the State Department, the Pentagon, and the Central Intelligence Agency. This joint project had one objective: to develop realistic proposals for military facilities in Southwest Asia. This was neither haphazard nor accidental, but it was a crisis management effort, given the temporal constraints. Second, the underlying objective was to locate the best possible combination of naval, air, and ground facilities, relative geographic proximity to the Gulf, and political and institutional stability within the potential host nations. Third, the cementing factor which narrowed the alternatives to these three was that these countries had quietly and unofficially expressed a guarded willingness to entertain

official, concrete proposals. (6)

If we examine these interlocking factors closely, taking into consideration the geopolitical realities of the region, it would be tendentious to question either the rationale or the merits of these three choices as a package deal. Once the President made the decisions to proceed during the National Security Council meeting on 4 December 1979, the only remaining issues were to determine the ultimate price tag and to secure the tacit agreement of the Saudis not to oppose Omani participation in these negotiations. Underlying this entire project was the recognition that the regional countries were extremely sensitive about how their "cooperation" with the United States might be viewed by the other Arab and African states. In addition, there was some doubt in the minds of the regional leaders as to the "real" mission of the RDJTF, a subject which will be covered below.

The Omani agreement could be the linchpin of the RDJTF's strategic planning because of Oman's proximity to the Gulf. In return for \$210 million in direct military assistance, we have been granted facilities in several locations in the Sultanate. These include the former RAF air base on Masirah Island, harbor facilities at Muscat and Salalah, three small airfields located on the interior mainland, and a divisional cantonment area at Seeb. (7) Reportedly, in 1974 Sultan Qabus offered the United States the British lease for the island of Masirah for \$4 million per year, but at that time Oman was not even on the foreign policy agenda of the State

Department. In fact, we did not even have a military attache stationed there. The Ford Administration appeared to have adopted the Nixon approach by continuing to depend on the Shah of Iran to maintain regional security and internal stability. Hence, the Sultan's offer of Masirah was never seriously considered, except by the National Security Agency.

Five factors were considered in the selection of Kenya. First, Kenya was viewed not as a jumping-off point for the forward assault echelons of the RDJTF but rather as a staging area for reinforcements which would arrive within 30 days of the first commitment of the RDJTF. Second, as a stable, economically advanced Third World country with traditional ties to the West, Kenya possessed modern medical facilities and excellent recreational activities. Thus it could serve both as a casualty evacuation and treatment center and as a rest and recreation location for sailors and Marines of the RDJTF. Third, Kenya possessed excellent field training areas constructed by the RAF and the Royal Marines. These could be used by an embarked Marine Amphibious Brigade for periodic training exercises. Fourth, in a more global view, with Soviet involvement through Cuban surrogates on both coasts of Africa, the military facilities in Kenya could be viewed as an excellent contingency location from which to carry out combat operations in Africa, should that ever be necessary. Finally, a solid record of military cooperation and military sales existed between the United States and Kenya.

The tentative agreement with Somalia was quite a

different story. Although finally signed on 22 August 1980, it ran into unforeseen and heated opposition in Congress. Without digressing into Somalia's shift of allegiance from the Soviets to the United States or into the complexities of the bitter border dispute between Ethiopia and Somalia over the Ogaden region, we should note that a number of Congressmen, led by Representative Charles D. Long (D-Maryland), Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, refused to approve any military aid for Somalia until all Somali troops had been withdrawn from the Ogaden. During the last week in August, Richard Moose, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, testified before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa that the United States had been assured both orally and in writing that Somali regular forces were not in the Ogaden and would not be introduced there. Nevertheless, the Chairman of this subcommittee, Stephen J. Solarz (D-New York), expressed opposition to the Somali pact, stating that it could embroil the United States in an African war. In an attempt to allay these fears, Abdullah Ahmed Addou, the Somali Minister of Finance and a member of the Somali negotiating team, stated on 5 September 1980 that "we have no desire, intention or interest to drag the United States into a local conflict...all regular forces have been withdrawn or are being withdrawn from the Ogaden." (8)

Notwithstanding these assurances, the Ethiopian Chief of State, Mengistu Haile Mariam, sent a personal message to

leaders of 36 countries and dispatched special envoys to 34 nations, including the United States, to mount a concerted protest against American "interference" in the Horn of Africa. His special envoy to the Western Hemisphere nations, Major Dawit Wolde-Giorgis, charged in a press conference on 23 September 1980 that the American agreement with Somalia was an act of provocation that could ignite another war in the Horn of Africa because the RDJTF could be used against Marxist Ethiopia to protect the Russian-built port of Berbera, located only 117 miles from the border with Ethiopia. Major Dawit concluded by denying that the Soviets had bases or facilities inside Ethiopia, claiming that "we don't want to be trapped into this East-West business and lose our independence." (9)

Archrival Ethiopia was not the only African country to voice concern over the Somali agreement. Kenya, led by President Daniel Arap Moi, was also in a long-standing border dispute with Somalia and feared American arms would tip the balance in favor of the Somalis. Kasanga Malwa, chairman of the Kenyan Parliament's Defense Foreign Relations Committee, said that he was "alarmed by the continued sale of arms to Somalia because of Somali irredentist claims to Kenya and Djibouti."

In both cases these objections appear to be somewhat disingenuous. Ethiopia is by any measure in the Soviet camp, with thousands of Cuban combat troops and Soviet advisers stationed there. At the same time, many incorrectly thought

Somalia was winning the Ogaden border war long before American arms became an issue. To the south, Kenya had little room to be critical of Somalia since it was agreeing to essentially the same arms aid package as Somalia.

Intertwined with this search for facilities usage agreements in Southwest Asia was the underlying conflict between the apparent necessity to reach agreements expeditiously and the requirement to maintain a patient, measured approach which would take into account the political sensitivities of the regional countries to agreements with what many regard as an imperialist, colonial superpower. One example should illustrate this problem. One of the Pentagon studies conducted on potential Omani facilities was forwarded to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs for approval. This study recommended that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dispatch an engineer battalion and a large number of civilian contract support personnel to Oman within thirty days of the signing of an agreement. This unit would begin an intensive construction program to develop a division-sized cantonment at Seeb, just outside of the Capital, Muscat. Major projects for this cantonment included putting in streets and principal access roads, laying water, sewer, and underground utilities, and building concrete slabs for the prefabricated modular barracks and headquarters buildings.

Bartholomew and Ransom, Acting Director of Near East and South Asian Affairs in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, were able to

convince the senior officers on the Joint Chiefs of Staff that such a plan was precipitate and counterproductive. In contrast, the approach which Bartholomew, Ransom, and Murray propounded was to arrive at agreements through a series of tacit understandings in return for various quid pro quos. For example, a basic agreement for access to a port facility would be made in return for sale of an advanced weapons system. This weapons system would necessitate the added presence of a significant number of American support personnel, technicians, trainers, and administrators in the host nation. Once the host nation became accustomed to this presence, modest expansion could take place, perhaps concurrently, with additional weapons purchases in return for expanded facilities usage agreements.

The case of Saudi Arabia offers a particularly vivid example of this method. The loan of AWACS to Saudi Arabia following the outbreak of the Yemen crisis in March of 1979 and again after the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war in September of 1980 did more than simply demonstrate renewed U.S. support for Saudi Arabia. As part of the AWACS loan, the Saudis agreed to allow us to modernize two major Saudi air facilities, a project which required the presence of several hundred additional American construction workers on an extended "temporary" basis in the Kingdom. At the same time, AWACS aircraft support crews, maintenance personnel, and management and administrative experts were required to keep these aircraft in the air. At no time have the Saudis

set a specific ceiling on the number of American civilian or military personnel.

Pentagon and State Department officials have conceded that the United States has been able to station a large contingent of Air Force personnel in Saudi Arabia on a rotating, temporary duty basis since that time. In addition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has an open-ended contract to modernize or construct new facilities for the Saudi Army and the National Guard. This project includes strengthening and lengthening runways at four air force bases and construction of new barracks for Saudi soldiers. The significant point here is that these facilities appear to be far in excess of what the Saudi military would ever use in the future. This suggests that these facilities might one day be used by USCENCOM.

This variation to the Bartholomew-Ransom approach has come to be known as the "over-build" technique. Despite media claims to the contrary, there is no evidence of any written agreements between the United States and Saudi Arabia about American military bases on the Arabian Peninsula. Indeed, it is difficult to envision the Saudis signing such an agreement--ever. This does not preclude tacit or "off the record" understandings which have allowed American policy makers and military planners to proceed this far. The construction and military assistance programs in Saudi Arabia are not only ongoing, but the favorable resolution of the AWACS issue could have a direct impact on the future

capability of USCENTCOM to intervene in the Gulf region. The prepositioning of selected military equipment, specifically medical supplies and ammunition for tank and anti-tank weapons systems and for fighter and attack aircraft, may be one of our future rewards for AWACS. This prepositioning would be a vital step in logistic-support planning for USCENTCOM.

In addition to Somalia, Kenya, and Oman, two other nations have offered facilities and locations for prepositioning of RDJTF equipment. An Israeli offer in September of 1981 to store prepositioned stocks appeared to have merit, but it had to be discounted because any Israeli-American agreement for RDJTF support would be viewed with grave suspicion by Arab leaders. For this reason both Secretary of State Alexander Haig and Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger attempted to downplay the Israeli offer. (10) American forces based in Israel could not be called into a Persian Gulf nation to assist in putting down a destabilizing insurgency or to hold vital oil fields. Such an action could guarantee rather than prevent the down-fall of the legitimate ruler, and "would create a wave of Arabic Islamic revulsion...which would be disastrous to American interests in the Middle East and the Gulf." (11)

On the other hand, while Sadat was unwilling to sign a formal agreement, during February of 1979 he offered Secretary of Defense Harold Brown the use of the expeditionary camp of Ras Banas/Berenice on the Red Sea.

This facility could be of particular importance because of its potential as a forward staging area for the 82nd Airborne Division, a vital element of the RDJTF, and as a refueling and rearming base for strategic aircraft supporting ground troops or interdicting Soviet armored columns. Congress allocated \$187 million reprogrammed Fiscal Year 1981 funds for construction at Ras Banas. The Fiscal Year 1982 budget initially allocated nearly \$106 million for lengthening runways, building storage facilities for prepositioned support equipment, and constructing platforms for troop tents. However, the Senate cut this amount to \$70 million and the House dropped it entirely from the budget. Moreover, construction funded in 1981 was not begun because Congress refused to release the funds until a written agreement was signed with Egypt. (12)

Ras Banas is not only one of the two most vital places (for the RDJTF) in the region, but most probably would have been the site selected for the forward command post for the RDJTF commander. Ras Banas is particularly attractive for three other reasons. First, it is near the most likely locations for the commitment of the RDJTF--Saudi Arabia and Iran. Second, it is so far from any inhabited area that there is little danger of hostile local reaction to the presence of American troops on Egyptian soil. Third, it is outside tactical aircraft range of any hostile country in the region, i.e. Syria.

American access to any of these military facilities in a

crisis would always depend on the acquiescence of the regional leaders. However, we do possess constant access to the Indian Ocean atoll of Diego Garcia.

For a number of years Diego Garcia, part of what is now called the British Indian Ocean Territory, remained a base to which Navy personnel were exiled. Even during the Vietnam era it played a very small role in American defense planning. Not until after the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971 did the Pentagon begin to realize the significance of Diego Garcia. To a large degree we were forced into positive action. Following the contingency deployment of a carrier strike force and an embarked Marine Amphibious Unit to the Indian Ocean during the Indo-Pakistan crisis, Pentagon planners discovered we could not sustain naval forces in that region for any length of time. Moreover, the Soviets possessed an enviable string of port facilities on both sides of the Indian Ocean.

In 1975 the Pentagon proposed a modest upgrading of this small atoll, to include extending its one runway from 8,000 to 12,000 feet to handle P-3 antisubmarine aircraft and C-141 cargo jets. In addition, the anchorage would be expanded and ammunition and fuel depots would be constructed. The same countries which had granted the Soviet Navy facilities in Aden, Berbera and Vishakhapatnam sounded the international distress signal over this rather modest proposal, while simultaneously calling for the Indian Ocean to be declared a Zone of Peace. Originally a Russian initiative, it appeared

to be designed to prevent an upgrading of American naval capability in the area; meanwhile the Russians would be allowed to continue to maintain their "peaceful" maritime presence in the region.

Despite international protests, Congressional opposition and President Carter's brief flirtation with the Zone of Peace proposal, the expansion of facilities on Diego Garcia became a major factor in the evolution of our Southwest Asia strategy. The deployment of carrier task forces to the Arabian Sea in response to the Yemen Crisis in March of 1979 reemphasized the need for expanded naval support facilities in the Indian Ocean. The Fiscal Year 1981 budget approved over \$300 million for naval and aviation construction programs, reflecting deepening concern in Congress about this critical deficiency. The Fiscal Year 1982 budget submitted by Carter requested \$169 million for Diego Garcia, while Reagan requested an additional \$39 million for RDJTF-related construction on the atoll.

The strategic value of Diego Garcia has been part of the foregoing narrative because of its importance in the overall search for facilities for USCENCOM in Southwest Asia. Although over 2,000 miles from the Strait of Hormuz, Diego Garcia is a secure, dependable base for USCENCOM and for the Navy's de facto Indian Ocean fleet, providing a home for the maritime prepositioning ships.

This analysis of the search for military facilities confirms that there was a coordinated effort at the highest

levels, apparently led by the Pentagon and the National Security Council, to match military requirements with geopolitical realities in Southwest Asia. When it became evident that we had no capability to project and sustain ground and naval forces into a hostile environment in the Persian Gulf, a number of interdependent diplomatic and military planning initiatives were undertaken. This would refute the claim that the Carter Doctrine was simply a knee-jerk reaction; rather it appears to have been the evolutionary product of an interdepartmental planning process. (13)

But what has been the product of all these diplomatic and military planning efforts? At best it can only be characterized as a mixed bag. In Oman the U.S. secured construction appropriations beginning in 1981 for runway construction and facilities to upgrade on Masirah Island. Additionally, facilities were built and upgraded at Seeb and Thumrait. These programs represent the most successful U.S. effort at providing force projection facilities custom-suited to USCENTCOM requirements. As a practical matter, it should also be noted that when these facilities were completed, they were occupied by Omani military forces. The result is that when "Bright Star" and other exercises are conducted, U.S. military must continually renegotiate for their use.

No facilities have been built custom-suited for USCENTCOM use at either Kenya or Somalia. The tenuous political situation in Somalia has been the major obstacle in

trying to secure congressional funding for any type of facilities upgrade. USCENTCOM has, however, tested arrangements for facilities use by conducting joint exercises on Somali soil. Limitations of existing facilities, considered spartan, particularly for U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force usage, have been proven through these exercises. Facilities have been also sparsely utilized in Kenya. Though much better than Somalia, the distances from the Persian Gulf make them less desirable for heavy U.S. investment in facilities upgrade. Existence of arrangements with Kenya remain valuable mostly for contingency purposes previously described.

The facilities arrangements in Egypt are another story. President Anwar Sadat formally authorized the use by U.S. military forces of the facilities at Ras Banas in a tensely worded letter sent in August 1981. Plans to expand and upgrade the facilities were immediately began. Naval facilities built but never used by the Soviet Union in 1970-1971 and extensive hardened command and control facilities made upgrade plans relatively easy and cost effective.

The assassination of Sadat on 6 October 1981 aborted these plans however. The new government of President Hosni Mubarak flatly refused to formally endorse Sadat's earlier agreement. Privately Mubarak agreed to abide with the promise of use of Ras Banas with upgrade to be done discreetly and with an absolute minimum of U.S. military and contractor presence. U.S. negotiators, at the insistence of

the U.S. Congress, continued to strive for a more formal agreement that became more and more tied to U.S. military and economic aid to Egypt. This U.S. argument proved unsuccessful in that the heavy level of U.S. military and economic aid were a condition of the Camp David Peace Accords and unrelated to U.S. desires for base rights at Ras Banas or elsewhere in Egypt. In the FY1982 and FY1983 military construction appropriations package, funds were reluctantly authorized by Congress. The bills contained language that required the modernization and upgrade to be accomplished by U.S. construction companies supervised by U.S. government personnel. To accomplish this, a requirement existed to ascertain the status in Egypt of all these American entities. The Egyptians again balked at what they considered a back door U.S. attempt to formalize the presence of a U.S. base in Egypt. Negotiations ground on and the result has been no agreement and no U.S. upgrade of facilities at Ras Banas.

Political events directly involving the United States in the Persian Gulf have been relatively dormant from 1983 to the present. Soviet involvement in Afghanistan has shown no evidence of spilling outside the borders towards the Persian Gulf. The regional struggle between Iran and Iraq occupies the attention of the governments of the region and finally, an ample world oil supply accompanied by tremendous downward price pressure has caused a lessening of western interest in the Gulf region. The problem is that except for the facilities built in Oman and the periodic military exercises

with friendly regional governments, the U.S. position with regards to forward basing has not materially changed since President Carter's 1980 State of the Union Address.

The dream of one day forward-locating elements of USCENTCOM in or near the Persian Gulf has not come to fruition. This awaits the occurrence of some event that materially and significantly serves the vital interests of the United States and one or more of the states in the region.

A strong argument can be made that not only is this not a bad situation, but preferable to the potentially destabilizing effects of physically stationing U.S. forces in the region during the current status quo. Six years have passed since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan with no shifting of the US/USSR balance in the region. The U.S. is not a player in the Iran-Iraq conflict and the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian question is in the diplomatic arena. American efforts to tip the diplomatic scales with the U.S. Marines in Lebanon was an abject lesson in the improper use of force projection.

The risk of maintaining the status quo arrangement in the region is that the United States is unable to preposition war stocks in the region except for small amounts in Saudi Arabia. Again, a strong case could be made that a potential Soviet threat in the region would be telegraphed sufficiently in advance that would first galvanize regional support for U.S. military presence at precisely the spot where it is

needed. Secondly, war stocks in the configuration needed could be assembled and brought to the region with a speed dictated by the seriousness of the situation.

SUMMARY

Since President Carter decreed vital U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf, U.S. efforts to forward locate U.S. bases in the region have been mostly unsuccessful. Political events have not occurred in this seeming vacuum that have acted to the detriment to U.S. interests. In the absence, then, of any political event that seriously threatens U.S. interests and/or those of our friends in the Persian Gulf region, U.S. policy should be to maintain dialogue and negotiations for possible future forward basing in the area short of concessions to permanently introduce forces. Close military ties have been and will continue to be strengthened by joint exercises and similar bilateral/multi-lateral military contacts.

All these actions give recognition to the lack of common and near-term threat to the U.S. and states in the Persian Gulf. If an event so significant should occur that transcends these differences, the matter of forward basing will be a moot one and base rights will be given. In the meantime, a decision to do nothing is probably the best course of action.

ENDNOTES

1. Samuel P. Huntington, The Common Defense: Strategic Programs in National Politics, p. 45.
2. William P. Rogers, "United States Foreign Policy-1969-1970; A Report of the Secretary of State," Department of State Publication 8575, 1971, p. 169.
3. Herbert G. Hagerty, "Forward Deployment in the 1970's and 1980's," National Security Affairs Monograph 72-2, February 1977, p. 8.
4. President Jimmy Carter, "State of the Union Address," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 38/4, 26 January 1981, p. 201.
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