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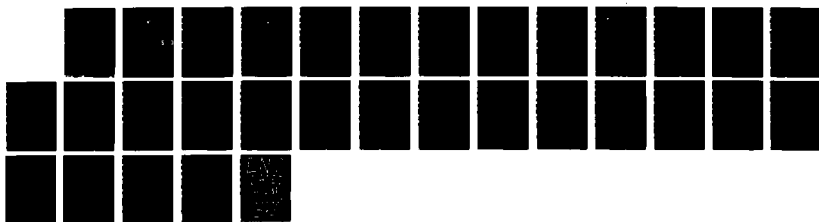
SAUDI ARABIA: THE FULCRUM OF US NATIONAL SECURITY IN
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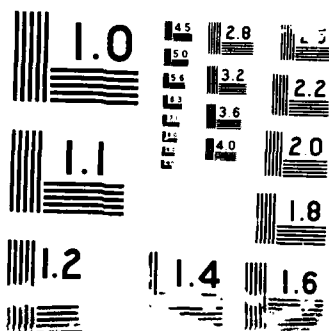
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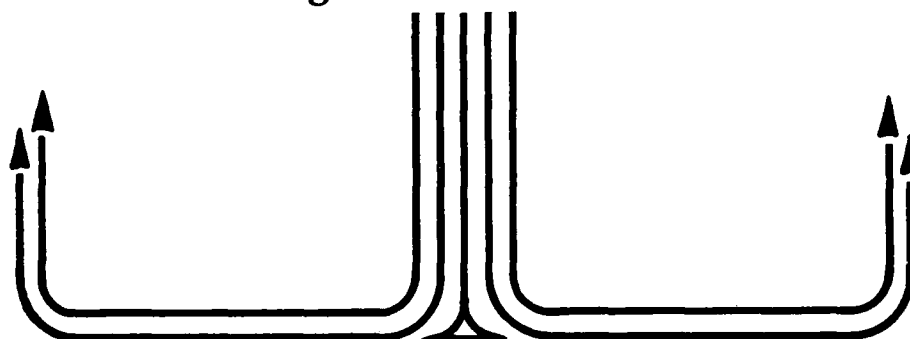
AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

STUDENT REPORT

**Saudi Arabia: The Fulcrum
of U.S. National Security in
Southwest Asia**

Maj Stephen J. Andersen 88-105
"insights into tomorrow"

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REPORT NUMBER 88-105
TITLE SAUDI ARABIA: THE FULCRUM OF U.S.
NATIONAL SECURITY IN SOUTHWEST ASIA

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requirements for graduation.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this paper is to educate individuals not acquainted with the Arab culture. The United States Government has been less than reliable as a security assistance partner for most Arab nations. There are many costs associated with the current policies, and few benefits. The arguments presented are hoped to produce a beneficial exchange of views concerning the true costs, benefits, and potentials of future security assistance policies with Arab nations in Southwest Asia.

The author wishes to express his appreciation to Dr. Russell Ramsey for his help and guidance in writing this dissertation.

Subject to clearance, this manuscript will be submitted to Strategic Review for consideration.



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Major Stephen J. Andersen received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Management from the United States Air Force Academy in 1974 and a Master's of Business Administration in Management Degree from Golden Gate University in 1984. During his Air Force career, Major Andersen has flown both F-4 and F-15 aircraft. He is a senior pilot with over 2,000 hours of flying time and a graduate of the F-15 Division, USAF Fighter Weapons School. He has held numerous positions on both squadron and wing staffs. Prior to his last assignment he was Chief of the Weapons and Tactics Division for the 405th Tactical Training Wing at Luke AFB. He recently returned from a 29-month tour in Saudi Arabia where he served as Kingdom Weapons and Tactics Advisor for Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) F-15 operations, and later as Technical Assistance Field Team (TAFT) Chief at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. He is currently a student at Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

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GLOSSARY

AGE.....	Auxillary Ground Equipment
AWACS.....	Airborne Warning and Control
C ³ I.....	Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence
CENTAF.....	Central Command's Air Forces
FMS.....	Foreign Military Sales
GCC.....	Gulf Cooperation Council
IIAF.....	Islamic Iranian Air Force
PAC.....	Political Action Committee
RSAF.....	Royal Saudi Air Force
SLOC.....	Strategic Line of Communication
TAFT.....	Technical Assistance Field Team
U.S.....	United States
USAF.....	United States Air Force
USCENTCOM.....	United States Central Command



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REPORT NUMBER

88-105

AUTHOR(S)

MAJOR STEPHEN J. ANDERSEN

TITLE

SAUDI ARABIA: THE FULCRUM OF U.S. NATIONAL
SECURITY IN SOUTHWEST ASIA

I. Purpose: To show that relations with Saudi Arabia, good and bad, directly impact the American ability to project power and influence in Southwest Asia. This, in turn, impacts upon our own national security.

II. Problem: Given the need for the United States to be in Southwest Asia, how important is Saudi Arabia for viable American power projection, and what role does Foreign Military Sales play in maintaining U.S. interests there?

III. Data: Since the espousal of the Carter Doctrine, the United States has been firmly committed to a military presence in the Persian Gulf. The Iranian revolution caused serious problems for our regional powerbase since we no longer had permanent basing rights for our military forces. Our presence, of necessity, became predominantly a naval one. Our relationship with Israel has created stumbling blocks in our dealings with Arab nations of the Gulf region. Saudi Arabia occupies a singular position among Arab Gulf States due to her size, influence, geographical position, and wealth. Our historical relationship with the Saudis has been good, but our future relationship with the Saudis is inexorably linked to our sale of defensive military equipment

—CONTINUED—

and training in the use of that equipment. Recent actions by the U.S. Congress regarding these sales has created a perception in the Saudi government that the United States may be unreliable as a security assistance partner. A close relationship with Saudi Arabia is important to the United States for several reasons. Saudi Arabia can act as intermediary for the United States with more belligerent Arab states. She may allow us to use national facilities during periods of crisis. Most importantly, she is the only regional power respected and feared by both Iran and Iraq, and plays an important role in containing that war. Saudi Arabia is a large country with extensive borders and sparse population. Her defense is largely dependent upon airpower, C³ links, and modern technology. Like the United States, Saudi Arabia must compensate for a relatively small manpower pool through technological superiority. The Saudis expect military sales sufficient to meet their defensive needs in reciprocation for their diplomatic efforts on our behalf.

IV. Conclusion: The sale of American military equipment to Saudi Arabia forms a critical link in the chain which cements our countries' relationship. If they perceive that we are an unwilling or unreliable partner in their national security efforts, they will look for another partner. The loss of that influence and potential powerbase to the United States will significantly affect our own national security in dealing with the current and any future crisis in the world's petrochemical breadbasket -- the Persian Gulf.

V. Recommendation: The Department of State and Department of Defense, as focal points for the United States Government in conducting foreign affairs, need persuasive material to advocate foreign military sales to Saudi Arabia. Key individuals within our executive and legislative branches must be educated on Saudi's role in maintaining stability in the Persian Gulf, and our own need for them as an influential ally within the region. Government agencies must be made aware of the potential risks and costs to our own national security if future arms sales proposals are refused or denied, resulting in further alienation of the Saudi Arabian Government. This paper advocates future foreign military sales to the Saudis and presents arguments and rationale in support of these sales.

INTRODUCTION

Given the need for the United States to be in Southwest Asia, how important is Saudi Arabia as an ally for viable American power projection, and what role does Foreign Military Sales (FMS) play in maintaining U.S. interests there?

In the process of answering these questions, I will present some regional interests and perspectives, followed by United States interests and the historical Saudi - American relationship. Then I will cover some of the principal stabilizing and destabilizing factors at work in the region. Two questions may come to mind. Why is Saudi Arabia the best choice of a U.S. ally in Southwest Asia, and why are arms sales vital in creating a pro-western military ally? While answering those questions I will endeavor to also show why American national security is directly affected by our relationship with the Saudis.

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

As Gulf countries have developed, fueled by oil revenues, the [United States] and the West have come to recognize a range of important additional interests - commercial, financial, military and political - in the region. But oil remains at the heart of the critical Western strategic interest in the Gulf. (12:1)

In speaking before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January 1987, Secretary of State George Schultz had this to say about the Persian Gulf region and American interests, "...[I]t is critical to the economic health of the West. An interruption in the flow of oil or control of these energy resources by an unfriendly power could have devastating effects on the pattern of world trade and on our economy." (10:163)

Arab countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, have perceived U.S. policy as inconsistent since the Watergate debacle. As Congress took a much larger hand in shaping policy, they saw

...[policy] that was formerly based on consistent principles [had] been exchanged for one that [was] subject to tremendous domestic pressures. These domestic pressures included ... the presumption that the Israeli position [was] the preferred U.S. position. Arabs further feel that the merits of their case are often not even brought to light, much less considered. (4:26)

Following the Iranian revolution, many Arab leaders felt they had to be very cautious in dealing with the United States. Monarchies constitute over one-half of the governments in Southwest Asia, and fear of similar revolutions is real and tangible. This fact is often overlooked by American policymakers, but it accounts for Arab leaders' refusal to make formal agreements on basing rights or port access for American forces.

Historical hatred between Arabs and Persians (Iranians) is another factor often forgotten by Westerners. This ageless schism is demonstrated by something as simple as the name for the body of water that separates the Arabian peninsula and Asian landmass.

Iranians and the world at large call it the *Persian Gulf*. Arab nations unanimously call it the *Arabian Gulf*. Mis-speaking the name in the presence of either faction can cause immediate credibility problems for a Westerner. Informed individuals therefore simply refer to "the Gulf." This is but one example of a deeper and far reaching hatred between the two peoples.

The final, but perhaps most important perspective to keep in mind is the multifaceted aspect of loyalty in Middle Eastern culture. The region is renowned for its outward hospitality and friendship, but less known is the hierarchy of feuding. Feuds, when they occur, often span generations. The hierarchy can best be summed up by a bit of folklore well known to outsiders who visit the region: "Me against my brother; my brother and I against our cousin; my brother, my cousin and I against another tribe; and Arab brothers against the infidel." The hierarchy will band together to confront the greatest threat, and as each threat is eliminated the hierarchy will roll back. This culture of subtleties and fine distinctions makes it necessary for foreigners to deal with Arabs on an informal basis, if they wish to create meaningful policy. Each relationship between an Arab nation and the United States needs to be individualized to obtain best results for both parties.

U.S. INTERESTS IN SOUTHWEST ASIA

What are United States national interests with regard to the Persian Gulf region? Melvin A. Conant articulated U.S. National Interests as follows:

First, maintain uninterrupted access to Gulf energy. Second, limit the expansion of influence of the Soviet Union. Third, help insure the security and independence of all Gulf states from external aggression or foreign-inspired domestic subversion. Finally, help insure the independence of Israel from external aggression. (5:59)

These interests are the principal reason for policy actions the United States has taken in recent years. The United States is the only major power capable of mobilizing enough force to protect Western interests (1:121), but this fact also creates our critical need for a power projection base within the area. Geographic location and distance eliminate the ability to project power from American bases in the Continental United States, Europe, or the Pacific. We need a formal ally, a friend, or a nation sympathetic to our national interests which is also close to the potential theater of action in order to safeguard our vital interests.

OUR HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP

Saudi Arabia occupies a singularly important location within the Gulf arena. The Arabian peninsula lies with the Persian [Arabian] Gulf on its eastern shore and the Red Sea on its western shore. "[The Gulf side of Saudi Arabia contains] 60 percent of the world's proven oil resources, [while the Middle East] . . . has over

75 percent [of the] world's spare producing capacity." (5:57) The Red Sea provides Indian Ocean access to European markets through the Suez Canal. The Federal Republic of Germany is an especially large consumer of Gulf oil, along with Japan. The strategic importance of Saudi Arabia, with oil resources on the eastern side and strategic lines of communication (SLOCs) along her western border, becomes inherently clear.

The United States has succeeded in diminishing its own need for Gulf oil, but our Western allies remain critically dependent upon oil from this region. However, European influence has been reduced to an impotent state, and Japan is reluctant to engage in global power politics. (1:121)

FORCES OF INSTABILITY

What forces are at work causing instability in the Gulf? "Four principal sources of instability [arise]: territorial disputes, religious cleavages, ethnic dissension, and ideological contests." (7:10) In the first case, the Iran-Iraq War offers the most dramatic example. What is less known is that several other countries in the region are also involved in border disputes, though on an infinitely smaller scale than the Gulf War. Some examples are, Saudi Arabia - Kuwait - Iraq, Saudi Arabia - Oman, and North - South Yemen. The miles of endless desert and oil reserves underneath make national borders financially important, yet hard to ascertain or prove. There is a constant battle going on along virtually all borders in the region. These disputes have occurred for as long as the nations have existed. The only ones unaffected are the bedouins

who continue to wander back and forth across the borders without concern for national identity.

Iran is a pervasive threat to stability, alone or in conjunction with Iraq in their Gulf War. "President Carter, in his State of the Union Address of January 23, 1980, committed the United States to the military defense of the Gulf from 'external' threats." (7:9) The "Revolutionary Islamic" Iranian Navy has become a menace to shipping in the Gulf. Ship attacks and boardings are commonplace. It appears no spot in the Gulf is safe from Iranian attacks unless protected by superior forces.

Iraq also contributes to the regional instability. In its attempt to cut Iran's economic oil lifeline, Iraq has struck neutral third parties, including the USS Starke, generally claiming an accident when challenged. Although usually striking targets in the Iranian exclusionary zone, several mistakes, including the Starke incident, have been made in the past. This continues to create concern and adds to regional instability in the Gulf.

The battle between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims is a continual cause of unrest. Islamic fundamentalism predominantly generated in Iran threatens to spread, causing concern among the various monarchies of the region. The governments of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have become more conservative since the Iranian Revolution, in part to appease Shi'ite enclaves within their borders.

The threat of Soviet influence, always waiting on the horizon, is another factor. General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev openly stated

Soviet goals to control the energy resources of the Gulf and the mineral resources of Africa.

"In its efforts to weaken and ultimately eliminate Western influence from the Middle East, and particularly from the Arab world, while promoting Soviet influence, the Soviet leadership has employed a number of tactics; . . . military aid, . . . economic aid, . . . friendship and Cooperation treaties, [and] . . . disinformation." (7:44)

So far they have been unsuccessful in attaining their goals, but they stand ready to exploit any opportunity in the region. "For thirty years Arab states friendly to the United States have turned chiefly to us as a source of arms and technology, to the near exclusion of the Soviet Union." (15:2) The United States would like to maintain that balance in the interests of peace and stability.

WHY SAUDI ARABIA?

The United States formerly relied on the Shah of Iran as a regional power figure, governing a militarily significant nation. After his demise, we had to find a new partner to promote stability and consistency in the region. Saudi Arabia became that partner, but to a lesser degree. It was a natural selection, since Saudi Arabia formed the other half of our "Twin Pillars" policy, along with Iran, before the revolution. "The Saudis are the key U.S. ally in the Gulf and the lynchpin of Washington's relations with moderate Arab states." (8:89)

The Saudis have always had weight in the Arab world, not in the military dimension, but through oil wealth and financial diplomacy, and also because of the prestige that went with being the land of Mohammed and guardian of the holiest cities of Islam. As a moderate

state able to talk to both sides, Saudi Arabia is able to exert considerable influence in calming inter-Arab disputes. (1:121)

A young nation (55 years, in 1987), the Saudis have much to offer and much to gain from an American relationship. The United States has helped the Al-Sa'ud since before World War II. With that help, the Saudi monarchs have made amazing and rapid progress economically, politically, and militarily since the inception of their kingdom. Today Saudi Arabia ". . . is the only government in the Arabian peninsula both friendly to the United States and capable of playing a regional security role." (14:67) The Saudis, acting in this role, are much more palatable to other Arab states than direct intervention by the United States Government.

A quick study of the region substantiates that assessment. Jordan is small and lacks sufficient credibility among other Arabs. Additionally, she is a Mediterranean state and too far away from Gulf energy sources to significantly help the United States in power projection. King Hussein is occupied with his own internal problems and has little time to spend on regional initiatives. Egypt is the next possible partner, but is too far away to provide military help to the U.S. during most foreseeable confrontations in the Gulf. She does have the advantage of being able to stabilize the Suez Canal however, a separate but vital strategic asset. The United Arab Emirates occupy an ideal location, on the Gulf itself, but are politically unreliable, and do not accept policy direction from the United States even on issues of common interest. They possess

insufficient facilities to be of significant help, in any case. "Oman is the only country where we have a formal access agreement which provides access to U.S. military forces in peacetime and contingencies. . . . It is key to preserving our access to the Gulf."

(9:34) This is significant help, but Oman is a military midget in comparison to Saudi Arabia. Located south of the Straits of Hormuz, Oman is of little help in dealing with incidents in the Northern Gulf.

Ideally situated geographically, a leader within the world of Islam, and a major Arab military force in the region, Saudi Arabia represents the best partner for the United States in a concerted effort to maintain regional stability. The Saudi coastline reaches most of the Gulf from the northern tip down to the Straits of Hormuz. Aircraft launched from her bases have access to the entire Gulf. Finally, as the *de facto* leader of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), other Gulf states follow her lead in many areas of international politics.

ARMS SALES AS A U.S. POLICY INSTRUMENT

From a historical perspective, it is clear that the United States needs to be in Southwest Asia, and that Saudi Arabia is the best partner available for stabilizing the Gulf region. The focus now turns to the principal U.S. foreign policy instrument available, Security Assistance in the form of Foreign Military Sales (FMS), or simply arms sales.

Our security assistance programs are [a] key element in our relationships with Arab states in the Middle East. We are committed to the security and integrity of our friends in the region. Their ability to defend themselves against those who would threaten stability benefits the U.S. We have common goals and interests, and we move closer to their achievement through the sale of American military equipment and technology. (13:66)

There are many arguments for and against arms sales to Arab nations. There are also many myths associated with security assistance.

Costs and Benefits of Arms Sales

A brief look at the benefits and costs suggests that security assistance, in general, and arms sales, in particular, are not zero-sum games. Both sides profit from the transaction. Saudi Arabia receives state of the art U.S. Military hardware in the form of Bradley Fighting Vehicles, F-15 Eagle fighter aircraft, E-3 AWACS aircraft, and C³I equipment. The hardware significantly improves Saudi Arabia's ability to defend her own borders, and even more importantly, to project stabilizing forces outside her borders.

Security assistance contributes directly to the security of the United States and at the same time lowers defense costs. It enables allies to obtain military equipment to defend their independence, and/or undertake responsibilities which otherwise we might ourselves have to assume. Second, it furnishes tangible evidence of our support, thus deterring possible aggression and promoting regional stability. Third, it contributes to the broad cooperative relationships which permit the presence of U.S. facilities or access by U.S. forces to host country facilities in time of need, thereby reducing the cost of U.S. defense. Fourth, it demonstrates an American constancy in support of nations whose survival constitutes a basic purpose of our foreign policy. Fifth, it

provides benefits of consolidated planning and economies of scale to both parties. (9:30)

It is because of this assistance to Saudi Arabia that the U.S. does not have to commit more forces to the Gulf. Without the Saudis to act as regional policeman, American military power would be forced into a larger and larger role. The logistical savings alone is tremendous. The Saudis have also demonstrated their resolve. In 1984, Iranian F-4s violated Saudi airspace after repeated warnings. Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) F-15s were dispatched and proceeded to shoot down at least one Iranian F-4 Phantom II. (3:48) This act of national resolve by the Saudis significantly reduced the number of incidents and intensity of Iranian adventurism in the Gulf. Even today, three years later, Iranian aircraft hesitate to enter Saudi controlled Gulf airspace.

Arms sales help the United States by insuring interoperability with our allies. Having an ally who uses the same equipment, such as in NATO, adds a synergistic element to our support should the U.S. become directly involved. In the case of unilateral American power projection, the ability to use local hardware as spares or support equipment decreases the logistical dependency of our forces, which then increases their sustainability.

Royal Saudi Air Force Bases are among the finest in the world. Their equipment is, for the most part, new; they have abundant spares; and everything is prepositioned for use. The Saudis use exclusively U.S. Auxillary Ground Equipment (AGE) where possible. Should Central Command's Air Forces (CENTAF) ever have to deploy

to Southwest Asia, use of this equipment would allow the initial airlift support to concentrate on combat munitions and spares, while host AGE would be used to sustain aircraft sortie production.

Some U.S. government officials are concerned that the U.S. does not have any formal written agreements with the Saudis concerning the use of their facilities. Verbal agreements are very much a part of Arab culture, where a man's word is his bond, and the Saudis have honored such accords for years. (11:100)

[Saudi] leaders have privately given tacit approval for the United States to use their bases in times of crisis. They have actively sought a strong U.S. advisory role and quietly consulted U.S. defense planners and senior U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) officers regarding United States Military use of Saudi Arabian facilities in an emergency. (16:12)

Until a genuine military crisis occurs, the Saudis do not want a permanent American presence on their soil. This is a natural course for a sovereign nation to take, and is actually in the interests of the United States. Perhaps the longstanding U.S. presence in Europe has masked the fact that sovereign nations do not want another's military forces permanently stationed on their soil.

What happens when we refuse to sell military hardware to the Saudis? There is always the threat that Saudi Arabia will turn to other countries in fulfilling her defense needs. There are real costs involved in that case. ". . . Saudi purchases of European systems will complicate interoperability with U.S. systems, remove U.S. involvement in spare parts and training, and generally lessen our influence with the Saudi defense establishment." (14:68) We are

already experiencing the beginning of this problem as the Saudis acquire British Tornado and Hawk aircraft. Simple things such as electrical power requirements cause large problems when hardware from different manufacturing systems compete for the same facilities.

This point subtly brings up the need for "reassuring" our friends in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). "... There are two related cornerstones of an effective policy that deserve as much or more consideration than unilateral military capabilities. The first involves the necessity of enhancing working relationships with each of the GCC states. For the United States, 'reassurance' of its friends in the GCC is just as important as deterrence of the Soviet Union." (8:88) One of the more important benefits of our relationship with Saudi Arabia has been the stability they have provided to the region. This stability allows the United States to hold the majority of its assets in reserve for employment elsewhere.

The Israeli Connection

There is sentiment in the U.S. Congress that any help to Arab nations is, of necessity, detrimental to the security of Israel. The facts do not warrant this assertion. In fact, arms sales to moderate states such as Saudi Arabia actually enhance the security of Israel. "... The recipient country [of U.S. arms] has to agree to stringent security regulations, including a pledge not to use those arms in an offensive manner." (6:31) Israel, as a recipient of U.S. arms sales, has violated this principle, and yet seems unwilling to acknowledge

that the Saudis do honor it. For example, F-15 aircraft purchased by Saudi Arabia are not permitted at Tabuk Airbase in the northern part of the country because of their potential threat to Israel. This stricture was part of America's agreement to sell them the aircraft. The Tornado aircraft Saudi Arabia purchased from Britain in 1985 however, when the U.S. refused to sell them additional F-15s, have no such restrictions. That particular purchase had several effects on Israel. First, Saudi Arabia now possesses a dedicated strike aircraft with no restrictions on its use. Second, they took delivery of these aircraft at least four years earlier than they would have been able to receive additional American F-15s. Finally, Israeli pressure on U.S. Congress has affected American influence with the Saudis.

The efforts to serve Israel's interests have ended up damaging Israel's strategic interests as well as those of the United States. It takes three forms: Increased the barriers to Saudi participation in the peace process, reduced the U.S. ability to influence Saudi policy and military actions, and it has increased the theoretical military threat that Saudi Arabia could present to Israel in some future war. (16:20) . . . The U.S. - [Saudi] relationship has been plagued increasingly in the last decade by complications arising from close ties between the United States and Israel, and the latter's ability to influence and even prevent many U.S. arms sales to Arab states. (7:67)

The loss of influence creates several problems for the United States. As Congress denies more and more sales to Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations, we first lose the grassroots interaction that accompanies American personnel training foreign nationals in the use and maintenance of the equipment. Many third world countries

have grown to like the American system of training better than the British, French, or Soviet counterpart methods. Unfortunately, if Congress will not allow the sale of military hardware to our friends, then we cannot promulgate our system and ideals. "[Our] security assistance programs provide the access that allows [American] influence to function in a practical fashion in many countries."

(7:162)

The Regional Balance of Power

Every time there is a proposed arms sale to one of our Arab friends, a tremendous protest is heard from Israeli lobbyists, special interest groups, and political action committees (PACs) about the threat these sales pose to Israel. An objective look at the regional balance of power will show whether or not the allegation is true. Only Israel and Saudi Arabia are considered in this force comparison.

FORCES	ISRAEL	SAUDI ARABIA
Personnel	540,000	77,000
Armor vehicles	8,000	1,900
Combat Aircraft	630	95
Transport Aircraft	96	61
Naval Vessels	85	60

Source: The Middle East Military Balance 1983

This rudimentary breakdown of forces is sufficient to show a gross inequity in the military balance. It becomes even more lopsided when physical size is added to the equation. Israel has 20,325 sq. km., while Saudi Arabia has 2,331,000 sq. km. of territory to defend. (2:112,196) The Saudis, like Israel, have hostile

neighbors to their east, south, and (some would say) north. The Saudi case is aggravated by extremely long coastlines which must be protected. ". . . Attacks on the Kingdom would necessarily have to come through the air. The sheer size of the country. . . makes reliance on land-based defense nearly impossible. . . ." (8:67)

Currently, Saudi forces are stretched to the limit in fulfilling that role. They are therefore primarily interested in additional aircraft to support protecting those borders. Israel is over 100 times smaller, with a military force approximately six times larger. While Israeli concerns about lack of maneuver space and possible Arab alliances have validity, those arguments are being used, in the case of Saudi Arabia, in a manner that is contrary to long term stability in the Middle East.

Hopefully, these facts show the reader that the Saudis do have a legitimate requirement for additional forces, that these forces do not increase the threat to Israeli sovereignty, but in fact aid regional stability. American policy makers must not let Israeli paranoia adversely affect our relations with other nations in a vital world region. The Israeli lobbying effort is doing great damage to our relations with moderate Arab states, and particularly with Saudi Arabia. Since 1985, virtually every proposed arms sale has been blocked by Congress because of the supposed threat to Israel. Israeli national interests are distinct from our own, and yet an argument could be made, based upon recent congressional voting

records, that U.S. national interests have total congruency with those of Israel.

CONCLUSION

THE LINKAGE TO AMERICAN NATIONAL SECURITY

American national security is directly linked with that of Southwest Asia. Our close military ties with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states have been a key factor in guaranteeing our friends a means to protect their own security, contain threats posed by the Iran-Iraq War and Iranian extremism, guard against Soviet inroads, and cooperate with the United States to insure open international access to oil supplies. (15:2)

The United States is the only major power trusted by both sides of the Arab-Israeli dispute, putting us in a unique position to mediate and influence the peace process. Maintaining warm relations with the moderate Arab states, led by Saudi Arabia, is vital to our strategic interests in the Mideast. The continued sale of American equipment to replenish and update Saudi forces responds to a clear need for the continuing defense of Saudi Arabia and strengthens our relationship. (15:4)

The current policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* are making Soviet advances in the region more appealing to local governments. It becomes even more important therefore to reinforce, not alienate, our relations with our friends and allies. We have seen that the Saudis have been our friends since the inception of their Kingdom. They have supported us even at the cost of great embarrassment to themselves on occasion, and it is now vital to show our support for them. In so doing, we strengthen them, we cement our ability to

project power in the region, and we insure free world access to energy resources; all of which are in our vital interests because they enhance our national security.

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